

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: CHIEF ONE GUN
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: BLACKFOOT RESERVE
ALBERTA
INTERVIEW LOCATION: BLACKFOOT RESERVE
ALBERTA
TRIBE/NATION: BLACKFOOT
LANGUAGE: BLACKFOOT/ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: FEBRUARY 21, 1983
INTERVIEWER: WELSH/SNOWSILL
INTERPRETER: ADAM SOLWAY
TRANSCRIBER:
SOURCE: ADAM SOLWAY
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IH-013, Side a
DISK: TRANSCRIPT 5
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RESTRICTIONS: NONE

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Chief One Gun tells his father's recollections of the signing of an unspecified treaty.
- Brave Dog Society prayer meeting.

Adam: I got here with me Mr. One Gun. He is gonna tell about the original signing of the treaty. Prior to the treaty that everybody was in question what the treaty really meant. We will listen to the old man as he relates to us of today. One Gun says, quote:

I am gonna tell you the history of Chief Crowfoot, at the time of signing the treaty, as I know it, through my dad's interpretation. My dad wasn't the chief at the time. He was just an observer. That is how I understood my dad at the signing of the treaty and what Chief Crowfoot said at that time. He says I have already chosen your political voice, chiefs and all the people were listening what was said and all the interpreters who were there. The fellow who was the interpreter, Chief Bird, these were some of the interpreters that I mention. All these major things that Crowfoot commented and agreed upon.

The chief that was sitting there was Chief Going to Calf. The Commissioner told Crowfoot, "You are going

to be treated good, you are going to be treated right. We are going to try and put a stop to internal killings and killing the whites, and vice versa." The Commissioner had an Indian name. His name was Buffalo Head. The Commissioner knows all these guys, that is the Commissioner I am talking about. That is what my dad told me and he said, "I waited long enough for you fellas. A lot of chiefs have been killed in wars. You took your time coming here to this important event. What are your intentions? There won't be no white men around.

The reason why I can't speak out because I want to have a little time to think about what I am going to say, what is true. Because this is an important meeting and I am short-winded."

Here is one of the promises that came out:

1. One fella per capita, twelve dollars annuity payments. As long as the sun shines and the river flows.

That is the agreement, the promise the Commissioner made.

Annuity would be paid every year as per agreement above mentioned. Crowfoot got up and said, quote:

"You look after us. I am going to have my people in council."

A fellow chief by the name of Calf Chief, that was a very close friend of Chief Crowfoot. I don't deny any stories that have been told by my father. I don't want to be saying things that I just hear on and off and it changes off the next minute. A lie becomes a small one and as it travels, it becomes a big lie. I want to say the truth, what I heard from my dad. A comment he made, let us respect each other, let's try our best to keep peace within our tribes, within the white society. Respect the agreements. Number one, we will have to get rid of our bootleggers, [Dumbo] was one place locations, Calgary, Fort Calgary, and Morleyville, Okotokes. These locations are the bootlegger stores. That is where the Indian get their supply of whiskey.

The police came in, protected us, they were shooting at these kegs of whiskey that was stored inside liquor stores. That is how they drained it. They started with the bootleggers because they were bringing bad water to the people and we were killing each other, not respecting each other by drinking the bad water. All these chiefs that have been elected or voted on or appointed, they were promised ammunition. Each respective chief, respective bands would utilize one 30-30 rifle and this would be given

to each chief so that he could pass it on to each other to go hunting. If they didn't need the ammunition any longer, they would continue giving out rations. I go for my rations to Fort MacLeod. From there they went south. They were following the buffalo herds and then they went to Yellowstone to sign another treaty. I can't elaborate what happened on that particular treaty at Yellowstone but I will get back to the Blackfoot Reserve. Then we went for rations. They got rations, blankets, food, tea. There was a lot of cattle being killed to be rationed out.

Excuse me as I am short-winded. All the chiefs at the time, I used to know them by name but I am very short... absent minded and I forgot their names, individual names. There are only a few that I know of at the time of the signing of the treaty. There were some Bloods, Peigans, Sarcees, Morley, and the Blackfeet. This formed the Blackfoot Confederacy. Also, I would like to say that the chief was the key man of the Blackfoot Confederacy. Chief Crowfoot sang an honorary song which I will sing later. When the treaty is signed and Crowfoot then will sign and proceed with other tribe representatives to sign the treaty. My dad is the one that is telling me these stories. It is not me that is telling them, I am just interpreting them. Relating to you what happened in the treaty. I was just a little boy, accompanied my father, and I was only four feet from the Commissioner and my dad was kind of hanging on to me.

