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Memories Painted on the Walls

Felix Walking and the Murals of the Old Marty Gym

In 1938, Felix Walking arrived at Saint Paul's Catholic mission at Marty, located on the Yankton Indian Reservation in southeastern South Dakota, looking for work as an artist. Seventy-five years later, the murals he painted in expressive brushstrokes and brilliant colors around the balcony of the school's gymnasium still tell a sweeping story of the mission and the Yankton people, or Ihanktonwan Oyate. In her history of the mission, Mary E. Carson wrote, "It was as if ancestral memories poured from his paints onto the walls, to be grasped by future generations, and held equally close."[1] Studies of how knowledge is generated through images, history, narrative, and memory tend to focus on masterworks and ritual objects. They often overlook individual communities and local artists who, on a much broader scale, create historical knowledge and public memory through illustrations, portraits, signs, and murals produced for entertainment, marketing, and educational purposes. While perhaps not masterworks, the murals of Felix Walking at the Marty mission had an impact on community memory as they were viewed by hundreds who used the gymnasium for classes, games, performances, movies, dances, and other gatherings.[2]

The genesis for this article came from my preparation of the nomination of the Marty Gymnasium and Saint Therese Hall to the National Register of Historic Places in 2011. I am grateful to Cletus Goodteacher, Yankton Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Lana Gravatt, Carol Davis, Larry Dauphinais, Herbert T. Hoover, and Mary Eisenman Carson. My thanks also go to Peter Strong and Mary Bordeaux at the Heritage Center of the Red Cloud Indian School and Jhon Duane Goes in Center, who helped with research for this article.

1. Mary Eisenman Carson, *8th Landing: The Yankton Sioux Meet Lewis and Clark* (West Conshohocken, Pa.: Infinity Publishing, 2004), p. 331.

2. Cletus Goodteacher, email to author, 4 May 2011; Carol Davis to Cletus Goodteacher, 27 Apr. 2011.

Walking's twenty-two mural panels focus on stories of contact and cooperation over years of interaction between the Ihanktonwan and the Catholic Church. They constitute one of the first histories of the mission and reflect the narrative that mission leaders of the late 1930s wanted to convey to future generations. In 2013, the murals turned seventy-five years old, and their condition has begun to reflect their age. The Ihanktonwan tribe and a group of alumni from the Saint Paul's mission school have expressed interest in gathering the resources needed to conserve the murals and preserve the school buildings. With the school having moved into a new structure, they hope that the old buildings can be converted to new uses that will continue to serve the tribe and area residents. In January 2012, the mission's gymnasium, known as the Old Marty Gym, and another classroom building, Saint Therese Hall, were listed on the National Register of Historic Places for their significance to the history of American education, religion, architecture, ethnic heritage, and art. Adaptive reuse of the buildings and conservation of the murals is yet to come. The Felix Walking murals in the Old Marty Gym are valuable works of public art by an untrained but talented artist, and they continue to tell their story of the work of the Catholic Church among the Ihanktonwan.[3]

The history of missions to the American Indians of the Northern Great Plains is a complex story of physical hardship, unequal relationships, and multicultural negotiation. As nineteenth-century attempts to resist European American settlement by treaty or by force proved ineffective, American Indian tribes faced dramatic interference in their traditional ways of living, moving, and providing for their families—even for those tribes who managed to keep remnants of their lands as reservations. The Ihanktonwan are one of the tribal groups of the Oceti Sakowin, or Sioux nation. The name Ihanktonwan, which means Dwellers at the End, refers to the place they take when gathered with the entire Oceti Sakowin. Ihanktonwan was later anglicized to "Yankton." They spent much of their time on lands in the lower James

3. Robert H. Ruby, *Doctor among the Oglala Sioux Tribe: The Letters of Robert H. Ruby, 1953–1954,* ed. Cary C. Collins and Charles V. Mutschler (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), p. 29.

River Valley east of the Missouri River and made regular trips both to the sacred Black Hills and to the pipestone quarry in what became southwestern Minnesota.[4]

The 1858 Treaty of Washington opened more than eleven million acres in present-day eastern South Dakota to white settlement and limited the Ihanktonwan lands to 430,000 acres on the east side of the Missouri River. After 1858, reservation lands underwent several more major changes. The 1887 Dawes Allotment Act divided reservations into 160-acre parcels that were assigned to individual nuclear families for farms and ranches. In an 1892 agreement, the borders of the Yankton reservation were opened to European American settlement, and unassigned parcels were sold. From 1946 to 1952, the construction of Fort Randall Dam and the subsequent flooding of fertile bottomlands disrupted the lives of those displaced, as well as the community at large. The reservoir took homes, ancestral lands, pastures and fields, burials, and existing social networks in addition to sources of fuel, food, and water. By 1969, Ihanktonwan lands had decreased from the 430,000 acres retained in the 1858 treaty to only about 5,400 acres of tribal land and 29,700 acres of allotments still in the possession of tribal members.[5]

From the time of their arrival and expansion into what became the United States, European American missionaries, teachers, and federal agents attempted to "civilize" the tribes they met. On the plains, missionaries followed the river routes of early fur-trading companies and accompanied military units onto the frontier, where they set up chapels, performed baptisms, established schools, and sometimes served as intermediaries in United States-tribal affairs. As they built up staff and

4. Herbert T. Hoover, "Yankton Sioux People," context/draft (Vermillion, S.Dak., 1986), p. 11, Research Files, South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, South Dakota State Historical Society, Pierre.

5. Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 85; Reneé Sansom-Flood, Shirley A. Bernie, and Leonard R. Bruguier, *Remember Your Relatives: Yankton Sioux Images, 1865 to 1915*, 2 vols. (Marty, S.Dak.: Yankton Sioux Elderly Advisory Board, 1989), 2:39–42; Vine Deloria, Jr., *Singing for a Spirit: A Portrait of the Dakota Sioux* (Santa Fe, N.Mex.: Clear Light Publishers, 1999), p. 212; Michael L. Lawson, *Dammed Indians Revisited: The Continuing History of the Pick-Sloan Plan and the Missouri River Sioux* (Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2009), pp. 25–26; Herbert T. Hoover, "Yankton Sioux Tribal Claims against the United States, 1917–1975," *Western Historical Quarterly* 7 (Apr. 1976): 141.

financial resources, the major denominations established permanent missions and associated chapels. Outlying stations often resembled small villages with schools, stores, post offices, hospitals or clinics, and farms. Mission schools were places of both cultural suppression and multicultural interaction where power was unbalanced but not unilateral. When students arrived, they were subject to the expectations of appearance, schedules, labor, and discipline common to American schools of the time. This pressure to conform and assimilate was compounded by separation from families and by racial and cultural prejudice. At the same time, students, parents, and staff brought their own experiences and cultures into the milieu; at day schools, in particular, they had the ability to assert their own power.[6]

Over the years, schools were also used as centers for community gathering and sources of advocacy for the tribe within the political system. Eventually, forced assimilation as a policy of the federal government and missionary groups underwent reform. During the 1930s, the administration of Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier revised policies in regard to education, health care, land use, and traditional cultural expression. During the mid-1960s, the Catholic policy of inculturation encouraged the embracing of aspects of American Indian cultures in mission work. In the 1970s, all Catholic mission schools in South Dakota except for Holy Rosary on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation (where local parents petitioned for the church to remain in control) were turned over to tribal management.[7]

On the Yankton reservation, Saint Paul's Indian Mission at Marty began as an outpost of Saint Francis Mission on the Rosebud Indian Reservation, located across the Missouri River to the west. Beginning in 1911, the Jesuits at Saint Francis sent Father Henry Westropp

6. Thomas G. Andrews, "Turning the Tables on Assimilation: Oglala Lakotas and the Pine Ridge Day Schools, 1889–1920s," *Western Historical Quarterly* 33 (Winter 2002): 407–30.

7. Hoover, "Yankton Sioux People," pp. 39–40, 44; Margaret Archuleta, et al., *The Native American Fine Art Movement: A Resource Guide* (Phoenix: Heard Museum, 1994), chap. 3; [Carol Goss Hoover], "Catholic Missions, Churches, and Schools," in *A New South Dakota History*, 2d ed., ed. Harry F. Thompson (Sioux Falls, S.Dak.: Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, 2009), p. 322.

to visit the Yankton reservation three times a year, and the congregation erected its first chapel building in 1913. After Father Westropp was sent to India in 1916, Father Ambrose Mattingly was asked to extend his mission circuit from Stephan Mission on the Crow Creek Indian Reservation in central South Dakota. The schedule quickly wore on the aging Father Mattingly; within a year, his superiors transferred him to the Fort Totten Mission at Devil's Lake, North Dakota, where he exchanged places with Father Sylvester Eisenman. From his first visits in 1918 until his death in 1948, Father Eisenman oversaw thirty years of rapid growth at Saint Paul's.[8]

On his first visit, Father Eisenman and the congregation purchased and started to move a larger church building from the town of Wagner to the mission, and the older chapel was converted to a day school. The mission took the name Marty, after Abbot Martin Marty, when it established a post office in 1922. When the logistics of getting children to a day school caused attendance to drop, Father Eisenman opened a boarding school on 2 September 1924 with financial and staffing support from Mother Katherine Drexel of Philadelphia and her Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. Over the years, many of Father Eisenman's own family members served as teachers and support staff, including his brother Leonard Eisenman, who supervised much of the mission's construction from his arrival in 1929 until his death in 1947. Father Eisenman invested a great deal of his time in both the physical growth of the mission and fundraising through letters, newsletters, and direct appeals.[9]

The mission and its staff provided not only religious instruction

8. Sister M. Claudia Duratschek, *Crusading along Sioux Trails: A History of the Catholic Indian Missions of South Dakota* (Yankton: Benedictine Convent of the Sacred Heart, 1947), pp. 284, 286; *Catholic Sioux Herald/Eyanpaha Kin* (Marty, S.Dak.), 1 Oct. 1948.

