

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: CROOKED LAKE #1
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: CROOKED LAKE
INTERVIEW LOCATION: CROOKED LAKE

TRIBE/NATION: CREE
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: JUNE 21, 1934
INTERVIEWER: DR. D.G. MANDELBAUM
INTERPRETER: LEO & NORBERT
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD
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BERKELEY

TAPE NUMBER: IH-DM.01
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 133
PAGES: 4
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Informant: Peter Henry

I came upon this man as he was building a house for Arthur Wasaxkis. Since none of the men we had set out to talk with were present at the moment, I talked with Peter Henry for about half an hour.

He is a half blood, says that his father was French and his mother Cree. He was born in the Qu'Appelle valley but his parents originally lived to the east and made journeys back to the region of Winnipeg on occasion. Incidentally, I got quite a marked impression from all those I spoke with today that their connections are to the east and they only have been residents of the country for one or two generations. Peter Henry had been a fireman on a locomotive in the States for some years. He learned how to build houses in the Turtle Mountain country. His father did the same thing. In the summertime he builds houses for others and in the wintertime he chops wood and does other odd jobs for the Indians. He does not live on the reservation and is apparently not on the Agency rolls. He is evidently a specialist in the construction of houses.

He says that a real good house takes about three weeks to build. The one I saw was in the process of construction for about a week. The walls of rough timbers were about ten feet high. His son was helping him as do his two other sons in turn. His pay for building this particular house is to be a bag of flour and ten dollars.

The house is to be occupied by Arthur Wasaxkis's son who is going to be married. I am in doubt as to whether Arthur is going to move into the new place himself or whether the newly married couple are to have the new house.

The building of the house is started by finding a level piece of ground or levelling off a likely place. Those who are having the house built see to the cutting of the logs and to hauling them to the place of construction. Four beams are laid down and levelled, notches are cut and into these are laid the next timbers and so on until the walls are raised to their full height. The terms I obtained were:

Window - wacnikau (light shines through)
Foundation Beams - nistam mistig k (first sticks)
Beams - kaxgau mistig k (all sticks)
Roof - akwa naxikau (covering)
Doorway - ickwatem
Mud Plastering - acicgi
Floor Board - napaki 'takwa

As I took these terms I seemed to notice a tendency toward an intermediate k and g, sometimes it sounds like one, sometimes like the other, so it is also with the d and t. Leo said that this man Henry's Cree was bad, being interspersed with French. Peter Henry said that he belonged to the Kakiwistahau reserve.

I said that I would come back to get a picture of the completed house and find out more about its structure.

Informant: kanewuskwahau

This old man was one of Skinner's chief informants when he was here. Skinner gives his name as "Four Clouds" but I believe that it means something like "layers of clouds," at least "Four Clouds" does not seem to be the exact translation. I spent most of the time getting acquainted with the old fellow, showing him Skinner's pictures in the A. A. article and reading back to him some of the things he had told Skinner twenty years ago. He said that he was born somewhere north of Regina and came to the Agency with the second group that came under the treaty. His chief, when the treaty was made, was kagiciweu. That band used to hunt, as far as he could tell, from the Rockies, along the Saskatchewan River, to Medicine Hat. Later he gave his birthplace as a locality about 12 miles north of Moose Jaw and a little east.

This old man will probably yield a great deal of information although he seems to be not in complete possession of all his

mental faculties.

Informant: kaniswiwitay (Two Voices)

This is one of the oldest men on the reservation, claiming to be 105 years of age. He says that he is an Ojibwa and belongs to the Kauwisis band. He received me in his tipi and to me it was quite impressive. The tipi is decorated with four tipi figures, two on each side of the doorway, and is girdled by a ring of horses and men, representations which depict kaniswiwitay's exploits in warfare. One in particular that I asked him about shows him scalping a Sioux. The paintings were done by a 16 year old school boy about whom I shall have to find out more.

The old man has a beard, rather scraggly, but seven or eight inches in length. He is blind but received me with dignity as I sat in the tipi facing him. He knelt on a blanket which was embroidered. One Norbert who was visiting there interpreted since he seemed to be able to communicate with the old man better. The reason for this may be in the fact that Norbert is an Ojibwa while Leo is a Cree. (Incidentally, Leo said that he had come from Turtle Mt. adding that Leo's people had come from there also.)

Two Voice said that he was of the family of Chief Black Duck who was his mother's uncle. Two Voices had lived for a while on a reserve in the U.S. but came back to Canada for a visit. He could not recross the border because of his "eye failure," probably his eye disease, and has remained in Canada since.

He said that the Kauwizes band was sometimes known as the Osup band because Osup was chief after Kauwizes died.

When I asked him what difference there was between the Cree and the Ojibwa, he said that there was none except for a slight difference in language.