Adam: Excuse me, I got some mice running down my throat.

Tony: Do you want some water?

Adam: No, I got some tea here. Well, we got so far that way. That's going pretty good.

Tony: No kidding.

Adam: It is just about word to word on that.

Tony: We'll put another seat in our van and we'll take you around with us.

(Laughter)

Adam: What I heard, you know, when I was playing it there before supper and what I am hearing the same recording, I just about know it by heart. So I am not too far out in interpreting that.

Tony: No, that is good.

Adam: It is pretty hard sometimes you know. He pronounces his

words and he is using two languages, mind you. That is the old language and I have a hard time to try and interpret that. These agreements, he says that different and I got to try and find

the proper word to put that in there. Maybe I did, maybe I didn't.

Tony: It sounds all right.

Adam: Oh yeah. So, I just have to try and do my best for you guys.

Tony: You are doing great.

Adam: Because I don't think there is anybody on the reserve here that is going to interpret that. Because a lot of them, they are using 50/50 language all the way. They use me as an interpreter all the time. Irregardless where I go, even Cardston uses me as an interpreter. And so does Peigans. I don't want to use that as a practice but it is a hard thing to interpret. And the finger is pointed on you maybe 20, 30 years down the line, "Oh, you said that. You interpreted that." So I want to get away from that. But this here, the old man, it is pretty hard to get somebody that will interpret exactly what he means with them big words. Just like in English, well, I might interpret that big word and interpret it wrong. It might mean two, three other things and you got to use that word directly to what he mentioned. So, so far we are doing all right.

What we should have done, and I am sorry, we should have started that after you introduced that, I should have played that honorary song, Crowfoot song on there.

Tony: From the machine?

Adam: Yeah.

Tony: Well, you can put it on the end.

Adam: Yeah. Well, he sang that anyways. He sang that.

Tony: We can probably get it, get him singing it, okay, and get it transferred from the tape. We will get it on better equipment than this and we will get it onto this tape at the end.

Adam: Take it off the machine.

Tony: In Regina, we will do it professionally. So off this tape we will get a better quality than if we were going from here, from this one to this one.

Adam: Yeah. No, the one with the drum, the little small drum, I got that record. The old original honorary song.

Tony: Oh, you have have you?

Adam: Yeah. That is the one Crowfoot was supposed to sing when he makes a speech and that is a sign of respect, of honoring. Just like you honor your Bachelor Degree or something and they got a little song or something that will start you guys going. And maybe "God Save The Queen," eh. When the Queen appears to you, "God Save the Queen." Well, that is the chief's song there. But, however, I don't know. We make mistakes and we should do them properly. If I'd thought about it, I could have mentioned that before, after you introduced me.

Tony: But you could still put it on the end, eh? On the end of this tape?

Adam: Oh yeah. Sure.

Tony: Or do you think it should go on at the top? It should really go at the head, the beginning?

Adam: Yeah. An introductory song. Because the chief is going to speak, eh. And the treaty agreement, so if you could fix that up?

Tony: I can, I can fix that up.

Adam: Right after your introductory, then...

Tony: Put that on? Okay, I can do that.

Adam: And then he is singing his other song, his chief song at the end, anyways, so he finished his story. Right?

Tony: Right. I got it.

Adam: Okay.

Adam: Now...

In those days, pay day was on, twelve dollars per my individual member, Blackfoot, Peigans, Sarcees, Stoney, everybody had twelve dollars.