9. Duratschek, *Crusading along Sioux Trails*, pp. 291, 293, 295, 297–98; Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 119, 135, 191, 293; Theresa L. Hessey, "The Native American Hand of God: The Oblate Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament" (master's thesis, University of South Dakota, 1996), pp. 15–16, 29–30; Adeline S. Gnirk, comp. and ed., *Epic of the Realm of Ree* (Burke, S.Dak.: By the Author, 1984), p. 178; Mary Eisenman Carson, *Blackrobe for the Yankton Sioux: Fr. Sylvester Eisenman, O.S.B., 1891–1948* (Chamberlain, S.Dak.: Tipi Press, 1989), p. 112; Gerald W. Wolff, "Father Sylvester Eisenman and Marty Mission," *South Dakota History* 5 (Fall 1975): 364–68.

but also education, health care, counseling, and a place for community gathering. A large body of clergy and laypersons from around the country supported the work, and individuals who lived nearby assisted in the offices, workshops, kitchen, and classrooms. From the mission at Saint Paul's, the priests and sisters additionally served the missions of Saint Francis Solano at White Swan/Lake Andes (1921–1978), Saint John the Evangelist at Greenwood (1914–1916 and 1921–1983), a day school at Saint John's (1933–c. 1950), Sacred Heart at Santee, Nebraska (1915–1916 and 1931–1957), Saint Gregory at Greenwood/Missouri Bottom (1938–1958), Saint Placid's Home (1939–1946), Saint Catherine of Siena at the Rising Hail Colony (1940–1965), and Saint William at Niobrara, Nebraska (1948–1957).[10]

The leadership of women played a significant role in the life of the mission. In addition to Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament and laypersons who served as teachers, nurses, and school administrators, one of the most beloved elders who supported the school was Osotewin, or Smoke Woman, also known as Unci (Grandmother) White Tallow. A storyteller, historian, and midwife known for her generosity and skill with quill and bead work, she and other elders and sisters taught traditional craft and dancing to students. Unci White Tallow died in June 1943 and is buried in the mission cemetery. In 1935, the order of the Oblate Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament was established as a religious community for American Indians at Saint Paul's Mission. The Oblate Sisters provided a core staff for the mission and school, eventually expanding their efforts to other reservations and urban areas. Although never a large order, they received full recognition from the Vatican in 1949, opened the order to non-Indian members in 1954, and received their own convent three years after that.[11]

10. Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 264, 283, 304, 400; Duratschek, *Crusading along Sioux Trails*, pp. 301–2; Marquette University, "Guide to Catholic-Related Records in the Midwest about Native Americans, 1839-present," Saint Paul Church, M-215, http://www.marquette.edu/library/archives/NativeGuide/SD/M-215.pdf, accessed 13 Dec. 2013.

11. Thomas Constantine Maroukis, *Peyote and the Yankton Sioux: The Life and Times of Sam Necklace* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), p. 115; *Indian Sentinel* 10 (Winter 1929–1930): cxxx; Sansom-Flood, Bernie, and Bruguier, *Remember Your Relatives*, p. 71; Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 274, 288–89, 389; Duratschek, *Crusading along Sioux Trails*, pp. 289, 308–9; *Catholic Sioux Herald/Eyanpaha Kin,* 1 Apr. 1940, 1 July 1943; Hes-

Students boarded at the Marty school for nine months of the year, traveling every September and May by foot, horse-drawn wagons, mission-owned trucks, and buses to and from reservations throughout South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska, and Minnesota. The boarding school opened in 1924 with fifty students, one priest, and three sisters; by 1938, there were 205 elementary students, thirty-eight high-school students, four priests, twenty sisters, and additional lay staff. High-school courses included chemistry, biology, business, English, speech, Latin, algebra and geometry, church history, United States and world history, bookkeeping, and shorthand. The thorough home economics and industrial arts curriculum included training in baking, printing, sewing, mechanics, farming, shoe repair, and wood and metal work. In addition to courses, students attended mass daily and had chores or work assignments around the campus. Female students worked in the kitchen, cleaned the church, and performed housekeeping duties, while the male students worked on the farm, produced publications in the print shop, planted trees and windbreaks, and did wood and metal working for school buildings.[12]

As the Marty mission and school grew in the 1920s and 1930s, the surrounding Yankton reservation faced immense economic and political challenges. During the drought and grasshopper infestations of the Great Depression decade, the mission and the entire reservation faced shortages of food and clothing, limited federal relief, and outbreaks of tuberculosis and smallpox. In 1936, the mission opened a soup kitchen for those confronted with crop failure. A few federal projects like the construction of a small dam at Marty, the building of the Rising Hail Cooperative settlement, road improvement work, and Indian arts and craft projects provided some local relief. In the summer of 1938, con-

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sey, "Native American Hand," pp. 34–35, 38–39; Gnirk, *Epic of the Realm of Ree*, p. 185; [Hoover], "Catholic Missions, Churches, and Schools," p. 322; Carson, *Blackrobe for the Yankton Sioux*, p. 203; Robert F. Karolevitz, *With Faith, Hope and Tenacity: The First One Hundred Years of the Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls, 1889–1989* (Mission Hill, S.Dak.: Dakota Homestead Publishers, 1989), p. 195.

12. Cletus Goodteacher, emails to author, 10 May, 7 June, 8 Sept. 2011; Hoover, "Yankton Sioux People," p. 31; Carson, *Blackrobe for the Yankton Sioux*, p. 174; Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 135, 141, 189, 350, 376; *Lake Andes Wave*, 28 Apr., 1 Sept. 1938; *Catholic Sioux Herald/Eyanpaha Kin*, 1 Nov. 1937–1 Mar. 1938, 15 May, 15 June 1941.

struction of the mission's new high school building was publicized in local newspapers as creating jobs for the community. In the realm of politics, the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 inspired a tense period of debate and negotiation about how the Ihanktonwan tribe would define its relationship with the federal government. At stake was the constitution the Ihanktonwan had adopted two years earlier, the legitimacy of elected officials, the success of standing claims against the federal government, and the status of tribal sovereignty. Superintendent William O. Roberts on the Rosebud reservation indicated that the Catholic leaders at the Marty mission had been most influential in the Ihanktonwan vote against adopting a new constitution under the Indian Reorganization Act.[13]

During the school's first couple of decades, Father Eisenman and the rest of the staff invested a great deal in its physical growth, despite the agricultural depression and political tensions of the 1930s. The men and students at Marty began digging the foundation for a new gymnasium in the spring of 1935. Known now as the Old Marty Gym, it was built using material that Leonard Eisenman and a small crew with a large mission truck salvaged from the United Bank building in Sioux City, Iowa, 135 miles away. They gathered up steel I-beams, flooring, windows and frames, cast-iron columns, plumbing fixtures, radiators, marble, trim, and common bricks, all of which had to be cleaned before reuse.[14] The architectural design of the finished building resembles Stripped Classicism, a style popular during the Great Depression for public projects like schools. Stripped Classicism was characterized by simplistic classical elements of symmetry, massing, and materials. Aesthetically, it communicated solidity, tradition, and moral authority, and it avoided the embellishments of many 1920s styles as both a

13. Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 240–347; Teresa M. Houser, "A Pivotal Decision: The Yankton Sioux and the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934," *South Dakota History* 42 (Summer 2012): 95–125; Hoover, "Yankton Sioux People," pp. 29, 33; Duratschek, *Crusading along Sioux Trails*, p. 301; Hoover, "Yankton Sioux Tribal Claims," pp. 139–40.

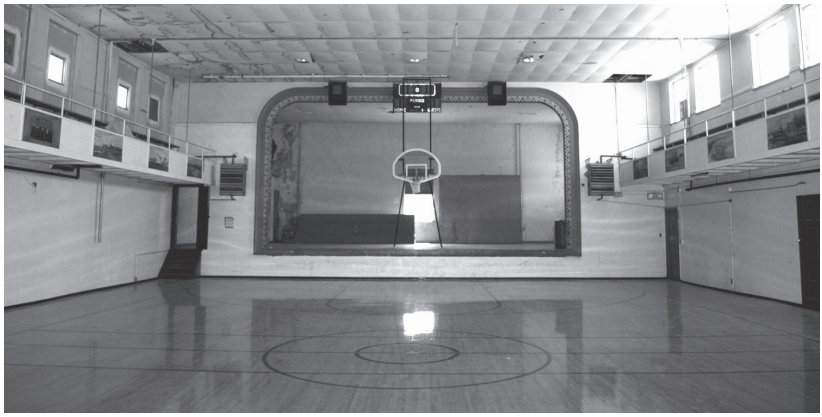
14. *Lake Andes Wave*, 1 Sept. 1938; Carson, *Blackrobe for the Yankton Sioux*, pp. 253, 277; Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 277; Wolff, "Father Sylvester Eisenman," p. 369. Materials from the bank were also used in the high school building in 1938.

practical reaction to financial shortfalls and a cultural reaction to the extravagance of the previous era.[15] Elements of Stripped Classicism found on the gymnasium include the pedimented parapets centered on the north and east elevations, pilasters resembling columns, and the reserved peaked arches over the entry doors.

