HIGHLIGHTS:

- Mr. Harper, born 1887, attended residential school and attempted to get a higher education but found that this was only available to him if he went into the ministry. Later he did some trading (having small "stores" in several reserves), farming, freighting and surveying.
- Story of Scar Face who climbed the mountain and was helped by the Thunderbirds.
- Story of the Lousy Ones, two lazy Cree boys who lived with the Blackfoot for a year before returning home with many horses.

Mary: August 6. You may start your story now, Uncle.

Pierre: Let me think of a story to tell you. Did I ever tell you the story of Scar Face?

Mary: No, I don't think I ever heard the story.

Pierre: A long time ago, when I was younger and stronger and I was able to work, I travelled a lot working here and there for white people. Once, some of us were taken 35 miles north of the city of Calgary and left there to do some work. We camped
in a ravine beside a creek. The mountains to the west of us were very beautiful and they seemed very close to us though we were told they were 65 miles away. There were four of us camped there. And there were beaver in the creek, which we sometimes hunted. We had a man from Saddle Lake with us. His name was Robert Horne.

Not far from our camp, and to the north, was a very high hill. It was not a mountain - just a very big hill, and it was high. In the evenings after work we would sometimes climb this hill, and we would sit there admiring the scenery to the west of us. The mountains fascinated us and we never tired of looking at them. One mountain in particular captured our attention. It was a very high mountain, and from where we sat it looked flat on top. Every evening for many days we sat on the hill. Often we would see wild animals such as bears, moose and deer.

One evening our friend from Saddle Lake said to us, "I will leave now for the hill. You guys will be along shortly anyway." And so he left for the hill. When we arrived shortly after, we found our friend sitting there looking west. There were banks of clouds over the mountains this evening and the mountain that was flat on top was nearly touching the clouds. "I am thinking," said our friend, "of a story my grandfather told me a long time ago. I am wondering if that mountain with a flat top is the mountain Scar Face climbed when he went on a vision-seeking quest." Robert Horne then told us the story his grandfather had told him many years before. This is the story he told us that evening as we sat on the hill looking at the mountains.

Once, a long time ago, a roving band of Cree found themselves camped right beside the mountains. This band was very large - it consisted of many lodges and had 2 chiefs because of the number of people in the band. One of the chiefs had no daughters, but the other chief had a daughter who was a very good looker. This girl was stuck-up. On many occasions young braves had offered to marry her but she had refused them all. She did not think there was a brave in camp good enough to be her husband.

In camp also was a young orphan boy who lived with his grandmother. This boy was dark-skinned and he had many ugly scars on his face. So ugly was he that many people called him Scar Face. Because he was so ugly, he was shy and never went anywhere.

Because they were camped so close to Blackfoot country, there was the danger of raiding Blackfeet. Every evening the Cree would put their horses in an enclosure they had made at the foot of a mountain. The horses were then safe from raiding Blackfeet.

Scar Face and his grandmother had a mare and a colt. Every evening Scar Face would wait until all the horses were
in the enclosure and everybody had gone home; only then would he take their mare and colt. In this way there would be nobody there to laugh at him.

One evening Scar Face's grandmother said to him, "Grandson, before it gets too late take a thong and lead our mare and colt to the enclosure where they will be safe from raiding Blackfeet." On his way to the enclosure Scar Face went by the spring used by the band. The chief's beautiful daughter had been to the spring for water. On the way back she came face to face with Scar Face. Scar Face had a habit of walking with his head down in a futile attempt to hide his face. He, therefore, did not see the princess until she was upon him. The princess, thinking this meeting was not accidental but planned deliberately by Scar Face, got very angry and she told Scar Face so. "Scar Face," she said, "you are so ugly I don't even want to see you, let alone become your wife. The bravest and best looking boys in camp have offered to marry me. What do you think I would be doing with an ugly thing like you? You should be ashamed to be seen in public." With that she walked off. Scar Face just stood there. He was not mad; he was more hurt than anything else. Then Scar Face turned the mare loose and went straight into the mountains.