They made personal camp visits, made sure everybody was paid, Blackfoot encampment. This is the first payment of twelve dollars, from there on here and after, five dollars every year. This is the first payment of twelve dollars per capita. Blackfoot, Peigans, Sarcees, Stoney, and all the promises the Commissioner made in agreements. This never came through. The chiefs were waiting for action and sent for the Commissioner to come and meet them again, to come through with his promises. Only a few feet away, I was standing again where the Commissioner was with my dad, and there was a policeman mounted on a

grey horse or a white horse and he had a sword. And instead of staying behind the chiefs, I was in front of them, trying to look what was going on. There was the Commissioner standing, I was looking at him. He had some hair on his face. That is how much I know about the treaty. I was just a little fellow, just accompanying my dad and there was somebody from the crowd says, "What the Commissioner wants was he wants to see these leaders." And that is where I seen the Commissioner, he started to have stooped shoulders. He must be up in age. He was just feeling his face, worried because he was going to be questioned of his promises that he made with the tribes which never came. And the council, and the chiefs asked him, "What become of your treaty agreements?" He kept on feeling his face, rubbing his face, thinking of what he is going to answer. He said, "We mean that we are trying to gyp you out. That is the reason why you signed the treaty and the agreement didn't come through." And my dad says this is the exact words that the Commissioner said. "We wanted to gyp you out of your lands. In order to get your lands we had to make you surrender and live in peace with each other. Also, Her Majesty's subjects live in harmony." I think I will end what I am saying here.

Adam: Now, what's the next one, that's me now. I am gonna talk I think.

Tony: Is that just singing?

Adam: Yeah, after this you see...

Tony: What are you saying here? Are you speaking on this tape?

Adam: I am just talking about One Gun here, what he has just ended, eh. It is still on there.

Now you have heard old One Gun, the old elder, he is one of our old leaders. He is ninety-some odd years. What he knew about the treaty signing, what was told by his dad. Now he is going to talk to us again. He will talk something different.

Now I am going to sing to my son-in-law. There are some of my songs that I am going to leave with my son-in-law and my granddaughter. This is what I know and these are some of the songs that was sung.

Oh, he is singing.

Tony: Could you say this part again.

Adam: I am introducing Mrs. One Gun. She is 78 years old as she has passed on to us the songs. Some of our elders that will remember One Gun and his wife. That is the reason why he agreed to tape some of the songs that he is going to leave with us. He says, "May we have a good year with our elders, to see

them more often and to reach the ripe old age of 100 years. So that we could eat the wild berries from the trees and see the great plains covered with green grass. This is the prayer that old One Gun and his wife have wished upon all the younger generations and the generations to come. Amen." That's it. This is the last wish he had.

This is the song that Mrs. One Gun used to sing when he was doctoring his patients and this is the song that always been respected on her behalf. They were medicine that was given to her, specializing on things that he was doctoring and these are the songs that she used to sing during that doctoring ceremony.

Tony: This is now Adam Solway explaining what is on the tape of the Brave Dog meeting.

Adam: As you could see, the Indian culture, the Bird Dogs, they are very proud people. They were the people that used to be honored for their bravery. This has been passed on as far as the society is concerned, to other people that bought others' rattles or bells, or horseback performances in the society. And these were the only recognized people that have something individually. They used to buy these people, if there is money accepted or materials that was acceptable, horses, rifles, anything, in order to pay for this rattle or bell or individual ownership of these rattles. So, when that's performed, we used to buy out these elders, the former owners, and tease them because they don't own anything anymore, they are broke. And whatever they had, a lot of us, we go for these dances and we dress up our wives, they look pretty sharp, they are good dancers, good singers, they are good company for us. But then the former owner gets back at us and tells us anything, teases us that we don't bring our wives over, we don't let them wear any rings or bracelets or earrings or no new clothes. Don't bring them to dances, we were very jealous hearted people. So a lot of these things, and you will see later on, what I am going to interpret one of our elders by the name of Ben Calfrope, he is teasing us right now. We are having a meeting, a Brave Dog meeting, and he is in our midst, and he is teasing us about it. That is what I have explained. He is the former owner of one of the rattles. That is why he is teasing us. He thinks that he is the only one that brings his wife to dances and earrings and bracelets and rings and new moccasins. He thinks his wife was the only one that was dressed up but he never did dress her up. He got divorced at the end. I could still say this.

I am going to tell you something. I respect the Brave Dog's meeting and they are trying to imitate half-drunk society. This is all the half-drunk society, they all got old women for wives and so is the present Brave Dog Society. The Brave Dog Society's wives now, if we asked them to go to a dance, they'd say I got a twisted knee or a sore knee and they never bring them out there because they are scared of getting beaten up. And most of these Brave Dogs' wives, all my relations, nice girls, pretty

girls, and their husbands never bring them to dances. They don't even dress them up. They never wear anything shiny to be attractive. The only thing they respected is to bring them to the bars, get drunk.

