

Foremost man and his band.

/ David Lee.

[S.l. : s.n.], 1983. 7 p.

Claims and Historical Research Centre : I.175

E99
.C88
L43
1983
c. 1

E99.C88 L43 1983 G1

Saskatchewan History

Volume XXXVI

Autumn 1983

Number 3

(CHR # I-175)

FOREMOST MAN, AND HIS BAND

by David Lee

Foremost Man was the leader of the last band of Plains Indians to settle on a reserve in Canada. He and his people resisted the inducements and threats of the Canadian Government, refusing to move north and settle on a reserve as the other Indians did in the 1870s and 1880s. Although they were treaty Indians, this small band of Crees held out quietly in the Cypress Hills area for thirty years, eking out a living without the benefit of annuities and other treaty rights which other Indians possessed.

In English he was generally called Foremost Man or Front Man. On the 1875 and 1876 treaty lists for the Kahkewistahaw band he is noted as "Ne-can-nete" which is translated there as "Goes Before." On later lists he is registered as "Ne-kah-new," "Ne-kah-nea," "Front Man" and "Foremost Man." A halfbreed neighbour and friend living in Medicine Hat called him "chief Front Man, Nekaneet." The reserve established in 1913 and named after him is written Nekaneet.¹

Little will ever be known of Foremost Man's early life. After the signing of Treaty Number 4 in 1874 he was listed as belonging to Kahkewistahaw's band. This band was one of the Calling River People or Rabbit Skin People, divisions of Plains Crees identified by David Mandelbaum. In the nineteenth century these were the eastern-most groups of the Plains Cree, usually hunting and trading in the territory between the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle rivers. On one occasion Foremost Man recalled that he had lived among the whites when he was young and from them had gained some knowledge of agriculture. Many of the eastern Plains Cree are known to have spent considerable time around the Hudson's Bay Company posts of Fort Qu'Appelle and Fort Pelly;² this is perhaps where Foremost Man spent his youth.

On another occasion, however, when explaining his deeply-felt attachment to the Cypress Hills, he claimed that he had been born in that area and had grown up there. On signing the Treaty, Kahkewistahaw was noted as living "towards the Cypress Hills." Before the treaties, the Cypress Hills had been on the fringes of territory controlled by Blackfoot, Assiniboine, Gros Ventres and Cree. A few Indians hunted there but always at the risk of attack from other tribes. Travel was dangerous and, as a result, the Hills were never the exclusive hunting grounds of any of the Plains Indians.³

Foremost Man collected his annual treaty payment at Fort Qu'Appelle several times in the 1870s. But soon the buffalo (source of most of the Crees' sustenance) became scarce and the arrival of 5,000 refugee Sioux under Sitting Bull increased the demand while, at the same time, reducing the supply. Kahkewistahaw's people had to range greater distances from their traditional territory to find the diminishing buffalo herds. For this reason, in 1879 and 1880, the band took its annuities in the Cypress Hills instead of at the Fort. Then, in the autumn of 1880, Kahkewistahaw decided to give up the hunt and agreed with the Department of Indian Affairs to

standing. They had two sons; George, born 1906, and Morgan, born 1913, neither of whom followed in their father's occupation.

Dill was an avid sportsman. He played golf, was captain of the Saskatoon baseball club for a spell, and president of the hockey club. He enjoyed fishing at Waskesiu and went on hunting trips each autumn. One of his obvious skills was shooting; in 1920, as president of the Saskatoon Gun Club, he won the Manitoba-Saskatchewan zone trapshooting championship. He later went to Cleveland, Ohio to compete in the Grand American. In an autobiographical note drawn up a few years before his death, he described himself in the third person as "... an ardent follower of Rod and Gun, and an advocate of clean sport. His motto: Shoot to kill and retrieve the cripples."²⁴

Saskatoon's first photographer died 23 June 1948 at St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon at the age of 72 years after being ill for a couple of months. He was interred in Woodlawn Cemetery on the afternoon of 25 June.²⁵