Since it was evening, dusk was soon upon him. It was just getting dark when he came to a very high mountain which he began to climb. As he climbed, he cried: he was so hurt by the scolding the princess had given him. All night long he cried as he continued to climb the mountain.

Next morning at sunrise, he lay down on a ledge and slept all day. At sunset he woke up and as it got dark, went back to his climbing. For four nights he climbed. In the daytime he would find a ledge to sleep on. On the morning after the fourth night of climbing, he reached the top of the mountain, which was flat at the top.

He was very tired after four nights of climbing and crying, and he lay down to have a good sleep. Just as he was falling asleep, he heard someone say, "I have come to get you. You are to come with me." He looked around - but he was alone on the mountain top. Again he tried to sleep. And again as he was dropping off to sleep, someone said, "You are to come with me. I have been sent to get you." He opened his eyes in time to see an ant crawling away from him. He got up and followed the ant.

The ant crawled into a crack in the mountain. The crack opened up wide and Scar Face stepped in. He did not see the ant, but he saw a boy. By and by they came to a tipi. Coming upon the tipi, the boy stopped and he heard someone inside say, "Tawow, tawow. Noo sis aye." (Welcome, welcome, grandchild). "Old woman," continued the voice, "clean a place in the tipi. Also fix a bed for our grandson who has come to visit us." Then a very old man with very white hair came out carrying sweetgrass. At once he set about making a small fire
and burning sweetgrass. Later, after the old man had burned sweetgrass, he turned to Scar Face. "Tawow, noo sis aye," he said. "We are glad you have come to visit us. We will now go inside." Inside the tipi, the old man said to his wife, "bring out the best food you have, that our grandson may eat. He must be hungry."

After having a good meal of dried meat and flaked meat, the boy stayed the rest of the day, visiting with the old couple. And he noted that they were indeed very old. The young boy Scar Face had followed into the tipi was nowhere to be seen. Later on, two young boys came into the tipi. They did not stay long, and soon went away again.

Later when darkness came upon them, the old man said to Scar Face, "Grandson, I am glad you came when I sent for you. You are here for a good reason. The princess has angered me for the manner in which she spoke to you when you met her outside your camp. You will see, Grandson, it is because of me that her father is a famous fighter. You will stay here with us for four nights. Tonight you will sing with me all night. Tomorrow night, your grandmother, my wife, will sing all night with you. And the night after, you will sing all night with one of my sons; I have two sons. On the fourth night, you will sing all night with my other son. And that will be all. My son will then take you back to top of the mountain where he found you. From there you will go back home."

And so the boy sang all night long with his grandfather. The next night he sang with his grandmother, and then he sang with one of his grandfather's boys, and finally with the other boy.

It was early morning and he had completed four nights of singing. The old man came up to him and said, "Grandson, the chief to whom we gave fighting power has had it taken from him again, and given to you. In time of war, when you find yourself in trouble, just think to yourself, 'I wish my grandfather was here,' and I will come to your aid." The old man then presented Scar Face with a sharp piece of steel. "This piece of steel you will use when fighting. Only when you have worn it out will the enemy be able to kill you." From his grandmother, Scar Face received a bear robe to wear when fighting. "When all the hair from this robe has fallen out, then the enemy will be able to kill you," said the old woman to Scar Face. From one of the boys, Scar Face got a stone hammer. He also got a present from the other boy, but I forget what it was. The old man spoke again to his grandson, "Now you will go home," he said. "Your grandmother is lonesome and very worried, and people are out looking for you. You will be home early. It will not be late when you get home. When you arrive, do not enter the camp, but stand outside the camp. A boy will see you and shout for the camp to hear, 'Scar Face is back. Scar Face is back.' Then he will come to you to bring you into camp. Tell this boy to go find a tipi, a new one that has never been used. Ask him to set it up, and purify it with
sweetgrass smoke. Then ask your grandmother to cook berries in two places; one for your people and one for us. Then call a feast to be held in the new tipi. You may go now, Grandson," said the old man.