In October 1935, the recreation room in the basement of the gym opened, and the first official basketball games were played on Thanksgiving Day. The lower floors of the gym housed a shoe-repair shop, two apartments for male teachers, and a large hardwood floor that was used for roller-skating and basketball practice. The Old Marty Gym hosted school classes, assemblies, commencement ceremonies, community meetings, sporting events, pep rallies, dances, movies, recitals, talent shows, orchestra performances, plays, speech tournaments, Saturday haircuts, annual school bazaars, and even student circus perfor-

15. Mark Gelernter, *A History of American Architecture: Buildings in Their Cultural and Technological Context* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 247–48.

With its simple elements and spare details, the Old Marty Gym is an example of the Stripped Classicism architectural style. Begun in 1935, the building was used for seventy-five years.



The murals Felix Walking painted in the 1930s still ring the balcony above the basketball court in the Old Marty Gym.

mances. In October 1936, the first "talkie" film shown at the mission was presented in the auditorium.[16] In 1956, the National School Assemblies programs included a magician, a violinist, an archer, a ventriloquist, a troubadour, and acrobats. Former student Cletus Goodteacher recalled that in the 1950s and 1960s, people crowded in to watch the Marty Braves play basketball and would "leave the old Marty gym, after a game, with hoarse throats from all the cheering/hollering they did."[17] This active space was chosen as the setting for Felix Walking's series of historical murals.

Felix Walking (1906–1974) likely had no formal art training beyond grade school, and written documentation of his life as an artist is scattered. He was born on the Pine Ridge reservation to Paul Walking Elk and Mary Standing Soldier, members of the Oglala Lakota Sioux tribe. According to census records, after his mother passed away in April 1913, Walking lived for a time with his father and brother Cyrus. From 1917 to 1921, he resided with the Distribution family before going back to live with his father and stepmother, Clarinda Poor Elk. Walking's brother left for the off-reservation Genoa Indian School in Nebraska,

16. Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 292, 309.
17. Cletus Goodteacher, email to author, 13 May 2011.

and his father passed away in 1923 while Felix was in the seventh grade at the Holy Rosary Mission—his last year of formal schooling.[18]

In the mid-1930s, Walking painted several murals and wall decorations at Holy Rosary Mission located outside of the town of Pine Ridge, at Saint Francis Mission on the Rosebud reservation, and at Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel in Kyle on Pine Ridge. At Holy Rosary (now Red Cloud Indian School), his murals included images of a woman and child at their tipi, a tipi on a riverbank, the Black Hills, bison in the Badlands, a portrait of Kateri Tekakwitha, and a series of decorations in the gymnasium that included a landscape view of the mission along with stenciled buffalos, tipis, pipes, arrow points, and other pictographic images.[19] The 1940 census lists his profession as "artist," but he had made only fifty dollars in the previous year, had been unemployed for thirty-two weeks, and was living near the Holy Rosary Mission on the farm of an uncle, Benjamin Marrow Bone.[20] The published letters of Dr. Robert H. Ruby, who worked up the road at the hospital on Pine Ridge in the 1950s, described Walking as "an untrained artist with a real talent." Ruby also noted that Walking "makes paintings for the mission, which they sell to tourists."[21] A number of his paintings completed in the 1940s and now held in the collections of the Heritage Center at the Red Cloud Indian School are sets of similar, but not identical, images of Kateri Tekakwitha, mission landscapes, and depictions of the first meeting of Father

18. U.S., Office of Indian Affairs, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, Indian Census Rolls, 1885–1940, National Archives Microfilm Publication M595, rolls 369 (1907), 378 (1932), 370 (1913–1917), 371 (1918–1920), 372 (1921–1923); U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910*, Enumeration Distict 122, 12B, and *Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940*, Enumeration District 57-3, 1B; Louis J. Goll, S.J., "Indian Boy Saves His Father," *Indian Sentinel* 3 (Oct. 1923): 170.

19. Holy Rosary Mission/Red Cloud Indian School Records, series 6-1, box G, folder 26150, Special Collections and University Archives, Raynor Memorial Libraries, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis.; Rev. Placidus F. Sialm, S.J., "Dedication of Kyle Chapel," *Indian Sentinel* 17 (Jan. 1937): 6; Heritage Center Collections, Red Cloud Indian School, Pine Ridge, S.Dak. Kateri Tekakwitha was an Iroquois woman of the Catholic faith who endured much suffering in seventeenth-century New York and was sainted for miracles attributed to her intercession following her death at the age of twenty-four. *Catholic Sioux Herald/Eyanpaha Kin*, 1 Aug. 1942; Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 146.

20. *Sixteenth Census*, Enumeration District 57-3, 1B.

21. Ruby, *Doctor among the Oglala*, pp. 29, 40.

Pierre-Jean de Smet with the Oglala Lakotas. He also painted compositions of well-known Catholic figures like Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Saint Maria Goretti, Our Lady of Fatima, and Father de Smet.[22]

Not all of Walking's work was done for the mission. Around 1949, he contributed at least one image to a set of postcards for tourists printed by C. E. Engle of Chadron, Nebraska. Of the set, eight other images were drawn by Andrew Standing Soldier, and three were unattributed. The card attributed to Walking, called "Tepee Signs and Symbols," was taken from an oil painting and, in the description on the reverse side, told the purchaser what each of the symbolic images represented.[23] Walking also painted murals in the lobby of the agency hospital on Rosebud using symbols of the Native American Church. He attended Half Moon meetings of the Native American Church and was living with his uncle Benjamin Marrow Bone in 1940 at the time when chartered meetings of the church were being hosted by Marrow Bone. In 1964, Walking's work was collected and displayed with that of contemporaries Norman Short Bull, Wanblee, and Andrew Standing Soldier at a private museum near Wounded Knee.[24]

Other Walking paintings from the 1950s in the collection of the Heritage Center feature subjects such as traditional buffalo hunts in which the hunters disguised themselves using wolf skins, a family drying meat outside their tipi and *ohanzi* (shaded arbor), mountain and lake landscapes, Chiefs Red Cloud and High Horse, generic images of chiefs in full headdress, an Indian "princess," a man in full headdress smoking a pipe on a riverbank, a woman and child near a canvas tent, the blizzard of 1949, and even a cowboy. Later works by Walking from the 1960s

22. Heritage Center Collections, Red Cloud Indian School.

23. The set was for sale, and photographs of each side were posted on multiple websites at the time this research was undertaken.

24. Ruby, *Doctor among the Oglala*, pp. 169–76; Arthur Amiotte, "Adversity and Renewal: A New and Different Life on a Small Part of a Very Old Place," in Emma I. Hansen, *Memory and Vision: Arts, Cultures, and Lives of Plains Indian Peoples* (Cody, Wyo.: Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 2007), p. 210; Paul B. Steinmetz, *Pipe, Bible and Peyote among the Oglala Lakota: A Study in Religious Identity* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1998), p. 91; *Reservation Round-Up: Stories of Pioneer Days in the Settling of the Pine Ridge Reservation Area* ([Porcupine, S.Dak.]: Big Foot Historical Society, 1968), p. 66.

and 1970s in the Heritage Center's collection show less tonal variation and have a more graphic-art quality; they include a pictographic composition reminiscent of ledger art, a rawhide drum with a painting of a scaffold burial, and a stylized portrait of a man and a vulture sitting on a horse. The man is shown drinking from a liquor bottle while the horse eats cactus; a spear is posted in the ground nearby.[25]

In the view of artist Jhon Duane Goes in Center, Walking belonged to a particular generation of artists who recorded the lifeways of their people even as they became exposed to Western art techniques through mission and reservation schools. Much of their work was produced for the public benefit and not only demonstrated their skill and originality as artists but also cumulatively documented their community's historical narrative, identity, and "cultural memory."[26]

In the Lakota creative continuum, an artist's skill, form of expression, and inspiration were learned from experts who were often family members or elders. Sioux artists produced many kinds of creative works that held *nagi*, a soul and power connected to that of the person who created them. A significant narrative tradition of artwork recorded accomplishments and dreams as hide paintings and, later, as ledger art done on recycled book pages. These works depicted the history and culture of tribes in an era of drastic and forced change. Creating these narratives in service as a band historian was a ceremonial calling to observe, record, remember, and retell significant stories, but it was also a public process wherein leaders and interested parties participated in verifying the truth of the story. Works of the ledger-art period of the 1870s through the 1930s could be done from firsthand observation or personal memories, particularly in the early period, but many were also