While not noted for breaking new ground in his chosen field, Ralph Dill was a thoroughly competent, conscientious and skilled craftsman. He was, first and foremost, a businessman making a living, but in so doing, has left behind an extremely valuable visual record of Saskatoon in the first four decades of the twentieth century. For this, we can be grateful.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Dill insisted in a short autobiographical sketch that his birth was in 1876 but his registration on file at the Ontario Vital Statistics says 1875.
- ² Minnie Dill married Robert Quaife. She was very active in church missionary affairs and died 7 September 1948 aged 74 years in Nanaimo, B.C.
- ³ William B. Cameron, *Blood Red The Sun*, Edmonton: Hurtig, 1977, p. XI.
- ⁴ Morgan Dill, personal interview at his home, Saskatoon, 24 September 1981.
- ⁵ Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, "Ralph Dill Puts Away His Lenses to Fish and Golf," 7 April 1938, p. 3.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ Mrs. A. Hargreaves, telephone interview, 28 September 1981.
- ⁹ One of the Barr Colony images has become the first of eight photographs in the limited edition portfolio *The Saskatoon Series* published in 1981.
- ¹⁰ Saskatoon *Phoenix*, "Ralph Dill Puts Away His Lenses to Fish and Golf," 7 April 1938, p. 3.
- ¹¹ Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, "Will Be Shown the Sights," 18 July 1906, p. 12.
- ¹² Frances Morrison Library, Local History Room, photographs file — Local Officials, No. 1699.
- ¹³ *The Pencil of Nature*, published in parts 1844-46 was the first book ever assembled using photographs as illustrations. The author and photographer was William Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877), the Englishman who invented the paper photograph.
- ¹⁴ There are two Dill composite photographs of Saskatoon's last Town Council of 1906 and the first City Council also of 1906 located in the "Town Hall" of the Western Development Museum (Saskatoon Branch). The 1912 City Council is in the Francis Morrison Library, Local History Room and in addition, there are six more City Council composites (1925-1930) in the third floor hallway of Saskatoon City Hall.
- ¹⁵ Contact printing is the exposing to light of photographic paper through and in direct contact with a negative. The resulting print is exactly the same size as the negative, has maximum sharpness, minimum grain and, depending on the paper used, gives the best reproduction of the tones in the negative.
- ¹⁶ Morgan Dill, personal interview at his home, Saskatoon, 24 September 1981.
- ¹⁷ Saskatoon *Phoenix*, "Rotarians Hear About Photo Act," undated, ca. 1923.
- ¹⁸ Copies of this photograph are held by the Western Development Museum, Saskatoon Branch, the Saskatchewan Archives Board and the Local History Room, Frances Morrison Library.
- ¹⁹ Saskatoon *Commentator*, Martha Morgan, "The Man Behind the Lens," 2 September 1970, p. 9.
- ²⁰ Mrs. A. Hargreaves, telephone interview, 9 October 1981.
- ²¹ His son recalls that the retouching step was the most time consuming part of the operation. All the retouching was done on the negative, not on the print as is frequently done today.
- ²² Mrs. A. Hargreaves, telephone interview, 28 September 1981.
- ²³ Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*, "Ralph Dill Puts Away His Lenses to Fish and Golf," 7 April 1938, p. 3.
- ²⁴ Ralph Dill, autobiographical manuscript (2 pp.), undated (ca. 1943), p. 2.
- ²⁵ Mrs. Helen Dill passed away 23 October 1965 in Saskatoon and was buried beside her husband.

take a reserve on the lower Qu'Appelle River (Crooked Lakes district). The larger portion of the band, however, remained on the plains under the leadership of Foremost Man. In 1881 and 1882 these Indians drew their annuities at Fort Walsh, divisional headquarters of the North-West Mounted Police for the Cypress Hills area. Foremost Man, the Departmental paylists show, was "Paid as a Head Man, as he has a large personal following recognizing no other chief." In 1881 Kahkewistahaw is known to have had only 154 people living with him on the reserve while Foremost Man could count 428 in his following; many of these, however, were members of other bands.⁴ Foremost Man and more important leaders such as Piapot, Little Pine and Big Bear attracted to their own bands large numbers of Cree from reserves in the north, Indians who found it difficult to adjust to a quiet, sedentary, agricultural life.

