A-Introduction

Interviewer: Now, I am going to ask you question in regards to the past, the things you heard stories related to you, before the signing of the treaties and at the signing of the treaty. Then I will ask you to answer.

Yellow Sun: Yes.

Interviewer: Then when you have finished, I will ask you other questions.

Yellow Sun: You mean the first treaty payments?

Poor Eagle: Yes, the first treaty payment, things that relate to it.

Yellow Sun: Yes, number seven the day of the payments. Yes it is number seven - Treaty No. 7.

Poor Eagle: Yes.

Yellow Sun: Yes, Treaty No. 7 is the one you want me to tell
Interviewer: Yes, the way you heard about and who told you the story.

Yellow Sun: It will take a little time to talk about it, maybe I wouldn't be finished until about an hour. Yes, I already know about those things (tape recorders) when I was going to Old Sun Campus, when Two Horn (Lionel Two Horn, Blackfoot Studies co-ordinator at Old Sun Campus in 1971-72). It is the same. I first tell him Indian stories, and when I have finished the next person (Yellow Sun's colleagues) starts on a different story. O.K., I tell a story and then he throws the story in a different direction (his interpretation of the same story). Have you started (tape recorder) it?

Interviewer: No, it is not going.

Yellow Sun: Well, just start it, I already know what to say. War stories are different. Start it and I'll tell you about the first treaty payment.

B-Treaty No. 7 - 1877

Yellow Sun: I was told by Crow Eagle and S-OK-A-KE-NU-BE (Bareback Sitter). Those are the people that told me stories. They were older and had a good knowledge of the first treaty payment. That was when the Tall White Man gave us treaty payments. Also, the police leader from the Many Houses (the town of Macleod), he was police leader there - the first police leader. O.K. They (N.W.M.P. and commissioners) started to head north. Along they came in a group, the police force. They herded the food (cattle) that the Indian people were going to eat. They were long horns, not the cattle we have now.

They herded and camped at the Ridges Under the Water (Blackfoot name for the Bow River Crossing used by the Blackfoot). Then all tribes gathered there too. Bloods, North Peigans, Sarcees, Stoneys. Bobtail was also there, Blackfeet. Now, we are all there at the first treaty payments. Crowfoot was camping about two water inlets from the camp of the police and commissioners. Carrying Knife was his other name.

A halfbreed was the interpreter. He was told by the Tall White Man, "Go get Crowfoot. He is going to be given the money." So the halfbreed mounted his horse and headed east to get Crowfoot. When he arrived at the camp of Crowfoot, he was greeted by Crowfoot, "O.K., what is it that made you travel here?" The halfbreed replied to Crowfoot, "I came to get you. The Tall White Man is going to give you people the money." Crowfoot replied, "Yes, I don't think my children should take the money. Tell that to the white men." He didn't say too much. The halfbreed mounted and returned.

When the halfbreed arrived at the police camp, he told the Tall White Man, "That is what Crowfoot said and wouldn't take the money." The Tall White Man said, "O.K., we will wait." So he waited awhile and then again told the halfbreed, "Go over
there again." The halfbreed headed east again. The halfbreed told Crowfoot, "It is the same thing again; they are waiting for you. The white man will feed you. They have brought cattle with them." Crowfoot replied, "I told you, we don't want to take the money." So the halfbreed headed back.

The halfbreed reported to The Tall White Man that he had repeated his answer as before. And when that was said, Na-Ta-wo-Ta-Ne, an elderly, sick Blackfoot Indian came forward to the tent. The tent was huge, sort of yellow in colour, pegged and was erected in the middle of the camp of the police. Na-ta-wo-Ta-Ne came to The Tall White Man and said "I will take the iron things (referring to the money as iron things, because metal objects were familiar to them, but not as currency of which they didn't know). Crowfoot has refused to take them." He was told by the Tall White Man, "No, Crowfoot is the only one that we are waiting for. The money would not be given to anyone. Crowfoot is the one person we are waiting for. He is the person that will say how it is going to be."

Again the halfbreed was told to go see Crowfoot. The halfbreed told Crowfoot, "O.K., Crowfoot, Na-Ta-wo-Ta-Ne-Ka says he will take the money and has asked the Tall White Man for it. They are waiting for you." Crowfoot replied, "Yes, I am pitying my children. I will come forth." Now the halfbreed rode fast. He was half satisfied and rode back. He reported to the Tall White Man that Crowfoot will move camp to the site and will take the money. As soon as this reply was heard, orders for the preparations of the signing of the treaty were issued - sent out.

Now, at the site of the treaty was a cannon. It wasn't going to be used, only to signal Crowfoot's agreement with the treaty. The cannon was already packed with a charge. And on the ground was a flag, so as soon as the cannon was fired, the flag will go up.

The police saw Crowfoot pitch his lodge across the river. "There he is." O.K. now the police wagons (police wagons loaded with meat). The Indians that went across to get meat were covered with blood as they received meat rations. The sight was very original. They (Red Coats) had long knives, white plumes hanging from their hats, chains were strung across the Red Coats' mouths. The first Red Coats, this is how they dressed.

