

the border from the U. S. A., also refused to take any part.

Gabriel Dumont, Louis Riel's lieutenant, indeed sent word inviting the chiefs to take the side of the halfbreeds and help "fight for their country." They refused. Threats were then hurled at them in anger but the two chiefs had fought too many battles in days gone by to be intimidated. They told Dumont that as long as no one bothered them all would be well, but if either side molested them, those would be the ones they would fight and would be at war with them. From that time on they were left alone.

After the Rebellion had ended the Canadian Government decided to take some of the loyal chiefs down to Eastern Canada so that they could see the strength and might of the white man. They would then, on their return, tell the rebel chiefs what they had seen.

Apart from this the Government desired to show some appreciation of the loyal stand taken by some of the chiefs.

Chiefs Starblanket and Mist awasis went. With them were two other chiefs, one of whom was Owistaka, a Salteaux chief ~~by~~ from the Fort ~~Kelly~~ Pelly district. A half breed by name of Alex Hourie accompanied them, acting as interpreter.

They were feted and made much of down East.- they were taken through all kinds of factories - they went to see plays in theatres, they saw a Punch and Judy show. Chief Starblanket was inclined to believe that the two were actually alive, ^[that] they were something in the nature of pygmies. They had many a story to tell when they arrived safely in their homes some weeks after they had hastily departed on their long journey.

Henry MacKay, a son ~~of~~ of the later Chief Factor William MacKay (H.B.Co.) told me a couple of anecdotes about the chiefs' visit to Ottawa.

"The House was in session," he said, "and the Chiefs had been invited to sit in the visitors' gallery to see how the laws of the country were enacted.

"The House adjourned a few minutes before noon to a sort of balcony which was over the main entrance to the old Parliament Buildings. They supplied the visitors with seats and cigars were handed around.

"It was the custom to have a cannon fired off at noon whenever the House was in session. The gun was not very far away from the door.

"The chiefs who had never heard a cannon go off, were blissfully ignorant of what was in store for them. The members of course, knew and they were eager to see the reaction of the visitors. They themselves were a little uneasy and kept glancing slyly at their watches.

"Suddenly the cannon roared! The chiefs never moved from their position on the chairs. Long used to hiding their feelings and trained from childhood ~~to hide their feelings~~ never to show any sign of fear, the big sound made no appreciable impression on them.

"The only one who spoke was Mistawasis. 'Tapwā sōkē ta kwun! (Truly, it was a big noise!)" he said. "

Another story Mr. McKay told was this.- "Sir John A. Macdonald liked ~~that~~ Aht ahk akoōp very much. One evening having invited his own immediate friends to his house, he also asked x Aht ahk ak oōp and Hourie the interpreter to come.

"There was a dinner served. When all had had enough, Sir John said to the Chief, "My daughter here, has always wanted to have an Indian name. I would be most thankful if you would

"Without a moment's hesitation the chief stood up; the girl did also, at a sign from her father. The Chief said, ~~II~~ 'I give you part of my name which is Atahk~~ko~~akoóp i.e. Starblanket. You will be called "Atahk" i.e. Star. I myself will retain the "blanket" part of it.'

"Amidst clapping, he sat down. It is said that the girl used her Indian name for many years in her own home and amongst her friends."

A suggestion was made to send Starblanket on to England from Ottawa so that the English people might have the chance of seeing a representative of the Indians who were loyal during the Rebellion, and one who took such a prominent part in the Treaty the Indians made with the Queen in 1876. He refused this offer politely but decidedly.

When I go back home to my own Reserve I, of course, always go to church. On the wall is a stone tablet.- Amongst other words written in English are Indian characters which mean "The memory of the just is blessed." What is actually written is the following

"ᐃ ᑭᓴᓂᑦ ᑕᓄᑦ ᑎᓱᑦ ᑲᗈᑦ ᑵᖅᑐᑦ ᑕᓄᑦ ᑎᓱᑦ
O)kis ki so to-ta ko win o kwuisk ita ti sew
sa wā ye ta kwu ne yew"

Susukwu moos

The fourth brother of Ahenakew named Susukwumoots (one who adheres) was given the name Jacob, at his baptism. He was very different to the rest of his brothers. He was of small stature, quick in speech and movement, volatile in temperament; he was one of the Councillors of the Reserve i.e. a sort of sub-chief under his brother.