In the early 1880s the Cypress Hills became the centre where most of the Plains Cree who refused to take up a reserve, gathered at least once a year to draw their treaty payments. The rest of the year these more independent-minded Indians lived by the hunt, pursuing the fast-disappearing buffalo as far south as the Missouri River. American authorities discouraged this and, indeed, in 1881 Foremost Man and some of his followers were seized, disarmed and sent back to Canada by the United States Army, almost starving on the journey to Fort Walsh. By 1881 the great herd was gone and when the Cree assembled in the autumn for their annuities some agreed to go to their reserves. Many, however, tried to live on in the Cypress Hills. Rising out of the dry flatness of the surrounding plains, the Hills were still rich in fauna and flora. But, with the large number of Indians gathered there, it was not long before fish, fowl and antelope became scarce. While the Department of Indian Affairs provided them with emergency supplies, it coaxed and exhorted the Indians to give up their traditional nomadic life and settle down on reserves. Many gave up in despair but in December 1881 there were still 4,000 Cree being fed at Fort Walsh. The rations were not enough to keep them from hunger, however, and they lacked clothing and tents as well. After another long winter of cold and suffering (1882-83) most of these holdout Indians saw no other choice but a reserve. One by one the chiefs led their people north. The Department announced that henceforth (after 1882) annuities and relief would only be dispensed on reserves. Fort Walsh was closed to discourage them from returning.⁵

Foremost Man's group stayed on, however, living quietly in the area around the Cypress Hills. Their numbers dwindled over the years as some families gave up and moved to their reserves in the north.

Estimated numbers of Foremost Man's following⁶

1881	428	1887	200	1893	180
1883	350	1889	220	1895	120
1885	200	1891	230	1898	119

The numbers noted here are only approximate for these non-reserve Indians were spread across a large tract of the North-West Territories — many near Maple Creek, others near Medicine Hat and Swift Current; some spent several months of the year across the border in Montana. Most of them had originally been enumerated as followers of Kahkewistahaw but they were joined by Cree from the bands of Piapot and others, as well as a few families of Saulteaux among the Medicine Hat group. They were conservative Indians who wanted to continue their

traditional way of life. They resisted Christianity without exception. But their most important bond of unity was a strong attachment to the Cypress Hills area and a desire to remain there.

Bands among the Plains Cree had traditionally coalesced around men who were renowned for their courage and achievements in oratory, war, horse-rustling, buffalo-hunting and trading. Individuals could move freely from one band to another according to the benefits which they hoped to gain from a chief's leadership.⁷ Foremost Man's followers, however, must have hoped only to gain courage and inspiration from their leader's success in surviving in the Cypress Hills area against the wishes of the Department of Indian Affairs. Foremost Man also served as their spokesman in dealing with the Government and other whites. As late as 1896 the Department of Indian Affairs noted that he was the "recognized leader" of the Cypress Hills Indians but it never acknowledged or paid him as an official chief. In its correspondence the Department often referred to Foremost Man as a "Headman" (a councillor or minor chief).⁸

Foremost Man was never considered a dangerous Indian. Only once did he come to the particular notice of the authorities. In January 1883 he and some of his men visited the camp of a Canadian Pacific Railway contractor who was cutting trees in the Cypress Hills for railway ties. They demanded provisions from the workmen and told them to stop cutting the timber for it belonged to the Indians. The men were frightened and fled to the NWMP post at Maple Creek. Superintendent Shurtliffe called Foremost Man in and "convinced him" never again to interfere with the railway. Commissioner A. G. Irvine of the North-West Mounted Police minimized the incident as "a timid attempt . . . to procure presents of food from the contractors."⁹ Thereafter Foremost Man generally tried to stay out of the way of governmental authority. This must explain how he and his followers avoided being forced onto a northern reserve.

