

## PRE-RESERVE PERIOD

The Stoney people of Alberta are currently divided into three main groups, the southern, Morley, contingent, the Kootenay Plains offshoot, and the northern group consisting of the residents of Paul, Alexander, and Alexis bands. John Laurie (1957-59, Vol. I: 2), who on the basis of extensive studies with the Morley peoples, stated that *Those at Lac Ste Ann differ materially in manner of*

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that the epidemic of 1780 played a role in the apparent concentration of both Swampy Ground and Wood Stoney in this quarter. Establishment of posts eastward on the North Saskatchewan and the intentional redirection of Stoney trade from Jasper House to Fort Assiniboine as well as a dramatic decrease in population resulting from epidemics would have changed the focus of their territorial range from the Eastern Slopes toward the Edmonton area. Closure of other posts in the early part of the nineteenth century and Fort Assiniboine in 1877 reinforced the Edmonton association.

Another factor redirected the Stoney away from the foothills towards the Edmonton area. A Roman Catholic mission was founded on Lac Ste. Anne in 1842 by the Oblates. *Iroquois and half-breed boatmen and trappers working for the Hudson's Bay Company, which had merged and absorbed the Northwest Company in 1821, were already using this site as a last major station and outfitting place in journeys to Jasper House in the mountains, and as a source of whitefish for the personnel at Fort Edmonton* (Anderson 1968: 52-53). The route between Lac Ste. Anne and the mountains was thereby established. In 1859, James Hector of the Palliser Expedition travelled from Jasper House to Edmonton by a well known overland route used by the native peoples of the Lac Ste. Anne area. This was the same route that André Cardinal, a 'Jasper House' Iroquois Metis, used to guide a group of gold seekers, the Overlanders of '62', west through the Rockies and on to the Cariboo (Gainer 1981).

Specific families can trace their lineages into the written record of the pre-reserve period. The Kootenay or Kootenahayoo family history is included here as an example of the compatibility of oral and written history and the general pre-reserve lifestyle. Anderson (1968: 51-52) collected informant information on the Kootenay family. *The family name "Kootenahayoo," and its many variations, is evidence for the adoption of captured Kootenai orphans although this must have occurred well before 1877.* This story is first documented by St. Pierre (Burpee 1927) with regard to the establishment of Fort La Jonquière in 1751. Moberly (1929: 112) related a very similar story in which the group attacked are 'Snakes'. Oral tradition of the present Alexis band provides additional details in which only one small child, called 'Star', survived and is incorporated into the band. The details are comparable to the story collected by Laurie (1957-59, Vol. I: 16) from Mrs. Rhone, of the Sharphead band. In the Fort George

journals, frequent mention is made of 'Star'. Ducan M'Gillivray (Morton 1929: 38), while at Fort George on the North Saskatchewan River in 1794, recorded on October 30th that *The Star a Strong Wood Assiniboine Chief arrived: he reports that vast herds of Buffaloes are at the Paint River where he intends to make a Pound in the course of the Winter* and on December 17 of that same year (Morton 1929: 50), *Soon after 6 young men arrived from the Stars Pound near the Paint River where all the strong wood Assiniboines are making Provisions.* And again on April 12th of the following year *In the afternoon 3 Strong wood Assiniboines arrived from the Stars Buffalo Pound* (Morton 1929: 71).

The entry for October 9, 1809 at Fort Vermilion by Alexander Henry (Coues 1965: 549-550) provides the corroborating details of Star's heritage.

*A large party of Gens du Bois Assiniboines arrived with their chief, old Star, formerly of great consequence, but of late years not listened to. He is a Kootonois a by birth, who was taken in infancy at war, and by his great bravery acquired influence. He is of small stature and has every characteristic of his own nation. It is lamentable that the natives in general, in this country, have lost that respect they formerly had for their chiefs. The principal cause of this is the different petty copartnerships which of late years have invaded this country from Canada; the consequences are now serious to us, as the natives have been taught to despise the counsels of their elders...*

In the same fort journal on February 21, 1810 (Coues 1965: 587) another reference is made to the character of Star.

*Young Assiniboines arrived from the Gens du Bois Fort and Gens de la Grande Riviere-the latter to steal horses, and the former sent by old Star to inform against them. Being discovered by Birch, both parties ran off before we got any satisfactory information.*

While at White Earth House on the North Saskatchewan south of modern Smoky Lake on July 22, in 1810 Henry (Coues 1965: 615) also provided insight into the friendly relationships of Star and his band. *At sunset two mounted Sarcees reached the S. side; they came from opposite the Island house below, where all the Sarcees are tented, as is also old Star, with 10 tents of Strong Wood Assiniboines; all are making provisions...* Star returns to the fort on September 9th, *Star's band arrived. These Assiniboines traded 5 beavers, 4 swans, 3 cats, 1 red deer, 4 buffalo, 6 dépouilles, 14 taureaux of beat meat, and 132 bladders of grease* (Coues 1965: 626).

The Kootenay family is well represented, not only in the Alexis band, but also in the Morley group, indicating social contact and intermarriage in the past. The presence of 'relatives' at Morley is still recognized by the Alexis people.