25. Heritage Center Collections, Red Cloud Indian School.

26. Telephone conversation with Jhon Duane Goes In Center, 7 May 2013; Janet Catherine Berlo, ed., *Plains Indian Drawings, 1865–1935: Pages from a Visual History* (New York: Harry N. Abrams in association with the American Federation of Arts and The Drawing Center, 1996), p. 12; William K. Powers, "Drawing on Cultural Memory: Self and Other in Native American Ledger Art," *American Anthropologist* 104 (June 2002): 663; Janet Catherine Berlo, *Spirit Beings and Sun Dancers: Black Hawk's Vision of the Lakota World* (New York: George Braziller in association with the New York Historical Association, 2000), pp. 149–55; Helen H. Blish, *A Pictographic History of the Oglala Sioux* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), pp. 11–26.

drawn according to memories gathered from elders.[27] The ledger-art style tended to be characterized by strong lines and sense of motion, two-dimensionality, blocks of solid color, minimal, if any, landscape, and the use of symbols for the sake of economy and storytelling—for instance, the repetition of hoof prints to represent the passing of a large group of riders. Because the traumas of the reservation period made some elders feel that contemporary daily life left "nothing more to tell," ledger art was used to depict a time "when the people were strong and vibrant and leading lives independent of government interference."[28]

At the time Felix Walking was painting, the influence of the reservation system constricted what subjects were acceptable as art and what was considered "good" art. There was an American market for art and handicrafts created by tribes across the country, but cultural preconceptions narrowly defined art that was authentically Indian. Starting in 1935, the federal Indian Arts and Crafts Board encouraged and tried to regulate the production and sale of "traditional" arts and material culture as a tool of economic development. In South Dakota, the board established clubs on the Pine Ridge, Rosebud, Cheyenne River, and Standing Rock reservations, a small museum in Rapid City, and shops in Flandreau and Rapid City.[29]

27. Marla N. Powers, "The Significance of the Family in Lakota Art," in *Five Families Art Exhibition* (Pine Ridge, S.Dak.: Heritage Center, Inc., 1992), p. 14; Berlo, *Spirit Beings*, pp. 20–21, 149–51, 153; Arthur Amiotte, "An Appraisal of Sioux Arts," in Arthur R. Huseboe, *An Illustrated History of the Arts in South Dakota* (Sioux Falls, S.Dak.: Center for Western Studies, Augustana College, 1989), p. 127; Mari Sandoz, introduction to Blish, *Pictographic History*, p. xxi; Myles Libhart and Vincent Price, *Contemporary Sioux Painting* (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1970), p. 14; Oscar Howe, "Theories and Beliefs—Dakotas," in *Lakota Art Is an American Art: Readings in Traditional and Contemporary Sioux Art*, ed. R. D. Theisz, 4 vols. (Spearfish, S.Dak.: Black Hills State University, 1982), 4:172; Evan M. Maurer, *Visions of the People: A Pictorial History of Plains Indian Life* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1992), p. 37; Dorothy Dunn, *American Indian Painting of the Southwest and Plains Areas* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1968), p. 169; J. J. Brody, *Indian Painters & White Patrons* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971), pp. 27–29; Joyce M. Szabo, *Howling Wolf and the History of Ledger Art* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), pp. 25–27, 43.

28. Amiotte, "Adversity and Renewal" pp. 204–5.

29. Szabo, *Howling Wolf*, pp. 46–47; Amiotte, "An Appraisal of Sioux Arts," pp. 138–39;

As art became a viable professional option, early studio artists focused on traditional painting styles and the narrative genre, but exposure to modernist art trends of the 1950s shifted the field. In the late 1960s and 1970s, the federally chartered Institute of American Indian Arts encouraged students to use individualistic expressionist styles and also taught supportive courses in business and marketing. Several of these studio artists broke away from what they saw as limited definitions of "authentic" or "traditional" Indian art, instead incorporating from the international art world whatever styles, subjects, and techniques fit their individual vision. In the late twentieth century, postmodern and postcolonial work by native artists began to look critically at representation, the course of history, and social identity. Older design traditions continue to provide context for many contemporary art pieces, and some artists have chosen to reinvigorate forms like hide painting and ledger art in order to connect with and comment on Sioux history.[30]

Felix Walking's generation of Sioux artists was the first to grow up on the confined reservations of the early twentieth century. Like earlier ledger artists, this generation tended to produce narrative work that used art as a form of storytelling. Stylistically, these artists began using the greater color variation, shading, distance, and perspective of the regional and realist art that was taught to them at the reservation schools. Highly structured composition remained important, but the

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Robert Fay Schrader, *The Indian Arts and Crafts Board: An Aspect of New Deal Indian Policy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), pp. 217, 261.

30. Brody, *Indian Painters*, pp. 187, 194–206; Jamake Highwater, *The Sweet Grass Lives On: Fifty Contemporary North American Indian Artists* (New York: Lippincott & Crowell, 1980), pp. 27–28; Margaret Archuleta and Rennard Strickland, eds., *Shared Visions: Native American Painters and Sculptors in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New Press, 1993), pp. 22–29; Archuleta, *Native American Fine Art Movement*, chap. 3; Howe, "Theories and Beliefs," pp. 178–79; William K. Powers, "The Ecumenical Nature of Lakota Art," in *Five Families*, p. 23; Edwin L. Wade and Rennard Strickland, *Magic Images: Contemporary Native American Art* (Tulsa, Okla.: Philbrook Art Center, 1981), pp. 4–6; Robert Penn, "Art and Self," in John R. Milton, ed., *The American Indian Speaks* (Vermillion, S.Dak.: Dakota Press, 1969), pp. 95–96; W. Jackson Rushing, "The Legacy of Ledger Book Drawing in Twentieth-Century Native American Art," in Berlo, *Plains Indians Drawings*, pp. 56–62.

technique was looser than the point-to-point precision of lines in hide painting and ledger art.[31]

In an overview of Sioux visual arts, Arthur Amiotte placed Walking with Godfrey Broken Rope, Jake Herman, Frank White Buffalo Man, Vincent Bad Heart Bull, and others within a category he called "Emerging Non-Traditional Fine Arts," situated between periods of "Transitional Tribal Arts" and "Contemporary or Modern Sioux Art." He concluded that their paintings were generalized stereotypes of a romanticized past. "It is doubtful," he wrote, "if their works will ever become known as fine art recognized by a world audience. In time their works may become the subject of a historical regional genre and be thought of as collector's items. . . . However, when juxtaposed against the accomplishments of the exceptional few from this period, such as Andrew Standing Soldier, they continue to recede."[32] Despite Amiotte's critique that they lack the fine execution and transcendence of Standing Soldier, the "historical regional genre" of the period is valuable to the history of arts in South Dakota. These artists made a living without formalized higher education, shared their talents with their communities, and produced creative work that recorded stories important to them or their audiences.

Felix Walking may have come to the Marty mission as a referral from the priests of Holy Rosary, or at the invitation of Father Eisenman on a visit to the Holy Rosary for a summer Indian Congress, or perhaps because he had family among the Ihanktonwan. Also unknown is how the subjects for the murals in the gymnasium—all taken from local history—were chosen, but they were probably identified by a group made up of Father Eisenman, other priests, sisters, and/or elders of the tribe. Many images were inspired by photographs housed at the mission, several copies of which ended up in the collections of Father Daniel Madlon, the Blue Cloud Abbey near Marvin, or the Sacred Heart Convent in Yankton.[33]

31. Howe, "Theories and Beliefs," p. 173.

32. Amiotte, "Appraisal of Sioux Arts," pp. 136–37.

33. *See,* for instance, Sansom-Flood, Bernie, and Bruguier, *Remember Your Relatives*, pp. xiii, 62; Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 2, 65, 93, 98, 114, 126; *Catholic Sioux Herald/Eyanpaha Kin*, 15 Apr. 1939–1 Oct. 1940.

In the twenty-two murals that line the balcony of the gymnasium at Marty, the compositions are all highly focused, with a clear central subject in a single scene. The murals are painted on board, probably in tempera, and measure approximately four feet by two feet. The major subjects are bust portraits of significant individuals, notable buildings or locations (most of them religious), interactions and contact with European Americans, the Missouri River, and Ihanktonwan community and culture. Only one scene is absent people or buildings. The backgrounds use loosely blended hues to depict trees, vegetation, plains, skies, and rivers. Six of the panels employ an aerial viewpoint for a wider composition. All scenes (excepting the bust portraits) demonstrate distance and perspective through object size, color tone, and level of detail. Buildings and distant figures are painted relatively flat, but the portraits using busts or entire figures are better defined and three-dimensional. Painted about twenty-five years after the first chapel was built at Saint Paul's, these murals constitute one of the earliest histories of the mission.

The first mural panel (Figure 1) is the only one without a person or building. It shows a coyote calling from a red butte in the foreground, with the tree-shaded river and setting sun in the background. Across the low plains of South Dakota, high points like this butte were often known as places of concentrated spirit and power.