Foremost Man was not averse to taking up a reserve; but if the Government insisted that he settle on a reserve he wanted it to be in the Cypress Hills area which was so dear to him. In 1881, indeed, he and Piapot had travelled with T.P. Wadsworth (Inspector of Indian Agencies) and the local Indian Agent to Maple Creek to select locations for their respective reserves. The following year, however, the Government decided that all Cree reserves would have to be north of the projected route of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Government was nervous about having large numbers of Indians located close to the boundary with the United States; it wanted to minimize contact, especially horse-stealing raids, between Canadian and American Indians for fear they should lead to serious disputes between the two nations. Piapot still wanted to live in the Cypress Hills area but he was considered dangerous by the Department of Indian Affairs. It expended much effort in inducing him, Little Pine and Big Bear to move north. It offered transportation assistance and all the bands but that of Foremost Man accepted. It would be several generations before Foremost Man's band would again receive treaty benefits. Foremost Man insisted that he would only settle on the reserve promised him near Maple Creek. Wadsworth at first told his superiors that he had not promised anything, but two North-West Mounted Policemen contradicted him. He then argued that the offer had been made in error, that Foremost Man had not been entitled to a reserve for in 1881 he had not been a headman; but he could not deny that, in 1881 and 1882, Foremost Man had been paid the larger annuity merited by a headman. Finally, he contended that a reserve in the Cypress Hills

region would be a "great mistake" for it would become a "rendezvous for 'scalawag' Indians and horse thieves."¹⁰

After the departure of the other band leaders, Foremost Man continued to press his case for a reserve in the Cypress Hills. He may even have travelled to Regina in 1883 to see Edgar Dewdney, Lieutenant-Governor and Indian Commissioner of the North-West Territories. Dewdney refused to concede him a reserve on several grounds. A reserve in that area, he felt, would attract American Indians on horse-stealing raids; it was too remote from other reserves to be serviced economically; and the soil was unsuitable for agriculture. He objected that Foremost Man's Indians were not entitled to a reserve for themselves as they were "stragglers" from other bands; but this should not have disqualified them as other breakaway groups (for example, that led by Poundmaker) had been granted reserves. Later, in the 1890s, the Department went as far as to wrongly label the Cypress Hills Indians as "non-treaty" Indians.¹¹

Foremost Man's claim to a reserve at Maple Creek arose again after the 1885 rebellion and again Wadsworth rejected it. Wadsworth recalled that Foremost Man had once told him that he would never leave the Cypress Hills. He recollected that when he warned the Indians that no farming instructor would be sent to teach them there, Foremost Man had replied that he was familiar with farming, that he did not want to farm, that he wanted to stay where he was. On 19 July 1887 Foremost Man appealed directly to the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs in Ottawa. In the petition which someone wrote for him he claimed that:

I have been born and have lived in this part of the country. . . . My people and I wish to live in this part of the country where I was raised in. I have always been a loyal subject to Her Majesty's Government and whenever I meet white People have always been friendly to them. I showed my loyalty when there was trouble in 1885 by keeping my Band quiet. . . .¹²

In the 1880s and 1890s the Department of Indian Affairs tried several times to induce the Cypress Hills Indians to move to reserves in the north (especially that of Piapot). The country around the Hills was being developed as a grazing area and the Department now felt that the Indians would "menace the safety of the stock." After the Rebellion the Department considered using force if necessary to move them out but Sir John A. Macdonald rejected such a measure for fear of alarming the other Indians of the North-West Territories. Later the Department tried to convince them individually to leave. In 1893 the North-West Mounted Police reported that "several were willing to go if 'Front Man', who seems to have a great deal of influence among them, would go"; but he preferred to "continue in his present state." The new Indian Commissioner, Hayter Reed, then tried to paint them as troublemakers, "getting drunk and fighting among themselves and with the settlers." He hoped, thereby, that the Indians could be removed by citing the "Act respecting . . . Public Morals." The North-West Mounted Police, however, would not co-operate for they regularly reported that the Indians were "peaceful," "well-behaved" and "industrious." Moreover, while whites were occasionally jailed for vagrancy at Maple Creek, the Mounties never charged any of Foremost Man's people with that offense.¹³

Foremost Man's Indians were seldom involved in serious crime. A survey of North-West Mounted Police arrest statistics shows that, from 1886 to 1896, the force recorded an average of only one Indian conviction per year at Maple Creek — usually for theft or drunkenness. In 1891, however, some of Foremost Man's followers were arrested at Medicine Hat for illegal possession of alcohol: to avoid

