

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: MOOSE MOUNTAIN #1  
 INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: MOOSE MOUNTAIN AGENCY  
 SASKATCHEWAN  
 INTERVIEW LOCATION: MOOSE MOUNTAIN AGENCY  
 SASKATCHEWAN  
 TRIBE/NATION: CREE  
 LANGUAGE: ENGLISH  
 DATE OF INTERVIEW: JUNE 22, 1934  
 INTERVIEWER: DR. D.G. MANDELBAUM  
 INTERPRETER: FRED  
 JACK SHEEPSKIN  
 TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD  
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I spent this day at the Moose Mountain Agency near Carlyle,  
 Saskatchewan. On this reserve are the White Bear band of Cree  
 and the Striped Blanket and Prison Drum band of Assiniboine.  
 Mixed with the Cree are a good many Soto.

The White Bear Band was once included under the Birtle Agency,  
 which included a number of reserves in western Manitoba and  
 eastern Saskatchewan. Subsequently, a separate agency for this  
 band was set up and called Moose Mountain Agency. Later yet,  
 the two Assiniboine bands sold their reserve, deposited the  
 sale money in the common Moose Mt. Agency funds, and moved into  
 the Moose Mountain Reserve. At the present time, the reserve  
 is under the jurisdiction of Mr. Ostrander, agent at Crooked  
 Lake. There is a resident farm instructor, Mr. Morrison, at  
 Moose Mountain Agency.

I drove down with Mr. Ostrander, the Agent, Mr. Ball, the  
 clerk, and a Mounted Policeman. They were going down to pay  
 treaty at Moose Mountain.

Some incidental information I picked up on the ride down was to the effect that there is very little drinking among the Crooked Lake Indians. The agent said that when first he came eight years ago he used to try a liquor case almost every week. Now they run about one a year. Emphasized was the respect the Indians have for the Mounted Police Force. In writing this material up, I must give some space to the effect of the policemen as the proponents of justice in the governing of the native population. Also mentioned was a case of arrest. An Indian was convicted of cohabiting with his sister and was sent to prison for one year. I did not get any further information on the case.

When we arrived at the Agency we found Mr. Morrison, the inspector of Agencies for Saskatchewan, already there. There was a band meeting with about forty-five men present. Morrison told them of a court settlement that had been made concerning a lease of part of the reserve to the town of Carlyle for the purpose of making a summer resort. Evidently, they had made a bad bargain before and through litigation made the deal a little fairer to the Indians. The natives are to receive a certain annual sum (\$800.00 per year) and after four years, 10% of the summer resort rentals. Then Morrison went on to explain a pet project of his, that of building a golf course on the reserve, to be run entirely by the band and so to earn more money from the resorters. One Casimir Hardy violently opposed the idea, not on any rational grounds as it seemed to me. Casimir is the grandson of the original chief, White Bear, and

apparently is a "trouble maker." He does not wield a great deal of influence. He did try to stir up the Cree against the Assiniboine. The meeting ended with a vote being taken and most of the band was in favor of building the golf course, mostly because they were too apathetic to move over to the negative side to register their vote and because they hardly dared oppose the enthusiastic proponent of the idea, the general inspector.

Morrison has been in the Indian service for 41 years and speaks Assiniboine and Cree. He talked over old times with the older men in the band and appears to be a fine administrator.

On the whole, the band meeting was a tedious affair. Every speech had to be interpreted into the two languages, Cree and Assiniboine, and vice versa; every Cree speech had to be interpreted into English and Assiniboine.

The Indians on this reserve are an extremely poor lot and according to the Agent, "extremely backward." By this I take it he means that they are not good Christians and follow the pagan beliefs. The reservation at Moose Mountain is hilly and rocky and makes but poor farming land. There are a good many tipis on the reserve as there are at Crooked Lake, inhabited in the summer. The houses are the mud-plastered, log type, with a screen of rough, unplastered logs often built up around the doorway.

Casimir Hardy, the objector, is an interesting personality; at the end of the meeting he grew more vehement and Morrison told him, as a parting shot, that he was ready for Weyburn, the insane asylum. Few other of the Indians in the band would have had as much courage as he, but it may be a symptom of some psychotic state. Ostrander said that he sends letters to lawyers, complaining of his grievances and signs himself as Casimir Hardy, Chief. He is not chief at all, since the duly elected chief is an Assiniboine. However, he is one of the grandsons of old Chief White Bear and so may regard himself as the true chief although he has little or no backing.

As I write I wonder what all the palaver about the golf course must have meant to the older men present at the meeting, who have only a vague acquaintance with white culture in general, much less any understanding of the significance and function of a golf course and its place in the economic system.

Incidentally, Ostrander told an interesting tale on the way back. One of the old Agents at Moose Mountain broke into the "Community House" (a mud-plastered, windowless building) one winter and tried to stop a Fiddle Dance that was being held.

The Indians firmly sat him down near the door and held him there until the dance was over. They didn't hurt him but merely showed him that he hadn't as much power as he thought he had. The Agent was acting on Mr. Graham's say-so. Mr. Graham evidently was the general superintendant of the Indian Service for 40 years and was quite a tyrant both to the white employees and to the Indians.

I didn't get a chance to work until the late afternoon, after the meetings were over. A young Soto, Jack Sheepskin, did all of the interpreting except the few minutes I spoke with Eagle Voice, the oldest man on the reserve.

According to Morrison, there are about 300 people on the reserve, about 70% of whom are Cree. Ostrander said that the percentage was 50/50.

