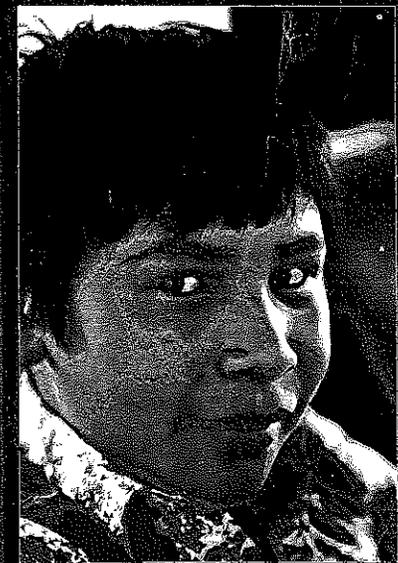


The Stories of Alberta

*an illustrated heritage
of genesis, myths, legends, folklore and wisdom
of Yathey Wichasstabi, (Mountain Stories),
the people who cook with hot stones*



051-028-001

The Stonies of Alberta

*an illustrated heritage
of genesis, myths, legends, folklore and wisdom
of Yahey Wichastabi, (Mountain Stonies),
the people-who-cook-with-hot-stones*



Iktomni, "the Eldest Brother of All Living Things."
Stoney cultural trickster-hero. Creator and destroyer.
Maker of the rainbow, the chinook, the gulches.
It was he who painted the birds.

The Stonies of Alberta

*an illustrated heritage
of genesis, myths, legends, folklore and wisdom
of Yahey Wichastabi,
the people-who-cook-with-hot-stones*

Narrated by 12 Stoney Elders
Translated by Alfred "Toots" Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

A private heritage project
designed, directed, researched,
produced, published, funded by
The Alberta Foundation.



The Alberta Foundation, publisher,
Calgary, Alberta 1983

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Project Production Team

Sebastian Chumak, Project Director
Narrators
Translators
Researchers
Editors
Indian artists
Field scouts

Stoney Narrators (Elders)

Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Tom Kaquitts / "Yellow Eagle"
Bella Kaquitts
Mark Lefthand / "Fish Child"
Mary Lefthand / "Small Girl"
Hanson Bearspaw
Johnny Chiniquay
Roland Rolling Mud
Frank Kaquitts / "Sitting Wind"
Bill McLean / "Seen the Light"
Wayne Lefthand / "Antelope"
Becky Beaver

Stoney Translator (Sioux)

Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.

Chief of Research

Thomas T. Williams

Technical & Design Consultants

Ben Wagner
Ian Brown

Photographer

Bob Mackie

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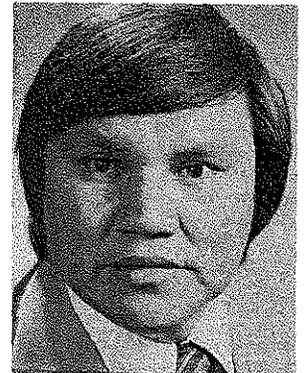
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Stoney Elders' Joint Statement

We, the Elders of the Stoney Reservation at Morley, Alberta, as narrators, storytellers and spokesmen, on behalf of our tribe, the Stoney People, do hereby certify that the sacred mythology on which we have spoken within these pages is authentic, accurate and true to the best of our knowledges of our oral traditions, legends and old customs.

And we, the Stoney Elders, recognize that in order to bring our sacred mythology to all peoples everywhere - in the final published form - hereby grant, authorize and sanction The Alberta Foundation full, complete and total authority of editorial policy, editorial planning and final copy of our own words.

Further, we the grandfathers of our tribe, are honoured to have our photobiographies appear in the book which we have narrated.

Finally, we the Stoney Elders, are pleased and grateful that The Alberta Foundation has devoted great resources in both labour and funds in order to preserve our culture and language in this document.

We offer our full support and wish The Alberta Foundation a breakthrough in this authentic document which we hope will endure.

To these words, I put my my hand and seal:

Louise Kootenay Morley, Alta. Oct 2, 1980
 Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo" Place Date

Mark Lefthand Eden Valley Oct 15, 1980
 Mark Lefthand / "Fish Child" Place Date

Mary Lefthand Eden Valley Nov 4, 1980
 Mary Lefthand / "Small Girl" Place Date

Jonas Linn Eden Valley Feb 4, 1981
Place Date

This mark is witnessed by Alfred T. Dixon

Alfred T. Dixon Eden Valley Feb 4, 1981
 Alfred T. Dixon, Jr., "Toots" Place Date

Wayne Lefthand Eden Valley Nov 24, 1980
 Wayne Lefthand / "Antelope" Place Date

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Joe Kootenay,

“Rolling Buffalo”

“Ta Taga Chimnimneja,”

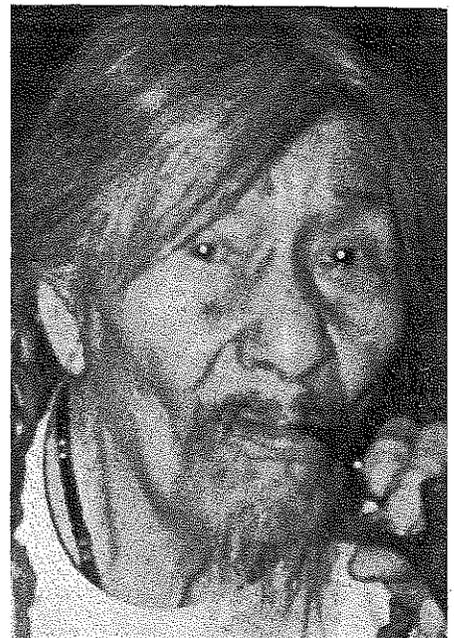
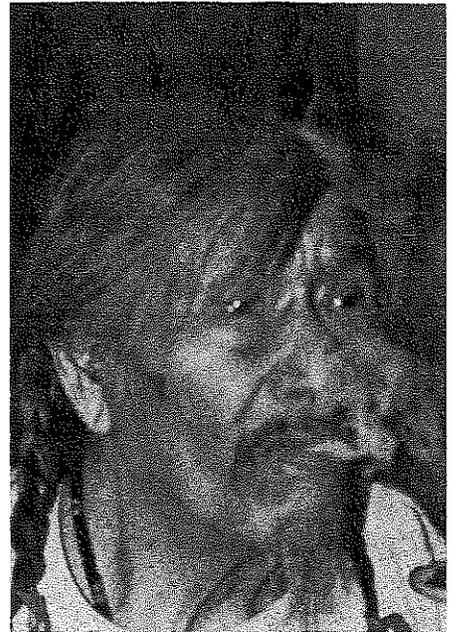


Photo credit: Thomas T. Williams © The Alberta Foundation

Joe Kootenay

Stoney Elder

Born in 1883 "or thereabouts," in Eureka, Montana.

His mother was Mary Jean Dixon, a Stoney.

His father was Little Paul David, "Small Grizzly," a Kootenay.

Little Paul was the son of a Kootenay chief, Chief Good Friday.

When Joe was a small boy, his father was killed in a gunfight. After Little Paul fell from the gunshot, life became very hard. Mary Jean raised Joe alone.

His mother returned to the Stoney Reservation at Morley, Alberta in 1897.

Joe still remembers the journey on horseback with his mother from Montana to Morley when he was a little boy:

"After the death of my father, we had no provider. These were very hard times. We had no flour, no tea, no sugar. All we had was a little dried meat. I was too small to understand why we had so little to eat. I remember thinking that maybe my mother was trying to starve me."

"We left Montana with all our belongings and my father's thirty head of horses. We left Montana in the early spring, before the grasses turned green. By the time we reached Eden Valley, all but six of our horses had died of starvation."

Travel across the border was traditional by custom and by treaty. They travelled to Waterton Lake, where his brother-in-law, Peter Ear, was camped. He helped out for a while. Then they stayed for some time with their uncle, Jack Dixon (Martin) near Longview.

Although the family name was David, the Stonies called them "the Kootenays," and that name stuck.

About that time, his mother, Mary Jean, remarried. The stepfather was good to both of them. But Mary Jean belonged to the Wesley Band. And she wanted to live in Morley.

Young Joe was given the Dakota name "Ta Taga Chimmimneja."

At one time, Joe worked at a camp where he was digging for coal.

But Joe worked as a young man mostly as a ranchhand herding cattle on various ranches around Longview, Alberta.

Joe married Mary Ear. Together they built a log cabin which still stands today. Mary died not long after WWII ended. Of their four children, only one, Mildred Simeon, is living today.

"The Stonies growing up today have forgotten the old ways. They do not ask to hear the old stories. They have become like strangers among their own. Young people no longer listen to the old teachings or the old legends."

"I am glad that the stories told to me long ago by my mother will not die with me."

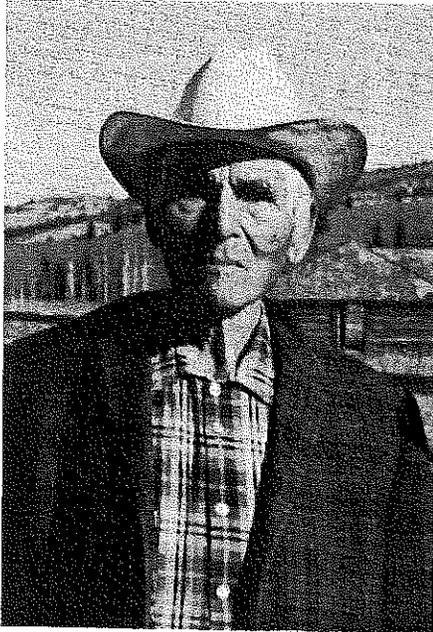
"The Stonies need a strong leader to guide them and to show them how to live well."

Joe says that there is hope in the Spirit. There is hope also, in finding the old ways, the beliefs and customs that once made the people great.

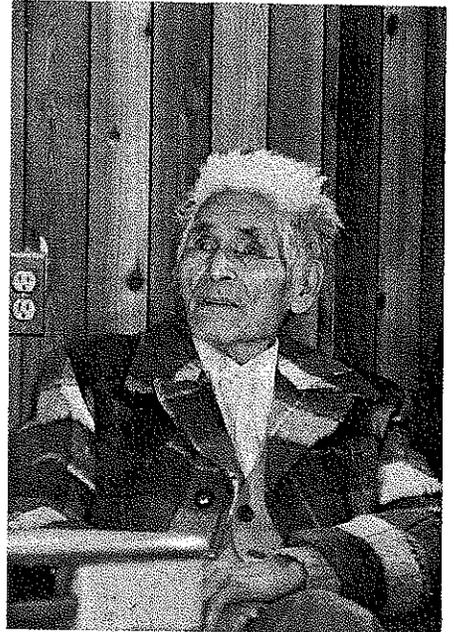
Joe lives alone in a little cottage on the Stoney Reservation north of Little Jumpingpound Creek.

Recorded by Thomas T. Williams

**Jonas Dixon,
“Wicha Wayin”
“One Boy”**



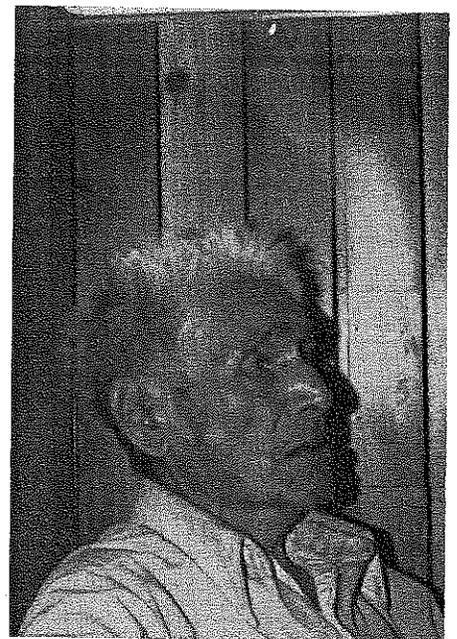
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Jonas Dixon

Stoney Elder

Born in 1886 "or thereabouts" near Morley, Alberta.

Jonas was born in a skin lodge. He says that he remembers the exact spot. However, today, at that place there is a highway sign.

His father was Noah Dixon, "Ta Taga Pa," - "Buffalo Head." His mother was Nancy Dixon.

Jonas was the only boy and the youngest in a family of ten children. Therefore, he was named "Wicha Wayin" which means "the only boy among these."

Jonas remembers riding alone on horseback to Macdougall's church as a young boy to be baptized.

Buffalo Head (Jonas' father) was the uncle of James Dixon, who signed Treaty Number Seven in 1877.

Jonas married Becky Crawler in 1905. She died in 1928. Bella Wesley, Jonas' second wife, died in 1950.

All his life, Jonas worked as a ranchhand for various ranches around Longview, Alberta. At times, he worked as far south as Waterton Lakes, where Kootenay Brown established his famous ranch.

When he was seventeen, Jonas was a champion rodeo bronc rider at Banff, Alberta. He has been in rodeo championships all across southern Alberta and northern Montana. Jonas often competed against the famous Tom Three Persons, the celebrated Blood champion from Cardston, Alberta.

"During those days, we never cut our hair. When we rode the bucking horses, our braids would fly all over. (Long braids were customary among Stoney males.)

Jonas Dixon and Joe Kootenay are the eldest of the Stoney narrators in this mythology book. As boyhood friends, they used to hunt with bow and arrow. Although they both married in their late teens (as was the custom), there seems to be some disagreement about the age of their respective brides. Each claims that the other married a girl twelve years older.

Of the Stoney myths and legends which appear in this book Jonas says that they were told to him by his father, grandfather, and various other Stoney Elders.

Jonas says that the beliefs and values of the Stonies are much different now from what they were when he was young.

"The influence of the early missionaries created many conflicts for those of us who retained our Stoney sacred ways. I think that the Stonies of today have become more selfish and less concerned about living in harmony with nature or honouring the traditionally deep family ties of our people."

"The present seems to be a time of destruction, and of fear."

"Once there was a time of laughter. Now there is only worry."

"Long ago, the sacred medicines were used for healing and for vision. Today, there are only a very few of us who know about these."

"The Stonies are losing their identity as a people - as a culture, day by day."

"The young people lack discipline. Their concern with money worries us old ones. There seem to be no definite goals in life among the younger people today. Children aren't raised with love as in the old days, but are grown like weeds instead. Without the teachings of the old ways, I am afraid that the young people will grow up like young dogs."

"The old custom of every person helping every other person to survive is gone. Today, people seem to be either too selfish or they want to condemn their neighbours."

"My hope for the future is that more of my people will return to the old sacred Stoney ways, customs and beliefs, so that they will live according to the wishes of Great Mystery."

Jonas lives on the Eden Valley Reservation in southwestern Alberta.

Recorded by Thomas T. Williams

Mark Lefthand, “Fish Child”

Stoney Elder

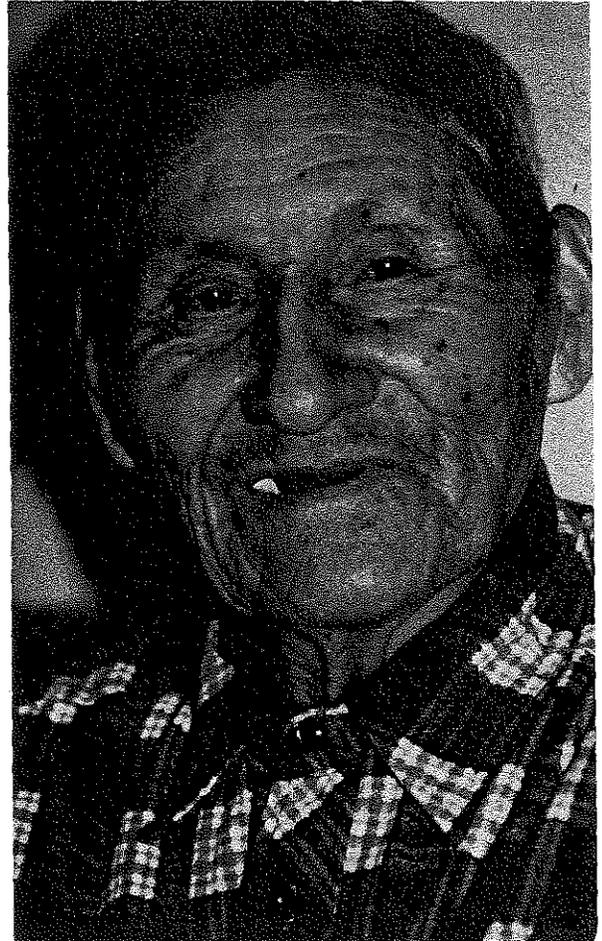
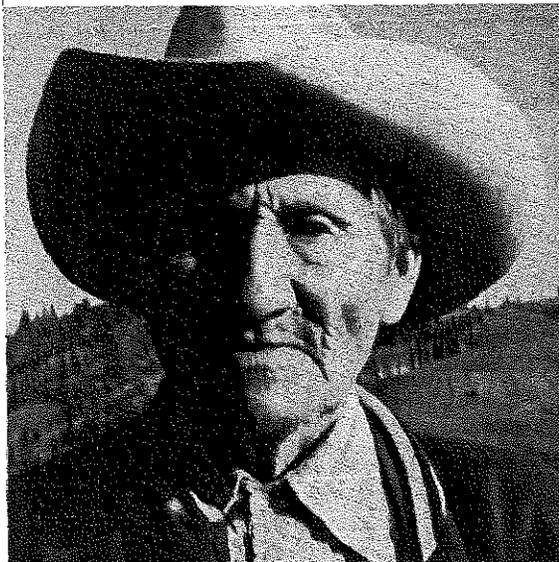


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Born in 1900, in Longview, Alberta.

Mark worked as a ranchhand for 27 years.

He spent his years “roping, wrestling, and branding cattle at the Rocky P Ranch.” He was a famous calf wrestler in his time. He has mended countless fences on his range circuit.

He is the father of seven children: four boys and three girls.

On the tiny Stoney Reserve at Eden Valley, where some 500 people live, Mark has an extended family of thirty-six relatives.

“In my time, most of us didn’t learn to read or write. Today, our future lies in educating our young and training them to be wise leaders.”