Prohibition laws, whiskey runners often threw liquor from moving trains just outside town; the Indians, though, would sometimes pick up the contraband before the smugglers could retrieve it. With respect to disputes within the band, only on two occasions did an Indian choose to use the white system of justice rather than have his grievance handled, in the traditional manner, by the chief; these cases resulted in convictions of one Indian for assaulting another. There is no record of Indians laying court charges against whites, though the Police did order one whiteman to pay reparations to an Indian whose dog he had shot. With respect to whites charging Indians, offences were never worse than minor thefts; there were no cases reported of Indians assaulting whites or of Indians killing range cattle.¹⁴

Relations between Foremost Man's Indians and the white settlers were quite good. Many whites supported the band's attempts to obtain a reserve at Maple Creek and advised the Indians that the Government had no legal right to force them onto any reserve. The North-West Mounted Police noted, however, that many of the settlers stood to gain from the Indians' presence in the area for they served as a handy source of cheap, intermittent labour.¹⁵

With the buffalo gone, mere survival must have been difficult for Indians not living on a reserve. Though life was often difficult there, reserve Indians at least received some assistance in the form of equipment, seeds and stock, and instruction in agricultural methods. As well as the annual cash payments guaranteed them by treaty, they could obtain medical and food aid in times of emergency. The Department of Indian Affairs denied these benefits to Foremost Man's band because it would not agree to settle on a reserve. By threatening to withhold the benefits of treaty, the Department had successfully forced every other band to move onto a reserve; but Foremost Man and his people would not give in. Foremost Man does not seem to have been aware that the Department could not legally deprive him of his annual treaty payments. Departmental officials were aware, however, that the withholding of these annuities was not legal. The amount was not large — \$5 a year per person and \$15 for a headman. Still, the annuities, along with other treaty benefits, would unquestionably have helped this impoverished band. On the other hand, Foremost Man's old leader, Kahkewistahaw, was not prospering on his reserve. Although considered a cooperative chief by the Department, he was reported in 1902 as living in extreme poverty.¹⁶

Foremost Man's band scratched out a living by various means. In the early years it tried agriculture; in 1885 a Mounted Policeman reported that they were "occupying themselves in trying to put in a crop of potatoes, but as they had no implements, except one spade, the others using sharpened stakes and hatchets, the headway they made was small. A few were fishing with dip-nets and catching suckers enough to feed themselves." Two years later they were reported still gardening but this practice seems to have been abandoned by the 1890s. In these early years the band supplemented its diet by hunting in the Cypress Hills but that could not continue indefinitely. A Mounted Police officer warned as early as 1886 "they are fast killing off all the game in this section." The band also earned some cash by harvesting buffalo horns and bones which lay about the plains. The horns which polished and decorated for sale as souvenirs to passengers on the trains which passed through Maple Creek and Medicine Hat; the bones they collected for export to fertilizer and carbon works in the United States. By the 1890s most of the antelope, fish and bones were gone and the Indians had to find other means of subsistence. Many, like Foremost Man himself, were able to continue hunting by

spending part of the year in Montana where apparently there was still some game. The rest remained in the area, hiring out to local ranchers at haying time, cutting fuel wood in the Hills for sale in the towns or selling the horses which they bred. The Indians received no assistance from local churches.¹⁷

Foremost Man never asked for help, even during the most difficult winters. After his death in 1897 his people continued to be wary of Government aid. The North-West Mounted Police provided them with emergency rations on occasion but, as one officer observed:

If we do not happen to find out their condition they will say nothing as they are morbidly afraid of accepting assistance from the government lest they should be compelled to go and live on a reserve. One is disposed to think that life on any kind of reserve must be better than the life they lead, but they cannot be persuaded to think so.¹⁸

The Cree tradition of community sharing must have contributed much to their survival in difficult times.

In 1885, when they were gardening, some of Foremost Man's followers were reported living in rough houses but by the 1890s they had returned to living in tents because they made travel easier. The seasonal nature of their odd jobs made frequent travel necessary but, in any case, it suited the migratory propensity of these Plains Cree Indians. At times half or more of the band might be found across the border in Montana, hunting or attending a Sun Dance. The American authorities occasionally sent some of them back to Canada but if the hunting was better on the Missouri River the Indians did not hesitate to go back. In Montana they met Cree who had fled Canada after the Rebellion of 1885; these Cree were repatriated in 1896 and some of Foremost Man's people were mistakenly included among them.¹⁹