Informant: kikehgowe (Eagle Voice)

This is the oldest man in the band and is still able to get about. I spoke with him twice, once before the band meeting and afterwards at his house. He led me there to show me a poem that had been written about him by some sentimental woman with the noble-savage complex. He then asked for a dollar to make a noise like a bear and I couldn't get him to answer my questions. He did tell me previously that he was a member of the White Bear band, that the band was so-called from the chief at the time of the treaty making. (When I asked the old man about the chiefs previous to the treaty, several times the younger man interpolated that there had been no chiefs previously.) Eagle Voice answered when asked how old he was at the treaty making (1874). He replied after doing some mental arithmetic -- 43. He now claims to be 103 years old and

evidently wants to be consistent.

Before White Bear was chief, Ukimau was chief. As far as I could find out, this latter name means "Chief" or "Leader," and is regularly used as the word for chief. Before him there was a chief itawuskijik, "Double Eyes" or "Two Eyes," hence "Cross Eyes." This chief was half Assiniboine and half Cree. Note here that if this is so there was a Cree chief with Assiniboine blood in him in the early part of the nineteenth century.

Eagle Voice said that the chieftainship was hereditary but I doubt whether he understood my question fully. When I later questioned the two sons of White Bear they said that Ukimau and Double Eyes were related but they did not know to what degree. Eagle Voice said that he was born south of Turtle Mountain. They frequently used to hunt in the Rockies. There was danger of running into the Blackfeet but they took the chance. None of the informants at Moose Mountain could give me any reply as

to the aboriginal round of travel, saying that wherever they turned their faces, there they went.

As far as he could recall the Cree and Assiniboine had been allies, especially with the Prison Drum and Striped Blanket bands with whom they now live. I am a little dubious as to the last statement, it may be that I so construed his words as to the particular band of Assiniboine allies.

The Chippewas who lived north of Winnipeg were our ancestors, Cree and Assiniboine both.

Informants: potcapis (Old Man - Soto word)  
patwewisuz (Thunder Roar)

There are two sons of White Bear, the chief of the band at the time of treaty making. White Bear's father was Ukimau, the preceding chief of the band. Another Cree chief they remembered was kakiciwat, "Big Voice," who was older than White Bear. I did not definitely ascertain whether Big Voice was chief of this same band. They said the four generations of White Bear's family had been chiefs. They evidently did not include their generation in the reckoning, although I am not certain as to who was chief after White Bear. White Bear had two wives.

They said that Ukimau had received his fiat to the chieftainship in the United States. From the way the interpreter put it, it sounded as though the only stamp of authority to band leadership was attained only through government recognition.

They said that before the reservation days, the band had roamed about the Maple Creek district (Cypress Hills). They never went into the Rockies nor came in conflict with the Blackfeet. The discrepancy between these statements and those of Eagle Voice may possibly be due to the difference in their ages, although I should want to check up on this. They, too, could not give me

any place names except Maple Creek for their old habitat. They said that they did not remember raiding for horses, but one showed me a twisted arm that he had acquired in a buffalo hunt.

As to the Assiniboine relationship, they said that they always were friendly with the Assiniboine but did not associate with any single band. In the summer, on occasion, they would all camp together, Crees on one side, Assiniboines on the other, and Sotos on another side. The only Assiniboine band name they remembered was piecuanixt auwigit, "Thunder Grow." An old Assiniboine who was sitting around volunteered the following information.

Informant: matosabah (Black Bear)

His father was Assiniboine, his mother Soto. His chief was Ocean Man. Another band of Assiniboine was Prairie Chicken Rump. These latter bands are originally listed with White Bear band under the Birtle Agency, but the present neighbors of the White Bear band of Cree, the Striped Blanket and Prison Drum bands, are not the same ones. I asked him if he knew of a Rocky Boy band of Assiniboine and he replied that he often went into their territory in his boyhood. It was near a creek called in Cree apicicibic, and near a Hudson's Bay post called camakiwackahigun, Flat House.

Informant: maxkwa hapit (Sitting Bear)

This is Jack's father who says he is 87 years old. His father was a mixed Assiniboine and Soto, his mother was a Cree. At the time of the Riel Rebellion he went to the States to avoid trouble. There he lived with his father, Standing Ready, wewutci kapu. This was in the vicinity of Turtle Mountain and the chief of the band there was egec, Little Clams. That band still lives in the United States. Sitting Bear gave his band affiliation as that of Ukimau. Sitting Bear described stone boiling in a hide. He said that though bow looms were not now used for beadwork, they formerly were utilized for quillwork. Some Cree terms are:

Assiniboine - Pwasimuk  
Soto - Naxkaweniuk  
Blackfeet - Kackite waya cituk  
Indians in general - Ayisiniwuk (not Cree only)

At this juncture I am puzzled by the relationship between the Cree and Soto. Several times at Moose Mountain I asked just what the difference between the Cree and Soto was and always got the same reply, that the sole distinction was in the pronunciation of words. This dialectical distinction is evidently well marked since Jack Sheepskin called upon some Cree who were sitting around to pronounce names and terms for me since he could not give me the exact Cree tongue. But he interpreted Cree with a ready enough facility.

Just why Jack Sheepskin reckons himself a Soto and speaks Soto

is not clear to me although I specifically questioned him on this point. Sitting Bear said that before the treaty there was Soto mixed in with White Bear's band. Thus Sitting Bear is half Cree and half Assiniboine and Soto. Jack's mother, Sitting Bear's wife, is Cree, and so Jack is at least three-fourths Cree and yet speaks Soto and calls himself Soto.