

Stories & Accounts  
OF THE BLACKFOOT PEOPLE



As told by White Feather to Bob Sanders

# **Stories & Accounts Of The Blackfoot People**

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# CHAPTER 1

I lived at a time before the white man came to America. This was a long time ago (pre-1620) and I lived with a tribe that would be close to what is now known as the Canadian border, although for us it was just a huge plains area.

The tribe that I belong to consisted of about 100 people in all; men, women and children.

We were a nomadic people and followed the herds of bison and other creatures as they followed the weather patterns, moving North in summer and South in winter.

The women of our tribe tended to migrate with us, but stayed in the camp wherever we set up home.

I could say that we had a form of marriage ceremony, in which a woman would be betrothed to a man in a ceremony, which consisted of a fete, but also consisted of an exchange of goods between both parties.

The man's family gave animal pelts and weapons to the woman's family who, in turn, donated much of it to the bridegroom and the woman's family gave cooking utensils and blankets to the man's family, much of which was given to the bride.

The object of this was to seal the marriage and also to assist the young couple in setting up home, so to speak. So, it was a helpful arrangement for both families and both the husband and wife.

Eventually, of course, it was expected that the wife would give birth and at this moment the elder, experienced women, would assist with the birth.

At that moment, the husband would return to his parent's teepee and would await the birth.

As is often the case, a boy's birth was celebrated more than that of a girl, but both sexes were celebrated.

It was more the case of celebrating a successful delivery than celebrating the arrival of a boy or a girl, as child mortality was fairly common amongst our tribe.

This was in part due to poor hygiene and partly due to lack of medical care. So, the safe arrival was the cause of celebration, once it was assured that both mother and child would survive.

After a period, the husband would return to live with his wife, but in the meantime, the young wife would be attended by elder women, who instructed the wife in childcare.

The baby would be breastfed for 3 or 4 years until it was obvious that a normal diet was required.

As our main diet was meat based; bison, deer, rabbits etc, it was not suitable for a young baby, so the mother was encouraged to breastfeed the baby for as long as possible.

In the meantime, it was hoped that the wife would not become pregnant again, but if she did, lactation stopped and so the baby would be fed by a wet nurse of the tribe.

As the child grew, depending on its sex, it would have its education taken over by its mother, in the case of a girl, plus some of the elder women of the tribe. It would be taught the skills of cooking, caring for the interior of the teepee and its immediate surroundings, keeping all neat and tidy, plus skills like skinning hides and so on.

Rope and string making for bow strings and lines to hang arrows on was another skill left to women.

The boys were taught hunting, the use of weapons, bow skills, and when they were old enough, they were taken on hunting trips.

Although shooting and killing animals for food was important, one of the most difficult skills was trapping wild horses.

We never had enough horses because they would sometimes be injured by being gored by bison in hunts, or get broken legs by falling into rabbits or gopher holes.

It was difficult to cure horses that had such injuries, and so we were always in need to capture more.

Wild horses, particularly with the primitive means we had at our disposal, we're not easy to capture.

The technique was that a warrior would approach a group of wild horses, riding his horse, but hidden on the side away from the herd.

As his horse approached the herd, at the last moment the brave would throw either a lasso, hoping to catch a horse round the neck - the lasso was made by the women of the tribe - or he would throw a sort of bolas around the legs, hoping that the horse would stumble and fall. This last method was dangerous as sometimes the stones of the bolas would hit the man and knock him out, in which case he could fall under panicking horses, or the horse could stumble and break a leg. This might provide us with meat to eat, but was hardly beneficial to increasing the herd at our disposition.

Our captive horses would breed, of course, but it was a slow process.

The aim of our tribe was that every viable man should have a horse, as these were used in hunting and in battle, but it was not always the case.

## CHAPTER 2

The history of my tribe goes back a long way, and until the white man came and stole our land, slaughtered our people and stole much of what belonged to us, including our women, had not changed very much over that long period.

I could say that I should forgive the white people and I do forgive them, but I can't help having some remorse over the way they rode roughshod over our people.

They caused us much unnecessary hardship, and worse, blamed us for the harm they cause us as a race.

Having said that, I would like to return to describing the way we lived before the change I mentioned above occurred.

By and large, we lived in peace with the other tribes that surrounded us.

We had little contact with other tribes and respected their hunting grounds, as they respected ours.

We all realised that fighting was a futile engagement, and disputes were often settled by the elders, agreeing on land limits during meetings.

We would occasionally cross paths during our treks following the animal migrations.

Once again, we tried to respect that we all needed to follow the herds, and as there were enough animals for all, we hunted in peace.

Occasionally, a daredevil brave might attempt to raid another tribe as we crossed paths, but if that or those braves could be caught, they would be returned to their respective tribes and would be punished in some manner.

We were not the bloodthirsty savages that we are sometimes depicted as.

All those years ago, our weapons were fairly basic.

Axe and arrowheads were made from stone - flint if we could find it. Our knives also had to be made from stone or bone, and their main use was to assist in the removal of animal skin and scraping of fat from the skin.

These skins would be draped on to our teepees, fat side towards the sun, and left there until what that was left on the animal pelt dried and mainly disappeared.

Bison skins we used for covering our teepees, as the fur was virtually waterproof.

They also made excellent blankets.

Our personal clothing was usually made from deer skins. These would be sewn together by the women using sharpened bones, to create needles, and strips of deer leather was the thread that held the pieces of clothing together.