Scar Face again followed the boy to the mountain top. When they arrived at the place where the ant had found Scar Face, the old man's son turned to Scar Face, and said, "You lay down and roll over." This Scar Face did, and when he got up, the boy handed him a mirror. Scar Face looked at himself and was surprised to see how handsome he was. Then the boy told Scar Face to lay down and roll over again. After he had rolled over a second time, he was even more handsome than before. Then the boy said, "You may go home now." Scar Face started down the mountain.

It had taken him four days to climb the mountain, but less than a day to climb down and get home. The sun was still high in the west when he arrived in camp. He stood just outside the camp as his grandfather had told him to do. Soon a boy noticed him and shouted, "Scar Face is back. Come everybody and see Scar Face. He has come back and he is very handsome." Then he ran to Scar Face, and Scar Face told him to find a new tipi and set it up.

The whole camp, it seemed, came to see Scar Face. Among the first was his grandmother, whom he told to cook berries in two places; one for the camp and one for the spirits. People crowded around him. Girls fought their way in the crowd to get near him. Among them was the camp beauty, the chief's daughter who had scolded him before he left. He told her to go away and not come back. The girl went away, crying.

In short order, a new tipi had been set up, and two pots of berries cooked. Then a feast was held in the new tipi. Before the feast, and before anyone entered the new tipi, it was purified by sweetgrass smoke. Then the servers carried the food in. A medicine man then said prayers and passed the food over the sweetgrass smoke. When this was done, Scar Face looked the food over and noticed one of the two bowls of berries was empty. The chief's daughter all this time could not take her eyes off Scar Face. She had never in all her life seen a young man so handsome.

Several days after the feast, scouts came hurrying into camp with news of Blackfoot warriors having been seen, and they were in fact heading for their camp. When Scar Face heard this, he told his grandmother. His grandmother then told him of a Blackfoot fighter whom the Cree could not beat. Many Cree camps he had raided and always came out the winner. Many Cree braves this Blackfoot fighter had slain.

Late that night, as expected, the Blackfoot war party arrived. The leader showed his fighting skill by knocking down anyone who got in his way. He had never been defeated. Scar Face walked up to the Blackfoot leader and challenged him to a
hand-to-hand fight, which the Blackfoot fighter accepted eagerly. The fight was on, and the people who looked on noted with dismay that the Blackfoot had the edge. He was bigger, stronger, and faster than the Cree. When Scar Face went for his weapon, the piece of steel his spirit grandfather had given him, it was not there. He had forgotten it in his tipi. Scar Face was fast tiring. The Blackfoot knew this and he went to work on Scar Face. Scar Face then remembered what his spirit grandparents had told him to say when he needed their help. "I wish my grandfather and grandmother were here," he said.

At once the tide changed, and in a very short time Scar Face had the Blackfoot fighter stretched out on his back, dead. The Blackfeet took one look at their fallen leader and headed for Blackfoot country, as fast as they could. Cree braves were all for chasing them, but Scar Face held them back, reminding them that it was apparent they did not want a fight.

A victory dance was then held in honour of Scar Face. As the singers sang the victory song, they shouted, "Scar Face." As people danced, they too shouted the name of Scar Face. Several times during the dance, the princess came over and offered to dance with Scar Face, but Scar Face very politely refused, saying he was not good enough for her.

One day sometime later, Scar Face's grandmother said to him, "Grandson, ever since you were very small I have looked after you. Now you are a man. You don't need me any more. You are old enough to support yourself. You are also old enough to have a wife. Over at the other end of the camp lives an old woman who has raised her orphaned granddaughter in to a very beautiful young woman. I am going there to arrange for you and the young girl to be married." Scar Face did not reply, and his grandmother left. Soon she was back with Scar Face's new wife. The people were happy with the choice Scar Face had made. A new tipi was set up in the center for Scar Face and his bride.

Scar Face lived happily with his wife. He would, now and then, go on raiding trips and became a famous fighter. Eventually he became chief of his band. His grandparents who lived in the mountains that was flat on top were Thunder Birds. And he never abused the power they had given him. This is the way our friend told us this story.

(End of Side A, Tape IH-043)

(Side B)

This is another story I heard when I was younger.

