

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: NORMAN ABRAHAM  
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: STONEY BAND

INTERVIEW LOCATION: MORLEY

TRIBE/NATION: STONEY  
LANGUAGE:  
DATE OF INTERVIEW:  
INTERVIEWER:  
INTERPRETER:  
TRANSCRIBER:  
SOURCE: OFFICE OF SPECIFIC CLAIMS &  
RESEARCH OF THE INDIAN ASSOC. OF ALTA.  
WINTERBURN, ALBERTA TOE 2N0

TAPE NUMBER: IH-222  
DISK: TRANSCRIPT 2  
PAGES: 4  
RESTRICTIONS: NONE

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Mr. Abraham, born 1901, is a Stoney (Wesley) from the Bighorn Reserve.
- Treaty 7 - accounts from his grandparents.
- Stoney claims to the Kootenay Plains.
- Encounters between Stoney and Kootenay Indians.

NOTE: The transcript of the Norman Abraham interview supplied by the Office of Specific Claims and Research is incomplete.

Q. How much assistance have you received from the government?

A. None at all. Only when we moved into the Bighorn Reserve, I received a house and a couple of horses. That is the only assistance I received during my life time. All the rest of my belongings I have, I earned with my own two hands until I have reached this age.

Q. With the assistance the government gave you, do you think it is enough help?

A. No, it is up to my chiefs in Morley. They never noticed me. Maybe I look different from the rest of the people here; maybe that is why I never received any assistance.

Q. Can you tell me the history of the Stoney people who were living at Kootenay Plains, before the arrival of the white man?

A. Yes, this will be according to my mother's father's story. Old timers such as Joshua Twin, Crow Tail Feather, George McLean, Moose Killer with whom I used to live told me a few stories.

Q. Could you tell me a story from one of these people you mentioned?

A. I will start with my grandmother because when I was a child and I grew up alongside of my grandmother she used to tell me a story of long ago when there was no white man in this country. I don't know how many years ago, maybe four hundred years ago. There was this certain Stoney chief named Meat Hunter who used to roam this vast territory, camping wherever it pleased him and his people. One day while camping just south of what is now Kootenay Plains, near a place called in Stoney Fishing Hill, there was this hairy creature who came into camp from the west. They found out he was a white man. This man was David Thompson, that is what they call him now. Just before the arrival of David Thompson, maybe a decade or so, there were the Kootenay Indians who were roaming around the country. They came to the area just as winter was approaching and they had settled there for the winter (so they thought). When the Stoneys, who were away from the area when the Kootenays settled there, came back to stay there for the winter, the Kootenays broke camp and took off. The Stoneys were ready to fight them but nowhere could they find the Kootenays. They had just disappeared from the area.

Q. What is your grandmother's name?

A. Mrs. Joe Beaver - Joppie Beaver. This Joppie Beaver, he was from a family of chieftainship. I believe he was the tenth generation of chiefs. Then one day he claimed Kootenay plains as his homeland. His brother's name was Paul Beaver; he too claimed Ya-ha-tin-da valley as his home land. There should be a marker at Ya-ha-tin-da some place because he would have marked out the area. These two brothers they were always living in mountains and they claimed these two areas as their very own home land.

Q. How did Kootenay Plains get its name?

A. The reason they called it that is because they had chased away the Kootenay Indians from the area and were happy about it.

Q. Could you name the Stoneys who went to the signing of Treaty Number Seven from the Kootenay Plains area?

A. No. According to my first father-in-law Joshua Hunter, he said that some of the Stoneys were up at Saskatchewan River at the time of the signing of the first treaty. He said he was just beginning his teen years at that time. While most of the Stoneys remained at Saskatchewan River Valley, Joshua's parents broke camp and headed for Cold Water (Morley). When they finally arrived at Cold Water (Morley), there was excitement amongst the people about the signing of the treaty. Big Stoney was appointed chief of the Wesley Band. Bearspaw was appointed chief of the Bearspaw Band. He was the spokesman for the Stoney

people. Chinikio was also chief of the Chiniquay Band. They had appointed three big chiefs for the Stoney people at the treaty signing. There was a feeling of happiness amongst the Stoney people here in Morley at the first signing of the Treaty No. 7. The people told my father to go down to where they were making a ration house and get some grub. They told him his family would be fed. So Joshua Hunter's father and mother took a pack horse and rode down to where they were building this ration house. Later when they came back, they got flour and a whole side of bacon.

The people told my father the story of the signing of the first treaty at Blackfoot Crossing. At the meeting of the treaty conference the government had a Cree for an interpreter. The Stoneys couldn't write in English nor speak English and they weren't that fluent in Cree either. The white man had all the upper hand in writing at that time. The Stoneys knew what was happening but they just couldn't communicate with the government. The Indians knowing that they could not write with a pencil, spoke to the commissioner and said I will use the sun

as my pencil. So long as it shines it is my proof that as long as the river runs I will keep the peace. The government said I will pay you money, I will give it to you when you sign for peace. That is what they used to tell us, but today it is interpreted in a different way. We have signed away all our lands too. At the first signing of the treaty there was no mention of land negotiation, but that was to come at a later date. Today it has been said that the government will run our lands. At that time the Indians didn't know any different, because he couldn't write or speak English. Just like I am today, I don't know a single word of English. Today the Indians still have faith in themselves because they have seen the sun shine and the river flowing, this reminds them of the sale promise made to the Queen on their behalf by their forefathers. But the land, that is a different question. We Indians still maintain the rights to our land. Today there is an ever increasing population of white people encroaching on the land. For example; consider myself. I was camping at the Saskatchewan Valley and the white man started a fence around my camp and told me to get out. I used to think that I should have stayed there, never moved and let him take a drastic action against me. This was on my land, the cabins are still visible.

Q. Who was at Kootenay Plains in 1948, just after the war?

A. All of the Bighorn people were up there, they had a lot of horses. We used that place during winter and summer months; there were a lot of camps.

Q. Have you ever heard about the government establishing a reserve at Kootenay Plains for you or was there any discussion at the signing of the Treaty 7 in 1877?

A. The only one I know are the markers put up by the Stoney people. That was put up by my mother's father, way back in the

early days (it is a fact). My grandfather was the first one to build a settlement at the Kootenay Plains. The corrals he built, though rotted, are still visible and I consider that a fact of life. There is also another site of corrals on the Cline River, at the fork of McDonald Creek. Those are two evidences of the early day life on the Kootenay Plains.

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