

Napi's Playground

At the time of first contact Siksikaisitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) occupied a territory that ranged as far east as present day Manitoba west over the eastern range of the Rocky Mountains and the present states of Montana, Washington and Northern Wyoming.

At later times the territory as defined by our oral history as from the North Saskatchewan (Om'k iit'taa) to the Cypress Hills (I'kimikoo) to Yellow Stone river (Ot'kwit'taa) to the Columbia River and Tobacco Plains in British Columbia. Our traditional leaders formed alliances through our traditional treaty making (Inyiistiyukukstimaan) for the protection and preservation of our hunting grounds, trade and lifestyle.

<https://youtu.be/hEA35m0t6ts> YouTube video link

At this time I'd like to talk about, what is known as Treaty Number 7, and the Canadian Government, and this we call inyiss-tsokukstimaan, a long time agreement, and our understanding of making treaty, with each other. We have been making treaties with each other for thousands of years, and these treaties many of them had been broken by ourselves with each other through warfare! We were a Warrior's society, we are still a warriors society.

We have just agreed to live by the leadership of our elders, but at the same time this border called, iss-sik-skaaksin, means a line or making a mark. In this case this invisible border, at the time and what we knew of our country and the area that was designated as the point of these cairn's laid across the United States. These stone cairns' that were the English, British and American Government Borders, between 2 counties.

So at that time Canada was non-existent, there was no Canada, and the lands that were considered British lands that today is the continental Canadian, Canada you will say, now that being said, I will go back into my language, I will go back into niitsiipo'sin, my birth rite, and I'll speak from the heart, about inyiss-tsokukstimaan, treaties and the story I've just shared with you.

äämaa, stämik-ksistsii-kaiyayii Lame Bull, kiiniiksii, kitsittaapiiminoon, kiikso'koowainoon, our relatives kiiniitaapii kiikso'koowainoon, real relatives, kyaaksii kiits'koowaa, our tribe. The siksikaitsitaapii kiisto'naan iino'k, iikaakai tsiniikaasi aam'k inyiss-tsokukstimaan. Iikaakai tsiniikaato'p, there are many stories mutupii, , maanistss-sksinniipii, maanistsitaap'pii maataak'koot tooksaayaa, iiniikso'kyaa i'kottsii ookaamootsii tsinniikuto'myaa. Among our people from the past there are many who can tell the story, we won't be able to count the ones that can tell, how it happened.

I'kot so'poiyaapii tsinniikuto'myaa taakaa iitsinsiiyaa, saakainaa ksipookiyaa, they were babies, and young boys and girls, takaa iitaapaisiiyaa, they were a part of it when it happened, they were there children. Iso'poo yaapaisksinnimiyaa, they new firsthand how our people suffered. Oot sowoo'koosaa, oot sowoo'k "kwitaapiisaa, they learned through starvation and longer had the luxury from there past life. Kyiinkso'kyaa kiistoonaan kitsaakaanoowa iini paitaapiiw'sin, istsiipaitaapiyo'p iinii, these were the ones who lives were given life from the buffalo. Kii kyiinkok iitoamootsinskumyaa, this was when be buffalo disappeared from our lives. ootkowsowoo'k "kwitaapiisaa

kyaa miiksii om'kaakootsaapsiiks aawaamiitsupii stiiyainaakaas o'sokoiy The rich folks looked west from back east with the possibility of building a railway and gaining immense wealth. Iitiasskoonaakutsii

īīniw, kyīīniimai istīupoamootsinskumyaa , From these trains they shot the buffalo for sport, this was the demise and extinguishment of the buffalo?

Kiīniitoyook kiīstoonaan, no”kutaisto’p maako”ko”kwīitaapiiyoop, kyīīniskok no”kutanitīyaa īīniiks, we ourselves also killed the buffalo for food. Kokoosiks, kit”kiimaanowa, kiikso’koowainoon, our children, our wives and our relatives, could also have something to eat and maako”ko”kwīitaapiisaa, natural wealth.