(Ka Yas) Long ago, all the Cree Indians did was hunt, and occasionally they raided Blackfoot camps. A circle of lodges formed an Indian encampment. Some encampments were large, and others were smaller. One encampment was so large the ring of
tipis formed a very large circle. In the middle were two lodges - these two lodges were the homes of the chiefs. This band had so many people it required two chiefs.

The two chiefs in this case each had a grown son, and no other children. And as it happened, two older braves in camp had a grown daughter each. The two sons of the chiefs were great friends and were always together. They never went on raids. They never joined buffalo hunts. They were a lazy pair of useless boys. When other boys went to Blackfoot country on raids, they stayed in camp doing nothing. Occasionally they would leave camp for long walks in the open country. When they did, the people would say, "The sons of the chiefs have left camp. They have gone somewhere to hunt lice in their breechcloths." The people laughed. "We will call them 'lice hunters'," they said. These two lazy boys, the sons of the two chiefs, must have been handsome because when they left camp to take their walk the two daughters of the two braves in camp would follow them. The boys would wander away from camp together.

Some distance from camp, they would sit together on a hill, talking and enjoying the scenery. Now and then the two girls would come to join them. One day as all four were sitting on a hill, one of the boys said to the girls, "We appreciate it when you come to sit with us. Having you for girl friends never entered our minds. We have great respect for women. We know we are being laughed at but we don't mind it one bit. You girls are being laughed at too. People in camp call you 'the louse hunting girls.' We hope you don't mind.

One day sometime later the two chiefs, fathers of the lazy boys, and the fathers of the girls, along with other braves who had been away to Blackfoot country on a raid, arrived in camp bringing with them many horses. A marvellous welcome was put on by the camp for the returning raiders. This was followed by a victory dance that night. As the returning warriors danced and shouted the Cree war cry to the beating of the drums and the singing of the victory songs, the two lazy boys, the sons of the chiefs, joined in. Right away, the spectators shouted to the servers, "Take them away. Take the lousy ones away. They have no right to dance here." The two boys were escorted from the dancing lodge.

There were no more raiding trips that summer, as the people had to prepare for the winter that was coming. One day the following summer when the two lazy boys were out for a walk, one said to the other, "This is the season for raids. If it is alright with you, I was thinking we should go into Blackfoot country and try to do something for our people, bring them horses perhaps." His friend readily agreed, and it was decided. They would leave their camp in four nights.

After their discussion they sat down on a hill, and soon the two girls arrived and they too sat down. The boys told the girls of their plan to go on a raid by themselves, but warned the girls to keep it to themselves and not tell anyone.
The girls were sad and disappointed to hear this. But both agreed to not tell anyone. "The people in camp would have more to laugh at," said the boys. "The way it is, they laugh at us and call us the 'lousy ones'."

Four nights later the boys met on a hill previously agreed upon, and the two girls came to say goodbye. And so the boys would travel all night, and sleep all day. After many nights of walking, the boys arrived at the mountains. All day they slept, and at night they climbed a mountain and waited for daylight. They had a feeling a Blackfoot camp was nearby.

At last daylight came and the sun came up. The Cree boys watched and waited. Then from the south came a large herd of buffalo, chased by Blackfoot hunters. The hunters were many, and many buffalo were dropped. Quickly they were skinned and dressed and the meat was taken away. Late in the evening, the boys climbed down and made their way south.

It was after darkness had fallen when the boys saw from the top of a hill a large Blackfoot camp. It was lit up by many campfires. And they laid down on top of the hill and looked on as one by one the campfires went out. Finally all was darkness, and the boys made ready to enter the camp. They sneaked past a row of tipis and came upon two tipis in the center of the ring. They hadn't made a sound. These two tipis were the homes of the chiefs, the bravest men in camp. A white horse was tethered beside the chief's lodge. Outside the lodge of the other chief a black horse was tethered. When the Cree boys approached these horses, they snorted and frisked about - they did not like strangers.

