

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: TOM YELLOWHORN  
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: PEIGAN RESERVE  
ALBERTA  
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INTERVIEWER: ALBERT YELLOWHORN  
INTERPRETER: DILA PROVOST &  
ALBERT YELLOWHORN  
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD  
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Tom Yellowhorn is the son of Chief Yellowhorn. Chief Red Crow was his uncle.  
- Cattle-raising on the Peigan Reserve.  
Tom Yellowhorn, 70 years old, Peigan Indian is second son of Late Chief "Yellowhorn" whose mother "A-Ke-Kee-Na" (Later Mrs. Little Leaf) was present at camps of Treaty No. 7, also a sister of Chief Red Crow.

Albert: First of all, we will talk about cattle.

Tom: We will talk about cattle. I will begin about the time of the treaty. Our Chief was Sitting on the Eagle Tail Feathers, as my people talked about him and what he claimed to be his land. When I was in school, I didn't hear about these things anymore, but when I got out I began to hear about them again. The chiefs at the treaty all specified their choice of land, that they would go to later. The Blackfeet choose Blackfoot Crossing, the Bloods chose Belly Buttes, the Stoneys the Trail Blazed Country, the Sarcees the present site of where they are today. Our chief, Sitting on the Eagle Tail Feathers, when his turn came he claimed a three-point land marked country.

- 1) Crowlodge Country
- 2) Old Man's playgrounds  
(Livingstone district as known today)

### 3) Porcupine Hills Country.

The reason why we always owned this country, described by three land marks, is because of a legend concerning the Old Man Napi and another like him, who resided beyond the mountains to the west. One time an argument began between the two. The one from beyond the mountains claimed the foothills to be his, but Napi said this was not true. The core of the argument was over game. The argument ended with Napi claiming the divide, at the summit of the mountains and all the area where the river flows down this (east) side of the mountains.

So in a gamble for this side, they played a game which is our native game called "The Whoop Game". Today the signs and evidence of this game having been played could still be found in the mountains where they played. Napi won the game so the country east of the mountains became Napi's. Napi told his opponent to remember that game and know that everything on this side of the mountains all belonged to him. So then our people were able to go to the mountains whenever they desired to change their diet to deer, elk and other mountain game; also fishing at Waterton Lakes as this was Napi's country. So the story goes that anytime the people from beyond the mountains would come into Napi's country they met trouble with us because they did not belong on this side, and were invading. Therefore our people drove them back over the mountains.

The people from beyond the mountains had no right to the buffalo as this is not their type of game. This is why Sitting on the Eagle Tail Feathers claimed all this area. It (the country) all belonged to the Peigans as far north as Squaw Buffalo Jump west of the present town of Nanton. That is why the Porcupine Hills were mentioned.

All these landmarks claimed by Napi proved that the Peigans owned these areas. After the treaty and when the people began to settle down, Sitting on the Eagle Tail Feathers led his people to this area where he had specified in the treaty. Two years after he settled in this area, the first large ranchers came seeking land and enquired who was the chief. The people directed them to Sitting on the Eagle Tail Feathers who instructed them as to where they could graze their cattle, as he had a large area under his control at the time. So they went to see him. "I came to see you as the commissioner said you have land. I would like to lease some of your land for cattle grazing. I've got many cattle and many men working for me. I will not put my stock on your land for nothing, I will pay you." I know those ranchers, some came as early as 1880 (particularly the Waldron Ranch).

This area was as far northwest as Squaw Buffalo Jump, the Porcupine Hills, west of Nanton, east to Look out buttes, north of Lethbridge, Wateron Lakes, the Waterton River. All that area. The deal was made so that he could occupy all these places specified by the said landmarks and that he would not cheat the Indians.

When we started to settle down in the area specified by Sitting on the Eagle Tail Feathers, the Waldron Ranch camped at Beaver Creek. That became their headquarters. They supplied beef to the agency west of Fort Macleod, which was issued as rations to the Indians. This became the beginning of the involvement of cattle on the reserve. The government started exchanging these cattle for ponies from the Indians - one cow for one horse. So it was that the more horses an Indian had, the more cattle he could buy. They paid 2 horses for a bull. So thus, these people with more horses could buy all the bulls they needed.

In the years after the introduction of cattle on the reserve, the Indians were told that they had to stop contracting and dealing with white ranches on the cattle business, now that they had enough of their own. So then, buying meat at the ration house began - no more free meat. So they still relied on outside ranchers for what was not available from Indian cattle and the Indians began to make use and profit from their own cattle, the ones who had quite a herd built.