He maintains that Stonies must learn specialized skills and high technology trades, if they are to survive. (Without jobs, young people fall apart.)

“Live well, and be honest. An honest man is known and trusted by others.”

Mark lives on the Eden Valley Reservation in southwestern Alberta.

Mary Lefthand, “Small Girl”

Stoney Elder



Photo credits: Bob Mackie© The Alberta Foundation

Born in 1904, in Morley, Alberta.

Wife of Mark.

She has received much praise for her traditional homemaking ways.

She possesses the fine skills of tanning hides, making moccasins, buckskin jackets, and special beadwork. She has taught her daughters these skills. (She laments that most young Stoney girls “aren’t interested” in these custom-laden, all-women’s crafts. In times of scarcity, she has made Stoney handicrafts “to help feed the family.”)

Mary has a keen sense of humour.

She believes that a good husband and wife work equally hard and equally share burdens. (And that is her secret to good husband-wife relations.)

Mary lives on the Eden Valley Reservation in southwestern Alberta.

Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.

“Toots”



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation



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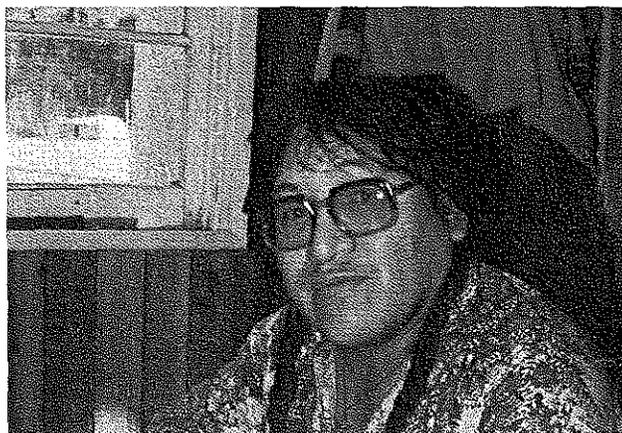


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Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.

Stoney translator

Born in 1948, in Morley, Alberta.

In the spring of 1949, his family moved to Eden Valley. Shortly thereafter, the Eden Valley Ranch was established as a Stoney Reservation by the Government of Canada.

"Toots," as he is affectionately known, is a name that was given to young Alfred by one of his Grandfathers. He was named after the grandfather's close friend, Toots Manfield, a foothills cowboy.

Toots entered the Gooderham Missionary School in Edmonton when he was thirteen. Isolated from his family and friends, he spent two unhappy years at Gooderham School. After graduation from high school, in Eden Valley, he attended Mount Royal Junior College for 2½ years. He also spent two summers at the Prairie Bible Institute at Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan.

When the Government of Canada granted the Stonies the right to self-rule, Toots was appointed as Executive Band Secretary for the Stoney Band at Eden Valley. He also worked as a social worker at Eden Valley.

In 1973, Toots moved to Calgary. He found the transition from the Stoney culture to that of the urban Albertan presented severe difficulties.

Leaving Calgary after a year-and-a-half, Toots joined the Pentecostal Church. He began a life of peace and calm. He served as pastor of that church for one year at Eden Valley. However, the church had little support there, and was closed down soon after.

Toots then went to work in an agricultural program with various ranches around Eden Valley. (His father, McFarland Dixon, had worked as a ranchhand, and later as a foreman of the Rocky P Ranch in Pekisko County, Alberta.)

Two years later, Toots was re-hired as Recreation Manager for the Stoney Band at Eden Valley. Later he was transferred to the position of Cultural Manager.

In 1981, Toots became Assistant Band Administrator, an important position in Eden Valley.

A man of deep thought, his first concern is for the Stoney people:

"The Stonies are a people of dreams and visions . . ."

"The Elders possess wisdom . . . and have much to teach the young . . . The Elders know the paths to the truth. Only their wisdom will bring an understanding of the Great Mystery. Only their knowledge will re-ignite the oneness-with Grandmother Earth. The 'spark in the Stoney spirit' must be given new life. If not, our culture will be lost forever."

"We were originally a people who lived-as-one-with Grandmother Earth. Our forefathers and Elders were spirit-seekers and spirit-speakers. The early missionaries brought us values that are foreign to us."

"We are proud of what we are. We don't want to be foreign-to-ourselves. We want only to be ourselves. We want to be-one-with Grandmother Earth and to worship the Great Mystery in our own way."

Toots believes it is unjust to study the Stonies from-a-distance. An in-depth immersion of the people is vital. "We cannot be put under a microscope and studied as objects: We are a living people - We are Nakoda; deliberate, calm, and slow-talking. - A visitor would have to be-among-us for a long time to know who we are."

"The two cultures must integrate. But first, they need understanding. And it is a hard thing for one culture to understand another. First we must understand ourselves - our past, present and the direction of the future. This is why the rekindling of our own culture (by Elders) is so important a task."

"We have been too intolerant. There is room on this great earth for many (different) teachings."

"It is my hope that the reader of this Stoney mythology and folklore will open himself, or herself, up to the richness and abundance in the differences in outlook. Every race of people has a contribution to make. We need each other to survive in this world."

"Many readers of this mythology will find *Iktomni's* ways difficult to understand. That is as it should be. For *Iktomni* is himself the bringer of understanding. There is an underlying reality to *Iktomni*. It is something that can be understood only by learning the legends, getting to know them well and meditating on them."

"*Iktomni* was the first human form in nature. He is the mediator between *Waka Taga* (Great Mystery) and everything else. He is the one who bestowed names on everything. As my Grandfather told me, 'whatever *Waka Taga* did, or created, *Waka Taga* first consulted *Iktomni* to make sure that it would be fitting.'"

Alfred Dixon served as key translator in this Stoney heritage project.

He lives on the Eden Valley Reservation in southwestern Alberta.

Recorded by Thomas T. Williams

Wayne Lefthand, “Antelope”

Stoney Elder

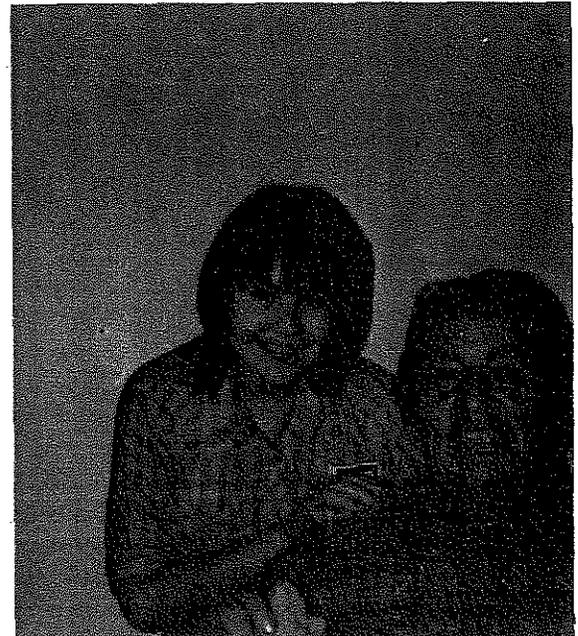
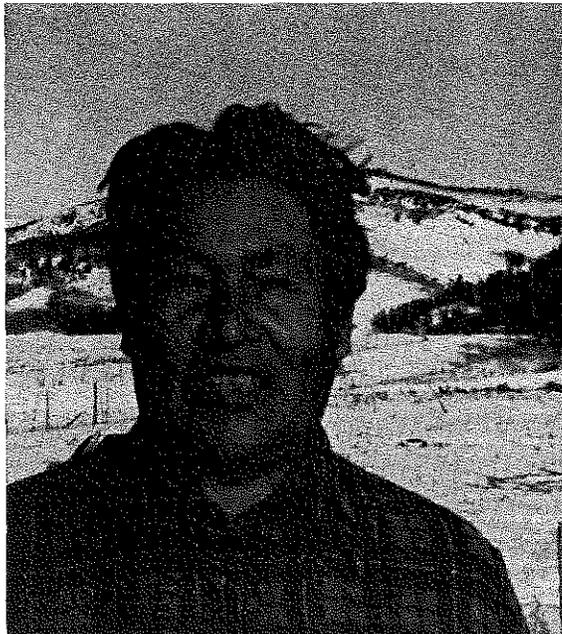


Photo credits: Thomas T. Williams © The Alberta Foundation

Born in 1919, in Morley, Alberta.

Son of Mark and Mary Lefthand.

Worked as a ranchhand for most of his life (as did much of his generation).

Wayne enjoys big family life.

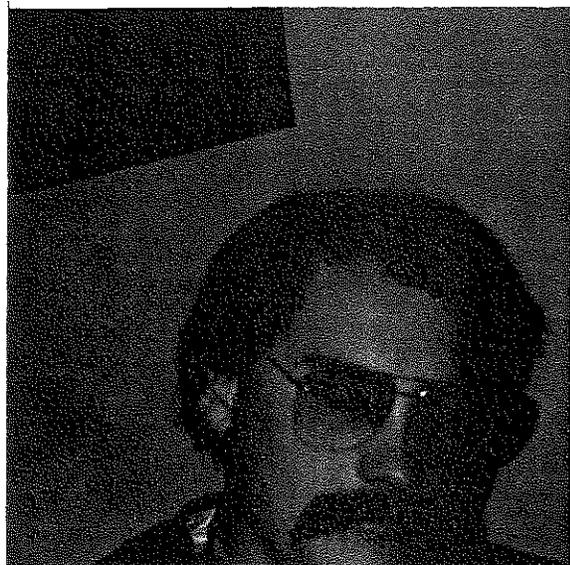
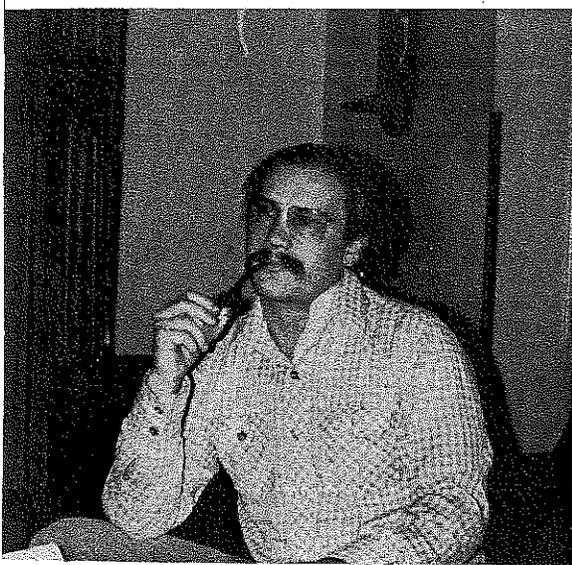
He is a good storyteller.

Wayne believes that people should stay on a path of goodness.

Wayne lives on the Eden Valley Reservation in southwestern Alberta.

Thomas T. Williams

Chief of Research



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Born in 1951, in Texas.

In 1971, he served as fieldworker in the data-gathering and excavation of Chumash Indian sites in California.

In 1972, Tom was in Africa, with the University of Nairobi. He was part of a field expedition to Mount Elgon in Kenya. The expedition researched evidence in the transition from stone tool technology to the smelting of iron (by Kenyan tribes).

From 1973 to 1980, he took his university studies in Philosophy. He became a member of the Philosophy Society and a Logic Tutor. He served as guest speaker and graduate research assistant and graduate teaching assistant.

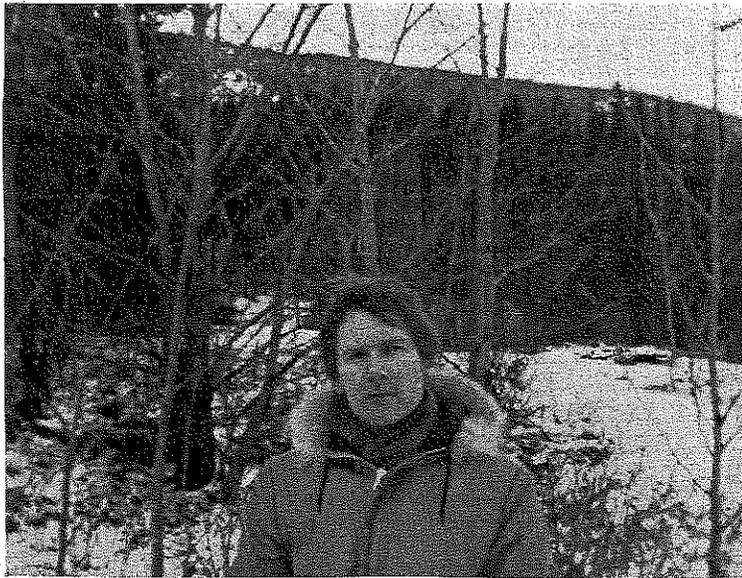
Tom was doing doctoral work at the University of Calgary in 1979 towards his Ph.D. in Philosophy.

Throughout 1980-81, he took over as Head of Field Research of the Stoney mythology project. He organized field scouts, guides, assistants, translators, narrators, Elders. He served as central figure in the field interview and data-gathering work. He travelled extensively in producing the field manuscript.

In 1982, Tom entered law school studies.

Sebastian Chumak

Project Director, Editor-in-Chief



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Sebastian Chumak

Sebastian was born in 1946 in Zams, Austria.

In 1947, ruined by the War, his parents arrived in Canada.

At University he studied philosophy, anthropology, mythology, history.
Served as a columnist and editor of student newspapers.

In a joint project with his father, worked with William Kurelek, Canadian artist (on the illustration of an early childhood studies project) 1975 - 1977.

In 1975, working with a group of Edmonton historians, authors, artists, he formed The Alberta Heritage Foundation - later, The Alberta Foundation. The intent of the group would be to research and publish major heritage works.

In 1978, he published his first historical work in Edmonton. He served as Project Director and Editor-in-Chief of a major historical anthology *The Spirit of Alberta* (with some 100 Alberta historians, authors, artists, editors contributing).

In 1978, he attended an art exhibit of the works of Norval Morriseau (Ojibwa).
It changed his whole life.

From 1978-83, he served as Project Director of the heritage work *The Stories of Alberta*. Heading a team of some 50 people, he published this work despite severe economic times.

Currently, he is Project Chief of works on the original cultures of Alberta. These are mythological works.
His research team is specializing in recording and documenting tribal cultures. "To reclaim, to restore the dignity and pride of the Alberta Indian tribes. . . To immortalize the Alberta tribal cultures. (Because) the old Indian cultures are dying right in front of our eyes . . ."

Vision: "To produce something that will outlive our civilization."

Interests: A committed bicyclist. Loves walking by rivers, hiking, climbing, canoeing, snowshoeing, dogs, and horses.

Sebastian lives in Calgary.

INTRODUCTION

General Notes on Stoney Mythology.

All men dream.

The Dream reveals a Garden where they will not perish. Their oldest dream is a desire for immortality. In their greatest dreams, men have spun great mythologies. And when they wake, in their sacred myths is their search for truth.

Here, we will look at mythology as a summary of ancestral Stoney reality. We will go to extreme antiquity. We will enter a very old order of reality. We will walk into the spirit world. We will observe a world transformed by a spirit man called *Iktomni* (Changer). We will watch time and space and customs altered by Stoney-specific forces.

Stoney myths reveal the sacred history of the people. The myths serve as reinforcers of traditions and truths. Traditionally, the myths gave meaning to life. Explained the universe. Defined moral wisdom (good and evil). Enhanced authority. Determined philosophy. Interpreted suffering. Expounded natural laws. Stabilized a tribe. Structured daily life. Territorially situated a people. Elucidated everyday experience. Originally, myths answered mysteries. They spoke to the unknown.

Stoney origin myths (genesis) are very ancient. They reveal that spirit, earth, man, life, are sacred. It is the power of origin that organizes the universe, fashions man, establishes tribal society. The origin myths contain all ancestral realities: creation, destruction, birth, death, love, hate, victory, defeat, good, evil, ambivalence. The origin myths express the beginnings, first customs, beliefs, values, behaviours of a people.

Containing immense power, the myths were re-told for thousands of years, so that the people would not forget their origins. In the ritual-source-myth, the origin is recited, repeated, performed. Here lie the codes, the soul of a people.

The first to emerge in the classic Stoney myths is a Great, Sacred Mystery, (Maker and Keeper of All). Celestial deities and spirits are sung into being, (i.e., Bear), and pass back and forth between sky and earth. Celestial hierarchies are firmly established. On earth, Spirit is alive in all places, in all things, at all times. The people make constant offerings to the spirits. Fear of death is virtually unknown. And eternity is a great feast with relative spirits. Above all, the spiritual and material are One. And he who does not believe will die.

The ancient Stoney cosmos is the realm of the Great, Sacred Mystery. The universe comes into being (as do all things) in a sacred way. The nature of the sky world is very holy, benevolent. There is a clear, intelligible plan in cosmos, sky, world, tribal hoop, lodge circle. All these have a sacred unity.

The old Stoney natural world is explained in nature-myths. The nature-myths release cycles, rhythms, forces, rebirth, renewal, in earth, man, etc. Phenomenal-world myths guarantee the regularity of seasons, times, fertility, birth, new grasses, great-herd migration. For in the beginning, time is born. And matter is born of spirit. In paradisaal time, a materially comprehensible world surrounds the (timeless) buffalo-dreaming Stonies.

Tribally, the Stonies are a nomadic buffalo people. Existentially, they come into being only as a direct result of the great myth-growth. Stoney consciousness comes into existence through the origin myths. (That is why they are sacred.) In the tale-motifs of the ritual myths, a people is made. A mythical birth occurs in the origin myths, medicine dreams, hero travels. A heroic age comes to life with mythical actors and ancestors in sweeping scenes, performing great deeds. Great mythical clans, families, chieftains, individuals, migrations, transformations, shamanisms, celestial adventures, animal fables, come to life. The mythical basis is divinely inspired with human carriers. (Oftentimes, the hero is *Iktomni*, (Wanderer).) In untold antiquity is born a buffalo people.

The classical Stoney trickster cycle revolves around *Iktomni*, (cultural hero). In a very old world, he emerges from a myth cycle. In the *Iktomni* cycle, he will be called "the tricky one, spider, unknown." His origins are found in pure being, instinct. He brings ambivalence into primal situations. *Iktomni* walks the narrow path between good and evil. His the fantasy. His the trail from chaos to cosmos. His the fall. It is Coyote (*Iktomni*) who stole Paradise.