The travels of Foremost Man and his band did not trouble the Department of Indian Affairs; it was, rather, those who left their reserves to visit the Cypress Hills who were considered worrisome. Immediately after the Rebellion some Indians and Métis fleeing the country passed through the Hills before escaping to the United States. Their passage placed Foremost Man under suspicion but there is no evidence that he assisted them. Indeed, the Mounted Police officer commanding at Maple Creek reported him as "very friendly." The Department was subsequently afraid that some of the rebel Indians might return to Canada by way of the Cypress Hills. This did not happen but the Hills remained a magnet attracting Indians unhappy with life on the reserve. While it was not illegal for them to leave their reserves it made the Department uncomfortable. It constantly encouraged wandering Indians to return home to their reserves in the north; transportation costs were paid by the Government.²⁰

There is no doubt, however, that if a substantial number of discontented Indians had left their reserves seeking to rediscover the traditional life of the plains, the Government would have found a means to force them all onto reserves. The Department of Indian Affairs tolerated Foremost Man's band only because it was small and caused no trouble. Foremost Man and his followers kept a low profile, especially in the 1890s. This is how Foremost Man succeeded in staying in the Cypress Hills while stronger leaders, such as Big Bear and Piapot, failed. It is also obvious that the resources of the Cypress Hills could only have supported a small band of hunting Indians.

In the early years the Department of Indian Affairs seems to have regarded all Indians living in the Cypress Hills as part of a band led by Foremost Man. In the 1890s, however, the Department more often considered the Cypress Hills Indians as "Stragglers" from several bands all of whom belonged to reserves in the north. The Indians themselves may not all have deemed Foremost Man to be their leader but he was usually their spokesman in any group dealings with the whites. It may have been that Foremost Man was simply the strongest personality amongst a group of conservative Indians who were united only in a desire to live in the Cypress Hills area. It may have been that Foremost Man was the most adamant in his attachment to the Cypress Hills area and that the others took courage from his example. The role which Foremost Man played, then, was probably more that of a spokesman for a group of like-minded people, more than of a quiet man who led by example, rather than that of a dynamic and hortatory leader in the Plains Cree tradition.

Even though a few Indians left their reserves to join Foremost Man's original group in the Cypress Hills, the total number declined over the years. Some gave up and consented to settle on a northern reserve; for them the price was too high — they could not live without their treaty rights. But Foremost Man himself was able to remain true to his goal. That goal was not to avoid life on a reserve but, rather, to avoid leaving his cherished Cypress Hills. In achieving his goal it has turned out that Foremost Man is now known as the leader of the last band of Plains Cree Indians to settle on a reserve in Canada.

Foremost Man's goal, however, was not realized in his lifetime. In the spring of 1897 a party of Cree returned to Maple Creek from Montana bringing Foremost Man with them; he had come home to see the Cypress Hills one last time and died there, 16 May 1897. The band, now led by Crooked Legs, pursued Foremost Man's dream of a reserve in the Hills, eventually hiring a lawyer to promote their cause. They informed the lawyer that "it was the express command of their Chief before he died that they should remain" in the area. The Government finally relented to the Indians' wishes in 1913; it granted them a small reserve at Maple Creek on the grounds that they had "lived in that vicinity all their lives" and that the local (white) settlers had requested they be allowed to stay.²¹ Still, it was not until 1975 that the Government agreed to pay them their treaty benefits; they had gone without them for 93 years.

Thirty years elapsed between the time that the buffalo disappeared and the year that Foremost Man's band took a reserve. One generation of these treaty Indians of the plains never experienced the close attention or paternalism of the Department of Indian Affairs. Unlike Indians on reserves, they travelled widely on the plains; they enjoyed considerable independence and were free to make their own decisions. Nevertheless, they strove to obtain a reserve where, as they were well aware, their lives would be restricted by government supervision. It is possible that they felt that two greater ends were to be gained by obtaining a reserve. Granted by the government, a reserve would give them a secure right to live indefinitely in the Cypress Hills to which they had become strongly attached (they would accept a reserve nowhere else). In addition, a reserve would give them a secure right to live together on their own, communally-held land.

This latter sentiment indicates that the individualistic wage employment and entrepreneurship of the white society in which they had worked for thirty years had not diminished the communal, sharing ethic of their Cree heritage. Indeed, Foremost Man's people do not seem to have been acculturated to any notable extent.