Despite his uncertain temper he was a sound counsellor and very generous to those in need. Despite a slight handicap he was very agile and capable. He had many good qualities but he was so overshadowed by his brother, the Chief, that it is not easy to sing his praises at this point.

He had two distinguishing features in the make up of his general appearance. One was a hunch-back which signally failed to rob him of his manly air, the other was a good sized beard which he could have got rid of, without in any way lessening what beauty he may have had.

A son of his, Joseph, by name, was a teacher but lived only for a year or so after he began his work. Another son Alexander was deaf and dumb. This affliction was brought on him as a complication from some fever he had: He lived to be over 70 years old and it was very seldom that he missed going to church on a Sunday

at. Smith
Napās kis the fifth brother.

Napaskis was the youngest. He was never baptized and had never married. He was quite young when he died. His name gives the idea of manhood.

A white man of importance took to this handsome youth. He liked him so much that he invited him to join his party when he went back to Montreal. Napāskis went with him gladly, of course. He was away for a whole year; how he spent his time there, we do not know. Enough it is to say that when he did get back, he seemed to be different. He was no longer the light-hearted young man who enjoyed the ordinary every day life of an Indian. Something seemed to prey on his mind; he was restless.

After distributing presents amongst his sisters-in-law he told his brothers that he was going to the Blackfoot country with the view of bringing away some of their horses. They, of course, would not stop him, though they tried to dissuade him from going away so soon after his arrival.

Word having gone around that he was going on a raid, many young men asked if they could accompany him. When he did start so many met him at the rendezvous, that his venture looked more like a military expedition than a secret raid, which was what he had planned for in the beginning.

They were on foot. It is a long way between the Fort Carlton country and the Blackfoot country, not so far from Calgary. What adventures they had on the road, no one knows. The only physical obstacle was the South Saskatchewan River; that, they probably swam across.

They eventually found out the situation of two Blackfoot camps, a large one and a smaller one. They divided into two parties. The smaller party headed by a nephew of Napaskis led those who went to attack the smaller camp. All went well with this party and they returned to their home camp with many good horses.

The larger party under Napaskis were at first successful. They brought away many horses secretly, meeting at a certain place they had agreed on. Another nephew of the leader, Ominawachakwās ~~by name~~ by name, failed to show up. He was the eldest son of Chief Starblanket.

Napaskis pleaded with his men to leave him. He said he himself would not be able to leave till he had found out the fate of his nephew. His men absolutely refused to go. While they

were discussing as to what action should be taken a mule which was amongst the horses brayed out loudly stampeding them, many of whom were able to run away, racing straight for the Blackfoot camp.

The Crees went to a nearby creek and on the bank they made trenches. In a short time the Blackfeet approached at great speed. Then the battle began, lasting all day and all night. About mid-morning, Napāskis was heard to sing a song. He then yelled out, "I could still kill some of you but what is the use? All my men are dead." He jumped out of the trench and stood up proudly while from all around the Blackfeet blazed away at him. He gradually sank down to the ground, dead.

The recreant nephew, instead of coming to the appointed meeting place, had started for home by a different route. His foolish act meant the death of many better men than he was, and failure of the expedition.

The sister-in-law of Napaskis had always been very fond of him. The question they asked each other was, "Why did he seem so restless and preoccupied? why did he rush off to fight the enemy?" They wondered if Napāskis had fallen in love with some white woman down East, had found his love to be hopeless? Woman-like, they allowed their imaginations to run riot.

In 1906 an uncle of mine Kakasoo (one who hides) took a journey to Fort McLeod and then on to the Blackfoot Reserve, with the purpose of trying to find out the Blackfoot version of the story regarding the battle.