Iktomni is punished for his passion. His mind discerns no division between universe/idea. He has come to no awareness of any division whatsoever of consciousness. Matter is his brother, undivided from spirit.

The myths (and legends) reveal an old universe and an ancient consciousness. In the early consciousness, material and spirit are one. Reality and idea are whole. It is a dream reality. The Stoney origin is perfection, the Garden.

S.C.
In the Goose Moon, (March), 1983,
Calgary,
Alberta.

INTRODUCTION

Background Notes on the Making of *The Stonies of Alberta*

As young pioneers and explorers, and entirely on our own initiative, we went out onto the Stoney Reservations to listen to the Elders. To listen in their kitchens. In their pick-up trucks. We explored by listening.

We set out to chronicle the shape of a culturally-specific human vision in time. Our first intent was to record the classic Stoney culture (prehistoric) from the mouths of the Elders. We wanted to document a unique, distinct, original Alberta culture. To preserve a sacred history. Our prime concern was with authenticity and originality (of narration and texts).

Listening to the Stoney Elders, we walked back thousands of years. Together, we unearthed a very old image of humankind. For we found that it was starvation, joy, isolation, birth, fear, love, indeed, all realities, that were the great shapers of the ancient Stoney myths and legends.

Long ago, the Stonies were an oral tradition. Oral transmission of myths was made intra-tribally. Such transmission demanded accurate, sacred knowledge. Such mythmakers, mythkeepers, mythspeakers were most highly valued.

The Stoney Elders were the chief source and authority in these spoken texts. We discovered that the old culture was still alive inside a handful of the Elders. They spoke as spellbinding storytellers and natural humourists. We sat and listened, fascinated.

Conditions of data-gathering ranged from generally hospitable to sacred atmospheres. Before beginning to speak on the sacred myths, the Elders would bring out their sacred pipes, and offer smoke to their spirits. Then they would pray or sing, and finally speak. Each narrating Elder had his own unique style, his own particular phraseology and special gestures.

Traditionally, Elders are the white-haired ones who have seen 75 snows. Following the old ways we gifted the narrating Elders with customary offerings of tobacco, pipes, shotguns, groceries, or cash.

As we listened, the Elders shaped this chronicle into 3 distinct parts: a) Genesis (primary), b) Iktomni, hero (secondary), c) Folklore (general).

By Stoney custom, certain myths and legends are the spiritual "property" or "territory" of a certain Elder. No one else has the right to certain narrations. (Except by rightful transfer.) Only a handful of 2500 Stonies are authorized to, and can narrate the myths properly and accurately (on behalf of the entire tribe).

Many of the Elders speak negligible English, and so preferred to narrate in their mother tongue, Sioux. A Stoney interpreter sat in on the narrations and provided simultaneous translation.

As custom requires, at the time when snakes sleep (in the winter moons), we went out onto the Stoney Reservations and asked the old storytellers to re-enact for us their oldest and most sacred legends. Data-obtained was recorded in living rooms (with attendant armies of infants, small kids, dogs, etc.), in backyards, from horseback, in roadside cafes, in huge, old, American cars without any heat whatsoever.

These living legends are sacred and special to the narrating Elders. In collecting material, we honoured what the Elders did not wish to speak on, what they considered to be too sacred to be revealed.

As a translated work, much is lost in the transfer of symbol and idea. Some difficulties arose in containing Stoney truth and magic in English. Some obstacles came into subjective interpretation, conflicting versions, non-translatable words, and speaking-in-fragments.

General methods of data-gathering involved recording, field notes, field observations, (memory, perception, etc.), field interviews, internal discussions, documentary research. First-hand collecting of first-person narration was the key to originality and authenticity. Material was gathered into one giant manuscript. Content selection of the narrated collection became a formidable task.

Editorial policy was simple: retain the truth. Our desire was to set down the truth about the old Stoney culture before the contact with the first traders. Our approach was to allow the Elders to speak.

Consensus by the Elders determined content, major versions, division, length, etc. (Minority input was always credited.) An immense task was the exhaustive interpretation of field material. This resulted in 7 manuscripts, each leaner, more concise, each a better summary. Editing data doubled the length of the project (1978-83). Although the text herein is adapted from the original narrations, there is little departure from tradition (the heart of this inquiry).

However, some reconstruction was necessary. Some legends have been completely restructured from scraps, fragments, suggestions, images, mythological deduction. In some cases, it has taken infinite patience to piece together an old, nomadic, oral culture.

Chronology of the Stoney texts is straightforward. Before winter counts were kept, "great sun" (year), "moon" (month), and seasons were the great measurers of time. Needless to say, all the myths herein are undated (antedate written records).

There is no "proper, official, fixed, correct" Stoney mythology (or sequence to or number of, the legends). Stoney mythology is actually one giant circle (one long epic) with no beginning and no end. Any point within the circle (sequence) is equally valid to commence the *Iktomni* cycle.

Mythical names of person, place, terrain were often not provided, lost, or unknown.

Myth versions verify authenticity. Our investigation revealed that different versions of the same legend were confirmed (virtually word-for-word) 100 kilometres away on different Reservations. We were astonished at the accurate material.

All quotations were written by the author, based on texts, interviews, narrations, discussions, research, etc. Their wisdom and philosophy are attributed to "the Stoney."

Verb tenses at times appear scattered or confusing. Mythology is timeless, paradisaical. Verbs occur simultaneously in the past, present, future.

Footnote references, (* asterisks), rather than numbered footnotes are used in order not to detract from the simplicity of the texts.

It is very late in the Stoney culture. Much has been lost. Little is being retained. Much is simply not known any longer. Some Elders did not know, or were not clear on origins and major roles of deities, keepers, etc. Due to deculturation, deaths of Elders, non-observance by emerging generations, there are many contradictions, omissions and fragments in the texts.

This investigation has recorded the remnants of a very old culture. We found a great fragmentation and non-transmission of the mother culture to the young.

Acculturation is in rapid process. New forces, pressures, influences, conditionings, have radically and totally altered the pre-contact Stoney. However, myths live and die. Great modification of myths has occurred by new culture contact, missionaries, intermarriage, territorial loss, etc.

Notwithstanding the loss, the decline, we sat with one Elder who spoke of renewal. He talked of returning to the sacred origins, customs, rites, ceremonies, traditions. Learning the songs of the Elders. Remembering the Great, Sacred Mystery.

Let the Elders speak . . .



Iktomni, Immortal Mystery and Spirit Man.
The one-who-comes-in-a-sacred-way.
"My medicines are earth, wind, water, fire."

Sacred Stoney Genesis

The Great Mystery

Waka Taga

And it is told among the Stonies that in the beginning there was *Waka Taga* whom the people call the Great Mystery and who is the source and the origin of all life and all being.

With *Waka Taga*,* sits *Iktomni*,* who is the Eldest Brother of All Living Things.

And *Waka Taga*, who is Spirit-Maker,* sings into being these sacred ones:

the Four Winds,

and these four who are the Keepers and Guardians of the Four Winds;

Pezutah Tawaeh, who is the Keeper of the Sacred Herbs,

Tomnoga Menage, who is the Keeper of Songs and Incense,

Ozinjah, the Keeper of Medicines,

Widongshu Tawaeh, the Keeper of the Great Medicine Bundles.

And *Waka Taga*, who is Life-Maker, then sings into existence these medicine spirits:

Mu, the Spirit of Thunder,

Waheambah, Sun,

Haheybi Waheambah, Moon,

Ohahsee, Grandfather Sky,

Ingeeshin, Grandmother Earth,

Ta Taga Skan, the Spirit of the Great White Buffalo,

the Four Sacred Horses,

Oombeskah, the Great Eagle,

the Four Sacred Coloured Soils of Earth,

Macoyah Debe, the Little People,

the Mouse Women,

Owsni Ti, the Cold Air Spirit,

and the Water Spirits.

Waka Taga,* who is Life-Giver, then gifts-with-life the great races of Man and Woman, and his special people, the Stonies, and *Nakoda* the first of these.

The medicine voice of *Waka Taga* then sings-into-life the Prairies, the Foothills, the Rivers, the Mountains, the soil and root nations, the sacred tribes of the animal people, and all that is and lives and moves and sings.

And it is said that all spirits and persons and things are born to yield their medicines to *Waka Taga*, who is the Spirit of Life.

And *Waka Taga* asks all living things to give their hearts to his special ones, the Stoney Nation. And

the old ones say that *Ta Taga*, Great Buffalo, was the first to yield.*

And it is said that all the spirits, rulers, guardians, messengers, protectors, carriers and helpers listen to the songs of the Stoney People and carry these to *Waka Taga*.

And the spirit men say that when the people remember *Waka Taga*, who is the Great Mystery, the hunters would return with much fresh meat on their shoulders. And when the people would honour *Waka Taga* with much ceremony, the nights would be filled with songs and dances and games.

Waka Taga watches over* his special people. The spirits are made to bring* the Stonies the red earth, the sacred wind, mountain air, good sun, much warmth, and many horned and antlered herds. And these, *Waka Taga's* gifts of life to his people.

The medicine power of *Waka Taga** is so great that *Waka Taga* does not come down to earth for the earth would burst into a ball of flame.*

So it is said by the Elders.

Based on narrations by various Stoney Elders.*
Based also on interviews, discussions and research studies.
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

* indicates footnote

*Yield yourself to the Mystery,
Trust the path of the heart.*
-from the Stoney

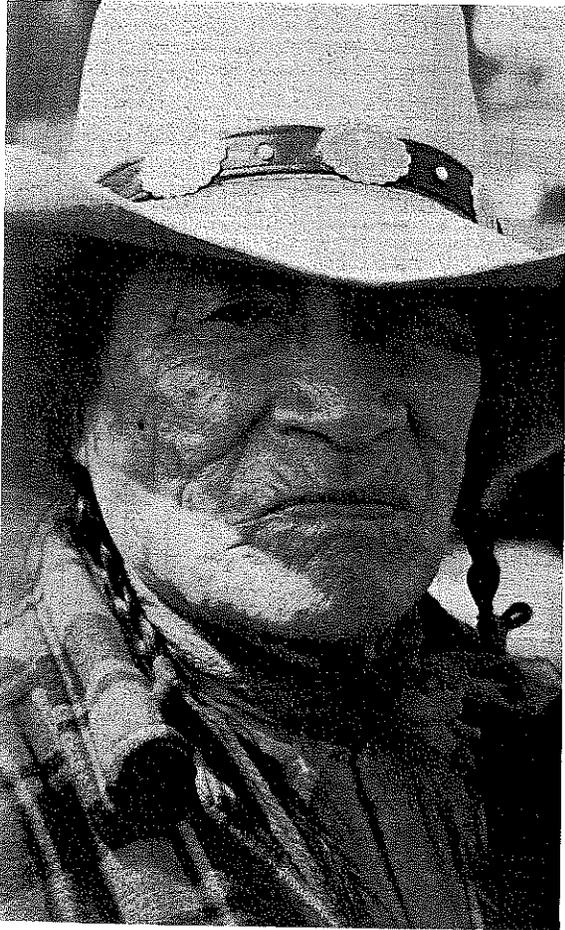


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Jake Rabbit
Stoney,
carpenter,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1901
Mother's Name: Bonnie Fox

Iktomni:

Immortal Mystery and Spirit Man

And it is told that in the beginning there was *Waka Taga*, The-Sacred-Mystery-Who-Is-Great. Beside *Waka Taga* sits *Iktomni*, the Man-Who-Is-Immortal.

These sacred ones always-were and always-are.*
Waka Taga and *Iktomni* are-here before the Great Star* is made.

These are-here before Grandfather Sky raises his blue lodge.*

Before Grandmother Earth swells with brown wet calves, these are.

Before the four Thunderer Birds* fly, these two sit with long-stemmed pipes.

Iktomni sits-as-one-with* *Waka Taga* who is first Source.

For these two sacred spirits are as one.* Yet both Unknown.

Waka Taga shares Being with *Iktomni*. For the one is the other.*

Waka Taga fills *Iktomni* with powers and medicines and gifts of the earth.

Waka Taga makes life and *Iktomni* completes it with chinook and rainbow.

Iktomni is immortal mystery that is not-to-be-known.*

Iktomni is immortal being: One-who-is-here-before-death.*

Iktomni is Spirit Man.* Spirit and Man.* He sings the first song:

"I come, looking to the spirit which makes-seed.
My medicines are earth, wind, water, fire. I own spirit. I own earth.
I am first Man and first Spirit. I am not two, not one. I am."

Waka Taga sits-as Spirit.* *Iktomni* walks-as Man.*

Iktomni carries the ear and the hands of *Waka Taga*.*

Iktomni honours *Waka Taga* by singing a fullness and roundness into first life.

This one speaks with the same mouth and tongue as *Waka Taga*.*

For, on the day when *Waka Taga* who is Spirit, makes *Ta Taga* who is Great Buffalo, *Iktomni* serves as the one-who-sings-the-yielding-song for *Ta Taga* to give his medicines up to *Waka Taga* through the Stoney Nation.

Iktomni, then, is one-who-acts and one-who-

settles,* always calling on the sacredness of *Waka Taga*.

Waka Taga breathes the Spirit into *Iktomni* and sings the separation song that sends him out into the world.

Waka Taga appears to *Iktomni* in a great vision. *Iktomni* sees that he will travel on four great paths* which will reflect the Four Winds. *Iktomni* is to bear to all living things these four sacred gifts:

On the first path, *Iktomni* walks as a sacred being.* In a sacred way, he brings the power for every living thing to be spirit.*

He is bearer of sacred gifts and spirit gifts of which *Waka Taga* is the Origin. He brings sacredness and spirit to all things. His gifts are spiritual and sacred.

On the second path, *Iktomni* walks as earth-maker.* Here, a vision-of-doing. He brings a power to make a world. Here, spirit breathing into clay. This one, material-maker. Making all living things, he makes the buffalo people. *Iktomni* makes light, and so warmth. He scatters everyday gifts over a world: Shields, hides, pipes, backfat, quills.

On the third path, *Iktomni* is bearer and bringer of the sacred teachings of the way of *Waka Taga*.*

He teaches all things to live in a sacred way. He is giver of life and death and wisdom. His the wisdom that gives and gives. This one: Bringer. Bearer. Bestower. Mediator. Teacher. Pointer. Messenger. Carrier of Truth.

On the fourth path, *Iktomni* walks as changer.* He brings the power to survive and endure the everyday circle. Blends with the moons.

This one: Trickster. Magician. Green leaf and blood leaf. Spirit speaker.*
Cattail speaker.

Inside his white hairs sits all openness, all denial.*
Inside his brown earth nostrils sits all darkness, all sun-rim.*

And *Waka Taga* brings *Iktomni** four great sacred dreams.*

Based on narrations by various Elders.
Based also on interviews, discussions and research studies.
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Everyman is spirit,
Everyman is earth-maker,
Everyman is bestower of gifts,
Everyman is changer.*
-from the Stoney

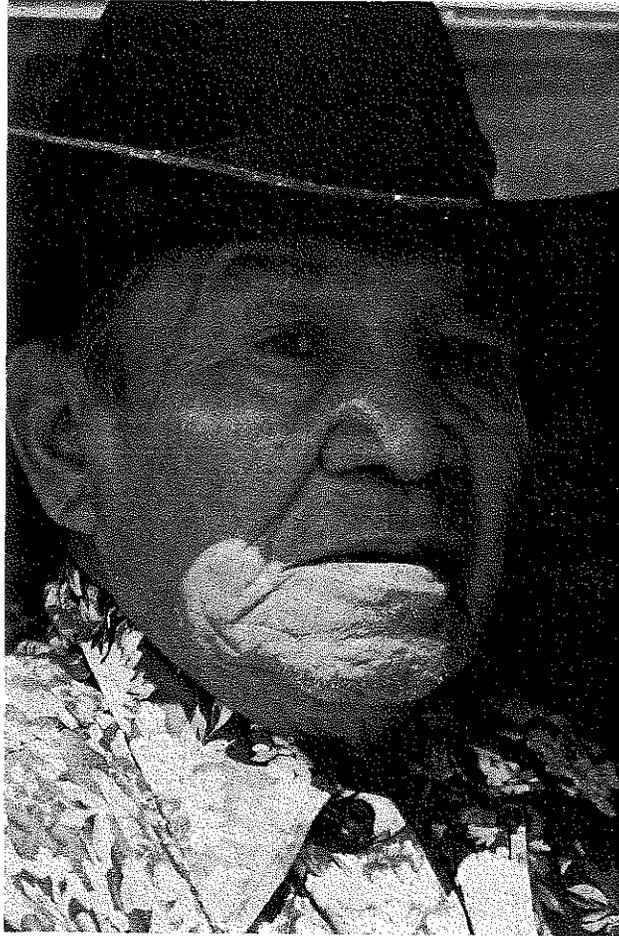


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Paul Wesley
Stoney,
retired carpenter,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: November 8, 1910
Father's Name: Moses Wesley
Mother's Name: Mary Wesley

Iktomni:

Eldest Brother of All Living Things

And it is told that in the beginning, *Iktomni* comes in a sacred way.

Iktomni comes as one who receives four dreams from Great Mystery: In the first dream, *Iktomni* becomes *Thicha Yuski*, a magical being. *Thicha Yuski* is a mysterious magician and medicine-tempter-hunter who becomes-many-things and changes into many beings and shapes.

This one wears many robes.

In the second dream, *Thicha Yuski* mates with She-Spider.

Thicha Yuski then becomes an insect person snaring ants with She-Spider's web fluids.

In the third dream, *Thicha Yuski* sees that She-Spider's web fluids are one-with the saliva of the human.

Thicha Yuski is at one with Insect, Spider, Raven, Coyote, Woman, Serpent, Man.

In the fourth dream, *Thicha Yuski* changes back into *Iktomni*, Spirit-become-Man.

Singing, *Iktomni* comes as one-who-points-the-way-of *Waka Taga*, Great Mystery.

Iktomni, as First Medicine Spirit, comes as sacred mediator* between *Waka Taga* and all life.