Our clothing was fairly primitive, but it served us well.

Deer skins are water-resistant, because it was important for our health to remain dry when it rained.

In cold weather, we wore cloaks made from bison hides. These were heavy, but kept us warm.

Our women and children wore similar clothing.

I would like to correct some errors that have crept into Indian folk law.

It has been suggested that bows were introduced by white people. This is not true. We had bows long before the white people arrived. In our case, they were often made from bison rib bones tied together.

Strings and ropes were made either by thin links of deer leather twisted, or plaited together, or from various plants that grew besides rivers. A form of papyrus.

The next error I would like to correct concerns horses.

It has been suggested that horses were introduced by the conquistadors around 1620, and although horses were introduced by these people, wild horses lived in the Americas long before that, and we had horses long before the conquistadors arrived.

Horses were essential to our way of life, and hunting and even migration would have been virtually impossible without horses to help with the hunt or to pull our teepees, and equipment when we moved our camps, which we frequently did.

Not only did we follow the animal herds as they migrated, but for hygiene reasons, we frequently moved.

You may understand that using animal flesh, bones, skin and remains in our food and daily needs, plus bodily waste from people, dogs and horses, quickly rendered camps unsafe, so every few weeks we would change camps.

The last thing I will mention this time, is the sort of throwing arrows that history has picked upon. This consisted of a stick with a notch at one end, into which an arrow would be fitted and the arrow projected with the aid of the stick.

We did have that weapon and we did use it, but it was ineffective against bison, not having the power to cause harm to a big and powerful creature. They were used to hunt rabbits, or to fling at enemies, but were no match for bows and arrows, which had much greater power and could harm a bison.

It has also been suggested that we could drive herds of bison over cliffs, and kill large numbers at a stroke. Some tribes might have done this, but my tribe did not. We lived in grassy plains and there were no cliffs where we lived. Also, we would never slaughter large numbers of bison. We had no use for large quantities of meat, so it would just have rotted before we could consume it.

We had respect for nature's creatures and only killed what we could eat while the meat was fresh.

## CHAPTER 3

When we would go hunting, we would tend to creep up on a herd of bison, deer or whatever creatures we were hunting, on our horses. We would be hidden on the side of the horse, distant from the animals we were hunting.

Most wild animals were used to sharing their pastures with horses and so would not be spooked.

Before approaching, we would have selected the animal we would want to kill - usually a male. So, we would try to surround the prey animal, and at a signal, we would fire arrows into the beast. This, usually, did not immediately kill the prey so the entire herd would run off with us, on our horses, in pursuit.

As the wounded animal would weaken, we would catch it up, shoot more arrows into it and eventually it would collapse.

At that point we would leap from our horses and with our axes, attempt to cut the jugular veins. The animal would bleed to death.

Then we would tie ropes around its neck and drag the now dead animal back to our camp at which point, women would take over, skin the animal, clean the hide and share the meat amongst the tribe members.

This may sound cruel, and we regretted killing any living thing, but our survival depended on killing to eat.

Depending on the season and where we were, we would gather nuts and berries also, which provided us, particularly our young ones, with valuable vitamins and minerals, although we knew nothing about such things. We only knew that these nuts and berries were valuable to us to help grow healthy children.

Winters were very hard, because no matter how fast South we travelled, snow was always present.

For people who are obliged to forage for food, cold and snow can be dangerous, as there is not much to eat.

We had no salt and could not preserve meat, so if we could not hunt successfully, starvation was always a problem.

We suffered greatly in winters and lost many people during such times, especially children and the elderly.

Where we lived, winters were long and harsh, and it was a miracle each year that some of us survived.

By the time spring came, we would be in poor condition, and even our dogs and horses would have suffered to the point of near starvation.

The history of our tribes often overlooks the ravages of winters, but winter was always our great concern.

How did we dispose of our dead?

During the winters, we often just wrapped a deceased person in a blanket and left him/her in the snow, because we had no other means of disposing of the bodies.



During the summers, as firewood was scarce, all we could do was cover the dead body in rocks, to prevent predatory animals from consuming the corpse.

On the great plains, trees were scarce and difficult for us to chop down with stone implements, so we had no effective means of cremating corpses, nor of burying them.

As we were constantly on the move, a body left behind presented no threat to us health wise.

We did have ceremonies commending the spirit of our deceased to Heaven.

We tended not to mourn death very much, as life was short and precarious for all of us, so death was a common occurrence.

## CHAPTER 4

The horses we had at that time were quite small and thick set compared to modern horses or even Mustangs of today.

They had to be tough to withstand the rigors of harsh winters.

I believe that they had made their way from Europe during the last great ice age, when ice formed a bridge from Europe to North America.

One could compare them to the small horses found in remote parts of Europe, although I cannot be sure of that.

As far as we were concerned, there were considerable herds of horses and they served our needs.

No doubt, these have crossbred with the much larger horses that were brought from Europe by settlers and form the Mustangs that roam wild today.

Because, before white people came to the Americas, the history is mainly hearsay, much of it is muddled up and it is for that reason that I am pleased to add some clarity, at least as far as my knowledge permits.

Let us continue with my explanations.

I mentioned that we had dogs. Once again, I have no idea of the origin of these dogs but, physically, they could be compared to huskies, in that they were quite large and had thick fur. This protected them from the heat in summer and the bitter cold of winter.

As they bred easily and had fairly large litters, there were considerable numbers of them.

It has been suggested that dogs were mutants of wolves, but I see no proof of this.

