

# **Eugene Standingbear Collection**

## **Mss.02650**

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	History Colorado. Stephen H. Hart Research Center
<b>Title</b>	Eugene Standingbear Collection
<b>Date</b>	1975-1980
<b>Extent</b>	0.25 Linear feet
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>Eugene Standingbear (1906-1980) was born to Chief Luther Standing Bear and Laura Cloud Shield. Standingbear grew up on reservations and attended several schools, including Carlisle, Pipestone, Santee Bible, and Haskell Indian Industrial. Upon finishing school, Standingbear traveled throughout the West and pursued various types of work. In 1975, Standingbear moved to Roggen, Colorado to pursue his work as an artist. Two years later, Standingbear returned to the film industry, with which he had been involved in the 1920s. Standingbear passed away in 1980 in Greeley, Colorado. This collection includes notes written by Standingbear and used by Mark Macy, author of <i>Chief: Experiences in the Life of Eugene Standingbear, an Oglala Sioux</i>. A copy of Macy's manuscript also included in this collection. The manuscript follows Standingbear's life from childhood through adulthood. Also included are newspaper clippings related to Standingbear's film career and a copy of his obituary.</p>

### Preferred Citation note

Cite as: If manuscript is used please cite as Mark Macy, "Chief: Experiences in the Life of Eugene Standingbear, an Oglala Sioux"

## Biographical note

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Eugene George Standingbear (1906-1980) was born to Luther Standing Bear (1868-1939) and Laura Cloud Shield. Standingbear traveled with his parents as they performed in Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show and Miller Brothers' 101 Ranch Show. When he was not traveling with his parents, Standingbear stayed with his uncle, White Bull Number 2, near Porcupine Station on Pine Ridge Reservation.

In 1914, Standingbear's mother, Laura Cloud Shield, remarried and moved the family to the Omaha reservation in Macy, Nebraska. At this time Standingbear entered the government-mandated Pipestone Boarding School in Pipestone, Minnesota as a second-grader. He studied subjects in spelling, language, history, civics, manners, math, hygiene, reading, writing, and drawing. He also learned the occupations of farming, carpentry, masonry, painting, engineering, blacksmithing, gardening, and shoe and harness repair.

Standingbear's experience at Pipestone included living in a dormitory, belonging to the Omaha-Winnebago gang, eating meals of brown gravy, bread, and syrup, wearing ill-fitting uniforms, and receiving whippings from the school principal. After Laura Cloud Shield visited Standingbear at Pipestone, she wrote to the government to protest the poor living conditions at the school. Though conditions improved somewhat as a result of her letter, Standingbear was removed from Pipestone and enrolled in Carlisle. When Carlisle closed in 1918, Standingbear returned to Pipestone and in 1919 was moved to the Santee Bible School in Santee, Nebraska.

By 1922, Standingbear was sixteen and spent his evenings performing in a band in Nebraska and South Dakota. While playing at a rodeo in South Dakota, Standingbear joined a footrace at the encouragement of the crowd and won. Watching from the crowds was Artie Artichoker, a Winnebago athlete, who recommended Standingbear for a track scholarship to Haskell Indian Industrial School in Lawrence, Kansas.

In 1925 Standingbear traveled to Cheyenne, Wyoming to play an Indian in a fight scene in the movie *Pony Express*. Standingbear would continue to be involved with the film industry on occasion until 1955. Standingbear's involvement in Hollywood provided him a firsthand view of the misrepresentation of American Indians in movies.

In 1926 Standingbear traveled to Oklahoma and married Mary Lookout. The couple had a traditional Osage marriage that was aired on television and later a blessing by a Catholic priest. With the money the Osage tribe had earned from oil on their land, the Standingbears purchased a large home in Pawhuska, Oklahoma, where they employed a cook, maid, groundskeeper, stock hands, and a chauffeur. The couple also attended black-tie parties, played golf and bridge, and took summer-long vacations to Colorado Springs in a fleet of limousines.

Mary Lookout came from a well-connected family. They did business with notable businessman such as W.G. Skelly and Frank Phillips, both of whom were adopted into the Osage tribe. The family also had political connections, traveling to Washington DC for Hoover's 1929 inauguration and receiving a 1937 visit from Eleanor Roosevelt to the Osage reservation.

In 1937 Standingbear left his wife, son, and the Osage tribe. He found work as a lead and zinc miner in northeastern Oklahoma and then Meade, South Dakota.

Standingbear traveled to Kansas City in 1941, where he found work as a mechanical and general draftsman. When World War II began, Standingbear assembled B-25 bombers for the Air Force. During this time in Kansas City, Standingbear met his second wife, Velma. The couple moved to Bremerton, Washington and continued working for the Air Force at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard. They also opened a restaurant called The Colonial House near the base. By 1944, Standingbear was also working as a commercial fisherman.