That is the reason why I am telling you this because it is true. I have seen it and I enjoy being with them tonight. I am going to sing you a song in respect to the Brave Dogs. I am going to sing my song.

He is singing now.

Some of the former owners of the Brave Dog Society, some of our elders. Don't pay no attention to Ben Calfrope, he just wants some company, for some girls to go with him to the tavern because he knows darn well nobody wants him. That is the reason why he is trying to get somebody to accompany him to the tavern so that he can have company while he is in there. And these fellas are helping us in our meeting by singing their songs and helping us out, solve the meeting. And here is another one, Francis Black, he is going to say a prayer for us. I love my friends, it is nice to be here with you. Here we are gathered together, trying to have a meeting going in regards to our dance this coming summer. The Brave Dog Society was well known to have the organization enlighten our Sundances and their individual dances. The Great Spirit gave these organizations, and us people, our religion in which we have to follow in respect to the Great Spirit and what we have in these various organizations, Old Women Society, and the Holy Woman.

Dear Lord, Great Spirit, listen to us today. I am enjoying myself with my brothers. Let them stay with the organization as long as they can. Listen to me dear Lord, Great Spirit, all those that passed on, left this organization with us to follow, help me dear Spirit. All those that is present, help our council, chiefs, let them have results on whatever they are dealing with. All the women, children, men that are in here, help us Great Spirit to see the new leaves, the life of the earth, the grass, the birds, the berries. Help us Great Spirit, give us a long life to reach a hundred years. Now we are getting to be pushed into a white society, that we are very concerned about our Indian way of life and our culture. Help us Holy Spirit, help Adam Solway as a chief to do his best for his people. I pray to you

Great Spirit, so that we may live to be an old man.

Francis Black here, he is right when he says that we should retain our Indian culture and our ways of life. Various organizations, Horn Societies, Old

Women Society, Brave Dog Society, Prairie Chicken Societies, Sweat Lodges, let us retain all these. So let us down to the singing again.

So the Brave Dogs are singing.

There is George Crowchief, former Brave Dog organizer. In the past, years ago, at that time I wasn't a member. They took me as an interpreter, announcer, master of ceremonies for them. I worked for them on their grounds. I was just announcing what they were intending to do and now I was initiated to the society because I felt good that I have joined them and now I have control of getting meetings going for them and I'm going to try and continue and keep the culture of the Brave Dogs. Maybe the future generation, maybe they might encourage the younger generations to carry on.

They are singing now.

These two, three elders that we have here in our organization, these are the sports-minded partners, Joe Bao and his wife, Anthony PrettyYoungMan and his wife, they are going to sing for you some of the old songs. These are sports-minded fellas so listen to them carefully. They are going to sing for us now. And they old time dance.

My friends, I want to help you out by singing a song. I have been all over various dances. I went across the ocean to Australia and I went over there and performed dancing. These are some of the things that I have done. I went by boat to Australia and I came back by air and I went across the country by land. I have been into four different countries and I have been dancing, performing in these foreign countries so I am going to sing a song of happiness to help the society out.

All right, they are singing now.

Here is my brother-in-law that wanted to speak to you. Here he is. He wants to say a few words. He is a Brave Dog member, George ManyShots. He is going to express his feelings by a prayer, praying for everybody, women and children, old people. All right George, take her away.

Today is a Sunday night tonight. You can go to church, the churches are wide open today all over the world and we all pray to the Great Spirit, Lord Almighty, that we are all praying for the Blackfeet, Bloods, Sarcees, Stoney, Crees, all Indians. I always prayed that the constitution, the Indian Policy, that will succeed by an agreement in favor of us. Great Spirit, I am calling on you on behalf

of my people. Let them do away with their drinking habits and I am one of the victims of drinking. It's nothing to be proud of.

(End of tape)

(Tape IH-013, Side A)

Tony: Continuation of Adam Solway translating what is on the Brave Dog Meeting Tape.

Adam: What is it?