The second mural depicts four men on horseback on an open plain, hunting a small group of buffalo with both bows and spears (Figure 2). This composition shows the most movement, stopping the hunters mid-action and foregrounding the charging buffalo. The subject is also the most like earlier formats of hide painting or ledger art that recorded accomplishments in hunting or warfare—acts of valor that were traditional sources of status for men and, by extension, their families. Over time, such images less often narrated specific acts of bravery and came instead to represent the character of the nation. Early in the period of American western expansion, a combination of factors contributed to the near-extermination of once-numerous herds of bison. Losing the buffalo, seeing whole herds rotting in the grass, and facing the emptiness of the plains brought grief to the people. Late in the nineteenth century, some conservation efforts slowly began in isolated

Figure 1. Coyote on red butte

Figure 2. Buffalo hunters

bison reserves across the northern plains. By the mid-1930s, national park reserves at capacity culled their herds and distributed animals to start herds on the Pine Ridge and Crow reservations.[34] In 1936, when a few buffalo were sent to the Marty mission, the school newsletter reported, "Old memories come back to our Indians of 70 or 80 winters. They talk among themselves, and make motions of the hunt in those grand old days of freedom."[35]

The third mural records a tribal gathering near a river (Figure 3). The scene shows a semicircular wall of canvas or hides, and a line of men stands in the foreground along a gap in the enclosure, facing a seated group in its center. Of the group inside the enclosure, one person is positioned as if to address the assembly. Many tipis are erected around the gathering, and bluffs are painted in the background. The

34. David W. Penny, "The Horse as Symbol: Equine Representations in Plains Pictographic Art," in Maurer, *Visions of the People,* p. 77; Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750–1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 164–87, 189–90; Amiotte, "Adversity and Renewal," pp. 206, 211–15.

35. Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 306.

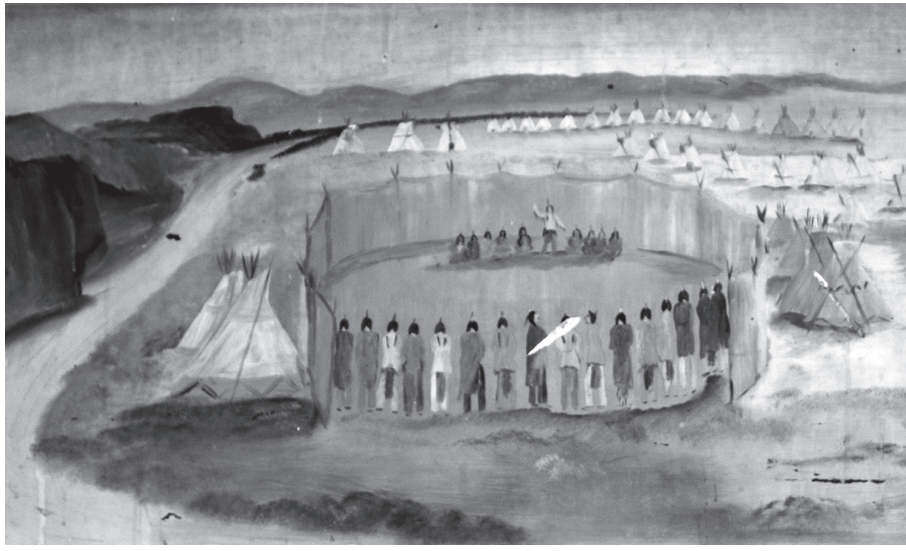

Figure 3. Tribal gathering

scene resembles descriptions of annual spring gatherings where the *wakikonza* council members—the pipe bearers—as representatives of the *tiyospaye* family networks would come together to decide and announce the tribe's governance for the year.[36]

The fourth and fifth panels (Figures 4 and 5) show the arrival of Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, who had ascended the Missouri River from Saint Louis, Missouri, in 1804 to explore the newly acquired western lands of the United States. Reaching the vicinity of what is now Yankton that August, the explorers met a group of Ihanktonwan who had come down from a settlement of buffalo- and elk-skin lodges nine miles up the James River. An exchange of gifts and a *wacipi* celebration took place at the expedition's camp.[37] Walking's staging of the initial meeting is set on the riverbank with conifer trees in the background. Seven Ihanktonwan men wrapped in robes or blan-

36. Ella Deloria, *Speaking of Indians* (Vermillion, S.Dak.: Dakota Press, 1974), p. 26; Blish, *Pictographic History*, pp. 30, 83; Berlo, *Spirit Beings*, pp. 64–67.

37. Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 25; Gary E. Moulton, *The Definitive Journals of Lewis & Clark: John Ordway and Charles Floyd* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), pp. 46–48.

Figure 4. Arrival of Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark

Figure 5. Captain Meriwether Lewis with infant Padani Apapi

kets stand in a line to receive three short-haired, bearded men who are arriving in a boat. The front men of each party reach out to shake hands over the shoreline. The Americans are wearing blue uniforms with forage caps more appropriate to the army uniforms of the mid-to-late 1800s than to 1804; it is likely that their apparel in the painting was informed by the memories of the elders or photographs of American soldiers who were posted at western military forts in the second half of the nineteenth century.

A tradition has been passed down that Chief Padani Apapi (also called Struck-by-the-Ree or Strikes-the-Ree) was born at the time Lewis and Clark arrived and that Captain Lewis wrapped the infant in an American flag during the *wacipi* at Calumet Bluff/Green Island in late August 1804.[38] According to one account, Lewis declared Padani

38. The spelling of Padani Apapi is taken from his grave marker. Duratschek, *Crusading along Sioux Trails*, p. 274; Gnirk, *Epic of the Realm of Ree*, p. 19.

Figure 6. Passing of Missouri River steamboat

Apapi an American and predicted that he would grow to be "a man of peace between his people and mine."[39] This scene is shown in the fifth mural panel as Lewis and Clark stand on either side of a posted American flag, one holding the baby wrapped in the flag while the parents look on. The event is set on an open plain outside a single tipi, on which Walking painted a buffalo-head shield.

The sixth mural is a wide landscape showing a small group of Ihanktonwan on the left and a solitary Catholic priest on the right as they watch a passing steamboat from the bank of the Missouri River (Figure 6). Steamboats brought ever more European American traders, soldiers, and missionaries to the lands of the Oceti Sakowin, where they established forts, missions, and small settlements along the river trade routes that constituted the major form of access to the territory. The steamboat's role in frontier missions can be seen in an oral narrative told by Unci White Tallow and related in an essay by a Saint Paul's student: "There were some people coming after wood from Choteau Creek. When they were going back they saw a steamboat coming. They

39. Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 26.

stopped and saw Father DeSmet in the boat. Father told them he was going down to Greenwood for a visit."[40]

Padani Apapi, the flag-wrapped infant of the fifth mural, is the subject of the seventh mural. He became an influential leader of the Ihanktonwan and was among the signatories of the 1858 Treaty of Washington. Padani Apapi worked towards peaceful relations between the Sioux and the United States government with an accommodationist and resigned approach that was not without detractors, including his fellow leader and treaty cosigner Wiyaka Na-pin (Feather-in-the-Ear). However, at the Doolittle Commission hearings during the 1865–1866 session of Congress, Padani Apapi testified on the United States-Dakota War of 1862 in Minnesota, stating that the Dakotas' violent reaction was understandable given the conditions on the reservation, the dishonesty of federal Indian agents, and the unfulfilled treaty obligations. On the Yankton reservation, he worked with other leaders to request a Catholic priest and school for the Ihanktonwan. Felix Walking's painting (Figure 7) is taken from a widely disseminated photograph of Padani Apapi taken in the spring of 1867 by Antonio Zeno Shindler.[41] In the

40. Ibid., p. 244.

41. Hoover, "Yankton Sioux Tribal Claims," p. 128; Hoover, "Yankton Sioux People," p. 21; Sansom-Flood, Bernie, and Bruguier, *Remember Your Relatives,* p. 27; Colin G. Cal-

Figure 7. Padani Apapi (after photograph by Antonio Zeno Shindler)

original photograph, the Yankton leader sits wearing a fur hat, prominent feather, long hair, a woven button-up shirt, and pants decorated with beads or quillwork. Walking's mural features only the bust from the image, and the paint of the subject's face is highly deteriorated.

The eighth mural features the arrival of Father Pierre-Jean de Smet in 1839 (Figure 8). Born in 1801 in Dendermonde, Belgium, Father de Smet was a Jesuit missionary who traveled extensively among the tribes of the American West until his death in 1873. In 1839, he arrived at Greenwood from the novitiate at Saint Louis and performed baptisms among the Ihanktonwan.[42] Padani Apapi cautiously accepted

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loway, ed., *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground: Plains Indian Views of How the West Was Lost* (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1996), pp. 97–98; *Congressional Globe*, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1866, vol. 36, pp. 3062–63; Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 65–66; American Philosophical Society, Shindler Photograph Collection, 1852–1869, mss.970.1.Sh6, box 1, image 1, http://diglib.amphilsoc.org/islandora/object/graphics:3270, accessed 13 Dec. 2013.