Perhaps the difficulties which they encountered in white society reinforced the validity of, and need for, maintaining their traditions. To meet their difficulties they continued to trust in familiar Indian practices rather than ask assistance of a government which they feared would force them to leave the Cypress Hills. For example, they rarely sought justice in Canadian courts, and never sent their children to public schools, or solicited welfare or medical care in times of want. They relied, instead, on traditional Cree mechanisms to resolve internal differences, instruct the young, provide for the needy and care for the sick.

An ethnographic study of the Nekaneet reserve conducted in the 1960s found that "much of Indian culture is intact, although its integrity is lost." This persistence was especially true of such traits as religion, language, medicine, food habits, music, recreation, sharing practices and a propensity to travel. The investigator did not claim that the Nekaneet population was less acculturated than that of other reserves (he was not aware that it was more recently established). However, he did note that only seven people were literate in English and five of these were women who had educated on other reserves and married Nekaneet men.²²

There is no evidence to indicate that Foremost Man preached the importance of preserving Cree culture. His goal was simply to be allowed to live in the Cypress Hills. To pursue that goal, however, Foremost Man and his band found strength in their traditional practices.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Public Archives of Canada (PAC), RG 10, (Department of Indian Affairs Records), Paylists, vol. 9412, pp. 47, 169; vol. 9413, p. 12; vol. 9415, pp. 47-49; vol. 9415A, pp. 64-75. RG 10, B 3, vol. 7779, file 27140. Canada, Department of Indian Affairs: *Number and Acreage of Indian Reserves and settlements by band*, (Ottawa 1976), p. 15.
- ² David Mandelbaum: *The Plains Cree*, (Regina 1979), pp. 9-12. RG 10, B 3, vol. 7779, file 27140.
- ³ R. Bonnichsen, S. Baldwin: *Cypress Hills Ethnohistory and Ecology*, Archaeological Survey of Alberta, Occasional Paper No. 10, (Edmonton 1978), pp. 35-39.
- ⁴ RG 10, Paylists, vol. 9415, pp. 47-49; vol. 9415A, pp. 64-65. Dept. of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 1880, p. 105; *ibid.*, 1881, p. 56; *ibid.*, 1882, pp. 201-202.
- ⁵ RG 10, B 3, vols. 3744 & 3745, files 29506-1, 29506-2 & 29506-3. North-West Mounted Police, *Annual Report*, 1882, p. 3.
- ⁶ Dept. of Indian Affairs, *Annual Reports*, 1882-1898, "Tabular Statements."
- ⁷ Mandelbaum, pp. 221-224.
- ⁸ PAC, RG 18, (R.C.M.P. records), B 1, vol. 1038, #75; RG 10, vol. 7779, file 27140.
- ⁹ NWMP, *Annual Report* for 1883, p. 8.
- ¹⁰ RG 10, B 3, vol. 3757, file 31397; vol. 3744, file 29506-2; vol. 7779, file 27140; Canada, House of Commons, *Debates*, 1882, p. 542. Dept. of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 1882, pp. 5, 194.
- ¹¹ RG 10, B 3, vol. 7779, file 27140. PAC, MG 26A, Macdonald Papers, vol. 211, p. 89912. Dept. of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 1892, p. 276; *ibid.*, 1893, p. 402.
- ¹² RG 10, B 3, vol. 7779, file 27140.
- ¹³ RG 10, B 3, vol. 7779, file 27140; vol. 3964, file 149874; NWMP, *Annual Report*, 1887, p. 37; *ibid.*, 1888, pp. 123-124; *ibid.*, 1893, p. 116; *ibid.*, 1895, p. 28. RG 18, B 1, vol. 1038, #75.
- ¹⁴ NWMP, *Annual Reports*, 1886-1896, Appendices. RG 10, B 1, vol. 1204, #163. RG 18, A 1, vol. 1042, f. 97.
- ¹⁵ RG 10, B 3, vol. 7779, file 27140.
- ¹⁶ RG 10, B 3, vol. 7779, file 27140; vol. 3863, file 84138-1. Department of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report*, 1902, p. 193.
- ¹⁷ NWMP, *Annual Report*, 1885, pp. 2-3; *ibid.*, 1886, p. 31; *ibid.*, 1887, p. 37; *ibid.*, 1888, pp. 123-124; *ibid.*, 1889, pp. 118-119; *ibid.*, 1897, pp. 88-89. RG 10, B 3, vol. 7779, file 27140; vol. 3964, file 149874. RG 18, B 1, vol. 1382, #76.
- ¹⁸ NWMP, *Annual Report*, 1885, pp. 2-3; *ibid.*, 1904, pp. 25; *ibid.*, 1905, p. 24.
- ¹⁹ RG 18, A 1, vol. 62, f. 211; vol. 91, f. 150. RG 18, B 1, vol. 1063, #111, part 2. NWMP, *Annual Report*, 1891, p. 94; *ibid.*, 1892, p. 113; *ibid.*, 1895, p. 25. RG 10, vol. 7779, file 27140; vol. 3863, file 84138-1; vol. 3964, file 149874.
- ²⁰ PAC, MG 27, 1 C4, Dewdney Papers, vol. 4, pp. 1376-77; RG 10, B 3, vol. 7779, file 27140; vol. 3964, file 149874. RG 18, B 1, vol. 1038, #75; vol. 1140, #178; NWMP, *Annual Report*, 1886, p. 31; *ibid.*, 1897, pp. 88-89. B.A.T. de Montigny, A. Ouimet (eds.): *La Verité Sur La Question Metisse au Nord-Ouest*, (Montreal 1889), p. 144.
- ²¹ RG 10, B 3, vol. 7779, file 27140. Canada, Order-in-Council No. 2004, 2 August 1913.
- ²² Niels W. Braroe: *Indian and White: Self-Image and Interaction in a Canadian Plains Community*, (Stanford 1975), pp. 53, 122, 142 *et passim*. The author disguises the area, calling it "Sweet Grass."