There were packs of wolves where we lived, but our dogs would readily fight them if their paths crossed, which gives some indication that they are a separate species.

Anyway, dogs were very useful to us, as we used them in hunting to a certain extent - mainly for rabbits, etc.

If they could catch one, they would eat it, but we trained them to chase after rabbits and drive them towards us and we would do our best to kill them with arrows, either from bows or those throwing sticks I mentioned.

Then we would chase the dogs off before they could grab it and run away with it.

We also used dogs when we went into battle. These were fierce dogs and they learnt to protect us, but attack an enemy tribe.

Equally, nearly every family had some attached to the exteriors of the teepees to protect the occupants. It would be virtually impossible for an enemy to creep up on us without being detected. The dogs would raise the alarm and attack any enemy.

I will also say that our young children would ride on the backs of the large male dogs, rather as if they were horses.

Strangely enough, the dogs did not seem to mind this too much, and some seemed to accept it rather as horses accept an adult on its back.

We taught our children to give pieces of meat to the dogs, so these dogs looked forward to being ridden, as they knew that they would be fed as a reward.

Lastly, dogs were used to pull light weights as we moved from camp to camp.

So, one can see that dogs were an integral part of our lives, and like horses, served us well.

I will mention eagles.

You will have seen headdresses of eagle feathers worn by chieftains.

But, if you can imagine the weapons at our disposal and the fact that eagles are mainly a mountainous bird while we lived on the plains, eagle feathers did not really exist as far as we were concerned.

On top of this, all birds, especially eagles, were considered holy and we would be very reluctant to kill an eagle, even if such a thing were possible.

But we did make headdresses from feathers. These were often plucked from water fowl. We would eat the flesh, use small feathers (down) to stuff pillows for our babies and the large feathers, especially white ones, we would dye the tips to look like eagle feathers and make headdresses mainly for ceremonial use.

A headdress would be a handicap in a hunt, so we kept them for ceremonies.

A visitor, if he saw one of our chiefs wearing a long and fancy headdress, might think that it was made from eagle feathers, but in fact, they were made from waterfowl feathers, dyed to imitate eagle feathers.

## CHAPTER 5

I would like at this moment, to address how we named our children.

As you can imagine, we had no Christian, Arabic or any other denominational names. Neither did we have any written language or arithmetic. We had no need for any of that.

We tended not to give any permanent name to a newborn babe until we were sure that the child would survive.

As I have already stated, infant mortality was quite high in our tribe and we found it better not to name anyone too early, as that just made the loss of an infant more devastating. So, although both parents would love and care for the child, it was always suspected that illness or accident could carry one of them off at any moment.

Survival was a very precarious affair at that time.

There were a number of illnesses that could terminate the life of a young child, especially during the harsh winters.

Then there was the danger that a child might harm himself with one of our weapons.

Lastly, our animals could harm a child. If the children tried to play with dog puppies for instance, the mother might attack and kill the child, or the child might be trampled under the feet of horses.

Also, I may say that a child might fall into our open fires, which were lit in the middle of our teepees.

The slightest cut could become infected, then death was almost assured.

So, to name a child we would wait until he or she was relatively mature - about 11 years old using modern numbers - before there was a naming ceremony.

This naming ceremony would mean acceptance into the tribe.

Before that, the child was not a full member of the tribe.

So, the elders would gather with the medicine man, who was considered to have links to the spirit world, and a name would be chosen.

We did not actually have somewhat fancy names, such as the one I was given later in life - White Feather - but just single names like grass, tree, cloud and so on. It was just a temporary means of identification. The name had no real significance above and beyond a means of identification and even that name was not often used, because we all knew who we were and did not really need names. So, any name was suitable.

As I said, this was given at what you would know as about the age of 11. The important part, as far as we were concerned, was that the child would be likely to survive to manhood, could marry and procreate, thus enlarging the tribe or at least making up for the inevitable losses.

Most men and women kept their simple names throughout their short lives. Death would often occur before the age of 50.

However, for those who lived longer and were suitable to become the elders of the tribe, a double-barreled name such as Silver Cloud, Black Horse or in my case, White Feather, would be attributed.

This double-barreled name was both a mark of respect and also a sign that the person was an official elder and had the right to sit in on councils.

There was no upper or lower limit to the numbers of the members of the council.

It depended on the number of people of the right age and wisdom. Sometimes, following a series of very harsh winters, there would be few council members left and sometimes, with passing time, more would be appointed.

It was the council members themselves who appointed new members and chose a new, double name.

Once again, to us, the name had little significance, but it did earn respect when having council talks with other tribes.

I will also say, that fancy headdresses also helped to impress leaders of other tribes that did their best to impress us.

The actual wording of the names - White Feather, Black Horse, Silver Cloud and so on - meant nothing. It was just a name chosen at random.

## CHAPTER 6

I would like to talk about our clothing.

I will start with the way we would clad our very young children, before they were able to control their bowel movements.

First, let me say that very young children who cannot control when and how they pass fluids or solid matter, just like modern children, pass these things when they need to.

Modern children have their lower stomachs clad in disposable diapers that can be thrown away or replaced with new, clean ones. Also, their bottoms are carefully cleaned.

In the case of our children, it was rather more difficult, as we had no disposable diapers.

We had nothing made of material, cotton for example.

All we had, came from animal skins. These were not very suitable for keeping a child clean, but was all that we had.

During the summer, whenever possible, we allowed our young children to run about with the lower parts of their bodies unclad.