For *Iktomni* is bringer of Truth.* And these his medicines:

Iktomni the sacred one-who-sees-all-things: Bearer of visions which are the source of all wisdom.

Iktomni the sacred one-who-knows-all-things: Bringer of dreams which are the sources of all knowledge.

Iktomni the sacred one-who-sits-among-all-things: And so brother to all life.

Iktomni the sacred one-who-is-one-with-all-things: Upholds the great hoop.*

Iktomni the immortal one-who-affirms-the-earth. Gifter and giver. Sharer.*

Iktomni the immortal one-who-believes: One who trusts and accepts.

Iktomni the immortal one-who-understands-all-things. Radiates oneness.

Iktomni the immortal one-who-brings-life-and-death. And so, one-who-judges.

Iktomni the medicine-spirit who feels the pulse and anguish of all life.

Iktomni the medicine-spirit who touches all, and so heals and cures.

Iktomni the medicine-spirit who cares-for-the-other. One who comforts.

Iktomni the medicine-spirit who watches over Grandmother Earth. Earth scout.

Iktomni the Old Man who tricks-his-brother. Snare-maker. Snare-setter.

Iktomni the Old Man who waits like Spider. Watches like Fox.

Iktomni the Old Man, the laughing-one who sees a deadly, loving horizon.*

Iktomni the Old Man who bites into the one who would share with him.

Iktomni: This one teaches many songs and dances. Brings laughter, drums.

Iktomni: This one is magician.* Brings down Sun. Bringer of fire, flame.

Iktomni: This one, Changer. Transformer. Becomes Spider, Raven, Coyote.*

Iktomni: This one, storyteller. Bestower of names. Bringer of honouring laws.*

Iktomni: Twister-of-faces. One who deceives. And yet, wiser than Bear.

Iktomni: Lifter-of-boulders.* Yet, retreats before a single red berry.

Iktomni: Glutton-for-his-brother's flesh.* He soars without desire.

Iktomni: A fool for footracing Fox, yet more cunning than Weasel.*

Iktomni teaches that the smallest are equal to the mightiest.

He sits-down with Rock as often as with the Sacred Ones.

Iktomni walks the middle path, sits midway, but is first actor.

Iktomni settles-by-sitting-and-staying-with. He faces these.

The voice of all things, *Iktomni* brings sound. Makes things known.

Iktomni is origin of the word. He is bringer of words.*

He speaks with Thunder. Speaks with Willows. He is one who listens.

Iktomni opens first council. Talks with spirit people and with the living.

Iktomni stays close to earth.

Yet he journeys above, across, below, within earth. No person knows when he comes and what weeds or fruits he brings.*

He carries much wisdom and smoke in his shoulder bag.

Iktomni is Grandfather, Father, Son, Grandson. He is you. He is I.

Based on narrations by various Elders.

Based on discussions, interviews and research studies on *Iktomni*.

Based on field research recorded by Thomas T. Williams

Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Dreams are the source of all power,
For all dreams come from Sun.*
-from the Stoney

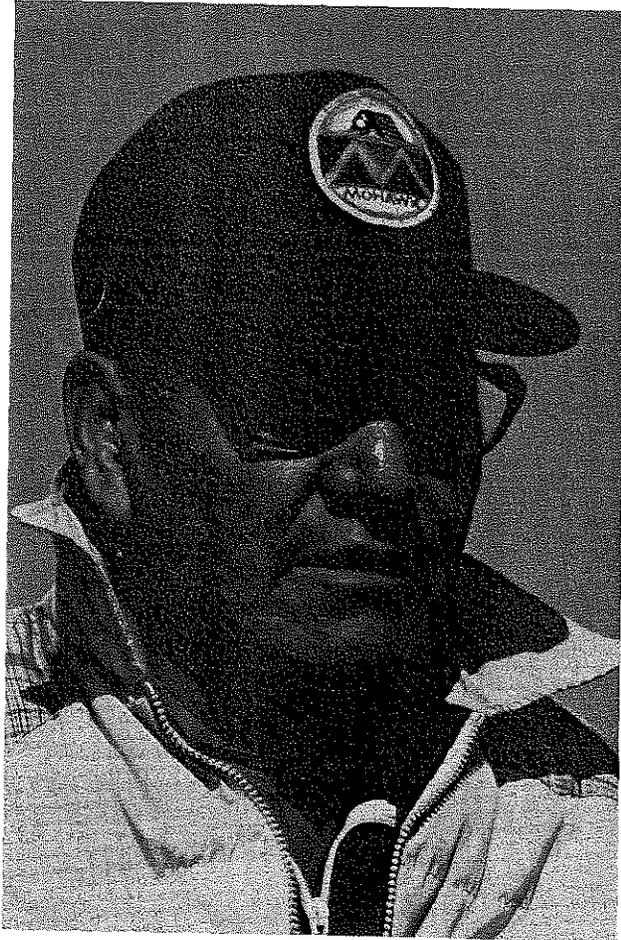


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Albert Bearspaw
Stoney,
handyman,
Longview, Alberta
Date of Birth: 1930
Mother's Name: Jane Rider
Father's Name: King Bearspaw

The Four Winds

And it is told that in the beginning
Waka Taga, the Great Mystery, makes the Four Winds.

The Four Winds are the first and most sacred of all things made.

As *Iktomni* sings, the Four Winds fill the great spaces with lifeflow.

The Four Wind Spirits are the first breath* of life of all things born.

The Four Wind Spirits are all the sacred natural powers and forces.

The Four Wind Spirits uphold Space and carry Sun on their shoulders.*

The Four Wind Spirits are bearers of earthscents, grass-in-motion, growth.

The Four Wind Powers are bringers of the great seasons.*

The Four Wind Powers: These are the roots of all life.

The Four Wind Powers roam Sky with their bags of gifts or torments.

The medicine sign of these four sky-warriors is a black buffalo stone.

The North Wind is power. He is Buffalo: The first wisdom. His heart is yellow.

The South Wind is growth. This person is innocence of heart. He is green.

The West Wind is change. He is Bear: Origin of illumination. He is black.

The East Wind is rebirth. He is Eagle. Source of introspection. He is white.

The North Wind is Buffalo. North is wisdom. His medicine colour is yellow. North wears the robe of wolf. In his lodge, the white hairs have their origin. His lodge is where the giant lives. This one is a bitter and mighty wind warrior. He gives the strength of bull buffalo. Endurance of musk ox. No person can match his anger. North Wind is storm-maker. He releases *Owsni Ti*, the Cold Spirit. He pushes his southern wind brother far away into sunsky. North Wind gives little light. Loves darkness. Nothing grows in his barren trees. But North is natural healer. He prepares the nations for the spring moons. Strengthens. Restores. Balances. Gives man freshness.

The South Wind is Mouse. South is innocence. His paws are green. His robe is coyote. South is the original lodge of the heart. The song of the South Wind says to put the heart above all, to see with the heart. For South is innocence of heart. South is the source of life. South is the origin of the flowering stick. South is the origin of man. This one gives much warmth. His heart trusts. This one carries ghost power. Wind of peace.

The East Wind is Eagle. East is illumination. He lives in a lodge of pure white. East wears the robe of elk. Morning Star announces his presence. East is seeing clearly, far and wide. See-far as eastern Eagle. East strength comes from the spirit horse. East is the source of the original medicine bundle. East gives light in a clear way. For East is the source of light and understanding. Bringer of light wind, good rain, good light, good growth. Wind of vision.

The West Wind is Bear. West is introspective ways of man. His medicine colour is black for change. West wears the otter robe. West is looks-within-place. West is a Bear person with change-coming. West gives rain. Brings water in bags. Scatters much fruit. Rushes in winds of odours, scents, dampness, wetness, greenness, completeness. Bears soil gifts. Brings first warmth. Thaws soils. Brings Sun closer. Power of West comes when Thunder visits this Bear wind and roars his greeting across Sky. When Thunder leaves, all life is glad for the greenness. West is the final lodge of man. Strong wind. Rain powerful. Light intense. Growth swift. Much Thunder. Wind of rest.

The Four Winds honour *Waka Taga** by upholding Space and Sky and Sun who are the oldest fathers and ancestors of the moons.

The wisdom of the winds runs like water.

Based on narrations by various Elders.
Based also on interviews, discussions, and research studies.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak.

It is the spirit that gives life to matter.
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Vera Daniels
Stoney,
handicraft worker,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: November 15, 1912
Mother's Name: Yonish Amos
Father's Name: Paul Amos

The Keepers of the Four Winds

It is the beginning.

The Four Winds are the sacred breath of *Waka Taga*, Great Mystery.

The Four Winds are Eagle, Bear, Mouse, Buffalo.*

The Four Winds are Wisdom, Innocence, Illumination, Introspection.

The Four Winds are storm-white, heart-green, medicine-yellow, changing-black.

Waka Taga, the Great Mystery, gives each wind a sacred guardian.

The Ruler of All the Medicine Herbs guards the East Wind.

Bull Moose Carrier guards the South Wind.

Great Bear guards the West Wind.*

The Keeper of All the Medicine Bundles guards the North Wind.

The Keepers of the Four Winds carry out the original wishes of *Waka Taga*.

Each Guardian carries out a sacred task to preserve *Waka Taga's* gifts of life.

The Guardians complete the circle of the sacred four directions.

The Guardians keep the Four Winds in existence and uphold the great seasons.

The songs of the four Keepers guard and defend the goodness of being.

The Keepers sing and release their gifts to sustain and prolong life.

These spirit Keepers sing to replenish the earth and repeople the nations.

These walk the skies and the soils to provide for, to support, to comfort the people.

The Keepers of the Four Winds have two great sky councils within every great sun.*

The first great sky council is held in the spring moons when-the-soils-of-earth-lose-their-coldness. The South Wind signals the Keepers to open their medicine bundles and release the spirit of watersoil medicines. The newborn roots and herbs are now ready to grow in a sacred way and do the work of *Waka Taga*.

The second great sky council is called in the autumn moons when-all-detaches-and-dies. The Guardians smoke their red sky pipe.* There is much talk of

how the blessings, teachings and medicines will be released during the coming wind-seasons. These are the moons of quiet when the spirit keepers release sleeping medicines, robes of snow.

The Keepers give the Stonies many signs in Sky of things to come.

There will be sky signals when the moons are like bitter herbs.

These sky warnings may point to lean seasons, dry rivers, rain-not-come, animal people with stolen spirits, disease-coming, warrior illness, starvation when-the-animal-people-hide-from-the-hunters.

The Keepers have a blessing from *Waka Taga* to hear the songs of the Stonies and to release certain medicine bundles to balance life in the four ways.

These spirit-ones give sacred teachings to the Stony who is worthy.

The Guardians are given these powers by *Waka Taga*.

They reveal, by their blessings and teachings and medicines, the way of Great Mystery.

These, the sacred mediators between *Waka Taga* and the Stonies.

The Keepers come to the people only in dreams and visions.*

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Remember yourself as one with the earth.
-from the Stoney

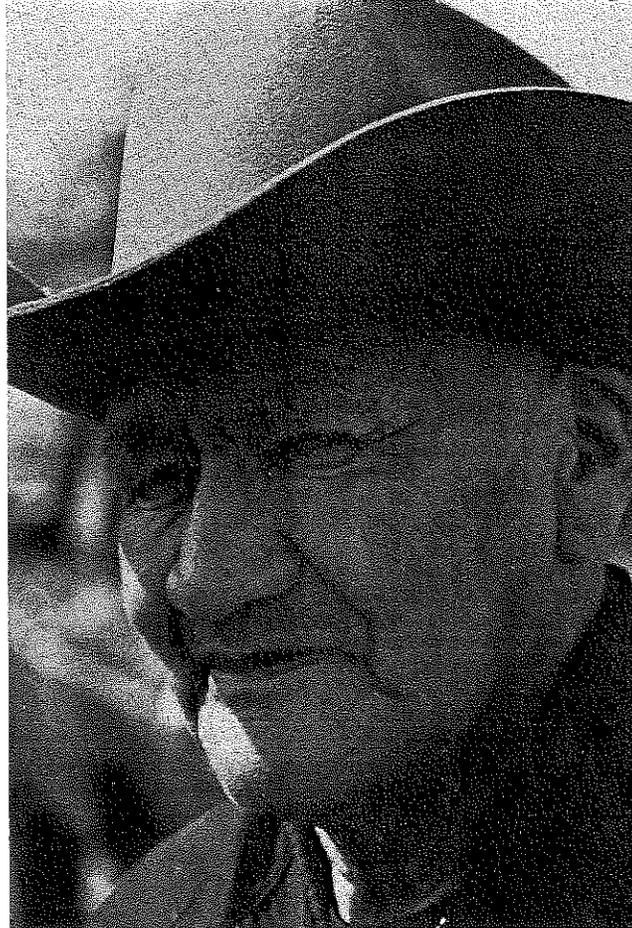


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Matthew Hunter
Stoney,
farmer,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1911
Mother's Name: June Crawler
Father's Name: Elijah Hunter

Keeper of All the Sacred Herbs

Pezutah Tawaeh

In the beginning there is first Sun and bare Earth.*

Only the Four Winds move. There is no other sound.

Waka Taga, the Great Mystery, makes *Pezutah Tawaeh* and appoints this spirit guardian as the Keeper of All the Medicine Herbs.

And *Waka Taga* gives* spirit-being to *Pezutah Tawaeh*.

This Keeper to hold All the Medicine Herbs.

This Keeper to guard the East Wind.

In his first song to this spirit keeper, *Waka Taga* asks that *Pezutah Tawaeh** fill the sacred soils of earth with life.

For the firstmade on Grandmother Earth are the sacred soils. Then are born the roots, grasses, herbs, berries, mosses, marsh reeds, cottonwoods, jackpines, spruces and many trees. All these are born in a sacred way. And all these open their green hearts to Sky who is among the oldest of all spirits.

And *Waka Taga* speaks to *Pezutah Tawaeh*, asking that all the ones-within-the-soils come to life. And *Waka Taga* and *Pezutah Tawaeh* sing-as-one, asking all these soil persons and herb persons to yield their medicines to Grandmother Earth so that she may live. And the root nations yield-singing in giving the heart-blood of their soil being.

Pezutah Tawaeh receives from *Waka Taga* the gift of becoming one-who-teaches-the-way-of-the-East Wind, one who brings change from the East, one who carries messages of East Wind, one who watches and listens in the seasons when East Wind sleeps.

Waka Taga gives the sacred herbal teachings* to *Pezutah Tawaeh*. And *Pezutah Tawaeh* takes into his soil-root pulse the ritual power to release the life of all the herbs as the East Wind will say.

Pezutah Tawaeh receives the knowledge of all-that-grows-within-the-four-sacred-soils. This one will know the path of all the underground persons who carry the powers to sing, to bless, to cure, to birth, to destroy a spirit. For *Pezutah Tawaeh* is Keeper of these inside-fire-medicines. It is he who gives each of these roots, seeds and herbs its own lifeforce, and light-within, and the first-spark-of-earth-life. And each root born is firstlife, firstseed, firstspirit.

And the earth-herb stem will wither and become soil after each great sun, but the seed does not die. The herb nation is its seed. For the seed is blessed with the breath of *Waka Taga* and the East Wind. And one day, another seed people, the Stonies, will be chosen by the hand of *Waka Taga*. These will take the medicine herbs for spirit-visions and body-dreams. The sacred herbs of sage, thyme, mint and basil will fill their medicine bags.

A Stony spirit man will sing to receive the teachings and mysteries of the sacred herbs through the Keeper. He will live apart from food. He will fill his pipe and offer it to the Four Winds. He will call down *Pezutah Tawaeh*. And if he will receive a spirit song from the Keeper and the herb people, it will go with him to his death.

Pezutah Tawaeh receives the Stony songs and sacrifices and smoke and drums and fires and rattles and gifts of the spirit man only if his blood-heart is free from impurities, weaknesses, evils, and wrongs-to-others. Only then will the Keeper gift him with the secrets and mysteries of the herbs.

The medicine herbs return to *Waka Taga* the power of the East Wind.

These, the origins of vegetation.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Bear told me to
understand only that
the spirit is everywhere.*
-from the Stoney

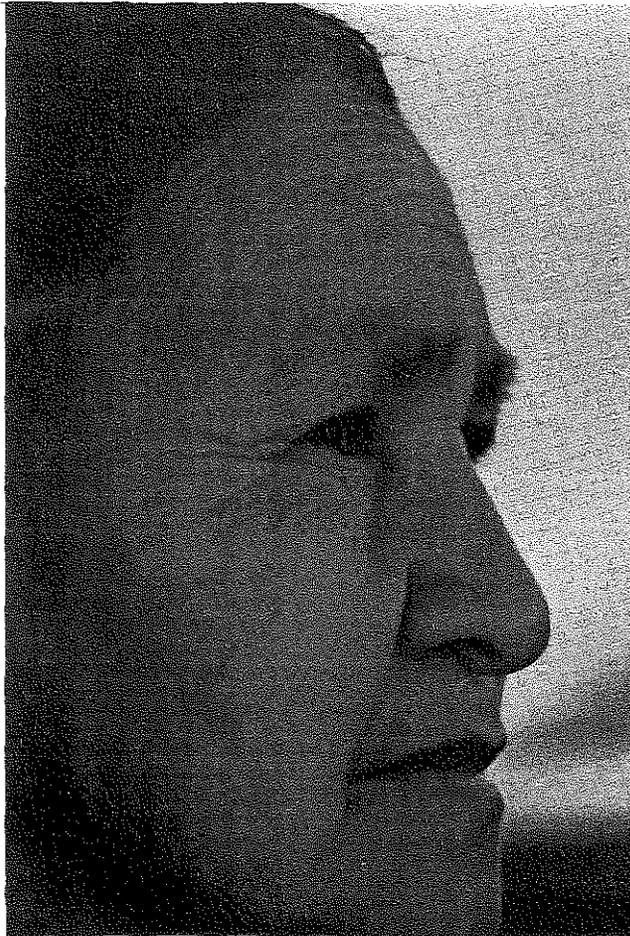


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Frances Snow
Stoney,
teacher,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: September 5, 1928
Mother's Name: Annie Beaver
Father's Name: Isaac Two Youngman

Bull Moose Carrier

Tomnoga Menage

It is the beginning.*

Waka Taga, the Great Mystery, gives life to *Tomnoga Menage*, Bull Moose Carrier.