Wherever I go, I pray. Walking, working, the Great Spirit is up there with me. I pray for all the Blackfeet, all Indians, various tribes. Let us try to have the Great Spirit make us think the same, to support our members. This coming summer that we can listen to the birds again come back from migration. The prettiest things that grow on the face of the earth. If we are drinking, we don't even know what is going on, we are in the dark. So help us Great Spirit, that the Sunday is not over yet, it is not twelve o'clock yet, we are still praying because this is the Lord's Day. I do my best and pray for our reserve, that it is administered properly. I feel pretty sorry when there is something wrong. My friends, my brothers, the younger generation, children, women, I pray for all of them so that we may enjoy ourselves as an organization, these

societies. And tonight I am completing my prayers by ending my prayer. I hope the best of this meeting. It is too bad that some people can't be more deeply involved in their religion, go to church or join other organizations. When we are drinking, we feel happy. Maybe a few hours time, you are strong. Next the liquor brings fighting face to face with our brothers, our parents. My dad left me, died at he age of 98 years old. He was born at the time of the treaty and they nicknamed him as a re-registry child because different women would go and get their annuity pay and say, "This is my boy." When she gets that money, pass it on to another women, and they go in and get another pay. That is why they called him re-registry. So, I pray that our chief, Adam Solway and his wife, to show his leadership. I got nothing against his leadership and he is a good competitor. I sure appreciate what he is trying to do for his people. I pray for him. We will never give up hope, assistance from him and I am going to end my prayers praying for all those who are here present. I don't make a fool of any religion. The only time I pray is when I want prayers for my people, my family. The Great Spirit is with us all the time. All the denominations that come in, let us support our church. There are some that are here with us, the

former graduates from this school, and I think a lot about them. When I was in school, my old man spoiled me, I was supposed to be sent to Regina, Saskatchewan for education and I turned it down. So in 1925 I was discharged from school. If I had gone to Regina, I could have been in government today, if I had the education. Now it is hard for me and it is hard for the people and I feel that I should be praying for the better livelihood of my fellow members. Be friendly and be forgiving to each and one another. Likewise with women and children. I am going to sing in my prayer and speech with a song. That is the reason why I used to entertain dances by singing, drumming for the dances and I am going to sing one of them songs that I used to sing. It was my favorite song and I am going to sing once and that is it. I can't sing but I can sing without a drum. It is no use having a drum if a fellow can sing without it.

He is singing now.

I have a cold here, that is why I can't sing real good. This is the only song that I am going to sing. Some other time I will sing for you fellows. That's all.

I am praying because the chief is here with us, Adam Solway, and I am supporting my organizations in which I am a member of. So this is my contribution towards my organization as a fellow member. I can't sing tonight because of the cold I got and when I sing these songs of the organization, the Brave Dog Society, I am heart-broke because a lot of our members, they are gone and some present here. But to those that are deceased, I sure feel lonely. The former Brave Dog Society, they can tell us anything that they want. Some of them, they beat it up west. Some of them they haven't got no wives, there is a lot of widows around and they can't even get a woman. They shouldn't be teasing us. Ben Calfrope is one of them. What is the matter with him? Ben Calfrope, now he is relieved of his laundry and his baking bread all the time for himself and his wife. His wife is just sleeping all the time and he is the cook for his wife. Good night, thank you.

Dear friends, fellow members, our member here, our colleague, he prayed for us and all the people, the reserve and I just told you that prior to his prayers, that we should practise our religion and try to retain every bit of it. And these two, three elders we have here prayed for us, prayed to the Good Lord, the Great Spirit, that we retain our culture. So help yourselves, fellow members, so that we could

have a good dance this coming summer. Let us practise what we are saying. Fellow colleagues, the next meeting, the follow up meeting will be announced later, at a later date. Let us get back to the meeting. Old Chief One Gun is talking to us, he says it is nice to have all members present at this meeting. Here I am as an old man, it is hard for me to get here to your meeting. Sometimes they have to help me get up, get on my feet, and I am very weak on my legs. It is pretty hard for me to join you. I was a longtime member of the Brave Dog Society. All these years when I first got married, I always did

maintain my own lodging, my own family, they had a roof over their head, but now I am a real old man today. Help yourselves, fellow colleagues, Brave Dog Societies, try your best to keep up the culture.

That is the end of the tape I guess, eh?

Tony: Yes.

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