There were advantages and disadvantages to this.

The obvious and immediately apparent advantage was that both urine and feces could be passed without soiling garments.

The disadvantages were several.

The legs of the baby or young child would become soiled with both urine and fecal matter which, if it was not immediately cleaned, could become a source of infection.

The only materials we had for cleaning children were swabs made from rabbits' skin, which was far from being hygienic.

A major source of infection came from insect bites, particularly mosquitoes, or a vicious fly sometimes known as horse flies.

These horseflies are drawn to fecal matter and the bites of both mosquitoes and horseflies could create open wounds on the buttocks or legs of children, and as I have said, as we had no disinfectants, could quickly become infected and cause the death of sensitive children.

When it was cold, of course, babies and young children had to be well wrapped in fur skins, which quickly became soiled and needed to be changed every time the baby or child soiled them.

To clean the skins, mothers would remove any solid fecal matter, then the skins would be boiled in water to clean them. Animal skins that are boiled quickly become hard and irritated the children, causing sores, which could also become a source of infection.

Drying skins in a teepee in winter was not an easy thing to do.

So, all in all, keeping young children clean and safe from infection was not easy and we would lose a number each year through infections, either caused by insect bites or through rough skin causing sores.

As the child got older, clothes made from deer skins would be made for summer use or from bison fur in cold weather.

Children wore hats quite often. They would be made either from deer or bison skins, according to the weather.

I mentioned deer skins, but I should also say that horse skins were also used. We had mittens made from rabbit fur as well.

Any animal that we could kill or that died; deer, rabbit, bison, horse or dog, would be skinned and eaten.

So, our diet consisted of deer, bison, rabbit, gopher, squirrels, dogs and horses and the skins or furs of all these animals would be carefully removed and turned into clothing, cladding for tents or blankets to keep us warm at night.

Nothing was wasted.

If we came across lakes or rivers, we would shoot fish and eat them or shoot, kill, pluck and eat wildfowl, if and when we could.

As I said, white feathers were dyed to resemble eagle feathers for our headdresses and the down (the very small feathers) we would use to create pillows.

Both men and women wore similar clothing.

You may have seen pictures of women in gowns, but our women wore the same clothing as men.

This consisted of a sort of jacket and long trousers made, usually, from deer skins although, occasionally, clothes made from horse skins were also used.

In winter, we had normal deerskin clothing but also had a huge and long garment made from bison skin with a hole cut into it. We would pull this over our heads and the bison skin cloak would hang down in front and behind us. Where the sides met, our women would sew them together. So, it was a sort of long tube of bison fur, with a hole at one end that we pulled over our heads.

Arms were just clad in the deerskin garment we would wear in summer.

So, to clarify. Both men and women wore jackets and trousers made from deer or horse skins, all sewn together with strips of deer or horse skin - usually deer.

These garments would be worn both in summer and winter.

Additionally, in winter we wore these tubes of bison fur with a hole cut in one end, that we pulled over our heads.

We also wore hats made from some fur – rabbit, etc.

Also, we had mittens made from rabbit skins.

These last items were necessary during the bitter cold winters.

Lastly, we had moccasins made from deer leather, made by our women, which we all wore.

For ceremonial use we had, or at least the elders did, headdresses made from feathers and sometimes we wore extra garments, a bit like waistcoats, that were dyed in whatever bright colours we could find. The dyes were sometimes made from boiled and mashed plants and sometimes in coloured earths or rocks, if we could find any.

These items would be ground into powders or mashed, in the case of plants, and patterns were drawn with our fingers on these waistcoats.

There were no particular designs, just what we felt like designing at the time.

## CHAPTER 7

This time, I would like to talk to you about the ceremonies we would hold for the inclusion of a young person into our tribe, the marriage ceremonies and how we would send off the spirit of a deceased person.

I have grouped these three ceremonies together, because they were all rather similar.

The ceremony would start, whatever it might be, by the males of the tribe being assembled in a suitably wide space within the camp.

This would usually occur at evening time, after the hunts of the day were over, and all the braves were back in camp.

A fire would be lit in the middle of this open space.

Firewood was always scarce, but during the day, women and reasonably grown children, especially girls (for the grown boys would be out with the hunters), would go out and collect as much wood as they could find, cut it and harvest. This wood would be returned to camp to build the fire.

Obviously, within reason, any ceremony would take place during the summer months and on a day that it did not rain.

At a certain time, the medicine man would give a signal - a call.

Then all the warriors and elders would assemble, dressed as finely as their choice of clothes permitted. The normal braves did not have much of a choice, but the elders appeared with their headdresses and their best clothes.

The women formed a ring outside of the main area of males.

The ceremonies only concerned males. Why this should have been I don't know, but it was tradition.

The medicine man would be dressed much like the elders, but he would decorate to a great degree his clothes with colours and he would paint his face with whatever colours he had at his disposition.

The warriors might carry spears, but it was not obligatory.

The elders would carry spears decorated with feathers that they kept for ceremonies.

The medicine man would have a variety of weapons upon his person and he would carry bunches of herbs.

The fire would be lit.

Depending on the ceremony, different things might now happen.

In the case of a dead person - once again a male - the medicine man would describe the life of the dead brave; the battles he fought, his bravery, his wife and the number of children he had.

Once he had finished this talk, the medicine man would throw the bunches of herbs into the fire. These would catch fire and fill the air with fragrance.