Around 1883, when the Waldron Ranch first entered Peigan country, was also the first time that farming entered or was mentioned to the Peigan Indians. A selective ground was chosen by the government south of Pincher Creek (the present townsite). Today this place is known as Chipman Creek, this was to be farm headquarters. The white men employed there were those living in common-law with Indian women. Their names were English, Holloway and Wise Adviser-man. They were hired to break up the land where the Indians were first taught the method of farming. I think that there were crops grown for one or two years in that area. They moved to this area amongst the Indians to continue teaching agriculture. The Indian agent at that time was named Bobby Wilson. He was the one who suggested the move to east of the present townsite of Brocket. My father, Yellowhorn, (who died in 1948) broke forty acres with a walking plow. After it was broken it was divided among certain people who were to continue working it. After that incident my father left that company-farm and started working on his own.

Cattle were brought onto the reserve and the procedure was a pony traded for a cow. The ponies that were traded were herded by Indians to Regina, so the Peigans paid for the cattle they got with horses, they didn't get any cattle from the government.

Many Cree Medicine was a Peigan cowboy who drove cattle to Regina. Cox, a stockman and farm instructor, accompanied them to Regina. An incident took place while they were down there. A white man advertised money for anyone who could ride his fierce bronco (outlaw horse). Cox went to see the man concerning the offer and said he had come with an Indian who could ride this horse. The man claimed the horse was a man-killer and asked Cox for three days in which to advertise the ride, as the horse was well known. Many Cree Medicine said "I will ride the horse - but, on my terms." He cut a club from a large stick, bought a saddle, and bridle. A large audience was watching. The corrals were opened. He went in to meet the horse. He

stood in the middle of the corrals; the horse charged at him. Many Cree Medicine stood his grounds. When the horse reached him, he clubbed it between the ears; the horse fell. Before he

could stand, the Indian had saddled and bridled him and mounted him. As the horse bucked, the Indian clubbed him. This continued for almost a mile. He then dismounted and when the horse attacked him, he clubbed him again. He went through this procedure again the next day with less fight from the horse. After three days he had conquered the horse. He then left the country for home.

One day our Indian agent told Chief Crow Eagle to put his signature on a piece of paper as his consent was needed to commence with a fence around the reserve. The chief would not sign, stating that the people knew their country and did not need a fence to know its situation. "The government says you have to fence it." Crow Eagle said "No. I know the area of my land, I do not need to fence it." At the time, the chief was about to leave for Montana. He said he was taking his son along on the journey. The boy was of school age. The agent said, "No, you will not take your son. He will stay and you will go alone." The chief was foolish and insisted on taking his son. The agent said, "Sign these papers, then you can go with your son." So the chief then foolishly signed the papers consenting to the fencing of the reserve in exchange for the privilege of having his son accompany him.

The people were all surprised to know for the first time how little the reserve really was according to the fence. Immediately after the fence was up, white settlers began moving in right next to the fence around the reserve. The area that the Indian people (Peigans) had always known to be theirs was just suddenly not theirs any more. This is the result and evidence of their not understanding what they signed at the treaty. The government knew the Indians did not realize or understand, but they went right ahead with their part of it. They were then forbidden to leave or go on land outside of this fence unless the agent gave consent in form of a permit to do so.

Far before the fence was made, the police had cattle. After the land was fenced, a white man had a place (settlement) west of the reserve, and an Indian by the name of Many Chiefs went out and purchased this homestead for the sum of 20 horses. The deal was made and Many Chiefs lived there for some time. Suddenly, the agent Wilson approached him and said the government orders that he vacate the place and return to the reserve. They are to pick a place and it will become his own.

Many Chiefs did as the agent advised, after some time to find out that the new place was only another part of the reserve and that the place he had left had been his 'private property'. He had left it and did not get compensated for it. The Indian agent had went back to the deserted (vacated) homestead of Many Chiefs and sold the place on his own. The people could not defend themselves in predicaments such as this because of

illiteracy on their part. They were easily misled on things that they were unaware of. Tom Scott was a halfbreed who lived on the reserve. He had been to school and was married to an Indian woman. He helped himself with the help of what he had learned, but the people did not profit from him.

The white settlers stayed away from the reserve until that fence was put up, then they moved in.

I knew a white man who used to homestead just outside the reserve. He told me one day that after the reserve was fenced he had moved in right next to the reserve and bought his land for 50 an acre. (It appears that if the Indian had been allowed to buy land back for that price from the government we'd be better off.) He said at that time, "When I moved to this farm in 1903 from the mountains, it was two days after I left my job in the coal mines that the Frank slide took place. All the people I worked with, were killed."