What they told him was similar to what I have written above. The Blackfeet said that some papers were found on Napāskis, papers given him by the white man whom he accompanied to Montreal.

Pere La Comte, the Roman Catholic priest, was in the camp and he advised the Blackfeet not to desecrate or cut up his body. It was therefore buried and the papers with it.

My uncle would have liked to have stood silently for a short time, at least, beside the grave but the distance was too great from where he was. His nephew and others who accompanied him wanted to come back, and they overruled him.

This is the story of the youngest of my grandfather's ~~x~~ brothers; his life was full of interest but perhaps latterly full of sadness.

My father's mother ~~Kxxxx~~ KEES-KA-NA-KWAS (Short Sleeve)

grandmother
My grandmother Short Sleeve belonged to a large family in the Eagle Hills country south of Battleford. One of her brothers Ka mé ko sit Pe hāo (Red Pheasant) was chief, another brother Wuttunee (Tail feathers) was a man of much influence. A third brother seemed to have lived a very quiet unassuming life bringing up his small family as best he could.

first husband
Red Pheasant, the Chief, was a fine Indian. He was a good leader and did much for his people. There was nothing very brilliant about his life. No one bears his name, for the few children he may have had died without leaving any young ones to carry on.

Wuttunee ~~x~~ has left his stamp on the Reserve life. He seemed to have been a man of good character. He however had two wives, and many sons and daughters grew up to manhood and womanhood. These sons have mostly all been educated and they have been the backbone of their Reserve, as they are quite progressive.

I will now say a few words about my grandmother Short-Sleeve.

came to the short sleeve.
 Her sons and a daughter all lived at Sandy Lake where she ~~xxx~~ as a widow had raised them. When the Rebellion broke out in 1885 she was at Battleford visiting a daughter who was married there.

Worrying over her sons and daughter at Sandy Lake ~~xxxx~~ she left Poundmaker's Reserve and started out to Sandy Lake some 200 miles away. There was still snow on the ground and there was no road.

She determined to cut across the Thickwood Hills. She was soon out of food as she had expected to find some in the house her daughter had lived in. Some one had however broken in and taken everything of any value, including what food there was.

She travelled in the wilds through snow. A few miles a day was probably all she managed. She lived on the rabbits she managed to snare and she picked the dried-up rose bush berries she found. She mended her moccasins every day with pieces of one of her two blankets. A time came when she had to make moccasins out of the blanket. When she was near Sandy Lake even this played out on her. She ~~xxxxxx~~ arrived almost bare footed, the skin on the soles of her feet blistered and bleeding. She was lame for a while and had to crawl around. She was the grandmother who could not walk into the teepee but crawled in at the time of my birth. Had she not made that wonderful journey I would not be writing this today.

It was a great feat for a woman, travelling through a wilderness alone, through snow and water, crossing fair sized rivers. The country she traversed was a thickly wooded hill country. It took her over a month to make the journey. It was a terrible experience but she reached her children and grand children at a time she thought she should be with them.

*Ermine
and father*
KOSEKOSE WU YA NEW (Ermine Skin)

Ermine Skin was the name of my mother's father. He came from the Bear's Hills Country some distance South of Edmonton, Alta. His Indian name was given him because of his fair skin i.e. fair for an Indian.

He took part in many battles. Once during a fight on horseback he was chasing a Blackfoot. He had to load his gun while his horse was going full speed. This was a difficult feat but ~~he~~ could be done by Indians when chasing buffalo. To pull out the plug out of a powder horn and tip it into the mouth of the gun bore was the first step. ~~There~~ There was no time to use a wad. Putting a bullet in the mouth so that it was wet with saliva was the next step.. This was then dropped ~~into~~ into the gun. The dampness served to some extent as a wad but care had to be taken not to lower the barrel of the gun till the moment it was to be shot off, or the bullet might roll out and the gun be rendered harmless.