The dead person would already have been 'buried' if I can use that word. His body would have been taken to the outside of our campsite and covered with rocks and stones to protect it from



scavengers. So, the body was not present, as it would have been in a Christian burial ceremony.

Once all the talking was finished and the herbs burnt, drums would start to beat. The drums were made of strips of wood soaked in water to make them pliable and then bent into rings. As we did not have nails, cords made of strips of leather held the two edges together to form a ring. Then a circle of horsehide would be placed to cover the ring of wood. This circle of horse hide would be large enough to overlap the ring of wood. Around the edges of the horse hide, holes would have been pierced with a needle made of bone and strips of leather would be threaded back and forth across the open side of the ring of wood.

These strips would be tightened in order to stretch the skin across the ring, as are all drum skins.

Then the drum would be soaked in water to further tighten the skin, until it sounded like a typical drum.

As the drums beat, the tribe, led by the medicine man, and followed by the elders and then the braves, would dance around the fire, chanting as they went. The chant varied according to the ceremony.

The women on the outskirts formed a circle and they would sway in time with the music.

The dance went on until the fire died down and the dancers tired.

By this time, it would be dark.

Then the dance stopped and everyone would disappear back to their teepees and that was the end of the ceremony.

All of the ceremonies followed a similar pattern to that I have described.

In the case of a young man being named and accepted into the tribe as a man, prior to the ceremony, the elders would gather and decide upon his name.

Then, when the ceremony was about to begin, all the warriors and women would gather around the fire and the boy would be presented to the assembled tribe.

The medicine man would present the boy to the tribe and tell them his name.

The boy had, effectively, changed from being a nameless child, to a full member of the tribe - a man.

Then the boy would be led back to his parents' tepee by his mother and the males would dance and chant as before. The words of the chant would say how brave the new member was and so on.

In the case of a marriage, the couple about to be married would be presented to the tribe by the medicine man, the gifts would be displayed and then the couple would retire, with their presents, to their new teepee.

Then the males would dance as before. The chant wished them a fruitful marriage.

Lastly, I should say, that there was no ceremony for deceased women or girls. Their bodies would be covered by rocks and stones at the exterior of the camp, but there was no ceremony.

## CHAPTER 8

This time, I would like to talk about battles with other tribes and the reasons for them.

Generally, we lived in peace together, as there were more than enough animals to feed everyone. But occasionally, things would happen that would cause us to get angry and if the elders could not solve the problem by negotiation, we would have to solve the problem by other means.

We were a proud people and we did not want to lose face through any action taken by a neighboring tribe, unless we could solve the problem through negotiation.

I will list the most common events that instigated battles.

1. Abduction of our women.
2. Murder of a brave.

It would happen from time to time, that one of our women would be abducted.

This would usually occur if a squaw left the camp for some reason.

Normally, while the braves were out hunting, we would encourage our females to stay within the safety of our camp.

Even though all the able-bodied men would be away from camp and all that was left in our camp were the women and the elderly or disabled men, our dogs had been trained to attack any stranger on site.

Our dogs were large, fierce and very alert all the time, both day and night. Their thick fur offered a measure of protection from axe blows, etc.

We had a lot of these dogs and even if one was attacked and killed, the others, without hesitation, would attack and kill any aggressor, so they were a major defense force in our camp.

If, for any reason a squaw left camp, she might take a dog with her and then she would be relatively safe, but it was usually when she left camp on her own, that she might be in danger.

The reasons that any squaw might leave camp were several and varied.

- a) She might leave camp to perform her ablutions, if you see what I mean. For hygiene reasons, most people defecated at the exterior of our camp. Also, some women were shy and did not want to perform any personal acts in full view of the rest of the tribe.
- b) She might leave camp to gather firewood. Keeping fires going and cooking was woman's work.
- c) She might leave camp to hang washing to dry on bushes at the exterior of the camp.
- d) She might go out looking for berries growing on certain bushes.

At such times she would be vulnerable. Generally, all would pass well, but just occasionally a warrior from a neighboring tribe might see her and abduct her.

She would be taken to the neighboring tribe's village and no doubt assaulted and raped.

The warrior would hide his prize in his teepee - for unmarried warriors lived alone in teepees - but, inevitably, very soon, the elders would learn of the incident.

This would cause a ruckus, as the elders did not want war, which they knew would be inevitable, as we would attack to recuperate our squaw.

Sometimes there would be a meeting - what you call a pow-wow - between the elders of our tribe and the elders of the neighboring tribe, and the woman or girl would be returned.

Occasionally, however, this would be refused and we would have to declare war in order to win back our missing female.

Before I go on to describe a battle, I will mention the other common cause of conflict.

It could happen sometimes, that when our braves went out hunting and came across one of the huge herds of bison - and these herds could be numerous indeed - another tribe would be hunting the same herd.

These herds were so numerous, that two tribes could hunt without problem, one tribe a considerable distance from the other.

Occasionally, a young brave from a neighboring tribe might seize the opportunity to attack one of our braves, and shoot him with an arrow and steal his horse.

When this happened, our brave might be killed outright, but because we had no antiseptics, even a flesh wound would quickly turn septic, and be a death sentence for the man.

There were other reasons for something to offend us, but those are the main two: a woman or girl being abducted, or a brave being attacked.

Contrary to what you might think, we were fairly civilized, and if the female was returned to us, or if the attacking warrior was released into our custody, to be dealt with by us, that would be the end of the matter.