Around 1896-97, when the railroad track was being proposed to go through the reserve a man was sent to propose the deal, he called it an 'iron road.' Little Leaf opposed this proposition. He said, "This is our reserve and we don't want a road here, it can be put a different direction, we don't want it on our land." It was Crow Eagle who was reacting positively towards this deal. He told Little Leaf, "You are a man who always opposes deals. This iron road will only be there for a short time not forever." Little Leaf said to Crow Eagle, "You can't tell me and name the date when this iron road will be taken off the reserve". It was told to them, Crow Eagle said, that in 25 years this deal will expire. It was later learned that every 25 years a re-negotiation would take place between Indians and the railroad people. The first was to take place in 1922. When this time came about, nothing happened and since then nothing has happened.

Little Leaf wanted 5 cows for every Peigan man, woman and child, but his proposal was never accepted. Instead the Indian agent Long-faced Crow (Wilson) said to the people, "You Indians will be better off if you got a sawmill." So the deal was accepted concerning a sawmill. A sawmill was brought in and 'Long-faced Crow' told the Indians to start working from farther within the timber and gradually work up to this side. Today the piece that was fenced in is shorter than what it originally was. Where they cut at that time is farther in. The Indians began work from three pieces of timber. One went toward the sawmill, and two the worker kept. Little Leaf built himself a home this way, and several other Indians made themselves homes also.

At this time cattle ranching was doing very well for the people. They located their homes purposely along the river to shelter and care for their cattle. They were very honest among themselves concerning their cattle. When they had many cattle and were well managing, Long Faced Crow, the Indian agent, came along and advised the Indians that the government wanted to take the cattle away and make one general herd to be managed by Indian Affairs, despite the protests of the owners. We were

looking and caring for our herds very good at the time, but the agent insisted they would do a better job.

After the Indian agent took over the cattle around 1906, the sawmill quit running. The steam engine was moved down to heat up water at the present I.D. dip today (in order to dip the cattle.) In the fall of 1906, the cattle were dipped in hot water, then it turned cold. As they started to head for the river bottom, they got stranded at the C.P.R. fence and could not get to the river bottom. As a result many perished. A man by the name of Emery La Grandeur was stockman then. He was hired to haul away the dead cattle that had died from exposure. The Indian agent wanted no part of it. The Indians suffered the complete loss. This was another drawback for the Indians in cattle ranching. The only advantage of Indian Affairs taking over the cattle management from the Indians was that the government could provide good bulls to improve the breeding stock.

By 1920, the Band had acquired a good herd of cattle. The I.D. paid half the price of bulls and the Indian funds the other half. The reserve then became the centre of good breeding bulls. Ranchers would come here seeking good bulls.

(That is the history of cattle on the reserve.)

Albert: What do you know about the dam on the reserve?

Tom: When the deal concerning the building of the dam on the reserve, the Indian agent was Tom Graham and the chief was Butcher. In 1921 the negotiations began. The chief did not want the dam built but the agent threatened them. If they did not co-operate with the irrigation people, they would be liable to court and conviction. If things could not be settled they would have to go to court in Macleod and the chiefs would go to jail. I was out of school then and I heard the people talking about these threats the agent was using. They then began to negotiate. A councillor by the name of Big Lake who was known to be mentally incompetent asked for \$25.00 an acre, then raised it another \$5.00 making his asking price be \$30.00 an acre. The people then knew he was really crazy (signifying the manner in which the people began to believe that they were to be cheated in every respect from the white man.) Running Wolf asked for \$10.00 an acre. The "negotiations" ended and the people never really knew how much money they had sold the land for. (To our thinking now about \$3.00 per person.) It was rumored that after the irrigation ditch left the reserve it became \$35.00 an acre and \$50.00 an acre when it passed through farms. The deal was all really negotiated by the Indian agent. The Indians were only employed as a front for paper signing. That is what I know about this 'deal'.

Albert: What about the land-surrender across the river?

Tom: My father, Little Leaf and Chief Plume would go everyday across the river to the area when this was going on. They were opposing and refusing the deal. The majority of the people said "no sell". They voted on it more than once; each time the

proposed surrender was defeated. But then they said a final vote would again be tried. A person by the name of John Bastien (a halfbreed) did all the talking for the Indian people. He had been to school and had more say about affairs than the chief and council. He was the main spokesman for the agent in getting this deal across to the people. There was a time when the people were approached concerning a road proposal through the Indian land at Porcupine Hills. At this date it lies far north of the north fence, indicating that the land area before the fencing was put in went much farther north, that was the reason for notifying the Indians concerning the building of this road. The people then voted positively and signed to have this road pass through their land.

A white man by the name of George Stafford came along one day and told Willie Crowshoe, "There is a piece of land in the mounts that you people have and own where your people used to go for paint. I was leasing this land." He then gave Willie Crowshoe eight or ten yearling colts and said "I am releasing my lease up there. I see no benefit from it, so I am giving you these horses as a present because I am leaving this land." Since then George Stafford has died, also Willie Crowshoe, but we could approach his son. We probably could get information.

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