Tomnoga Menage receives the powers to become the keeper of the South Wind.

Tomnoga Menage will guard the spirit of growing-in-a-sacred-way.

As Keeper of the South Wind, *Tomnoga Menage* receives the ritual strength from *Waka Taga* to guard this southern wind person.

Great Mystery gives Bull Moose Carrier the power to be the Carrier of Songs and Incense Stand Keeper. This spirit person is Keeper also of sweetgrass, pine cones, prairie sage, and pine needles.

Bull Moose Carrier is a sacred one and a ritual keeper. He is a sky spirit powerful enough to carry an earth bull moose on his shoulders across mountains as if it were nothing more than a newborn weasel pup.

The Stonies honor Bull Moose Carrier and so South Wind in burning much incense. These speak to the spirit Keeper with sweetgrass, forest needles and sage. The incense is blessed in a sacred way. Then it is offered through the Spirit of Fire because his smoke reaches the stars. The people sing songs many and sacred to the Keeper.

Bull Moose Carrier visits the Stonies in dreams.

He carries the songs of strong heart on his bull back in his song bundle. Like the other spirit keepers, he is song messenger. He will carry the good songs on his back to the South Wind. When sweetgrass is burned in coils, Bull Moose Carrier appears to the one with open heart. For it is the human heart that opens or closes his presence.*

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Listen to the Sky,
who says
laugh at no one
because all things
have the power
to destroy you.*

-from the Stoney



Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Peter Poucette
Stoney,
retired ranchhand,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1892

Keeper of All the Medicine Bundles

Widongshu Tawaeh

It is the beginning.

Waka Taga, Great Mystery, makes *Widongshu Tawaeh*, the Keeper of All the Medicine Bundles.

The Keeper of All the Medicine Bundles is made as one of the Guardians of the Four Winds.

Widongshu Tawaeh is given the sacred power by *Waka Taga* to guard the northern spirit of truth-in-power.

Widongshu Tawaeh is given life to guard North Wind. He will look to upholding and protecting. For this spirit keeper is sky shield. He is spirit shield. His watchfulness is to be the eyes and ears of North Wind. He will keep all harm away. He will defend the truth of *Waka Taga*.

Somewhere between Earth and Sky, *Widongshu Tawaeh* makes his lodge on a spirit island. The sky island where he dwells has four lodges. All four are pure white. Within the four white lodges, *Widongshu Tawaeh* keeps All the Sacred Medicine Bundles. And these, the source and the origin of all Stoney medicine bundles.

The Keeper of All the Medicine Bundles carries the sacred power bestowed on him by *Waka Taga*. The Keeper's power is to release the medicine of the medicine bundles. These powers, to serve the people in strength and purity.

It is told that no living man could ever reach this sky island to come within reach of the four sacred white lodges. No man is pure enough. The four lodges may be seen by a mortal only in a dream or vision.

A Stoney must make sacrifice and sing to the Keeper of All the Medicine Bundles to receive a medicine bundle to carry his own medicines in. Before a medicine bundle is made by a Stoney, it must first have the blessing of the Bundle Keeper. For without this blessing, a medicine bundle made by a man would have no power.

A medicine bundle made sacred by *Widongshu Tawaeh* contains many holy plant and animal and human possessions. Medicine bundles are very sacred. Their contents are the secrets of the people. The bundles rest in special places near the lodge. Or they may be carried in small versions in the hair, on the wrist or near the waist.

It is said that when *Widongshu Tawaeh* grants a medicine bundle blessing to a Stoney, this sky Keeper will paint the name of the man with red soil-medicine inside one of the four white lodges.

As a sacred one, *Widongshu Tawaeh* comes to a Stoney spirit man only in dreams or visions.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Mysteries come like clouds,
Understand with your heart
that Sky-which-is-open,
breathes as quietly as Rock.*
-from the Stoney



Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Moses Wesley
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1901

Great Bear

Ozinjah

In the beginning, *Waka Taga* makes Great Bear*, *Ozinjah*, in sky country.

Great Bear is the Keeper and Guardian of the West Wind.

Great Bear is the ruler of the sacred bear medicines.

Great Bear is the source of strength.

The Stoney ancestors said that Great Bear is gray and blue. A deep white stripe runs along his shoulders. This knowledge is sacred.

Great Bear possesses a power to yield himself. Like his brothers the herbs, grasses and trees, it is said that Great Bear grows from roots which are mysteriously hidden within himself.

Bear is brother to all persons. But his anger is known from sky to sky. And Bear loves fighting. Stonies who are Bear dreamers and who carry the medicines of Bear are the finest warriors and many of these become much-celebrated war chiefs. And these Bear persons become the keepers of the war pipe and the war club.

All the bears that men can see get their strength from Great Bear, for he alone has the gift of eternal strength. And it is said that no Stoney will ever see a bear who has died of old age — unlike his brothers moose and elk — for these old ones enter the medicine soils of Grandmother Earth.

When a Bear is brought down by a Stoney hunter, certain parts are buried in secret ritual. It is said that Great Bear impregnates and fertilizes the herbs with his healing medicines. Most of a bear — skin, bones, claws, teeth, ears, tongue, genitals — have sacred ritual and medicine rite uses. These rituals and rites are the secrets of Stoney Bear dreamers and Stoney Bear men.

When the Stonies sing or talk to Great Bear, he will hear their words even during his rest in the seven winter moons. Great Bear has a power to hear even when he is underground in his winter-moon-sleep. Great Bear listens to the songs of the Stonies and releases the medicine powers within his heart or claws or tail or teeth.

In centre moon, the middle of winter moon, Great Bear of sky country, and all the bears sleeping in caves or dens, turn over on their sides. This great winter sleep-turning renews the sacred powers of the bear medicine.

The people also say that Great Bear makes prophecies. But it takes much fasting and song to receive these. It is said that only one or two Stoney spirit men have ever received the prophecies of Great Bear. These are secret and very sacred.

When a Stoney becomes a Bear dreamer, the medicine powers of Great Bear will be released for his use. A man who has a medicine dream of Great Bear will go out and hunt and kill a bear so that these sacred medicines would be yielded to him.

Seeing a bear is always a good sign. In sighting a bear, it is clear that the songs of the one who has seen the bear are being heard.

Bear is very powerful. The Stoney Bear Society honours Bear. Here, many persons divide Bear Society into Head, Ribs, and Paw.*

Bear sleeps inside Grandmother Earth. Stoney hunters may bring fire or hot coals to bring sow bear out from within earth.

A Stoney woman who eats the heart of Bear will lose her youth and her body will turn charcoal and slowly become dust.

Bears are the hands of *Waka Taga*.

So it is said.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Based also on interviews, discussions, and research studies.
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Like Wind shapes Cliff,
by speaking to grain after grain,
so Spirit shapes all life.*
-from the Stoney

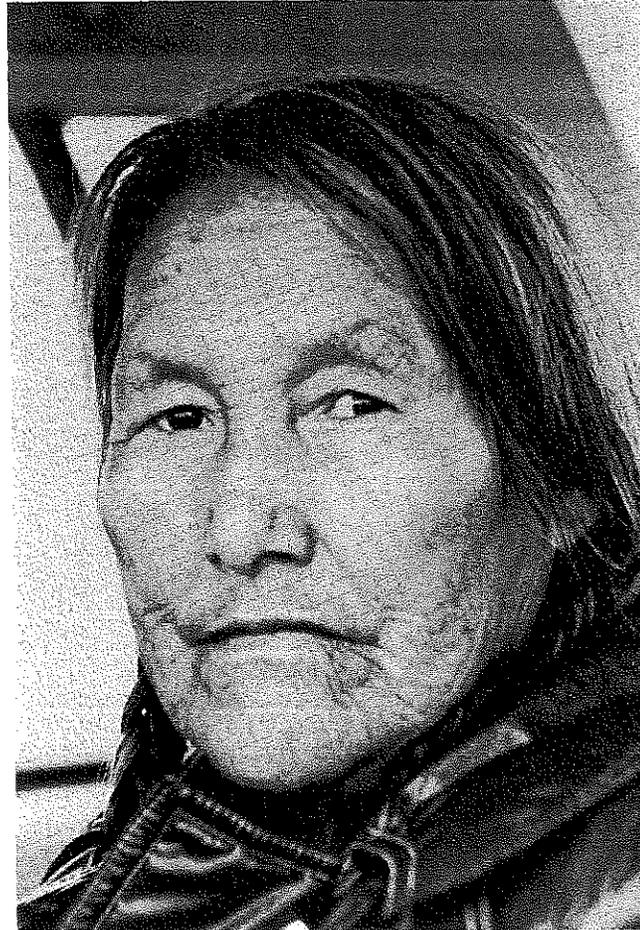


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Martha Dixon
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1915
Mother's Name: Mary Anne Dixon
Father's Name: Steven Dixon

Thunder

Mu

In the beginning, *Waka Taga* gives *Mu*, Thunder, a power to become medicine spirit birds.*

Thunder then becomes giant spirit birds with wings like mountains. These roam across Sky. Thunder makes his roaring lodge between Earth and Sun.* In a sky nest of white twigs and white bones, little thunderers are born. One thunder egg is much bigger than all Athabasca country.

Mu speak in thunder. Sky shakes when these raise their wings. Moon fears their roaring wings. And Space puts on cold, dark robes.

When *Mu* open their eyes, lightning pours across Sky. Thunderer wears many robes of fire, ice, fog, snow, clouds, hail.

When Grandmother Earth is born, there are four Thunderer Birds.*

Black Bear guards West Thunderer Bird.

Red Butterfly guards East Thunderer Bird.

Yellow Deer guards North Thunderer Bird.

Blue Beaver guards South Thunderer Bird.

And it is said that in the beginning, Thunder lived on Earth. These, earth giants and sky spirits. Their giant claws made the river flats. Sometimes Thunder would just scratch Grandmother Earth's curved back.

Mu have a power to make fire across the Sky.

Mu-fire* thaws out the sky ice. Then, much water falls to Earth. *Mu* link Earth and Sky with giant hoops of fire and water. When *Mu* make their sky-fires, they wear great dark robes of clouds so that Earth will not burn up in flames from their fires.

Before the birth of the Pipe, *Mu* would sit down in council with *Iktomni*. The one-who-throws-flame-across-Sky yielded himself to serve Earth. *Mu*-powers over earthwater brought much care, and much tending to the newborn grasses, roots, plants and trees. And when Moon gives-new-life to the yielding soils, *Mu*-rains release new births, new life.

Mu receive the gift of fire-making from *Waka Taga*. Fire-Maker shares fire-power with certain rocks. When these rocks are struck together, they make fire. These are the flint people. They are a nation of brown, black or gray rock. These are a very hard people-that-make-many-sparks. *Mu* dwell within flint persons. And it is said that *Mu* brought the Stonies the first fires.

Mu roam the Stoney Sky with their hand drums. *Mu* speak to the Stonies. In the egging moons, the Stonies can foretell what the summer moons will bring. And if, in the birthing moons, *Mu* speak in a low, rumbling voice,* the Stonies know* that *Waka Taga* will bring plenty of spring water and no drought. But if *Mu* do not speak in the spring moons, then there will be drought. It is said that if rain-maker comes in the green moons, but *Mu* do not speak their fires, then there will be drought.

Mu, medicine bearer, brings fire medicines* to the Stonies. These are great weapons to meet prairie fire, or battle medicines in days of war when men fight. Flame-thrower sends his runners to end fighting.

A Stoney thunder dreamer is a very sacred person. This gift and vision is a great marvel and honour. When the Stonies make sacrifice to *Waka Taga* and *Mu*, a wonderful Rainbow Woman may appear in Sky. This flaming person is a sign of good-days-to-come. And just as *Mu* thunders, Rainbow Woman splashes her beauty from hill to hill.

Long ago, Thunderer Bird makes war* with the great horned water Snake.

And Earth would buckle and flood and tremble as these fought.

It is said that a fierce *Mu* heads south in his long black mink robe. And when *Mu* is playful, he heads for Stoney country wearing the robes of hawk.*

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Praise the things that other men neglect.
-from the Stoney



Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Anna Bearspaw
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1911

The Four Thunderers and the Great Horned River Snake

In the beginning, before ever the hoop forever joined together Grandfather Sky and Grandmother Earth, there was a big separation of earth and sky.

Before the Stonies were born, when Grandfather Sky would be angry with Grandmother Earth, he would send his four adopted sons, the four Thunderer Birds, *Mu*, to bark and roar and bite at the old woman's ribs.

The Four Thunderers left many scars within her greenness and her rock and chewed up Earth's elbows. These four, charred up, and made smoky, her white hairs. That is why Earth is ochre.

Grandmother Earth bit her gums and hid her face. And when she howled, Sky would shroud his anger with the rains of his adopted West Thunderer son. Old Man Sky would then bend a little, but he had not yet learned forgiveness which every leaf teaches.

And it is told that Sky is the first intelligence. And because Sky can see everything, he knows many secrets and many tricks. In his boyhood moons, Sky would send snow to crawl up the Old Woman's neck.

One day, Grandmother Earth has enough. She takes up many bundles and crosses Tokuum Creek* and follows Ottetail River* until she comes to a lodge covered with river water where one of her sons raises his coiled lodge. And this one, the Great Horned River Snake.

Great Horned River Snake has copper scales and hair like blood. One great eye sits on his head. He is the Chief of all snakes, lizards, fish, and underwater and underground persons. These, his messengers and his brothers. When Great Snake once raises his head, the South Willow Creek hills* run south and hide in the Dakotas for three moons.

Great Snake does not smile when Grandmother Earth scratches on the smoky hide covering his lodge.

And when Great Snake sees her scars, he brings out his pipe-wrapped-for-war. And that is how Thunder and Snake became great enemies.

Snake and Thunder fought for so long that no one could remember why these made war or when these wars first started. And much earth-life-to-be-made waits while these two fight.

There are many battles and much fighting. Sky and Earth heave and roll as these lock horns. The fallen bodies of *Mu* and Great Snake turn into stones. And in the end, after all his brothers have fallen,* Great Snake hides in the underwater rocks of Amiskwi River.* And to this day, the Four Thunderer Birds soar across Sky singing victory songs.

And the peace pipe is unwrapped between Sky and Earth.

Grandfather Sky through his Four Thunderer sons sends many sacred stones as offerings to Grandmother Earth. These sacred stones are gifts for Earth from *Mu*.

Some say that the stone becomes the body and flesh of the Stonies.

Mu-lightning leaves black stones in the soils of Grandmother Earth's hands. The lightning-turned-into-stones is sacred like Wind. Stone is round like Moon. Stone is older than Summer. Stone is wise and hard like buffalo head. A spirit man who is keeper of the sacred stones sings to the spirit of the stones. The stones speak to this keeper. Stones have a good power. Scouting stones help find lost persons. Or these warn of sudden attack. And these know where buffalo graze.

No good man is without a good speaking stone.

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay/"Rolling Buffalo"
Based also on interviews, discussions, and research studies.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Mu have a power to make fire across the sky.
-from the Stoney

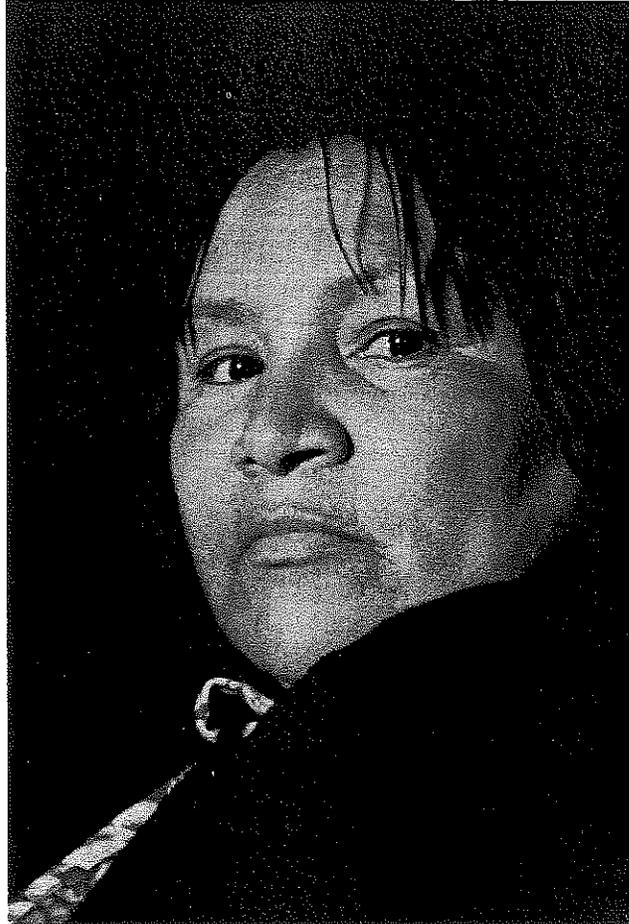


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Stoney

Great White Buffalo

Ta Taga Skan

In the beginning, *Waka Taga*, Great Mystery, makes* Great White Buffalo, *Ta Taga Skan*, and names him the chief* of all buffalo.

Ta Taga Skan, the sacred one, the Spirit of Buffalo-who-gives-life.

In the early spirit days, when Grandfather Sky was at war with Grandmother Earth, the Old Woman* dug out a great hole east of Beaverfoot Mountains* and hid all the buffalo inside herself. After her white hair reached the Wabiskaw River, and after the peace pipe was passed between Sky and Earth, the Old Woman released the black and gray buffalo people to follow the sacred grasslands and to rub her body when these shaggy people would wallow in dust or mud.

Great White Buffalo is the biggest, oldest, wisest, fastest and most sacred bull buffalo. And Great Mystery gifts him with much buffalo wisdom: This snorting person runs like West Wind, his older brother. He grazes into the North Wind. Nothing living on earth can stand and face the snowstorm spirit or the blizzard people like this one. Great Mystery gifts this one with the power never to die.* These medicines flow from the spirit of *Waka Taga*.