But, in the other case, refusal to return a female or refusal to give us the offending warrior, elders would inform the elders of the offending tribe, that we must attack them to regain what we considered to be rightfully ours.

These discussions meant that we would visit the other tribe with our elders, and a group of braves for protection, and our elders would discuss the problem with the elders of the offending tribe.

Protocol dictated that neither our elders, nor the protecting braves would be hurt or injured during these discussions.

If satisfaction could not be obtained, a declaration of war would be made and our elders and bodyguard would return to our camp.

So, before any hostilities would start, both sides were alerted to this upcoming battle.

This gave the time for women and children to be led to safety, as we did not kill either women or children.

The reason for this was simple.

We did not wish to exterminate the offending tribe, we just wanted justice.

Without women, no tribe could continue, so women were excluded from danger. Obviously, children were also excluded from any danger.

Even if a number of men were killed, the women could still procreate and thus the tribe would continue.

The only problem was that, inevitably, our stolen female would be hidden with the women led to safety somewhere, so once the battle was over, assuming we won, we would still have to find the women and recuperate our stolen female.

Protocol also dictated that we would not harm the hidden women in any way. Once we found them and once we had located our missing female, we would lead the tribe's females back to the camp and leave them to pick up the pieces of their lives and bury the males killed in battle. One of the downsides of all this diplomacy, was that as we were preparing for battle, the other tribe might seize the opportunity to attack us so, once the declaration of war was proclaimed, we had to be on the alert all the time for an attack against us to occur.

But to get to the preparations for battle.

Both sides had only primitive stone weapons; spears, axes, bows and arrows, the projecting arrows I have mentioned, that we seldom used in battle and bolas.

Both tribes would be similarly armed.

There would be one of the ceremonies that I have mentioned, where the men would dance around the fire and the men would paint their faces with ground, coloured stones or mashed plants, to try to make themselves look as fierce as possible.

Our horses would be protected, because if a horse fell through injury and the brave found himself on foot, he was very vulnerable.

So, we protected their legs by wrapping hide skins around them, hoping that an axe blow or an arrow, would not seriously damage the horse.

Also, we would take our dogs with us.

Our dogs, which we trained to attack anything or anyone that was not from our side, were major offensive weapons in our arsenal.

The day would come when we would attack.

We always attacked in daylight, as we had no artificial lighting, and in the dark, we would not know who was on our side and who was the enemy. So, battles took place in daylight.

As we approached the offending camp, they would be alerted to our arrival.

Our dogs would throw themselves upon the dogs of the tribe we were attacking, while we did our best to kill as many men of that tribe as possible.

Battles tended to be rather short and in the space of an hour or so, assuming we won the fight, the warriors we were attacking would surrender. At which point, the battle ceased.

We had no desire to eliminate the tribe, nor to be eliminated ourselves. We just wanted to win the battle in a rather egotistic fashion. It was a question of pride.

We would ask where the women were and seek reassurance that our missing female was with them.

Then, as I said, a party of our braves would seek out the women and lead them back to camp, and we would return to our camp with our missing squaw.

In the case of the brave who attacked one of our braves, if he had not been killed in battle, he would be handed over to us, and we took him back to our camp where he met his fate.

So, you can see that battles were rather stupid and served little purpose, other than us getting what was owed.

For that reason, battles were few and far between, but they did happen and I have described a typical battle.

## CHAPTER 9

I would like to talk about the means we had of trailing the buffalo herds - or bison herds as they should be called.

Without buffalo meat, we would have had difficulty in surviving, but the herds were constantly on the move, summer and winter, and so we would have to move to follow them.

Some of these herds were enormous and could cover the landscape as far as we could see. I don't know in terms of numbers, or of acreage they would cover, but if there were a million beasts in one herd, it would not be an exaggeration.

Before the white man came with their guns and slaughtered them relentlessly, bison were virtually immune from danger. There were predatory animals that roamed the plains; wolves and mountain lions, but a grown bison is a large and very muscular beast, with formidable horns and thick fur that protected it very well. These wolves and mountain lions might attack a newborn calf, but as this would be well protected by its mother, and any other members of the herd that would react to any attack, it was rarely that even lions working together could successfully kill a bison calf.

Of course, if an elderly or sick bison lagged behind the main herd, he might fall prey to an attack, but no fit bison could be killed by any predator - except man.

Thus, due to the fact that bison were invincible, the herds grew and grew in numbers to enormous sizes, and as they ate grass, they needed to be constantly on the move in order to feed.

A herd might cover several miles in a day, but the plains were huge also, so there was never any shortage of grass.

But this presented us with a problem. As the herds moved quite a distance in a day, we would have to follow them, to keep track of them.

We had, for the sake of our tribes' needs, to set up stable camps, if we could.

We needed to sleep at night and we needed our squaws to cook and so on during the daytime. There were a number of reasons that required us to stay in one place for a few days, days in which the bison - our main food source - was moving on.

Apart from sleep, cooking and eating, women needed time to clean our garments - hygiene was important. Also, when a pregnant woman arrived at the time for her to give birth, she needed to be in a teepee with other women to assist her.

I could go on, but I am sure that you can work out for yourselves the reasons we had for the tribal village being settled for a few days at least.

So, I am sure that you can also see that in the few days that we would stay in one place, the bison herd we were following would have moved on a considerable distance. We could have sent scouts out to find where the herd had gone, but this would have been dangerous for the scouts. Any person, or even a few scouts isolated from our main tribe, would be in danger, either from predatory animals or from another tribe, that might decide to try to kill scouts in order to steal the horses. So, it was always a risk for any person or small group of people to be isolated from our main tribe.