42. [Hoover], "Catholic Missions, Churches, and Schools," p. 318; Robert Galler, "Making Common Cause: Yanktonais and Catholic Missionaries on the Northern Plains,"

Figure 8. Arrival of Father Pierre-Jean de Smet

his friendship and religious teachings as an opportunity to "promote a relationship for his people," but he did not allow the missionary to baptize him or his wife until 1866. While De Smet valued such friendships, he still presented a rather "bleak prognosis" for success with the Sioux because of their insistence on maintaining cultural traditions. According to historian Robert Galler, "Tribal leaders showed interest in gaining access to power that they perceived coming from Catholic rituals, but they did not want to break from their own traditions that had also proved effective for many generations."[43] Over the years, De Smet gained a favorable reputation among the Sioux that benefitted the work of later Catholic missionaries. When two Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament visited Saint Paul's Mission in 1922, several of the men and women they met remembered being baptized as children by Father de Smet. There is an active feeling in the mural panel of de Smet despite the stationary poses of the three men. Red and brown stones jut out from both sides of the butte on which they stand. Walking put Father de Smet in the center, seated on a paint horse. The two men on horses directly behind him may be *iyeksas* (interpreters) such as Antoine Zephier Rencontre, who often accompanied de Smet.[44]

The subject of the ninth mural has been identified as the Verdel-Wagner Ferry (Figure 9), which the Verdel family operated at the mouth of Choteau Creek to cross the Missouri River. Ferries like this one between Verdel, Nebraska, and Wagner, South Dakota, were important for families, commerce, and other local travel even after the Good Roads Movement inspired businessmen and farmers to lobby for paved roads and automobile bridges in the 1920s. In 1938, the Verdel landing was the destination for a school picnic, though the outing had

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Ethnohistory 55 (Summer 2008): 447; Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 70; Sister M. Claudia Duratschek, *Builders of God's Kingdom: The History of the Catholic Church in South Dakota* (Yankton, S.Dak.: Benedictine Sisters of Sacred Heart Convent, 1985), p. 3.

43. Galler, "Making Common Cause," p. 453. Padani Apapi also regularly attended the Presbyterian church at Greenwood. Galler, "Making Common Cause," pp. 451–54; Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 64; Gnirk, *Epic of the Realm of Ree*, pp. 19–21

44. Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 58, 67–72; Sansom-Flood, Bernie, and Bruguier, *Remember Your Relatives*, p. 13; [Hoover], "Catholic Missions, Churches, and Schools," p. 319; Galler, "Making Common Cause," pp. 451–52; *Indian Sentinel* 2 (July 1922): 503–4.

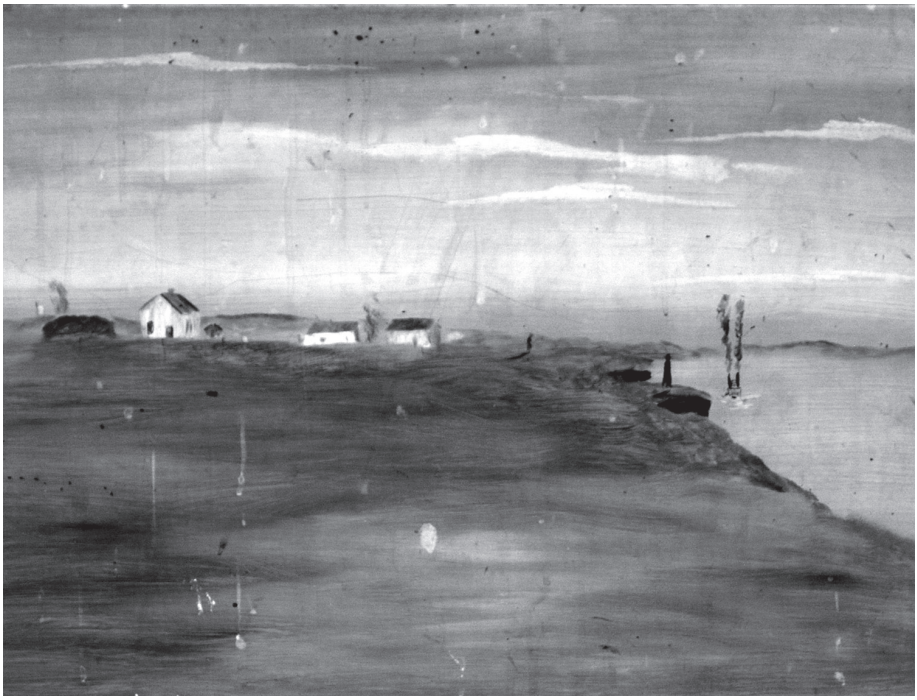

Figure 9. Verdel-Wagner Ferry on Missouri River

to be postponed because the trucks got stuck on muddy roads.[45] The mural shows a collection of three white frame buildings and a long, dark structure grouped in the distance on a river. Two silhouetted figures stand at the water's edge as a steamboat approaches.

The tenth mural features the arrival of Bishop Martin Marty (Figure 10). Father de Smet may have been renowned for his early visits to the tribes, but Marty was the one most responsible for establishing a system of reservation missions during his service from 1876 until 1895—an important period of cultural tension and institutional growth. Aloys Marty was ordained at Einsiedeln Abbey College in Switzerland in

45. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, *Transportation Series*, 3–4 (1935): 108; *Catholic Sioux Herald/Eyanpaha Kin*, 15 June 1938, 1 Nov. 1941; Adeline S. Gnirk, comp. and ed., *The Epic of Papineau's Domain: Comprising Goose Lake, Jackson, Moore, Rhoda, and White Swan Townships* (Burke, S.Dak.: By the Author, 1986), p. 41.

1855 and served as the first abbot at Saint Meinrad Abbey in Indiana before leaving to establish a mission at the Standing Rock Agency in Dakota Territory. He was also one of the first in a new missionary trend for the Benedictine order in America.[46] With support from the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, formed in 1874, Marty took multiple extended trips through Dakota Territory during which he "learned the sociopolitical practices of communities, established personal relationships, and was resourceful enough to gather personnel to fulfill Sioux requests for Catholic missions."[47] Even though the federal government

46. Galler, "Making Common Cause," p. 449; Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 79; Matthew Alan Gaumer, "The Catholic 'Apostle of the Sioux': Martin Marty and the Beginnings of the Church in Dakota Territory," *South Dakota History* 42 (Fall 2012): 258–62; Brother Patrick Joshua Finn, T.O.R., "Fostering Okodakiciye: Catholic Missions among the Yankton Sioux," paper presented to Joseph M. White, Catholic University of America (Washington D.C., 2011), p. 9, http://martycatholic.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/catholic-missions-among-the-yankton-sioux.pdf, accessed 13 Dec. 2013.

47. Galler, "Making Common Cause," p. 456. *See also* [Hoover], "Catholic Missions, Churches, and Schools," pp. 319–20.

Figure 10. Arrival of Bishop Martin Marty

had placed the Yankton reservation under the purview of the Episcopal Church, Marty first met with the Ihanktonwan in 1877 and offered "clandestine" mass in the homes of the Mahpiyato, Bonnin, Picotte, and Cournoyer families. Working with Father J. F. Malo and the Presentation Sisters, they established the first mission to the Ihanktonwan, called Saint Ann's. It opened near the village of Wheeler in 1879 but faced such hardship over the winter that it closed the next year. Marty was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Dakota Territory during this time and, on occasion, served as advisor to both the federal government and the Catholic Church on matters of Indian policy.[48] The mural shows Marty arriving on a cart pulled by two horses and being greeted by a man and a child outside a painted tipi.

The identities of the two men depicted in the eleventh mural are not known. Given the chronology of the murals, however, they may be any of a number of historical figures. Father Henry Westropp arrived with catechist William Eagle Thunder at the home of Ihanktonwan Chief Mahpiyato in November 1911 and founded Saint Paul's Mission that year. David Zephier also accompanied Father Westropp as he traveled to the Yankton and Sisseton reservations and to the Poncas and Santees in Nebraska, and he helped Westropp write a prayer book in Dakota. While Father Westropp was traveling, Pine Ridge catechists Ivan Star Comes Out and Nicholas Black Elk ran Saint Paul's Mission.[49] In the mural (Figure 11), two men on horseback are posed among cactus and sagebrush with high bluffs in the background; neither man is dressed in garments specific to a priest.

Depicted in the twelfth mural is the first Chapel of Saint Paul the Apostle, dedicated in October 1913 (Figure 12). With funds from the Marquette League and the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, Father Westropp bought land from Eugene Shooting Hawk (Brunot), secured labor from Wagner carpenter Paul Einkopf, and purchased materials to build the first Saint Paul's Mission church. When Father Eisenman arrived in 1918, he described it as facing east, with a door

48. Duratschek, *Crusading along Sioux Trails*, p. 276; Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 76, 79; Gaumer, "Catholic 'Apostle of the Sioux,'" pp. 269–70.

49. Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 87; Duratschek, *Crusading along Sioux Trails*, pp. 285, 313.