Great White Buffalo leads the way of the moving herds that fill the earth from sun to sun.* For only *Ta Taga Skan* has the power to hear the voice of the Old Woman calling through the soil persons and the birthing grasses. *Ta Taga Skan* passes this hearing-power to the buffalo herd bull leader, *Ta Taga*.*

The first source of the great buffalo life-grass circle is *Waka Taga*.

The first wisdom of *Ta Taga* is receiving the mystery and seeing that grass is a circle. *Ta Taga*, the bull leader, keeps the black herds moving so that these will stay-within and honour the grass circle which is sacred.*

And it is said that Great White Buffalo gives up his body to the Stony people with bitter tears. For *Ta Taga Skan* can see a day when his buffalo brothers will almost die out and his great prairie heart grieves. Yet *Ta Taga Skan* yields himself and his grazing nation up to Great Mystery so that the Stonies may have greater life. For these mountain-prairie people are first chosen. And the buffalo nation gives up its life for these.

Ta Taga Skan yields many gifts to the Stonies. His brothers gift the people with much light and warmth. These bring the Stonies gifts of buffalo meat, warm robes, living-circle-lodges, and many medicines. They teach the people many wisdoms. They point to prairie water, and to the crossing places of rivers.

In the ancestral moons, the Stonies were a hungry, weak and windswept people, in tied rabbit skins.* It is *Ta Taga Skan* yielding himself that makes the Stonies a buffalo nation and a buffalo people. This yielding, the origin of these hunters, these red-meat dancers, these buffalo dreamers.

And the yielding buffalo gifts, these: Hide shields. War clubs. Leg bone fleshers. Sun-dried and wind-dried skins and robes.

Stoney spirit men who meet *Ta Taga Skan* in dreams and visions say that this sacred one wears a robe that is pure white. As white as the snow goose. The Stoney buffalo dreamers hear the prophecies of *Ta Taga Skan*. These prophecies are very sacred to the people.

It is said that if a Stoney who is especially gifted by *Ta Taga Skan* finds a buffalo bone, then that very buffalo will come back to life again. And that is the way that the great herds would one day come back to life.

And *Ta Taga Skan* brings the Stonies one of the highest wisdoms of life: The strongest and mightiest warrior of the buffalo bull nation feeds on one of the smallest and humblest things on earth: grass. For grass is a circle.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon/"One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

I wish I had hooves like Buffalo.
-from the Stoney

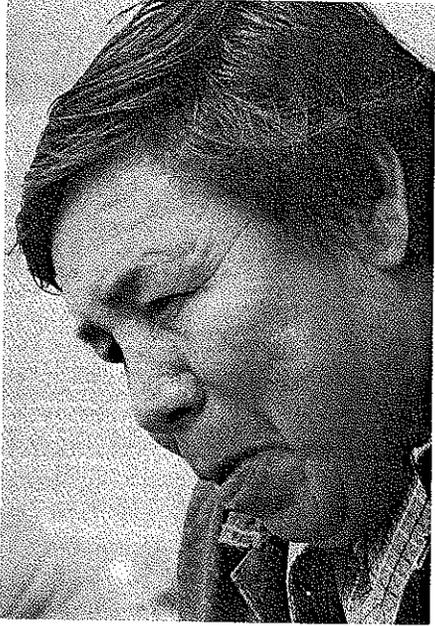


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Nelson Ear
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: June 16, 1924
Mother's Name: Sara Ear
Father's Name: Jonas Ear

The Four Sacred Coloured Horses: The Yellow Palomino, The Spotted Pinto, The Great White, The Red

In the beginning, *Waka Taga*, Great Mystery, gives life to the great spirit horses.

The Four Sacred Coloured Horses are born to make the great horse nations on earth.

These four spirit horses are:

The Yellow Palomino; this one the War Spirit Horse.

The Spotted Pinto; the Healer of Decaying Spirit.

The Great White; who Carries-Dead-Spirits.

The Red; who strengthens spiritual blood.

The source of their power is *Waka Taga*.

These four live in the wind lodge of Grandfather Sky.

All four have great wings* and fly from Grandmother Earth to the presence of *Waka Taga*. And so these are sacred carriers and sky singers.

In the sky lodge of the Old Man* is much buffalo grass, sagebrush, prairie purple clover, cottongrass, bluegrass, timber oat, rough bunchgrass, cowberry and kittentails. The spirit horses are found among these.

The spirit manes of the four brothers flow like Wild-horse Creek.*

The Yellow Palomino is war horse. This hoofed runner is bringer of fighting recognitions and war honours. For a man is a boy without these. This war spirit horse is the source of strength and courage in war preparation, attack, surrounding-the-enemy, and death-in-war.*

The Spotted Pinto carries songs and blessings for illness and healing. When *Waka Taga* breathes life into Pinto, this one bears the marks of two colour spots. Pinto is chosen by *Waka Taga* to carry disease-cures within his colour spots, which are like the spots on diseased skin.

The Great White carries the spirits of the dead to the spirit land of the Stoney ancestors. It is far to the East. There, the Great White Horse releases the Stoney spirits. No man may ever journey to this land of spirit lodges unless *Waka Taga* gives his blessing. When a Stoney receives the gift of death, the Great White takes him to the place-where-ancestors-meet.

The Red Spirit Horse comes from out of the south and brings spiritual growth. His redness sings of the renewal of spiritual fire which burns up the old spiritual skins a man sheds. The Red is the strength of spiritual blood. Hardener.

The four horses carry songs from the Stonies up to the Sacred Ones, and carry blessings down to Earth.

The four spirit horses gift the Stonies with earth horses known as spirit dogs.* The spirit dogs come to the Stonies with the strength of She-Bear. The spirit dogs, and *Ta Taga Skan's* yielding, make the Stonies into a high buffalo nation.

The spirit dog strength gives the people the power of the rock-hoofed ones, tail flowing in the high chase where men are born. The spirit dogs of earth yield their dragging-strength to the Stonies. The people can now carry many lodges and move many bundles circling the grasses. For loads follow the people.

The spirit dogs of earth yield their carrying-strength. These give their running-strength to Stoney hunters and their forgiving-backs to Stoney riders. The spirit dogs of earth bring many wonders: new red meat, make tribes into a buffalo nation, strengthen people, renew the hoop.

A Stoney does not soften or weaken his horse.

A Stoney does not steal the spirit of his horse.)

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon/"One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

A man is not born to challenge a mountain.
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Carol Lefthand
Stoney,
housewife,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1959
Father's Name: Frank Lefthand

The Little People

Macoyah Debe

In the beginning, *Waka Taga*, Great Mystery, makes two Keepers of the West Wind, for this wind warrior spirit carries the bundle of change-coming.

Great Bear, *Ozinjah*, is the first Keeper of the West Wind.

The Little People, *Macoyah Debe*, are the second Keepers of the West Wind.

These little persons once were small cub people within the bear nation but their pawing and chewing at the tail of Great Bear so angered Bear that he turned them into little people.

The Little People are very small person spirits. No bigger than badger, these underground persons live deep within the earth where it is always the spring moon. These have their own underground country. They weave braided flowers and know very little sorrow. Their singing is like the prairie burning and flowering.

At the beginning of all things, *Iktomni*, brother to all, journeys to the Selkirk Mountains* where some of the little ones dwell in underground places.

Iktomni lives among the people and teaches them many things.

Iktomni brings the Little People the gift of song and dance.

Some of the songs are for fun and amuse the people. The Little People come to love the fox songs of *Iktomni*. But other songs are very sacred and these only for ceremonies and blessings. The songs become a way of life. Whenever the people gather, songs are sung. When the medicine pipe or the medicine bundle is unwrapped in a sacred way, more songs are sung than there are days in the moons,* as the people circle in procession. *Iktomni* brings the enchanting songs to release the spiritual blessings during the Sun Dance, *Ti Jarubi Chube*. And these, very sacred gifts. These may not be sung except in ceremonial robes during sacred rites. These, ritual songs. And so the people became a nation which sang, sang and sang.

Iktomni brings the Little People ceremonial dance robes. These, for the great Sun Dance. Deer Dance. Round Dance. Buffalo Dance. Some wear the robe of the black-footed ferret. Some wear the plumes of eagle. Some, long-tailed weasels. Some, buffalo horns. These release the dancing spirits.

Iktomni brings the Little People many games. Hoop game. Foot races. Handgames. Flat-bone dice throwing. Horse races. Game of ducks. Water races. Arrow matches.

Iktomni brings these underground persons the gift of pleasure.

He brings the gift of fire and flint. He brings the gift of making-meat-hot-over-cooking-stones. One day, the Little People will pass this gift to a prairie people who will be known as the-people-who-cook-with-hot-stones.*

Iktomni gives the Little People a power to rule over the four sacred coloured soils of earth. The Little People sit inside the soils as medicine-watchers. These, keepers of the medicine soils.

The Little People bring all these gifts to the Stonies who seek them.

The Little People* listen to the songs of the Stonies. Then answer by teaching the people new songs and dances just like *Iktomni* taught them.

The Little People summon Great Eagle, sky guardian, to carry the spirit of the sacred ceremonial songs from Stoney spirit men to the sacred ones in sky country.

A Stoney spirit man who hears the song spirits rises to renew a people.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon/"One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Based also on interviews, discussions, and research studies.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Only a small boy would snare Sun in a copper shell.
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Lenette Lefthand,
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1973
Mother's Name: Alvina Lefthand
Father's Name: Stuart Dixon

Loretta Lefthand,
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1970
Mother's Name: Carol Lefthand

Cameron Lefthand,
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1969
Mother's Name: Nancy Lefthand
Father's Name: Frank Lefthand

Nine Spirits

In the beginning, *Waka Taga*, Great Mystery, breathes life into these spirit guardians, messengers, carriers, protectors:

Grandfather Sky.

Ohahsee.

His spirit holds up the sky country.

The stars hang from his lodge.

Grandmother Earth.

Ingeeshin.

All life comes from her.

She tends the sacred greenness.*

She gives *Mu*, Thunder, signals to bring rainwater for all her children, the soils, the roots, the grasses, the herbs.

Sun.

Waheambah.

This sky warrior, the eldest son of Grandfather Sky.

Moon.

Haheybi Waheambah.

Brother of Sun. Moon upholds light in darkness.

Great She-Bear.

Wozinahn Tha.

Great Bear's mate-accomplice. Much she-fury.

Water Spirits. Helpful beings, advisors, guides.

Mice Women. Guardians of the lost, the pursued, the weak.

Great Eagle.

Oombeskah.

Great sky power spirit. Chief between Earth and Sky. Largest, strongest, fastest of birds-that-eat-flesh. Carries medicine vision. Spreads very powerful wings, and carries Stoney spirit men in dreams and visions to the Keepers of the Four Winds. Great Eagle is the colour of sand.

The Bristling Goosefeathers Ruler.

Nowedescan Tawaeh.

Stirs in the moon of flaming leaves and gives a sign to warn all living things to become padded (like Lynx) with winter fur, or warm feathers, or many layers of fat.

The Cold Air Spirit.

Owsni Ti.

This one, old white-haired man, white-braided giant, and grandfather of winter. Keeper of cold moons. Balances Sun and the Blue Ice Spirit.

As summer races further and further from Stoney country, the Cold Air Spirit takes his family out of his lodge to go visiting the leafless lands. The first time that the Cold Air Spirit comes out of his icy lodge, he shakes out his giant white musk ox robe and so releases the first snow. The Stonies sing of winter joy for snow is a blessing from *Waka Taga*. The Elders say that the snow brings water to the earth so that the sacred greenness may live.

And if the winter moons become too harsh, the Chinook Wind will be shaken by the smallest warblers whose brothers freeze in the birches. The Chinook Wind comes from the sacred caves in the *Yahey Yamnaska*. In the bitter winter moons, Chinook Spirit will leave the sacred cave and go among the Stonies, spreading a sky half-circle of warmth.

Owsni Ti releases the four wind-sons. The Cold Wind brings much snow and ice.

The Chinook Wind brings warmth and balance. The Killing Wind brings blizzards and death. The Summer Storm Wind brings sudden shearing hail or fury-rain.

But in the hot summer moons, from another mountain cave, the cool breeze spirit releases his sons and daughters. These wave their green fans around the backs of the people's necks, and underneath the lodge-skins-rolled-up, and bring much comfort.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

From the smallest persons, a singing nation is born.
-from the Stoney



Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Marlene Onespot
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: September 21, 1939
Mother's Name: Lucy Powderface
Father's Name: Isaiah Powderface

The Four Winds

Make Grandmother Earth

And it is told among the Stonies that in the beginning there was only *Waka Taga*, Great Mystery, and *Iktomni*, brother to all life.

And the Four Winds, the first and most sacred of all things made by these.

And *Waka Taga* speaks to the Four Winds. And *Iktomni* receives their gifts.

And in the whirling night, *Waka Taga* and *Iktomni* make Space and Sky and Sun (who is a man called "Great Star") and Moon out of spirit clay. And Sun becomes the first brother of the Four Winds. And *Waka Taga* takes great joy in the sacred light.

And on that day of first Sun, there were no other stars. There was only Sun and his brother Moon.

And *Waka Taga* saw that the lodge of Grandfather Sky was empty. And *Waka Taga* found a great need for there to be many big stars.

And so with his spirit hands he sang into being many big stars. And the whirling night was astonished at the emergence of his brothers, the stars come to life.

And the night pulsed with star lodges.

And there was great light and there was warmth.

Now on a day of great sun power, the winds held the first sky game. And, as the game opens, the North Wind began to pull on the rays of the Blue Star. North Wind pulled and pulled at the rays until Blue Star was brought very close to Sun.

Blue Star is many brothers of sky lodge clusters.

All at once, Blue Star became very hot and began to melt. And bursting with heat, the big Blue Star then slowly started to turn into mud and water. Finally, it dried and became a disc with solid ground and water with rock and much mud on all low ground. Sun poured his warmth down and the disc came to life. For a game gives life to the players.

Grandmother Earth, *Ingeeshin*, is born.

She opens her eyes as the first light and the first warmth comes into the world. She sees that Sun makes light and Wind makes motion. She wants to sleep but Sun makes her face glow. She sees that the winds carry light to her earthbody. And when the first robe of darkness descends with the first night, she cries out in birth-terror for Sun not to die. As she cries, Moon, *Haheybi Waheembah*, who gives light at night, bathes her body in a soft glow. Grand-

mother Earth looks up. She sings a song of thanksgiving to Moon for throwing his robe over the darkness. And so night sun comes into the world. And to this day, Moon watches over all things on earth.

And Grandmother Earth hears the first song to reach the world: The Four Winds sing the earth-making song to Sun and Earth:

"Grandmother Earth, why do you weep?

Look ! The Wind-from-where-Sun-rises makes the spring birthing moons for you.

Look ! The Wind-from-the-far-Sun-side makes the summer moons of growth for you.

Look ! The wind-from-the-setting-of-the-Sun makes the autumn moons of change for you.

Look ! The wind-from-where-there-is-no-Sun makes the winter moons of power for you.

Old Woman, on this day, your sons are born.

Life is in your hand."

And that is the origin of the earth.

The reddening earth and the living moons are a gift of the Four Winds.

The Earth is sacred always. Sun made her so.

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Based also on alternate versions by various Elders.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*As long as the people remembered Waka Taga,
there would be a living Stoney tribe.*
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Jordina Two Youngman
Stoney child

Bella Two Youngman
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: 1928
Mother's Name: Ruth Two Youngman
Father's Name: Lot Two Youngman

The Four Sacred Soils of Grandmother Earth

In the beginning, the Four Winds make Earth out of coiled-stars-melting.

The sacred soils-which-are-everywhere, have their roots in *Waka Taga*, Great Mystery, and Sun,* and Thunder,* and the Little People,* *Macoyah Debe*, which move the dark seeds. These four sit for many great suns* on the first earth robe. The four set to work on the first mud pools and the first waters. Their songs and dreams bring to life many black roots, green plants,* gray boulders,* blue ridges, and much water* in the growing moons.*

The four root-soils are medicines with great power.*

And the four sacred coloured soil-medicines, these:

The Red Soils are made by Sun. These are the brown, dark brown, and blood soil nation. These yield life-strength of blood. These soil people raise their lodges on the high prairie. This one is restless and his brothers visit him often. These come as drought, cracked earth skins, water-run-fast-back-up-into-sky.* The red soils like to watch the south wind play in their short grasses, sweeping his hot breath over their sacred sage.

The White Soils are made by Great Mystery. These are most sacred of all. The white is a fire-soil person.* But some days, this one wears a dark gray robe. And on certain days, he puts on his dark gray wooded quilled robe. He raises his lodge in muskeg country.* His brother, North Wind, visits this one every day. In certain places, the white soil man keeps salt bags.

The Green Soils are made by the Little People and Grandmother Earth. These, the persons of greenness and growth. These also have many gray robes. Their lodges may be seen in the big country where the hills roll toward the aspen. Green soil man sits in grasses that are tall and many. And many willow and wooded brothers come here.*

The Black Soils are made by Thunder, *Mu*. This soil is a powder left by lightning (when-*Mu*-eyes-pierce-Sky). The power of *Mu* leaves behind these sacred black soils medicines. The black soils have a power to give much fat or to set terrible snares. These soils carry powers to bury weakness, bury disease. This one wears a robe like the black buffalo father.* His lodge runs along Stoney country in a half-moon.*

The Little People watch over the sacred soils.

The Little People bring the soil-medicines up from the world-below and leave them in special places for the Stonies to find. Stoney spirit men are taken to these places in dreams. The medicinal uses of the soils-roots are the secrets of the Stoney spirit men.

The four soil-medicines are used in spiritual painting. It is said that when spirit men use these soils for rock-painting, shield painting, and skin-painting, the soil spirits penetrate the surfaces. And by their power-of-origin, the coloured soils paint the spirit of man. And even when the paint fades or washes from the skin, the medicine remains.

It is said that near Sable Creek,* high up in the Selkirk Mountains, there is a cave where the spiritual soil paintings may be seen. The sacred paintings are medicine-songs-in-soil-and-dust-made-into-paint. These paintings show where the people have come from. The soil-paint speaks prophecies.