However, it was not difficult to follow the bison herd.

An enormous number of bison leave obvious traces of their movements. Grass would have been cropped. Further, grass would have been trampled flat by their passage. There would be quite a lot of physical detritus (scat or feces, if you wish) left behind. Hair would be on thorn bushes and, believe it or not, a huge herd of bison leaves a smell that lingers for quite a while.

Also, in our camp, we needed to move on for health reasons.

A whole tribe defecating and urinating in or around a camp, quickly becomes a danger.

Also, we had a lot of dogs that generally stayed in the camp. They also defecated and urinated.

Lastly, our horses, which were numerous, did the same, so the net result was that within a few days, we needed to move on to avoid walking in this large amount of waste.

I will also say that our horses ate the grass in or around any camp and quickly exhausted the food that was available for them.

For all those reasons, and more, we needed to move every few days, and it was logical to follow the obvious tracks of the bison herds.

The problem was that we moved rather slowly and as we would be several miles behind the bison herd we were following, it was difficult to catch up.

Therefore, braves would need to ride out and catch up with the herd and hopefully kill a bison, which would be dragged back to camp.

To drag a fully grown bison several miles back to camp was no mean feat. So, we tried to kill a smaller one if we could.

Sufficient meat to feed all our tribe and our dogs was a constant concern, so we always were in need of fresh meat.

A fully grown bison might provide sufficient meat for all our needs for one day, but a small bison was not enough at all.

Meat was our main energy source, and it was important that any and all men, women, large children and our dogs were well fed, because our dogs were essential to the protection of our tribe and needed to be well fed.

Now, I will mention why we needed lots of meat for our dogs.

Our dogs were large and needed quite a lot of meat to keep them healthy.

If their stomachs were full, the dogs would be content to remain in camp, sleeping, which is where we wanted them, because they always had one eye open looking for danger, and that was important for us.

If the dogs were hungry, they might be tempted to wander off and chase rabbits. So, it was important for us that our dogs were well and regularly fed, so we needed quite a lot of meat for them.

Thus, hunting was a major occupation for our braves and hunting implied being in contact with the bison.

So, we moved camp every few days for the reasons I have described, which was a nuisance for us as you can imagine. Dismantling our teepees, packing up clay pots, our blankets, gathering our horses and dogs and moving on.

But we had no choice.

In the meantime, our braves would return with killed bison and so we would have to set up camp again in order to skin and cut up the meat with our stone knives, which was difficult, cooking for our families and giving raw lumps of meat to our dogs.

So, we had this constant problem, the need to move on compared to the need to set up camp and feed everyone.

We solved the problem by dividing our braves into two groups.

One group stayed in camp, protecting the camp members, who were mainly women, children, elderly or infirm people, while the other group followed the bison herd, doing their best to kill one per day, dragging it back to camp, having a quick meal and then returning to follow the bison herd.

After a few days, for the reasons I mentioned earlier, the camp would fold up the tents and move off to follow the bison herd also.

In such a manner, both of these groups would have a sufficient number of braves to ensure their safety, while also ensuring that everyone was fed.

You may wonder why I wrote this chapter, but if you put yourselves in our place, ensuring that we all had sufficient food whilst, at the same time, ensuring that all our tribe members were safe, was a major problem for us, particularly in cold weather, where snow would impede our movements.

It took a lot of planning to keep the main tribe within reasonable distance of the hunting group.

I will also say that we always had to be on the alert from attacks by neighboring tribes.

Generally, as I said, we lived in peace together, but this was because all tribes ensured that it would be unwise for one tribe to attack another.

Warriors and dogs ensured protection for all tribes.

However, if one tribe thought that they could successfully attack another, they might try.

The reasons for this would be to abduct young females and bring them up as members of their own tribes and also to take horses which were always in short supply.

So, girls and horses were considered valuable prizes, and so needed to be well guarded both day and night.



## CHAPTER 10

This time, I wish to mention the parties we had.

We were a busy but happy people, and although we didn't have much free time, we did have a few traditions that we celebrated.

These traditions celebrated the birth or death of past members - either singular or plural - that had earned our respect, for instance in fighting difficult battles to prove some point, or to celebrate the return of some prisoner.

I remember, for instance, the time when the son of one of our chiefs was captured by another tribe, and a great and successful battle was fought to recuperate him.

You may have noticed that I have never mentioned a chief amongst us. That is because we did not have a chief as such. The elders ruled - if that is the correct word - collectively.

But we could consider them in a way to be chiefs, because they decided major policies and actions for our tribe.

The celebration was that one of these elders - and not all elders were in their dotage - had a son and this child was captured by a neighboring tribe.

It was decided to declare war on this neighboring tribe, and a bloody battle was fought, and the eldest son was rescued.

This was a cause of celebration for us, and each year after that, at roughly the same date, we would celebrate that victory.

Obviously, we could not calculate the exact date, but we followed the seasons and we followed the moon movements, and so we were able to guess pretty closely the date of the battle.

We had a few other causes for celebration, although they are not very important, but I will describe how we would celebrate this particular victory.

A few days before we intended to celebrate this victory, we would try to gather sufficient food and firewood etc., so that we would not need to go hunting on the particular day chosen for the celebration.

In an open clearing in the middle of the camp, a huge amount of firewood would be gathered.