RECOLLECTIONS AND REMINISCENCES

A BEGINNING IN POLITICS: SASKATOON CCF 1938-1943

By Carlyle King

Although I had been a member of the League for Social Reconstruction, one of the founding bodies of the CCF, and although I had supported CCF candidates in the elections of 1934, 1935, and 1938, I took no active part in my local constituency organization until the fall of 1938. This was partly because of my disappointment in what I felt to be the maladroit leadership of the Saskatchewan CCF by George Williams and the lacklustre performance by the CCF group in the Provincial Legislature. My admiration went to J. S. Woodsworth and M. J. Coldwell in the federal field. Anyway, I believed that significant effort to lift Canada from the depths of economic depression would have to come on the national level.

Of more importance to me, however, in the middle thirties was the worsening international situation and the consequent danger of war, of which I was warning my students at least as early as 1935. I spoke publicly on this subject whenever invited to do so, usually by youth groups. I remember speaking to groups as diverse as the Student Christian Movement, the Young Judaeans, and the Young Communist League. My speech to the latter group created a furore in the Province and a flurry of letters to the daily press from right-thinking people. My offence, I see now, was more in the group that I spoke to than in what I said, for my message to young Christians and young Communists was the same: I explained why the world was in deadly peril, I criticized the foreign policy of the British Government (and the Canadian Government) and I advocated policies that I believed would ease international tension. Among the audience at the Y.C.L. meeting was the Rev. W. G. Brown, outspoken minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, who listened attentively to my speech and in the subsequent question and discussion period raised no objection to anything I had said. It was the press that did me in. A sensational report with a scare headline in the next day's *Star-Phoenix* earned me the reputation for some years as "that _____ who said that the British Empire was not worth fighting for."

I compounded my offence by telling young business men much the same as I had told young Christians and young Communists. In an early month of 1938 I spoke to the Saskatoon Kinsmen Club, again condemning the foreign policy of the British Government and warning my auditors of the wrath to come. They heard me out in stunned surprise and responded with polite applause; but the next day the telephone in the President's Office never stopped ringing from outraged callers demanding my head on a platter. Dr. J. S. Thomson, President at the time, was so shaken that within the next day or so he walked across the campus to my office and told me that if I persisted in making speeches "like that" he would recommend my dismissal from the employment of the University. He was not appeased when I