One had a bugle, of which he would blow when Crowfoot mounted his horse. The ones on the hill with the cannon will fire the cannon when he approaches the lodge of the Tall White Man.

Now, Crowfoot mounted his horse and the bugler blew his bugle to signal that Crowfoot was coming. As he reached the Crossing at the river, a signal was passed on to the ones with the cannon and fired it. Signalling that Crowfoot approached. The cannon rolled back from the impact of its discharge. The raising of the flag followed, signalling Crowfoot had agreed to take the money. Negotiations began.

"O.K., Crowfoot, here is what you're given, some twelve blue backs (paper currency) paper. Every summer they will be given
to you." Crowfoot replied, "Yes." The commissioners continued, "Now, select the ones that are going to share the chieftainship with you, select ten or twelve."

So, warriors and leaders were selected to share the chieftainship with Crowfoot. Leaders like Many Swans, also known as Middle Rider, Rabbit Carrier. These people and others became chiefs and his brother, Three Bulls. The other leaders' names I don't know offhand now.

Now Crowfoot told the Tall White Man, "Rabbit Carrier," (today there are still people with that name) "will announce to the people, so they would know what is said here of the treaty and of your words. He will announce to the people what has been said; he has a loud voice. Everybody will hear him."

Today we have chief and councillors. They meet in cellars. In the past, the councillors met in the open and everybody hears what Crowfoot has to say. O.K., now that was finished, now they will talk about our land. "Crowfoot, now you will be given the twelve dollars, you will be treated with. Now, you will not have to kill the animals that you eat that roam your lands, that one that flies. These will be closed for you. People who don't obey this will be at fault with the law. The Red Coats will look after you but if you do wrong, they will be dealt with accordingly. It it is an extreme case, you will be sent away. Now, you will not sell the wood to white people. The stones you will not sell to white people. The deers and anything that flies will be closed for you." (Animal game of any kind will be for their own use and not for selling to white people, same as for wood and stones.)

Crowfoot replied, "This is why I didn't want any money in the first place. O.K., since I have decided to take the money, I will. Now, Tall White Man, I will tell you what I want in the treaty. You are going to give us the twelve dollars. Now, this sun (today) when the river has stopped flowing and the sun has stopped shining, then stop giving us the twelve dollars. O.K., that is what I have to tell you."

He really said a lot in terms of how long we will hold the treaty - when the river has stopped flowing and the sun stopped shining. That is how long we will receive the twelve dollars. Now that was done.

Now, again terms are given to Crowfoot by the commissioners, "Where are you going to live, where will you settle?"

Now, we Indians, let me go back in time. We Blackfoot are bush living people. We are people at the treeline in the north. And as summer approaches we move southwards where we spent summer months on the open plains. At fall time, we move back home. We are moving from home to home. That is why the people used to say, "Today is a home day" meaning that it was time to move home.

Now, Crowfoot released their entitlement of the north and
stated that they will live on the open plains, around the Ridges Under the Water.

Now, Red Crow was asked, "O.K., Mekasto (Red Crow), where are you going to settle?" He replied, "I will settle at the Belly River." Now the Peigans. I know but the name escapes me now of their leader, I would not try and call him, I might say the wrong name. He was a main leader, he said, "I will settle at the foothills and Porcupine Tails." Now the Sarcee leader, Little Chief, "Now, Little Chief, where will you live?" He replied, "I don't know where I want to live, look for a place for me, I will live there for two years." He was told, "Yes, a place will be located for you and you will be moved there." Now the Stoneys at the mountains. Now Bobtail said, "I will live in the north." Now it was over.

Now at the site of the treaty payments was a large corral of cattle. As soon as we agreed with the treaty, they started to kill the long horns. They were rationed out and people all went over and had their share of meat. And when the Indians left their camps after the treaty - left behind were rationed meat. Some of the Indians didn't know the long horn was supposed to be eaten.

When the Indian people left, Sarcee stayed behind. They stayed where the Bear People shot each other. That is where Little Chief stayed with his band. They stayed for two years. And when the land was found for them, they moved west to the Nose (one of several names for the surrounding area of the present city of Calgary). They were moved on the south side of the river. We say Nose; it was at the Elbow (today the city of Calgary is still referred to as "Elbow" in Blackfoot).

Now all the leaders with their bands settled down.

Later on, about two years after the signing of the treaty, when we were to receive our treaty payments, Crowfoot said to the government people, "Out of the twelve dollars, put seven dollars of it in trust for us. Those people that will be born in the future to make use of it. Just give us the five dollars so we could use it. Put seven dollars in trust for us. Future generations will need it for their use." The government people agreed with him. So, seven dollars out of the twelve dollars treaty money was put in trust for us.