Only a spirit man or woman may use these soil medicines which are made sacred by the sacred ones to serve the people.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

The earth is sacred always.
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Mona Wesley
Stoney,
office assistant,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: July 10, 1950
Mother's Name: Lorna Mark
Father's Name: Wilfrid Mark

Peter Wesley, Jr.
Stoney Child

Iktomni Makes *Nakoda*, First Stoney Man

Iktomni sits on a rainbow and so arrives on earth.

He finds that the animal people argue among themselves. He sees that all living creatures want to become Chief-Over-All. Bear disagrees with Fisher. Elk pulls the tail of Longnose. Wolf disputes with Beaver. Snake coils around Hawk. Each wants to become leader.

Iktomni is old and wise. He steps into their circle of dust. *Waka Taga* has given him many special powers. He assembles the animal people at a place-of-clay.

At the place-of-clay, *Iktomni* takes up some earth. He mixes the soil with clay and dust and water and makes it like a man. He places the clay man under the Great Star. When the star heat dries him out, *Iktomni* summons the Four Winds, who are firstmade, to blow the first life into the clay-earth man. The South Wind comes forward and breathes life into the lifeless bundle. But when the clay figure moves, *Iktomni* sees that he has placed the clay man too close to the Great Star and that he is burnt. *Iktomni* sends the burnt man the way of the South Wind. This, the origin of the black man.

Then *Iktomni* takes up some earth and clay and makes another man. But he places the second one further away from the Great Star. After he dries, the East Wind breathes life into his nostrils. And when he moves, *Iktomni* sees that he is too pale. *Iktomni* has placed him too far from the Great Star. *Iktomni* sends the man in the direction of the East Wind. This, the origin of the yellow man.

The third man made is set even futher away from the Great Star. *Iktomni* points to the North. The white man walks away in the direction of the North Wind. This one, the first white.

Iktomni makes a fourth man. The West Wind breathes into his nose. When he stirs, *Iktomni* sees that this one is tan and just right. *Iktomni* says: "I name you *Nakoda*, First Stoney Man. You are the fourth. And because Great Star dries you out evenly on this flat boulder, you will be called 'Stoney.' "

Iktomni sings to the fourth man:

"Stone is your birth. You are Stoney. Observe Fisher and Moose. Stay close to Loon and Herron. Lead as brother. Follow as son. Care for your own.

For if you neglect these, there is only death outside your hoop. Have no dispute among yourselves. For if you argue, then you will fight. And there is nothing more ugly on all the earth than he who fights his own. And if you fight, then your people will separate and break the hoop. If you divide your own, then you are the greatest enemy and opponent only to yourself. If you ever break the hoop, you will want only the blood of your brother and you will turn into stone-animal.

"For *Waka Taga*, Great Mystery, chooses you as a special nation. The Stoney people will one day bring together all their dark, yellow and white brothers."

Nakoda, Stoney man of the West, stays where he is.

Nakoda learns many secrets in the wilderness. He watches the animal people. He learns to run-like-Deer; track-like-Wolf; hunt-like-Eagle; circle-like-Ferret; raid-like-Wolverine; trap-like-Cougar; disappear-like-Weasel; endure-like-Bear.

The land speaks to *Nakoda*, releasing its medicines. The rivers show him secrets and dangers. Rock shows him position.

The animal people end their dispute over chieftainship when they see the wisdom of *Nakoda*.

Nakoda makes a medicine-blood-kinship with his brother, Buffalo.

Many great suns pass. *Nakoda* does not get old.

Based on narrations by various Elders.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

The Stonies are wise, like the kit fox.
-from the Stoney

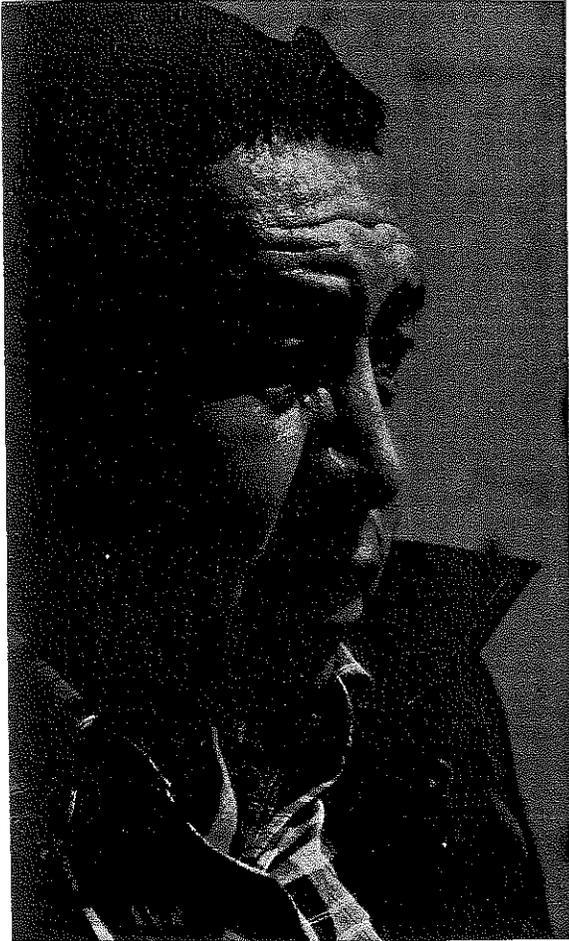


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Jonathan Ear
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: July 16, 1927
Mother's Name: Sara Ear
Father's Name: Jonas Ear

Loon Announces the First Stoney Women

One day, *Nakoda*, the first Stoney man, is sitting on top of a big rock. He hears a wonderful voice. It is Loon's song. Soon Loon appears before *Nakoda*.

Loon announces the presence of a tribe of Stoney women.* These raise their lodges beyond outer ocean. The women have heard about the Stoney men and they have become restless to meet. The women are willing to come a long ways from across the great waters. *Nakoda* asks Loon to assemble a tribe of strong geese to carry the women on their backs.

Loon, who is the messenger of woman, goes north to the nesting grounds of the gray ones. He calls the geese into council, and asks these gray ones to take the first women on their powerful backs across the deep waters. But the geese, who are very ordinary, ask that the mask spirit of the women enter their feathers.

It is a long, hard crossing. The Stoney women arrive in the buffalo hills and look around in amazement at the new world. They gift the giant birds by painting the geese with beautiful splashes, colours and markings from their many bags of paint and powder. The women then ask Loon to call a great meeting with the first Stoney men. Women raise lodges in Squaw Coulee.

One day *Iktomni* is walking. The dust of earth is on his back.

Iktomni sees *Nakoda* sitting on top of a big rock.
"This man looks just like I do."

The brothers meet. *Iktomni* teaches *Nakoda* many things of the spirit. *Nakoda* shows him the ways of the world. They stay together for many moons. One day they find a camp with Stoney men at the foot of the Rock. They teach these the old ways from the source, *Waka Taga*.

Then, one day, *Nakoda* tells *Iktomni* and the Stoney men of the coming of the Stoney women on the backs of the geese. Preparations are made. The huntresses bathe with sweetgrass and weave coils of flowers around their necks. The men bathe with cedar leaves. *Nakoda* says that they will have a game. But instead of a game, there is a big clash when men and women first meet.

It has been so long that no one can remember if it was some misunderstanding or if the brightly painted masks of women bring this much blood.

The first men and women meet with Loon and the Geese watching from the hill. Suddenly there is a big fight. The women attack with bone clubs. But the men's spears soon blacken the sun. Now in those days, women were real good fighters. And on this day, the women fought real hard. It is a big battle and there are many losses. Many men fall. Bodies of painted women are scattered before the big rock where *Iktomni* and *Nakoda* watch. Several times the men almost lose. But by the end of the day (they fight all day — until sun goes down) the women are taken captives. They are taken to the men's camp and fed buffalo meat.

Then the men and women pair and mate. Afterwards a big feast is held.

After the celebration, *Iktomni* enters the camp. He sees what the people have done and he speaks:

"You have just cut your lives. Now death is inside your seed. Did this death offend you when its lodge was far away at outer ocean? You have brought death into the world. Now you will die mating."*

But Marten Woman, the Stoney leader, desires *Iktomni*. But *Iktomni* says he does not want a woman with a painted mask and that his task on earth is higher than woman-taking. Marten Woman curses him:

"From this day, you are cursed. You will be alone like Copperhead. You will be without woman, all your life. You will wander alone until you fall. From this day there will be only conflict between you and woman."

She turns *Iktomni* into a gulch tree. And some say that to this day you can hear the curse-wail in the gulch tree throughout southern Alberta. For four suns, *Iktomni* howls in the wind. On the fourth day, Wind brings him back as man.

Iktomni goes to the top of a hill and sings his farewell song to the Stonies.*

Then he walks towards the East hills.

Based on narrations by various Elders.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*The hand knows
that makes fire.*
-from the Stoney

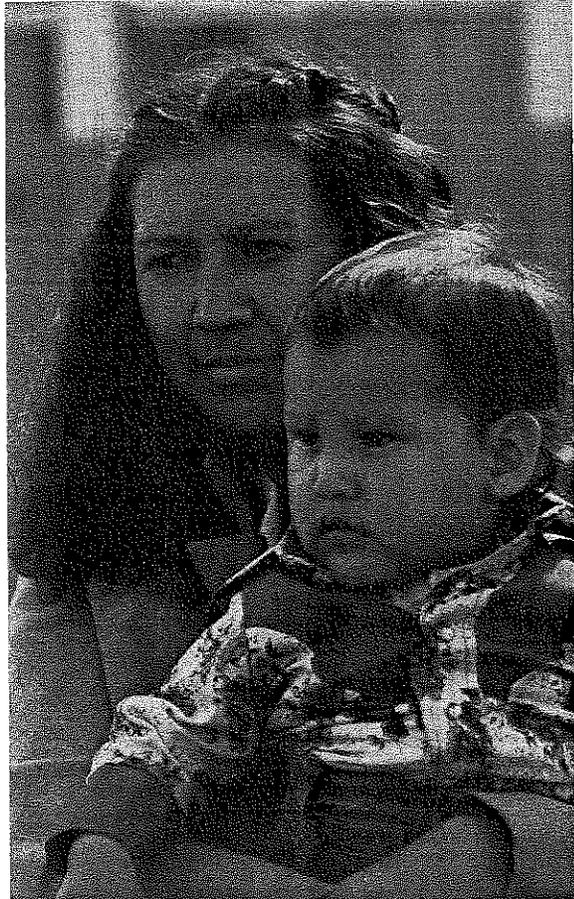


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation



Mina Benjamin
Stoney,
restaurant manager,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: August 1950
Mother's Name: Lily Benjamin
Father's Name: Paul Dixon, Jr.

Charles Benjamin
Stoney child

Nakoda and the Origin of the Stonies

It is the ancestral moon when all the great prairie tribes live as one nation.*

And the prairie, black with buffalo.

This is a time of great war.* There is much bloodshed and much killing.

Since the coming of the *wasichu*,* the prairie tribes scatter in violence, confusion, bitterness.

The Assiniboine begin to quarrel among themselves over what should be done. Strangers and enemies break custom and threaten the sacred hoop.

Twelve Chiefs among the Assiniboine meet in war council.

But each Chief wants to settle things in his own way. Some speak for war. Some talk of peace. Others point to changes.

Nakoda and White Light are Assiniboine *wichasta waka*, spirit men, who receive their powers from *Waka Taga*.

Nakoda and White Light come forward to speak.

Nakoda speaks of a sacred dream where *Waka Taga* speaks to him. In the dream, *Waka Taga* tells *Nakoda* that he is chosen to lead the prairie nation away from violence. *Nakoda* is told to lead the people far to the West.

But the Assiniboine Chiefs do not listen.

Traitors and spies leave the council and journey east, to tell the strangers and enemies that the prairie nations are divided. This is a good time to attack a quarrelling people.

In the dream, *Nakoda* is told to arm himself and to prepare his great white stallion.

When the attack comes, *Nakoda* rides the white stallion in a great circle above the treetops. Fire blazes from the hoofs of the great white horse. The fire burns some of the enemies up. The others run away from the sky rider.

Still, the twelve Assiniboine Chiefs will not listen to the sacred dream.

From the entire Assiniboine nation, only five hundred people leave to head west to follow *Nakoda* and White Light.

The forty lodges call themselves *Yahey Wichastabi* or "Mountain People" or Stonies.*

It is said that at a place called Magic Hills* in the Dakotas, *Nakoda* made his great death song. At the first words of the song, *Nakoda* rose up into Sky. At the last words, he waved farewell to his people. When the Mountain People heard *Nakoda's* final song, he was high up in the clouds. Some people say that they saw Great White Eagle take up *Nakoda* and carry him up to the higher Sky* place.*

White Light led the Mountain People the rest of the way to the land they had dreamed of — the *Yahey Yamnaska*, the Cliff Rocks of Alberta.

To this day the Stonies live in the *Yahey Yamnaska*.

These are the origins of the Stoney people, the Stoney tribe.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Old man, go home,
Hang up your moccasins,
Turn your horses loose,
Rest your back with sunfall,
And when it is night sun,
Sing the songs of your fathers.*
-from the Stoney

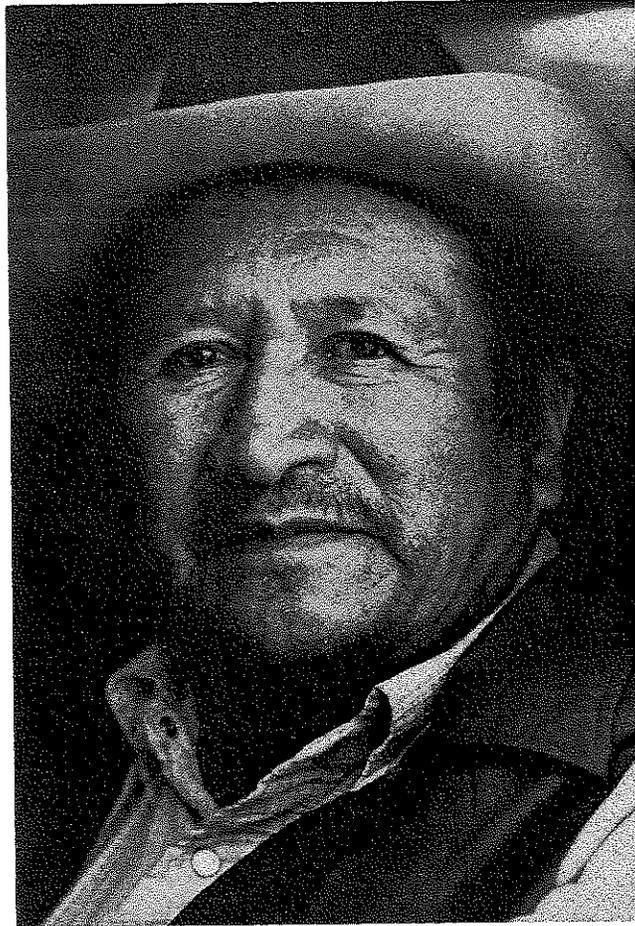


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Bill McLean
Stoney,
researcher,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: December 1, 1920
Mother's Name: Flora McLean
Father's Name: George Walking Buffalo

The Prophecy of *Iktomni*

It is the moon of the green lizard* when the prairie fires roar.

Iktomni walks with *Nakoda* to the Neutral Hills.* They sit on a hilltop. *Iktomni* speaks:

“A day will come when our people will forget the spirit.

“On that day, the long whiskers,* *wasichu*, come. These come like a big river. But they do not come as brothers of the shield.

“When these arrive, the hoop will be broken, the people will scatter, our sacred bundles and pipes will become as strangers to our children, and our sun spirit will have fled and hid in the deepest mountain canyon.

“Long whiskers will bring many lightning sticks.* And when these speak their thunders, our warriors fall.* These will bring shining knives* that pierce but do not break, do not bend.

“Some of these will look to the sun metal* that carries medicine like our shells. For these shining stones alone they thirst.

“And these will take as many hills* for one man as a nation cannot fill. For these do not hear our wise ones who say that too many things brings delirium and much sickness for any man.

“When these come, they sit on rolls-along-the-ground-on-hoops.* And this rolling-lodge carries long lightning sticks and many pelts. These traders-riders look to this rolling-lodge as to a brother. For have our Elders not said that when a man would sit higher than Sun, he will find* the one who runs without legs? And this one which runs-without-leaving-earth* will make him hang up his legs near the cold embers.

“On this rolling-lodge will be much water-like-fire.* This power-water, *mini wakan*, will drown our sacred stones. Its medicine will soften our warriors.

“These sun metal seekers will come in hard mocasins with metal stars.* They will bring many false stones.* As many as there are wild geese.* And for the false coloured stones and the burning water, they will take our sacred black bear hides.* For they look only to trade-in-peltries with still other metal seekers who sit far away across outer ocean. And

one day, they will make snares* in all places for our brothers Beaver and Buffalo.

“And some of these will bring words-without-honour.* These will come to Stoney country with false tongues. They will load up our hills on their rolling-hoops for false promises.

“Their longstick buffalo hunters* will hunt down our brother *Ta Taga*, until not one will be found in the land. And a black death walks before these.*

“They will bring leaves-with-a-power* to take our sacred mountains. Their hands will scratch power-marks on leaves-wrapped-in-robos.*

“They will cut down Stoney trees and raise lodges with big logs,* and break our sacred circles with crosses.

“Black robes will teach of a spirit that lives in a bundle-of-dried-leaves.*

“A metal horse* that breathes fires will unload the yellow metal seekers like a river* on our lands. These will come like a cloud of grasshoppers. These will measure and mark* every stone. They will make a medicine line* to divide us from our brothers. These measuring men will then make paths of stone.* These each carry shining bundles with a metal heart.*

“Their spotted buffalo* will fill the earth. These, bulls and cows that do not run when comes the hunter. These, with calves that stand and stare, with their blood inside the braided wires studded with killing barbs.

“When these come, we die. If we yield, we die. The Stonies will die of sorrow.”