Figure 11. Unidentified men on horseback

Figure 12. First Chapel of Saint Paul the Apostle at Marty

to the sacristy on the south side and unplastered interior walls. The mural shows, situated on an open plain, the wood-frame church with a central steeple entrance and an open pyramidal bell tower with a cross mounted at the peak. The image may have been modeled on a photograph taken by someone in the Eisenman family, though many other early photographs included views of the building.[50]

The thirteenth mural is the second bust portrait, this one showing Chief Mahpiyato, or Blue Cloud, who had encouraged the first Catholic missions to the Ihanktonwan. He passed away on 27 September 1918 during Father Eisenman's first visit to Saint Paul's. Mahpiyato was the last chief of the Ihanktonwan (due to a federal decree that there would be no others), and he led the people during a tumultuous period as they adjusted to reservation life.[51] It was said that he had called on the Catholic Church and community in his last days to build a school in

50. Gnirk, *Epic of the Realm of Ree*, pp. 178, 184; Duratschek, *Crusading along Sioux Trails*, p. 285; Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 93–94.

51. Duratschek, *Crusading along Sioux Trails*, pp. 276, 288; Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 2–3; Sansom-Flood, Bernie, and Bruguier, *Remember Your Relatives*, p. 69.

Figure 13. Chief Mahpiyato, or Blue Cloud

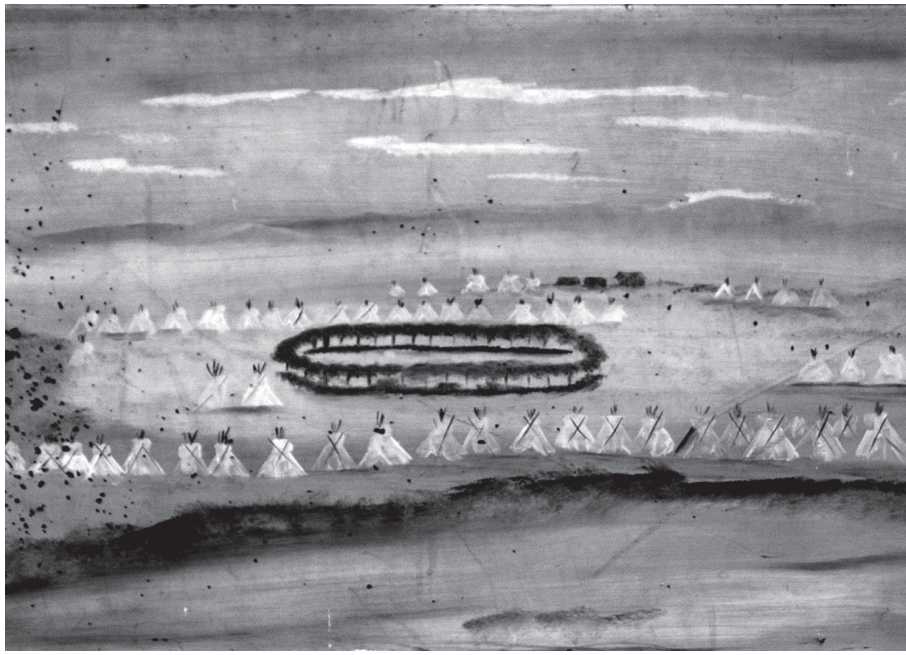

Figure 14. Landscape with *ohanzi*

order to "stop the decline of his people."[52] His name, Blue Cloud, was given to the abbey built in 1950 at Marvin, South Dakota. The mural portrait (Figure 13) shows a man with white hair and mustache wearing a hat and blue coat. In painting the portrait, Walking likely referred to a photograph of Mahpiyato with John Picotte and two other men in 1918.[53]

The fourteenth mural is an aerial-view landscape that includes a central, circular *ohanzi* on a level plain surrounded by tipis (Figure 14). Frame buildings can be seen in the far background. The left side of the image is in poor condition. It was common to build an *ohanzi* to provide a shady gathering place during summers, a time when *tiyospayes* assembled for dances, ceremonies, and giveaways. When the federal government banned most of those traditional events, annual

52. Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 2.

53. Photograph provided to Mary Eisenman Carson by John Picotte's grandson Alvin Picotte. Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 2.

tribal fairs and rodeos provided an opportunity for people to gather, exhibit produce and livestock, and display arts and crafts. Many missionary networks also held annual communal gatherings that to some extent substituted for the outlawed traditional seasonal ceremonies.[54]

The fifteenth mural is modeled on a photograph of the first Saint Paul's Indian Congress held in July 1923, although the composition is reversed. Many priests and parishioners from surrounding towns, other Sioux missions, and the diocese in Sioux Falls attended that congress, which included a banquet of meat, fry bread, and *tipsina*, or prairie turnips. The tradition of the Indian congress began in South Dakota in 1891 with Bishop Martin Marty and featured several days of worship, sacrament, oratory, and fellowship.[55] In the mural (Figure 15), figures with umbrellas sit beneath the *ohanzi*. A cloth is tied around the left side of the shelter. A frame building is visible through the *ohanzi*, and an American flag is posted nearby.

Depicted in the sixteenth panel is another chapel, likely Saint Francis Solano at White Swan. The White Swan church, located in Section 35 of White Swan Township some twenty miles from Marty, was built in 1915 by Father Henry Westropp on land donated by George Moneke (White Owl). With the construction of Fort Randall Dam in the 1940s and 1950s, the land at the White Swan village was seized by eminent domain and inundated by the waters of Lake Francis Case. The church building was moved to Lake Andes, and twenty-five of the sixty-five relocated graves were reinterred at Marty. The mural (Figure 16) depicts the chapel at White Swan as a one-story white frame building with a single door and a short steeple with bell, pyramidal roof, and cross. It is situated amongst the leafy trees of the forested bottomland. A photograph of the Saint Francis Solano chapel indicates that the door was set on an extended entryway and that a small chimney came up from the slope of the roof.[56]

54. Hoover, "Yankton Sioux People," p. 25; Amiotte, "Adversity and Renewal," pp. 249–51; Gaumer, "Catholic 'Apostle of the Sioux,'" pp. 275–76.

55. Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 126; Gaumer, "Catholic 'Apostle of the Sioux,'" p. 274.

56. Carson, *8th Landing,* pp. 132, 271–72; *Catholic Sioux Herald/Eyanpaha Kin*, 1 Apr. 1940; Gnirk, *Epic of Papineau's Domain*, pp. 18–19; Duratschek, *Builders of God's Kingdom*, pp. 351–52; Lawson, *Dammed Indians Revisited*, p. 64.

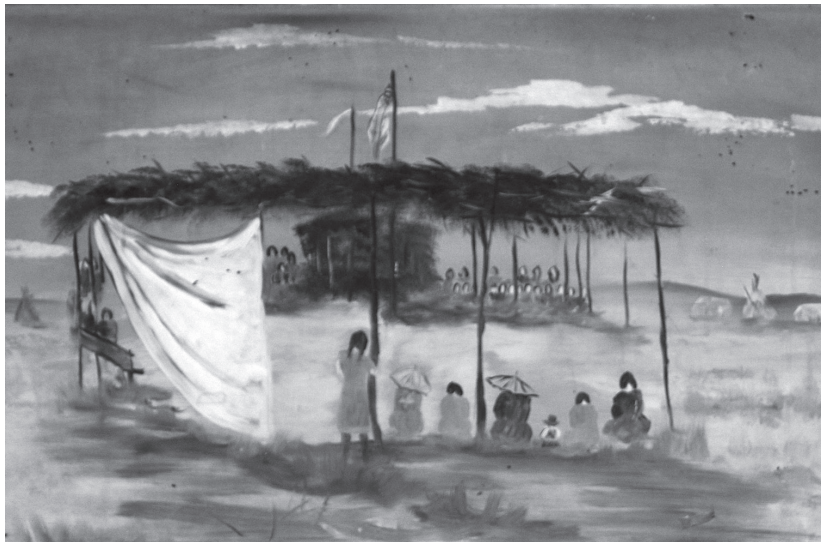

Figure 15. Tribal gathering (after photograph of Saint Paul's Indian Congress)

Figure 16. Saint Francis Solano Chapel at White Swan

The seventeenth mural commemorates one of the great sagas of Saint Paul's Mission. On 8 October 1918, Father Eisenman bought the Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church building in Wagner for seven hundred dollars. Six days later, the community dug out its stone foundation, used borrowed heavy equipment to lift the building onto timbers, and with steam-engine tractors started pulling it to the mission. Traveling the thirteen miles took three difficult months. The tractors repeatedly broke down and experienced perpetual trouble on waterlogged soil; the building slid into the ditch; workers suffered and died in the influenza epidemic of 1918; planks had to be laid over Eagle Track Creek; cables and pulleys snapped.[57] The long-awaited arrival of the building at the mission in late December was a cause for "celebration that could not be dampened, even by the gaping door and window openings nor by the bare spot where the sacristy fell off ten miles back, nor by the whitish scar where the entry and steeple should be."[58] The mural (Figure 17) shows three steam tractors puffing smoke as they pull a frame building across a flat plain. The building has a wide

57. Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 96–102; Duratschek, *Crusading along Sioux Trails*, p. 290; Wolff, "Father Sylvester Eisenman," pp. 361–62.

58. Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 102.