He was very close to the Blackfoot when he shot at him in the back. There was a big black smudgy ~~black~~ blot where the powder burnt but there was no bullet mark! He said he might have tipped the gun too far down by mistake. "I attempted things in battle," he said, "but misfortune always seemed to dog my steps."

Another time during a raid he took a great number of Blackfoot horses. His partners started to beg off him. In the end he alone had no horse to ride home on. This was in a sense another misfortune.

There was one time however when success smiled on him during a night raid on an enemy camp. It must be remembered that in such raids no mercy was shown.

X
He slashed the wall of a teepee with his knife and jumped in. Inside were an old man and his wife. A young girl, probably their grandchild, sat scratching her head in bewilderment and only half awake. Here was a chance to snatch scalps even though they were covered with gray hair!

My ~~grand~~ grandfather was in a dilemma. His duty, as he knew it, was plain, yet he felt sorry for the three poor people. The old man and his wife stretched their arms to him pleading with him. Humanity in him prevailed. He led them out of the camp, pretending they were his captives. He took them to what looked ~~ix~~ in the dark as a safe hiding place and left them there. What they looked like he, of course, never knew.

When he returned to the camp, he found several young women in the teepee that had been vacated by the old couple. Some one may have seen what he did, because these gave themselves up to him rather eagerly.

He herded them to the rendezvous, previously arranged. Young men in the party who were unmarried took one each. In those days quite often all that was necessary to marry people was that they should declare their intentions. These particular marriages were consummated in this way. The unions ~~xx~~ seemed to have turned out well - Only a few years ago a wife of an Indian chief died; she had been a child born from one of these couples. Her son is chief of another Reserve at the present time.

Capturing a group of women during battle can hardly be classed as a deed of valor, yet it gave my grandfather full authority to go through a camp and pick out all the women who, in his opinion, should accompany the men who were to haul timber for a sun dance ~~ix~~ lodge, when preparations were being made to hold that

great pagan festival. No women, single or otherwise, could disobey him.

However the most noteworthy thing about Ermine Skin was his great ability to entice buffalo into the pounds made by his father-in-law Skunk-skin or by some other man.

When a pound is completed and a herd of buffalo located, there was still the very difficult task of bringing them in, wild as they were. This needed swiftness of foot and great stratagem. Few men were able to do this work. My grandfather was the one who was always asked to do this. Fortunately he was the swiftest man in the plains and he understood his work.

This is not the place to go into detail as to the procedure followed, but he who was able to bring buffalo to a place where they could be killed, was given a standing in the band second only to the man who had the ability and the right to build one.

I can therefore be said that Ermine-skin filled a great need in the life of the Indians on the prairies. In later years he was baptized by the English Church missionary. When he and my grandfather were old, they felt that it was their duty to go through the form of Matrimony according to the Christian way. Secretly they went to the clergyman. Since their former marriage was legal, he married them without the usual initial formalities.

The reason for the secrecy was, to avoid the feasting and dancing which are always the aftermath of Indian marriages. The Chief, Basil Starblanket, a son-in-law, later said that had it been known, a feast which would have over shadowed any other previously held on the Reserve, would have taken place.

and mother
No tō kwā wi ku mik (Old Woman's Lodge)

His wife, my grandmother, was named Notōkwā wikumik (Old Woman's Lodge). It was not a pretty name she had, but the significance of it was, that she would live long enough to inhabit a teepee which would not be her children's but her own; the inference being, that the said children would have moved to their own home while she was alive.

my grandfather
 I will, at this point, give a sketch of her father's life. He was a Stoney Indian, partly, at least. He went by the name of Sekakwu yan (Skunk Skin). This is not a very romantic name, wither, and I am afraid I cannot give a satisfactory reason to show any extenuating circumstance which would justify the choice made by the person who so named him. I am also thankful that he was on my mother's side of the family and I do not have to use his name for my sur-name.

