

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: ASSINIBOINE ELDERS WORKSHOP 3  
DONALD MEDICINE ROPE

INFORMANT'S ADDRESS:

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- History of the Qu'Appelle Valley Reserves.  
ASSINIBOINE ELDERS WORKSHOP 3

History of Reserve and Chiefs

DONALD MEDICINE ROPE:

I will tell you a little of myself, I spent eight years in school and when I quit school I went home. I thought to myself, there is no money in the reserve so the middle of June, July, all of September, October, November, December, and January, these months I worked out for the white man. I don't know too much of what my brother, Charles Ryder, said about settling in the reserve; I was too young. I don't know the ways and wisdom of the white man so I decided to learn of the English language. I went to the town of Wolseley. I heard of these three lawyers practising in the town. I asked them to teach me a little of their language and knowledge; Thompson, Kennedy and Hoard. They were happy to do it for me. One day in a week I spent with these lawyers learning. When it's a heavy storm I slept in the hotel. I wanted to gain some knowledge of the white man so I did this. For three years I spent asking them questions and I was satisfied I had gained some white man's knowledge. They wanted me to continue but I had no money. I work in the summer and in the fall; this is how I make my living. Today they brought me here to tell a story of the past. The old timers the Assiniboines territory was Harlem, Montana and Small Creek

(the Milk River). And they have the territory of Wood Mountain and this is where the population increased and they called them the Wood Mountain people. My brother, Charles Ryder, and my nephew, James Ryder, and myself, we are the Wood Mountain people. Our forefathers grew up in the Wood Mountain area and into the Evergreen Mountains (Cypress Hills).

You have heard of the white man shooting the Indians, the Assiniboines. The halfbreeds stole some horses from the white man south of here in the States and these halfbreeds passed through the Cypress Hills heading north and the Assiniboines got blamed for it. There were seven cowchasers (white man cowboys) looking for these horses.

Over here from the north there were no buffalo; some of the Indians were dying of starvation. You might know of a man named Red Star from around North Battleford. These people originated from the Wood Mountain and Harlem Assiniboine. These people were coming back from the States and heading back north. They camped at Cypress Hills and the white man storekeeper trading with them told them to move on, keep going north as the halfbreeds that stole horses are blaming the Indians and the cowboys that are looking for these horse are going to shoot them. But they were given whiskey and some had already passed out. These cowchasers made them drunk and were shooting them.

A man was out hunting and heard shots and he hurried back to the camp. He saw these seven cowchasers standing behind the creek bank shooting the Indians in the camp. He was a sharp shooter and shot one of these men on the side of the head and the other six ran away. They killed some Indians there. The Man Who Took the Coat heard and saw what happened. After this happened the RCMP came from Maple Creek and asked questions. They told the Man Who Took the Coat that they will take him to Winnipeg in a few days to tell what had happened. There was an elderly woman and her little girl that did not run away and hid in the camp during this shooting. These three went to Winnipeg. They made the Man Who Took the Coat the chief over there and that is how he got the honor of being a chief of the Assiniboines. These three stayed in Winnipeg for a month.

There was a great big gathering of the Assiniboines - Wood Mountain including Harlem Montana and Piapot. And there were five chiefs at the Cypress Hills and the government was bargaining to make a treaty with these Indians. And they had a meeting for six days. The Man Who Took the Coat, Long Lodge, Skinny Man from North Battleford and Lightening in the Sky-Boy-Piapot. There were thousands of Indians gathered there. This is what my father told me. They were bargaining over the five dollars per person. The Indians wanted ten dollars, so the white man said, "We are not going to give you any money," and the Indians said, "You can take your money home, we don't want it." So the white man left but not long after they returned and gave them the treaty money there.

The Indian law is the Indian Act because there was no law in the land of the Indian, this is why they made the Indian Act.

Indians will have nothing to do with the Dominion law because this is the white man's law. This law you made will go as long as the sun goes and sets, as long as the grass grows and the rivers run. When all this stops only then the bargain we made today will be nothing and they finished signing the treaty. And what my brother said about our reserve is true.

They asked the three chiefs, The Man Who Took the Coat, Long Lodge and Lightning in the Sky Boy - Piapot to move to Skew Mountains so they moved them there. They settled there. Lightning in the Sky Boy admits he's an Assiniboine not a Cree. The reserve was 7 x 9 miles, Chief Piapot said, "There is no fish here," and wanted to save his people so he wanted to move where there was water and fish. He went to see the Indian Commissioner, Mr. Forget. They told him to look over the land in the valley and told his band he liked it, also informed the Assiniboines of his plans, and he traded his portion of land for the present Piapot reserve. Six by twelve miles was lost to

Long Lodge and his band by moving in with The Man Who Took the Coat band. Half of Piapot's portion of land is lost. Few years later The Man Who Took the Coat took sick and died and his brother Carry-the-Kettle became chief.

(End of Interview)

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