Now, our grandfather, Crowfoot, was asked, "When would you want to receive the five dollars?" Crowfoot replied, "At fall time - when the river and inlets have frozen, when winter is drawing near, so we could get blankets with it and winter clothing." It is done.

(Here Yellow Sun describes where Carrying Knife or Crowfoot's house was located. Today, the dugout still could be seen, he says. He acquired the location through stories related to him by elders.)

C - The Coming of the Iron Road
Now, Crowfoot was still home when a message came to him that all chiefs should head east and see the Iron Road (railroad). Crowfoot was also told that he was supposed to meet with the Iron Horse owner (Canadian Pacific representatives) on request.

Crowfoot left for the meeting. The Iron Horse owner told Crowfoot, "O.K., Crowfoot, this is where your boundary for your home is, your land. I am asking for you to go walk through your land and have the Iron Road go through, too, straight for the mountains. Loan me the land so it will go through. The road will go through The Lake Buffalo Fence (It is around Hussar where they built buffalo fences to catch buffalos. The lake is also called the Lake that Horses died of. It is mostly alkaline. That is also the place where the Kootenays were slaughtered in a battle with the Blackfoot), to the north through The Three Hills (Three Hills north of the town of Three Hills) through The Big Corner (town of Strathmore).

It is hard in the winter time for you people to live at the river bottom. It is hard for your people to go to The Lake Buffalo Fence in the winter time, to get food to eat." Crowfoot replied, "O.K., let it go through on temporary basis. You are right. It is far to get food."

It was written and the road started. Crowfoot was also told that he will be given a pass to use for travelling. I never heard when or where Crowfoot was given a pass.

Crowfoot went home and told his people that the road will go through. He was told by the Ash Wagon people, as we would say today, but in the past they were called Iron Horse owners, "O.K., Crowfoot, this iron to the south (the south rail of the railroad track) is yours. The iron on the north side belongs to the white people." Blackfoot people own one of the rails on the tracks. White people own the other half. The Iron Horse owners continued, "Now, the footings (railroad ties), when they get rotten, take them for firewood. There is what I could give you."

The road slowly made its way through the reserve, and when it reached where the town of Crowfoot is today or thereabouts, a message was given to Crowfoot again that the Iron Horse owners are requesting to meet with him again. He left to meet with them and was told, "White men will dig out the rock here to use as a bed for the iron that would lay on it. Give me all of it so I could make the bed with it. I will give you flour, one sack. It will never stop. Not until the sun and river is gone." In other words, we could say that the Ash Wagon headmen (CPR representatives), those first Iron Horse owners that came to speak with Crowfoot, committed themselves to use the stone (gravel) to fill the bedding for the railroad in exchange that they will give Crowfoot and his people a sack of flour each summer. Until there is no more sun or river, would this commitment cease. Now it has already ceased. I wonder where
that money went? Who is keeping the money for himself in this new generation?

Now, we were receiving treaty money, rations of flour. We were quite prosperous. The Iron Horse owners were sending carloads of flour to feed us. Now when the Iron Horse owners reached around Big Belly (Blackfoot name for the site of Gleichen) with their iron road, a meeting was called again with the Indian people. Crowfoot was told to bring his wife. Leaders of both parties met again. Crowfoot was handed a pass (a framed pass with a long small chain, a pass to ride the CPR anywhere) and was told to wear it around his neck. His wife was also bestowed with a pass. Crowfoot was told by the CPR representatives, "Wear this pass around your neck— even if you go around the world, you wouldn't have to pay. Same with your wife. If you want to ride, just wear it around your neck." Now his wife also wore one around her neck. You see some pictures of Crowfoot with the pass.

"On the land," Crowfoot was told by the representatives of CPR and the government, "you are the only two. Across the ocean is another, our Mother the Queen, who also has this privilege. Even if you were to be at fault with the law of this country, you wouldn't be prosecuted. But, your children, if they do wrong, will be prosecuted." Now, that was done again.

Time passed— until Calgary became a reality. Crowfoot was called upon to meet with officials (officials of the Canadian government and at times with CPR officials) on several occasions in Calgary. The officials don't see Crowfoot first, the police greet him at his arrival and escort him to the officials. He usually was taken to the flat across the river, at the place of the hospital (the present site of the General Hospital in Calgary now), where he was given a lodge to rest in. He was guarded all night by the police. I was told that in the evenings four sentries were posted at four corners of his lodge with long rifles. And at midnight the sentries are changed until morning. Then the sentries are relieved. During the day there are guards assigned to protecting Crowfoot.

Yes, that is how our leader and grandfather Carrying Knife (or Crowfoot) was honored by the people called The Ash Wagon white men.

Here ends what was told to me in stories about the first treaty payment at Macleod, at the treaty payment at the Crossing (Blackfoot Crossing) and when Crowfoot was called upon by the police in Calgary for Crowfoot to conduct his business (shopping for goods, meeting with people, officials, etc.) That is how the story was told. That is all. That is how it is told to me by my elders. It is as if I was there, I know it very well. That is how it is.

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