He is said to have had a good sized beard. Besides this distinguishing feature, for few Indians could ever grow beards, he committed murder twice. The first one took place at York Factory, Hudson's Bay; the other one in the plains somewhere. I will not go into details here, but I will say that ^{these} ~~these~~ were both partly justifiable as things were looked at in those days.

Once in a while I hear my mother speak of her grandfather's deeds. She is greatly concerned as to the ultimate fate of his soul. My father would tell her not to worry as there was little she could do to influence ~~the~~ a judgment which perhaps has already been, more or less, pronounced. As an afterthought one time he murmured that he did not suppose it mattered much anyhow. My mother had sharp ears and she was very angry.

and in the
 Skunkskin was a great medicine man. Before he died he taught my grandmother all he knew about the medicinal qualities of herbs, roots, etc. She carried on most capably, for she was gifted with courage and a strong will, both qualities very necessary to healers, specially in those days.

I well remember the busy life she led, going around on foot to see her patients. She, of course, was paid for her work, in kind, seldom with money.

I loved to go out in long walks with her when I was a boy, watching her digging up roots and gathering herbs. Later on she would dry these up and then tie them up in rags or pieces of paper. She never labelled them, she could recognize them just by looking at them. If this failed or she was in doubt, she would smell them or taste them.

Her brothers

I will mention one brother Osawu sis kewa ^{ks}koop (Yellow Mud-blanket) only briefly. He himself was not outstanding in any way but some of his descendants have been fairly prominent in Indian life. A grandson, by name of John Tootoosis is Saskatchewan president of an Indian organization which is recognized by the government of Canada. He has devoted his life to trying in his way to better the lot of the Indians in the West. He is often mentioned as a grandson of Poundmaker, his grandfather's brother.

Poundmaker (Pé to kwa^u ha na pe we yin)

at home
Poundmaker (Pě to kwu ha na pe we yin)

He was my grandmother's younger brother. His name is known to all Canadian school children because of the part he took in the Rebellion of '85. He was the leader of the Rebel Indians in the Battleford district. His lieutenant, Kameyo ké se kwāo (Fine Day), was in charge on the battlefield; and ably did he do his work that day. He was a man of gigantic stature, well versed in Indian warfare and having qualities which made him acceptable as a leader.

Forty miles West of the town of Battleford is the Cutknife Creek. It flows South to join the Battle River which in turn flows into the Saskatchewan a few miles East of the town of Battleford. West of the Creek there is a rise from the flat below to a height of land, perhaps 500 feet above the creek. The top of the hill is actually the natural level of the country which is prairie from there on to the South and South West.

A couple of hundred yards West of the shoulder of the hill was a large Indian camp. The Indians, expecting no immediate trouble, were all asleep.

A young man had ridden out to the West to see if there were any buffalo around. His quest being unsuccessful on account of fog he returned sooner than he would have, had it been clearer.

As he was about to hobble his horse he saw the soldiers appear over the hill. He gave the alarm. A small cannon boomed a few minutes later. It was supposed to be a salute, the shot passing over the tents and killing a horse which was grazing some distance away.

The women and children fled! The men hurriedly armed and arranged themselves so as to take full advantage of the

topography of the country.

All day the battle went on. A few were killed and wounded on both sides. A soldier who had the courage or hardihood to show himself fully, was shot down. Two students from Toronto University who had enlisted in the Queen's Own, rushed over to drag the wounded man to a safer place. One of the students was shot through the back. He was George Exton Lloyd, later Bishop of Saskatchewan; his friend was Acheson, later Assistant bishop of an American Diocese, which is somewhere in one of the Eastern States, I believe. Bishop Acheson sent me a subscription some years ago when I was building a church not far from the Cut Knife Creek battle ground. A son of his, I am told, held a very important position in the Government of the United States a short time ago.

Some twenty three years ago when Bishop Lloyd came to consecrate the church just referred to, he there met Chief Alexander Poundmaker, the son of the Poundmaker of the Rebellion days. It was interesting to see the two men shake hands and exchange words after the Service. Chief Poundmaker was then acting as Church Warden of the parish.