Aako’muttoomaatup ō”kit̄sīi paitaapiiw”sin, our lives began to change. Aako’maat taap īīnuk”tsīi īīnīi, the buffalo herds were getting smaller. K̄yaamai pīnaapo”ts nīītaiskaatoomyaa kutoyissiks, east of here was the 3 buttes they called the sweet pines. Aamaa stamīkīi aaniī stāmīk·ksistsīi·kaiyayīiw, iit stānitsīi, this buffalo bull gored Lane Bull to death, iit̄sit”pūt̄sīi ootaas he knocked down his horse. K̄iit”kaapsīi stāmīk·ksistsīi·kaiyayīiw, Lane Bull died from his injuries!

K̄yīīniimai īītwaanīi mutupīi, siksikaitsitapīi aawaanīi maatutto”koonoyīioo paitaapiiw”sin. This was when our people the Blackfoot Confederacy would say we could no longer find our source of life. Īīmaatai poonyaakiyaai mutupīi, istānīiyaa maa”ksoowaato”pīi, our people began to starve to death, dying from want of something to eat. The people were destitute they could only dress in cloth rags they dressed in kīmaataipisstsīi the pitiful cloth.

K̄īīniiksīi siksikaitsitapīi, the Blackfoot Confederacy and k̄īīniiksīi no”kitsittapīi what we called, different people, they also fought with their government. siksikaitsitapīi, the Blackfoot Confederacy, never took up arms against the government.

kīi kiīstoonaan siksikaitsitapīi, aak”koottanyo’p iikskoonaataapīi kīto”wsin. the Blackfoot Confederacy can say how powerful our traditional territory is! Maat̄tsaam aanistupīi īīpo”sin, It is not just talk! Maat o”koottsapyaanīitoop kīto”wsin, we can not describe in English the meaning of kīto”wsin. Today we say our territory.

kiīstoonaan nīit̄tow”saatto’p amoo kītsaa”koōminoon, we claimed our land as our own! Aastsisk iss·stoonaat”kītaapisskoosts, dangerous lands unfamiliar to us. maatoomait̄tupīi aiss·siitsimyyaa, the first people were very conscious of these lands they would not go to them, Instead iikaakoomiitsimyyaa īīnoom iit̄o’po’p. we favored these lands we lived on, kīītaitsinnikaatoomyaa they told stories Kyīīniimai iītaitsinnikaatoomyaa, ā·pūt̄”sōma”k’ iit̄”taa, north big river, boundary of Blackfoot Territory, North Saskatchewan River.

Miistup ā·pūt̄”so”ts further north about 300 miles, K̄yīīno’kī siksikaitsitapīi ooto”wsin is the description of siksikaitsitapīi, traditional territory. taakaa īīniiksīi kaa”toomīi, kaa”toominoon other tribal warriors who we waged war against āsin·nāawa, Cree people, pīn·nāpīisinaa’ – Assiniboiné, Sioux also other eastern tribe’s unknown to P̄īkūnīi, kō’tīō’nai, Kootenay.

There were many of them who lived in the north, ā·pūt̄”sō”ts.

These are the ones siksikaitsitapīi, fought with. K̄yaaksi kaa”toomiiks, began to learn that we had diminished, istānīiyoop maa”kswaato’p, we were dying of starvation, istānīiyoop simsin liquor, istānīiyoop , iit̄·tsīīss·stōomyaapīi, disease! K̄iitoomaatup ss·skaatsimyyaa kīi paitaapiiw”sin, the government began to pay close attention to the way we were living our lives.

kīi no”kaattsīitotoyaa kiīstonaan, iipo”sup aamītotīyaa, aamīi pīnaapo”ts no”kaat inyiss·tsīimīi nīitsitapīi, they came west to our people our own people made treaties amongst ourselves. kīi kīniimai, iitootoksīyaa kiīstonaan ī”kītsīikum, kyīīinaakok iītaawaanīiyaa, ī”kītsīikisk·skaaksin

inyiss·tsookukstiimaan. This is where the Canadian Government reached the point of conclusion of numbered treaties with our first nations and number 7. This is when the people would say Treaty number 7, no”kut inyiss·tsiimii kunnaitaapi, the government had concluded treaties with all the recognized tribes in Canada.