Figure 17. Moving of Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church building

Figure 18. Old Wagner church with steeple

central door, no steeple, two windows on the facade, and four windows on the side elevation. The composition is the reversed image of a photograph that likely would have been available at the mission.[59]

The eighteenth mural shows the old Wagner church after the steeple was rebuilt, but before cross-wings were added later in the 1920s.[60] Walking painted the church (Figure 18) on a flat plain, as a front-gable frame building with cornice returns, arched windows on either side of the entry and along the side walls, a central pedimented entry on the steeple, and an open bell tower with a steep roof and cross.

The nineteenth mural consists of a group of portraits of the school's three founding fathers. In 1921, Edward Yellow Bird and Thunder Horse (Sunka Wakinyan), with David Zephier (Black Spotted Horse) as interpreter, traveled to Saint Meinrad Abbey in Indiana to ask that Father Eisenman be posted permanently at Saint Paul's Mission. The abbot at Saint Meinrad had proposed to remove the Yankton missions of Saint Paul's, Greenwood, and White Swan from the priest's circuit.

59. *Catholic Sioux Herald/Eyanpaha Kin*, 15 Apr. 1939; Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 98.

60. *Indian Sentinel* 2 (Oct. 1922): 568; Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 125, 167; Gnirk, *Epic of the Realm of Ree*, p. 178.

As the abbot considered their request, the men addressed an assembly in the music hall and then pitched a tent outside the abbey church to await his answer.[61] He ultimately agreed, and with their success, "the trio's names became enshrined at Marty among the most revered in the area's history." The mural (Figure 19) was adapted from a photograph of the three men at Saint Meinrad.[62]

The twentieth mural shows Saint Paul's Mission at Marty and was likely painted from Walking's personal observations. The mission erected many frame buildings and about fifteen brick and stone buildings from 1922 to 1947, beginning with Saint Joseph's Hall. Some building materials were purchased, but others were salvaged from old government buildings in Greenwood, schools in Ravinia, and a bank building in Sioux City, Iowa.[63] Much of the labor came directly from the staff, students, and community members around the mission. Trees were also added over time for windbreaks and shade, and planting was

61. *Catholic Sioux Herald/Eyanpaha Kin*, 1 June 1948; Duratschek, *Crusading along Sioux Trails*, p. 292; Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 113–14; Wolff, "Father Sylvester Eisenman," p. 363.

62. Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 114–15.

63. Carson, *Blackrobe for the Yankton Sioux*, pp. 112, 246–47; Carson, *8th Landing*, p. 123; *Indian Sentinel* 3 (Jan. 1923): 17, (Apr. 1923): 89.

Figure 19. Edward Yellow Bird, Thunder Horse (Sunka Wakinyan), and David Zephier (Black Spotted Horse) (after photograph taken at Saint Meinrad Abbey)

Figure 20. Saint Paul's Mission at Marty

one of the chores assigned to male students. The mural (Figure 20) shows the crossroads near the mission's high school and its buildings in the midst of mature trees.

The twenty-first panel depicts another chapel, Saint Catherine of Siena (Figure 21), which was located at Rising Hail along the chalk-rock bluffs of the Missouri River. Begun in 1938 and dedicated in 1940, Rising Hail was one of twenty federal projects instituted in South Dakota under the Indian Relief and Rehabilitation program.[64] The Rising Hail Cooperative Development Association received technical and financial support from the federal government, and the eight to ten participating families had resources of fifteen hundred acres, along with livestock and orchards. The cooperative's homes, cannery, commissary, barn, dance hall and other buildings were constructed using a native limestone called "chalk rock" quarried from the Missouri River bluffs

64. Houser, "Pivotal Decision," pp. 117–18. The Rising Hail Cooperative was also known as the Chalk Rock Colony. Roger Bromert, "Sioux Rehabilitation Colonies: Experiments in Self-Sufficiency, 1936–1942," *South Dakota History* 14 (Spring 1984): 38; Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 339, 352–54; *Catholic Sioux Herald/Eyanpaha Kin*, 1 Oct. 1940.

Figure 21. Saint Catherine of Siena Chapel at Rising Hail

and processed onsite. Catholic mass was held in the canning factory at Rising Hail until the dedication of the new Saint Catherine of Siena Chapel. By 1949, difficulties with the enterprise had led most of the families to leave, and the Cournoyer family subsequently managed the land as a private farm into the 1970s. Saint Catherine's closed in 1965.[65]

The twenty-second mural depicts children playing a game on the ice (Figure 22). The image shows a group of sixteen people silhouetted in the foreground, with some standing and some sitting or kneeling. At least one holds a bat or stick. In the background, trees line the river, and hills stand in the distance. During long winters, skating ponds near the mission school provided entertainment for students.[66]

Although it is difficult to speculate on which pieces of the mission's history were left out of Walking's murals and why, certain subjects are

65. "Rising Hail Colony," Greenwood vicinity, Charles Mix County, National Register of Historic Places nomination, #75001713, published 28 Apr. 1975; *Catholic Sioux Herald/Eyanpaba Kin*, 15 Apr. 1938; Gnirk, *Epic of the Realm of Ree*, pp. 28–29; Bromert, "Sioux Rehabilitation Colonies," pp. 39–40; *Lake Andes Wave*, 1 Sept. 1938; Carson, *8th Landing*, pp. 339, 352–54; Marquette University Archives, "Guide to Catholic-Related Records in the Midwest about Native Americans," Saint Paul Church, M-215.

66. *Catholic Sioux Herald/Eyanpaba Kin*, 1 Mar. 1938.

conspicuous by their absence. The images do not illustrate biblical stories, nor are they depictions of natural landscapes or pre-reservation tribal culture alone. No image of home life on the allotments, farming, or fields appears. There is nothing of the federal agency at Greenwood, any of the surrounding towns, or the railroad. There is no depiction of cultural conflict or political tension. No images of worship, students in class or doing chores, or interior views are included. There is no portrait of Unci White Tallow or any of the resident priests, teachers, or sisters. It is possible that some subjects were discarded because of their technical difficulty, or because of the humility of living leaders, but their absence provides an opportunity to consider what was included and why.

As a visitor to Marty, Felix Walking was likely unfamiliar with the details of its history. He also designed several of the murals from locally available photographs that someone had to choose and obtain. As a result, Walking must have worked with local elders, priests, and/or other mission leaders to decide which stories were important. The subjects of the murals were selected from among many possible stories to tell, and they were translated through the lenses of a visiting artist, Indian and non-Indian decision makers, and, in some cases, a photographer as well. The murals in the gymnasium at Marty created a narrative of

Figure 22. Children playing on ice

the peaceful arrival of missionaries on the plains, support for Catholic efforts on the part of Ihanktonwan leaders, the erection of houses of worship, and marks of linear progress. They form a record of how mission leaders viewed their past and their legacy.

Historical memory frames the identities of individuals and societies —who we were, are, and hope to be—through narratives that are observed or learned from others. Narratives shared by members of a community can create traditional canons and thought paradigms, social cohesion, and social order, but they can also mask valuable diversity and individual experiences.[67] The leaders at Saint Paul's mission made the murals' narrative into a canon that defined the intercultural relationship they believed should be remembered as the history of the mission and a guide to future missionary success. These twenty-two murals do not approach a comprehensive history of the Ihanktonwan nor even a comprehensive history of Saint Paul's Mission. They do, however, share a specific message of peaceful and effective cooperation that was important to mission leaders during the late 1930s, a period of institutional strength and growth amidst economic depression and political tension on the reservation.

Felix Walking's murals have told a history of Catholic missions to the Ihanktonwan for seventy-five years, and all physical materials deteriorate over time. After the gymnasium and other buildings at the "old" school were vacated, fluctuating temperatures and humidity as well as leaks throughout the gymnasium structure hastened the decay of the murals. Long-term conservation will require that the building be repaired to stem water infiltration; ideally, it should be inhabited and used so that the air environment will remain more constant. Now that the gymnasium is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, efforts to rehabilitate the building are potentially eligible for grants under the South Dakota State Historical Society's Deadwood Fund. In regard to the paintings themselves, a professional experienced in mural conservation should assess their current condition and create a plan to remedy existing damage and slow further deterioration.

67. Susanne Küchler and Walter Melion, *Images of Memory: On Remembering and Representation* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 1–7.

Felix Walking belonged to a generation of Lakota artists who formed part of a cultural continuum of creativity. They negotiated a living as artists within the constrictions of twentieth-century reservation life. Their work was available to a large audience through public murals, illustrated publications, local exhibitions, and commercial work. As others before and since, these community artists expressed and framed shared memories about the past. The murals around the balcony of the Old Marty Gym indicate a narrative that was crafted and created for a highly public space. They provide insight into the mindset of mission leaders of the 1930s, who canonized a peaceful relationship between the Catholic Church and the Ihanktonwan, and demonstrate the talent of a Lakota artist. Together, the murals offer an important physical record and early historical narrative that is a part of, and a lens into, the histories of the Marty mission and of the arts in South Dakota.

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On the covers: For the past seventy-five years, the colorful murals of Lakota artist Felix Walking have decorated the gymnasium at Saint Paul's Catholic mission in Marty, South Dakota. In this issue, Elizabeth J. Almlie explores Walking's paintings and the stories they tell of the mission and the people associated with it.

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