In 1949 Standingbear divorced Velma and moved to Billings, Montana to find work building oil refineries. Standingbear struggled with alcohol abuse and, unable to work, traveled throughout the West, spending some of his time in Pasadena, California.

In 1960 Standingbear's niece died of alcoholism in Denver. Standingbear moved to Colorado and began working for his niece's widower at his bar. In 1975 Standingbear moved to Roggen, Colorado and formed the group the Standing Bear Dancers. The group performed at events, and Standingbear painted, drew, lectured, and made television appearances in his spare time.

In 1977 Standingbear returned to acting, playing the medicine man in the television show titled "Grizzly Adams." In 1979 Standingbear played a Sioux medicine man in the television miniseries "The Chisholms, Part II" starring Robert Preston. In this production, producers allowed Standingbear to perform an authentic healing ceremony.

"The Chisholms" aired in January 1980. Six months later Standingbear passed away in Greeley, Colorado.

Information taken from: *Colorado Heritage* "The Life of and Art of Eugene Standingbear" by Alisa Zahller and *Chief: Experiences in the Life of Eugene Standingbear, and Oglala Sioux* by Mark Macy.

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## Scope and Contents note

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This collection contains materials that detail Eugene Standingbear's (1906-1980) personal story of growing up in the United States as a Native American. In these documents, Standingbear discusses the challenges he faced assimilating into white life through schooling and life on reservations. Standingbear also goes into depth about the loss of his heritage by misrepresentation in film and roadside vendors. Standingbear used his experiences to create artwork to demonstrate the challenges of living two different lives, his Oglala Sioux and his white American experience.

This collection includes several newspaper clippings from his career in film and a manuscript written by Mark Macy that tells Eugene's story of growing up in America.

## Administrative Information

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### Publication Information

History Colorado. Stephen H. Hart Research Center

### Conditions Governing Use note

Copyright is held by Mark Macy, author of the manuscript. Mr. Macy has given History Colorado permission to copy the original document, scan images, and copy clippings for educational purposes. For any other use, contact Mark Macy.

### Provenance

Donated by Mark Macy, author of the manuscript included in the collection titled *Chief: Experiences in the Life of Eugene George Standingbear, an Oglala Sioux*.

### Processing Information note

Processed by Haley Suby, August 2015

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## Related Materials

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### Related Archival Materials note

These items add to the previous donations of materials documenting the life and art of Eugene Standingbear--R.136.2014 (A&D drawings over 300), R.136.2014 (album with drawings, clippings, and photos), and R.189.2014 (hat and digital photos).

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## Controlled Access Headings

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Corporate Name(s)

- Haskell Indian Junior College.
- Pipestone Indian Industrial Training School.
- Santee Normal Training School (Santee, Neb.).
- United States Indian School (Carlisle, Pa.).

### **Genre(s)**

- Correspondence.
- Manuscripts
- Newspaper clippings.
- Notes

### **Geographic Name(s)**

- Bremerton (Wash.)
- Denver (Colo.)
- Indian reservations.
- Keenesburg (Colo.)
- Macy (Neb.)
- Makah Indian Tribe of the Makah Indian Reservation, Washington
- Oglala Sioux Tribe of the Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota
- Omaha Indian Reservation (Neb.)
- Osage Tribe, Oklahoma
- Pine Ridge Indian Reservation (S.D.)
- Puget Sound Naval Shipyard

### **Occupation(s)**

- Drafters
- Mining

### **Personal Name(s)**

- Macy, Mark, 1949-
- Standing Bear, Luther, 1868?-1939
- Standingbear, Eugene George, 1906-1980

## Subject(s)

- Alcoholism.
- American Indians
- Artists--Colorado--Denver.
- Film and culture
- Indian students--Kansas
- Indian students--Minnesota
- Indian students--Nebraska
- Indian students--Pennsylvania
- Indians of North America--Colorado.
- Indians of North America--Minnesota.
- Indians of North America--Nebraska.
- Indians of North America--South Dakota.
- Restaurants.

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## Accession number

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2015.92



## Collection Inventory

FF1 Correspondence March 21, 28, 1977

*Chief: Experiences in the Life of Eugene George Standingbear, an Oglala Sioux 1977*

FF2 Introduction and Chapter 1 1977

FF3 Chapter 2 1977

FF4 Chapter 3 1977

FF5 Chapter 4 1977

FF6 Chapter 5 1977

FF7 Chapter 6 1977

FF8 Chapter 7 1977

FF9 Notes by Eugene Standingbear for *Chief: Experiences in the Life of Eugene George Standingbear, an Oglala Sioux* [1977]

FF10 Newspaper Clippings 1975-1980