To go back to the first chief of that name, he ~~was~~ somehow or other came to be known to Chief Crowfoot of the Blackfoot nation. The liking was mutual and it was not long before the chief took him as an adopted son. To me this seems very strange knowing as I do the hatred that must have been between the Crees and their enemies, the Blackfeet.

Because of this relationship I am told that the Blackfeet almost came to Saskatchewan to help the Crees against the soldiers. It was only because they found that they were too late

to do any good that they gave up the journey. How true this is, I am not able to say.

The Battle of Cutknife Creek ended just before dark when the soldiers retreated leaving their dead on the battlefield. They travelled all night over a flat country covered with small sandy hills; no country more ideal for ambush.

Archdeacon J. A. MacKay, a man who knew the Indians well and who became government Indian Agent for a few years during the days subsequent to the Rebellion said, "Had Poundmaker allowed his Indians to follow the soldiers that night very few of the latter would have been alive in the morning."

Poundmaker strained the loyalty of his men to him, almost to breaking point, when he refused to allow them to follow the soldiers, once they had passed the Eastern boundary of his reserve. Such an act speaks highly for an Indian who was one of a people considered to be savages in those days. It was not for fear that some of his men would be killed, for it is very probable that none of them would have been seen in the dark and hidden behind little knolls as they would have been.

A few years after the Rebellion Poundmaker travelled West to see his foster-father the Blackfoot Chief. While there he had a haemorrhage. In spite of all the the Medicine men could do for him, he died and was buried there somewhere.

MISTAWASIS

2-just well
I promised to mention Chief Mistawasis (Big Child) one of the two Head Chiefs referred to in connection with the Treaty of 1876. Our relationship to him is rather remote but at least he shared the blood of one of our ancestors. He was the brother of Skunkskin's wife, my great grandmother. He was the youngest

of the family to which he belonged, his sister was the oldest.

I can just remember this great chief. He was not a big man physically, but he was in every other way. He had a strong deep voice. In peace as in war he excelled the others of his band. He was respected by Indians and whites.

A daughter married an Orkney Islander by name of Drever. This man was by religion a Presbyterian. It was through his influence on the Chief that a minister of that denomination established a mission on his Reserve at Snake Plain.

Mistawasis' daughter, a younger one, married Starblanket's son, Crooked Finger (Pé ki che chee). He was the man who did not come to the appointed meeting place when Napaskis and his men were at length massacred. He lived an uneventful life for many years. A younger brother Kameywas totin (Fine Hat) succeeded their father as chief.

I have now finished what I set out to do. I may have erred in bringing in personages who are not closely enough related as white men see it, but as Indians see it all those mentioned are close relations for with them, the family is somewhat similar to the idea of a clan.

In order to aid any who may desire to know the approximate pronunciation of the Indian names the syllable to be accented is ~~thus~~ thus, Mí's ta-wa-sis.

The letter u is always pronounced as u in "but,"

and never as in "mute."

a is pronounced as in "ate"

a as in "mat"

There is an aspirate which is not easily pronounced by white men. I have spelled Starblanket's name thus A tah ka koóp - the proper way to put this down in writing is A tá ka koóp, the two little hooks denote the aspirate. By the way, the accent in his name is on the second syllable. I have not written it as it will have to appear beside the other sign, which would be confusing.

~~A tá ka koóp~~
~~A tá ka koóp~~

A tá ka koóp - Starblanket

Sa sú kwu moos - Adherer

A hén akew

Napāskis - manlike (indicated)

~~Muchō~~
~~Muchō~~

Muchō hoo - Bad owl

Mis taw asis - Big Child

Kó sé ko se wu yā new - Ermine skin accent on 2 syllables

Sek á kwuyán - Skunk skin, accent on 2 syllables

Keéska na kwás - Short sleeve

Nó to kwā wikumí^k - Ol woman lodge

Kamey wústo tin - Fine hat

Peke che chée - Crooked Finger

E. Ahenakew

April 27th 1948