Informant - epwatcis - "Little Sioux"

This is the oldest man on the Pa-ipwat [Piapot] reserve. He is about 80, but since he has no grey hair and black braids (false?) he looks about 50. It seems that full-blooded Indians turn grey only at a very old age while those with white blood turn grey much earlier. He, as was the previous informant, wore earrings made of a round of brass wire, wore a hat with a beaded band, roundlet, and feather. Shirt, neckerchief, and trousers (seamed by an outside cloth strip) completed his costume.

The father of Little Sioux was a Cree ukimau who was Pa-ipwat's uncle and adopted Pa-ipwat. His name was Wapemiuahkatapiska-wat, "White Bead around his Neck." He was also called Nehiawipwatuk, "Cree Sioux." He first lived at the (?) called
Nutimixk, "The Rivers" (Battleford), and hunted northward to the bush. Then he moved south to Cypress Hills. His father was an ogihtcitau ukimau also of the Nutimiyiuiwuk called Cako (no meaning).

This informant too could make no sense of my repeated enquiries as to the old name of the Pa-ipwat band. As far as I could tell they are a conglomeration of the Cree who are now at Crooked Lake, File Hills, Touchwood, and Battleford, with a liberal sprinkling of old "Cree Assiniboine" and straight Assiniboine.

This old fellow emphasized two points. One, in the old days there were no chiefs as we now know them. There were only ogihtcitau ukimau and Pas-gua ukimau who were simply chief warriors. Secondly, there really was no fixed band affiliation for any family or man. A man might come to the Sundance assemblage in the band of one ukimau and leave to go off with a totally different band under another ukimau. Or a man might visit his relatives in another part of the region, marry there, and become one of that region's people. Years later, he might take a notion to go back to his old range and so come under another ukimau. It seems that it was the ability and prestige of the ukimau that held any band together. Of course, each ukimau, I think, had a certain limited range, though I am very uncertain even of this.

This loose third type of band organization may be the only valid explanation for a lot of things. It may serve to elucidate the ease with which the Cree assimilated and became assimilated by and with other tribes. Again this loose organization may turn out to be a direct heritage of their forest life. Just what the historical advantages and disadvantages of such a system were, I must later work out.