This was so that we could roast a bison whole.

A day or so before the chosen date for the celebration, our hunters would kill a suitable sized bison and drag it back to camp.

There it would be skinned and prepared to be roasted whole.

The morning of the ceremony, a fire would be lit in the clearing and the bison would have a long, strong tent pole forced down it's throat and out the other end.

This, itself, was not easy and required much hammering by stones to force the tent pole through the bison.

We had no means of creating a turning spit, as might be used in modern times, so we would have just sufficient firewood to create burning embers.

Two braves would lift the carcass of the bison on to the embers and it would start to roast.

As the embers died down, so the bison was lifted off the embers. More firewood was thrown on and allowed to burn to embers. Then the bison was replaced onto the embers and it cooked some more.

This process continued for some hours, until the bison was cooked to a certain degree.

In the meantime, the tribe assembled and the elders and medicine man would appear. The tribe formed a circle around the fire with the women in the back, as I have described elsewhere.

The medicine man would describe the battle and the glorious victory made by our brave warriors. Those who had fallen in battle were thanked for their sacrifice, and that they were now at peace in 'The happy hunting grounds', as it is named.

Then the dancing would begin around the fire, and eventually, once every brave was tired, the bison - or the cooked bits - were sliced off with flint knives and distributed amongst all the tribe equally. No one was left out.

This story is short because it is quickly told.

There were other celebrations, but they all followed the same pattern as the one I mentioned here.

So that night everyone went to bed with a full stomach and a happy heart.

# CHAPTER 11

Pipe of Peace.

The tobacco used in the pipe of peace, was by its very nature, quite a potent blend of tobacco that grew wild at the time.

However, although cannabis/marijuana was not available, there were other plants and certain barks of trees that had mild hypnotic effects.

These were sometimes smoked by ordinary Native Americans, rather as some people smoke hypnotics today.

Further, a mixture of certain leaves and barks could be mashed up and mixed with the tobacco that was available, and that was put into the pipe of peace, and passed among the elders meeting with their own tribes and with neighboring tribes to settle hunting disputes, etc.

The peace creating effect of the pipe of peace prevented anyone from becoming angry and starting unnecessary wars between tribes.

Visiting elders would sit in on the councils, but would bring a variety of young warriors with them for protection.

These young warriors would sit with similar young warriors from the inviting tribe and they, too, would smoke doctored tobacco. The idea was to keep all discussions calm.

Some of these councils would last for days and so hospitality was shown to the visitors.

Teepees were put at their disposal and food was provided.

Great courtesy was shown to the visiting elders, and it was hoped that all would pass peacefully.

There were occasional battles between various tribes but the object of these councils was to resolve problems peacefully.

## CHAPTER 12

We are coming to the end of what I can share with you all. But, before I finish, I would like to share with you the experiences I had when my incarnation came to an end and I transited from physicality, to what is considered to be non-physicality, in the 4th dimension.

As I remember, my incarnation was considered to be fairly long, though compared to modern incarnations, it was short.

I had a wife and a few children, and eventually rose to be an elder of our tribe.

I was always an active member of our tribe. In my youth, I was a hunter and took part in numerous chases after both bison and deer. I helped capture horses and I am somewhat sorry to say now, I also took part in battles and was responsible for the deaths of several members of neighboring tribes.

Obviously, if I had known at the time what I know now, I would have avoided killing, if I possibly could have.

At the time, killing animals and killing enemies was considered normal and acceptable. The more we killed, the greater prestige we gained.

Eventually the day came when my body weakened and I died.

During my incarnation I had no idea about life after death.

We all knew that we had to die one day and there was some concept of going to the 'happy hunting grounds', but quite what that entailed, I had no idea.

One day I fell into a coma and soon afterwards found myself floating down the tunnel of light, and I entered the bright sphere of what is called Heaven and was met by a person who looked very much like a Native American chief. He explained to me where I was and I met my parents who had passed on when I was a child. I was taken to a camp that looked very similar to me like a typical Indian camp with teepees, horses, dogs and so on.

However, we did not go hunting, as we never needed to eat and so we just walked about and I wondered what purpose life held in this place.

The main difference between life on Earth and life in this 'Hunting Ground' was that we didn't eat or drink. We didn't hunt and we had no need to ride the horses.

So, it all seemed a bit purposeless to me, compared to life on Earth.

One day, I had what is called my life review. This came as rather a shock to me, as I realised the harm I had caused to so many animals and the trauma I had caused to the families of all the braves I had killed in battle.

I must say that I felt deep remorse for all the negative acts I had taken part in. I wished that I had never killed any animal or person.

At the moment, I have been in the Heavenly sphere for quite a long time, and I am doing my best to help new arrivals settle into the spiritual life.

Not all new arrivals show an interest in developing their spirituality and I respect that, as that is their free will choice. But many do and I am one of a large team that helps them.

We are moving into this great time called ascension. This is a very exciting time for us and is making our teaching job easier, as many students also feel this rise in spirituality.

As regards my tribe, I still monitor it in incarnation, but I do not interfere with it.

Since the white man appeared, there have been many changes to the Blackfoot tribe, some beneficial and some rather negative.

However, the Native American people generally retain their spiritual roots, and with the influence of ascension, will become a more powerful spiritual influence in America and Canada. Things take time, but progress is being made, and the Native American people will develop their spiritual aspects gradually.

I have been glad to share a few recollections with you and I hope that what I have told you has been of benefit to the history of the Blackfoot people.