In summer, nights are short and it was now beginning to get daylight, and the boys were trapped in the middle of a Blackfoot camp. They could not, they thought, leave the camp without waking up the camp dogs. Neither could they remain outside the chiefs' lodges. They did the only thing left to do. Without making a sound, they entered the chief's lodge. They found the chief fast asleep and snoring away on a backrest in the center of the tipi. The Cree boys took seats on either side of the sleeping chief. Soon after sunrise, the boys began to hear people moving about outside. For a long time the boys sat there waiting for the chief to wake up, and he did. Was he surprised to find himself between what he thought were two Cree braves! He woke up one of his wives and spoke to her. She got out of bed and left the tipi.

She returned very soon with another woman. This was a Cree woman who had been captured years before from a Cree camp by raiding Blackfeet. The chief then asked the boys where they came from. The Cree woman now acted as interpreter, and the boys told the chief where they came from. Then the chief spoke to the Cree woman, and the Cree woman told the boys they would not be killed and would be well looked after.

The chief also spoke to the people who had gathered outside his lodge. When they had heard that two Cree boys were
there, some came armed with clubs and knives and bows and arrows. They had lost relatives and friends to Cree braves and wished to take revenge. The Cree woman told the Cree boys what the chief had said, "These two Cree braves are not to be harmed." The chief shouted at his people, "Any of you who harm these boys will pay with your lives." He told his people, "It is apparent these boys have very strong medicine. These boys could have killed me as I slept. They have spared my life and I want them well taken care of. They sneaked past your tipis to get to mine. No one has ever done that before. That in itself is a feat, and furthermore, these braves come to our camp unarmed. It is plain to see they meant no harm."

And so the two Cree boys lived in the Blackfeet camp all summer. They got along fine with the Blackfeet, and they behaved themselves. They went on buffalo hunts and took part in the dances and rituals, and were well liked by the Blackfoot people. The chief presented his white hunting horse to one of the Cree boys, and the other chief did the same, presenting as a gift his black hunting horse to the other Cree boy. Finally cold weather came and it was winter again and the Cree boys stayed on.

Back at their camp, the parents and relatives of the Cree boys waited and waited for the return of the two boys. When winter had come and the boys had not returned, the people took for granted the boys had been killed. And so the band moved to their wintering grounds.

When spring came at last to Blackfoot country, the two Cree boys spoke to the two Blackfoot chiefs, "We appreciate all you have done for us, but now we would like to go home. Our parents and relatives are no doubt worried about us." "You speak good words," said the chiefs. "But first you will attend a farewell dance we will make for you, and after the dance you may go." The Blackfoot people had all become friends with the Cree boys and, in appreciation of the fact that they did not kill their chiefs when they had the chance, all came to the farewell dance and presented the boys with many horses. The Blackfoot people were sorry to see the boys go. They had come to consider the Cree boys as their own.

Early in the morning on the day the boys were to leave, the horses were brought into camp, and many boys and girls offered to go part way with the boys to help with the horses. The two Blackfoot chiefs each had a grown boy and girl. These two boys and girls were among those who offered to help the Cree boys drive the horses.

At noon the drive started, and one by one and in pairs, the Blackfoot helpers dropped out and returned home. But the two boys and the two girls, children of the chiefs, stayed on and on, till at last the Cree boys reminded them, "We are now only one camp from our people." But the Blackfoot boys and girls made no move to go back.
The two Cree girls who used to sit on a hill with the Cree boys would often go to the hill and sit there and watch for the boys to come home. Sometimes they would cry as they sat on the hill. One day when they were sitting on the hill, looking south, they saw in the distance six riders driving a herd of horses. As they came closer, they recognized the Cree boys, whom the people had called 'the lousy ones'. They ran back to camp. Very soon the camp crier was walking up and down the camp, shouting, "The lousy ones are back. The lousy ones are back. They have with them many horses and some Blackfoot people." People ran to meet the Cree boys and their friends, and they were escorted back to camp.

A new tipi was set up for the Blackfoot visitors, but as it turned out, four new tipis were needed, as the Blackfoot boys married the Cree girls who used to sit on a hill with the Cree boys before they left. And the two Cree boys, whom the people used to call 'the lousy ones', married the Blackfoot girls who had helped them drive the horses home.

That is the end of this story.

(End of Side B, Tape IH-043)

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