Based on narrations by various Elders.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*I am Stoney,
Outside the hoop, my eyes will be open.
Inside the circle, I will be gentle,
My enemy only the one who disturbs life,
I move like first crow.*
-from the Stoney

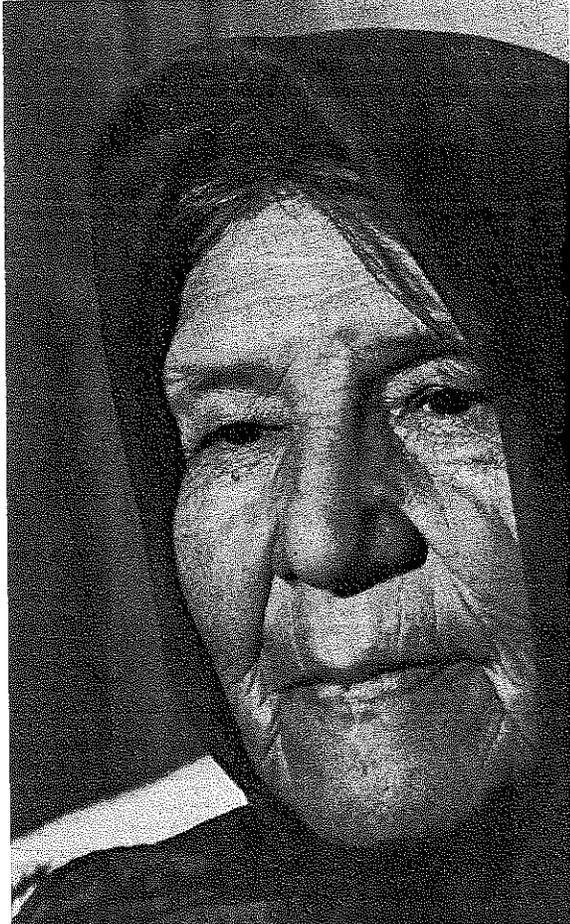


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Hazel Two Youngman
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: February 12, 1912

Iktomni:

**Stoney trickster-hero
“The Eldest Brother of
All Living Things”**

Iktomni Mates with She-Lynx

It is the ice moon when eagle sleeps.

In the Burnt Timber hills,* *Iktomni** mates with She-Lynx. When the winter snakes sleep, two lynx kittens are born.

She-Lynx hunts snowshoe hare in the moons when nothing grows.

She-Lynx has a soft, rich robe and *Iktomni* loves to rub her fur. Her padded feet are just like snowshoes. None can hear as she moves in silence on her frosty-gray feet. Her large ear tufts are tipped with long black hair.* This huntress moves alone by night.

But soon snowshoe hare meat becomes very scarce and She-Lynx and *Iktomni* and the two little ones are starving.

One day, She-Lynx is out gathering firewood for the earth-den when she sees a deer caught in a snow-drift up to its belly. She-Lynx uses her wood-gathering thong to snare the deer. Then she ties the deer to a willow and returns to the earth-den. She tells *Iktomni* to go out and kill the deer.

Iktomni begins to make a bow and arrow. But he is very slow. She-Lynx becomes very impatient. Finally, the bow and arrow are ready. But the arrow has no feather-guides.

Iktomni finds the deer. He stands ten paces from the deer. He raises the bow and releases the arrow. But it flies crooked. The side of the arrow strikes the deer and bounces off. The deer rears and breaks the wood-gathering thong and runs away. She-Lynx becomes very angry and she leaves *Iktomni*. She never comes back.

Iktomni is alone with his two lynx kittens. They are very hungry. *Iktomni* bundles the lynx kittens on his back and begins walking north.

It is the moon of freezing rivers and the snow brushes his waist bag.

Iktomni sees two Beavers who are sleeping on the edge of a hole in the ice. "O, we'll cook these Beavers. They must be dead," he says to the ice wind. *Iktomni* ties the Beaver's tails together with a little rawhide. Then he fastens the rawhide around the necks of the lynx kittens. *Iktomni* starts to make a fire. But, after a little while, he hears a choking sound:

"Auugh... auugh...."

He twists his neck and sees the Beavers dragging the lynx kittens towards the hole in the ice. *Iktomni* leaps up from the fire and races over. Just as the Beavers are pulling the lynx kittens underwater, *Iktomni* cuts the rawhide. The Beavers disappear down the black ice hole.

Iktomni is carrying the lynx kittens north again. He walks a long time. The lynx get very cold. He sets them down and begins to gather dry wood for a fire. He goes down a steep embankment to look for more wood. Then he tries to walk back up the hill. But the snow is hard-packed. He is almost to the top when he slips and slides back down to the bottom.

The lynx kittens watch *Iktomni* and laugh. Each time *Iktomni* gets near the top of the hill, he slips all the way back down again. The little kittens laugh and laugh. *Iktomni* makes it into a little game for them to keep the hunger and cold away for a little.

Soon the lynx kittens stop laughing, but *Iktomni* can still see the big grins on their faces, so he slides down the hill again and again. Finally, *Iktomni* tires of the game.

"They are quiet now," he says to the snow hill. "They have fallen asleep." He goes back to the lynx kittens. When he reaches them, he sees that they have frozen to death while laughing. The smiles are frozen on their faces and their cheeks are all wrinkled up.

Iktomni cries to the empty land and buries his children in the snow.

The Stonies say that is why Lynx' face is all wrinkled up.

Based on narration by Wayne Lefthand / "Antelope"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Wisdom comes only through suffering.
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Roy Dixon
Stoney,
counsellor,
Longview, Alberta
Date of Birth: January 21, 1942
Mother's Name: Martha Dixon
Father's Name: MacFarlane Dixon

Iktomni and the Mouse Dance

It is the changing moon when buffalo grow new robes.

Iktomni is walking along the coyote foothills.

Suddenly he hears the sound of many voices singing.

Looking around in all four directions, he sees nothing.

He walks towards the voices. The singing leads him to an old buffalo skull. He stands on top of the buffalo skull and looks all around. Nothing. Then he sees that the voices come from under his feet. Bending down, he peers through the eyeholes of the buffalo skull. Inside, many tiny mice are dancing and singing. *Iktomni* speaks to these:

“Ho, my little brothers! I want to have some fun too. Let me come inside and dance with you.”

The little mice laugh:

“But you are just too big, *Iktomni*. You won’t fit through these eyeholes.”

“O, I can fit through there real easy.”

And *Iktomni* makes his head shrink until it is no bigger than a *pisko*’s head.* But the rest of his body is just as big as it was before. Sticking only his head through the buffalo eyehole, *Iktomni* watches and enjoys the dance of the little mice. He looks so funny that the mice cry out with laughter as they dance and sing.

Finally, it is late. The dancing and singing comes to an end. And it is time for all the little mice to go home to their nests. One by one they pass through the buffalo eyehole in a sleepy procession. His head resting in the other eyehole, *Iktomni* is soon fast asleep.

Sun wakes *Iktomni* up. His head has become larger in the night, and now he cannot pull it out of the buffalo eyehole.* Getting to his feet, *Iktomni* stands with the buffalo skull stuck fast to his shoulders.

It is dark inside the buffalo skull and *Iktomni* cannot see anything. He stumbles around the hills until he falls. Finally his hands tell him that he has found a big rock. He pounds the buffalo skull against the rock many times. But the skull does not break. And he becomes dizzy.*

*Iktomni** hears diving birds* passing overhead. He calls to them:

“Brothers, diving birds, look - buffalo has hooked me! You must help me with your sky wings. I have two good-looking daughters.* If you free me, I will give you my firstborn most beautiful daughter.”

The diving birds climb high up into Sky. From where-the-clouds-are-thin, they swoop down and strike the buffalo skull with their hard beaks. At first, nothing happens. The diving birds strike at the buffalo skull again and again. Finally, on the fourth dive,* the skull breaks apart and *Iktomni* is free.

“Which daughter can I have?” asks the biggest bird with the strongest beak which broke the skull.

Iktomni hisses at the bird:

“O, you’ve got no nose and a mouthful of broken bones. Not only will you have none of my daughters, but from this day you shall never again fly straight but only in circles like a rock rolling down a hill that has no bottom, and rolls and rolls.”*

Based on main narration by Mark Lefthand / “Fish Child”
Based also on alternate version by Joe Kootenay / “Rolling Buffalo”
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*If you change yourself into a buffalo,
don't forget the tail.*

-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Eva Benjamin
Stoney,
receptionist,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: October 9, 1954
Mother's Name: Lily Benjamin
Father's Name: Paul Dixon, Jr.

Iktomni and the Medicine Leggings

It is the reddish-brown moon when the buffalo return.

Iktomni is walking west from White Horse Lake.*

He sees a painted lodge. Inside, he is greeted by a Stoney woman and her child. "O, *Iktomni*! Where did you come from? My husband will be happy to see you when he returns with fresh meat."

When Sun lies down on his sleeping robes, *Iktomni* hears copper and shells jangling. Stone Dreamer enters the lodge. He greets *Iktomni*:

"O my brother, how good to see you. I have taken a deer near the South Saskatchewan.* Will you do me the honour of butchering it?" *Iktomni* eyes the fat deer. He knows that only the finest hunter in the Middle Sand Hills country will bring down a prime buck like this. Then he goes out and cuts up the meat. The woman cooks the choicest deermeat and everyone feasts.

While they feast, *Iktomni* sees that Stone Dreamer's bucksin leggings are brightly decorated with shells and copper and eagle feathers and fine quillwork. *Iktomni* whispers into the lodge fire:

"Those leggings have a power to attract fine deer. I'm going to steal them."*

That night, the green clover moon watches over the otter lodge. After everyone has fallen asleep, *Iktomni* gets up and takes Stone Dreamer's leggings from the birch tripod where they hang. He ties them around his middle and quietly sneaks out of the lodge. He runs across the night hills, but he gets so drowsy that soon he falls asleep on the fat-meat earth.

In the morning, *Iktomni* is still dreaming when he hears,

"Thump...thump...thump...thump..." right next to his head. *Iktomni* wakes up and sees Stone Dreamer standing above him, arms crossed, thumping his foot.

"My brother, why did you steal my leggings from me?" *Iktomni* is in a daze:

"O...I am ashamed. I had a strange dream last night and it made me take them. Please. You must forgive me. Let me stay another day in your lodge." Stone Dreamer takes back his leggings and warns *Iktomni*.*

That evening, the moon hides. When Stone Dreamer returns from the hunt, it looks as if he is carrying a big rabbit over his shoulder. But when he

sets the game down on the earth-which-gives-meat-and-water, the others are astonished to see that it is no rabbit - but a bull elk.

"My brother," says Stone Dreamer to *Iktomni*, "go and butcher this fine elk."

That night, when the stars wear their whitest robes, everyone feasts on elk meat. Later, after the others have fallen asleep, *Iktomni* is awake, thinking into the lodgefire:

"It must be those fancy leggings that give Stone Dreamer the power to carry a bull elk as if it were no heavier than a rabbit. I'm going to steal them again." He gets up softly and lifts the leggings gently so as not to disturb the little coppers and shells that jingle, and runs away. Running across the hills, he comes to a creek and asks a twig to become a foot bridge. But before long, *Iktomni* begins to feel drowsy:

"O no, I'm not going to sleep like a fat spruce hen this time," he says to the black creek. But soon he tires out and falls fast asleep on the red-stem earth.

In the morning when the circle-of-the-sun-ascends, *Iktomni* is dreaming when he hears the thumping next to his head. Stone Dreamer asks:

"*Iktomni*, why do you steal from me when I open my lodge to you?" Again *Iktomni* stutters and mutters:

"O...I am filled with shame. It must be my bad dream that is making me do this. Forgive me. Please. And let me stay one more day with you." Once more, Stone Dreamer invites *Iktomni* back to feast at his otter lodge. But he points at him and warns him hard.

On the third evening, the old moon dies. And as the black descends, Stone Dreamer returns with a bear over his shoulder. That night, the same thing happens. *Iktomni* steals the fancy leggings, falls asleep, and is surprised in the morning.

"O, it was my bad dream that made me steal from you. Forgive me, brother. And let me stay with you another night."

But Stone Dreamer says:

"No, *Iktomni*. It is enough. Your word is empty. I will trust you no more. Walk away."

Based on narration by Wayne Lefthand/"Antelope"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*The heart is not bearfat:
It will only bend so far.*
-from the Stoney

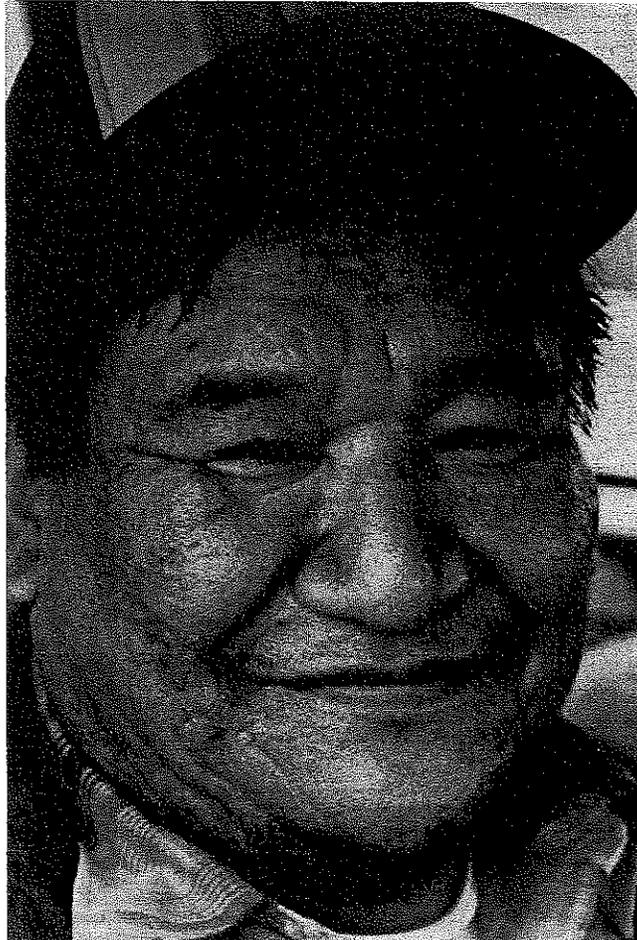


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Stewart Senior
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: June 1, 1933
Father's Name: Pete Dixon

Iktomni and the Geese

It is the ripening moon when the gray geese gather in great flocks.

Iktomni is up in the north country at Blackstone River.* He sees a big flock of geese preparing for the great migration to the south.

"Ho! Brothers! Where do you go? Take me with you!"

Iktomni asks the Chief of Geese for the sacred power of flight.

The geese hold a council. Each speaker comes forward:

"He is too fat," says the first goose.

"He is too big. His feet will not tuck in," says the second.

"He is too heavy," says the third.

"He has no wings," says a fourth.

"He is too long," says a fifth.

"It is too far. He'll tire before we cross the Dakotas," says another.

The Chief of Geese speaks: "It will do no harm. Let him fly if he will. Let him forget the Earth. Let him make himself a pair of wings."

A goose elder is appointed to watch over *Iktomni*. *Iktomni* gathers up many goosefeathers. Day after day he watches the ways of the flying geese. Finally, he is ready. He makes a big pair of wings. Then he swims with the young geese. And he learns to lift up from a lake and fly. *Iktomni* flies four times around Thunder Lake.* He is so happy that he honks just like a goose. And he loves coming down with his ruffled chest against the water.

It is the moon of autumn-storms-coming and the day arrives for these winged persons to fly south. The geese have been feeding to fatten themselves for the long, hard migration. The Chief of Geese speaks:

"*Iktomni*, our council has four commands for you: When we are flying south, you must not look down. And you must not speak. You must stay in place just to my left. And you must never see yourself above any other living thing."

Iktomni says: "I am as one of your smallest and humblest."

But the Chief Goose warns: "If your word is not good in these four ways, you fall to Earth."

When Sun stirs his early cooking fires in the morn-

ing, the geese rise up into Sky. *Iktomni* is flying near the head of the wedge.

Four days later, they fly over a Stoney camp. From below, the Stonies see a giant goose with enormous wings. The Stonies shout:

"Ho! What a great, wonderful bird. He must be Chief over all that flies in the Sky world."

"O, they are talking about me," *Iktomni* says as he looks down. But suddenly his wings fail him and he falls to Earth.* *Iktomni* is falling very fast and he sings to Grandmother Earth:

"O Earth, I made you. Do not let me fall to the hard rocks. Let me fall to the soft mosses. I have served you. Upheld you. Painted you. Named you. O, let me live." And Earth hears. For the Earth not only speaks, the Earth listens. *Iktomni* falls into a mountain swamp.*

The Stonies come running: "This is no wild goose. It's *Iktomni*. Maybe he's the one who has been bringing us flooding and hail. And early freezing nights. Now we've got him."

And even though *Iktomni* is dead from the great fall, the Stonies tie his arms and legs with rawhide. For three days the people throw wet ashes in his face and mock him and beat him with clubs.*

But early on the fourth day, *Iktomni* comes back to life.* He is covered with filth and bound by rawhide straps. An old Stoney grandmother comes out to him and washes his wounds and bruises and his face with fresh water and unties his arms.

"O, Grandmother," *Iktomni* says, "I have been foolish like a gosling. I am of the people, but I wanted to fly above Sun. Forgive me."

Based on main narration by Wayne Lefthand/"Antelope"
Based also on alternate version by Joe Kootenay/"Rolling Buffalo"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

He who ascends is not to look down.
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Sandra Lefthand
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: March 29, 1964
Mother's Name: Eileen Lefthand
Father's Name: Ernie Rollingmud

Iktomni and the Closed-Eye Dance

part one

It is the spring moon when-ponies-shed.*

Iktomni is walking along the Kananaskis mountain* forests.

Just ahead he sees a large flock of spruce grouse. *Iktomni* is very hungry. He has been walking for so long that his moccasins are nothing but the red dust of Earth.

Iktomni gathers up an armful of green moss from a swampy place and bundles it on his back.* He carries the moss up to the spruce grouse sleeping on the banks of Lower Kananaskis Lake.*

"What are you going to do with that moss, *Iktomni*?" the grouse ask.

"O, this is something you cannot use, my brothers," *Iktomni* tells them.

"O yes we can," the grouse say. "What is it for?"

"This is a sacred moss* for a special dance. The Closed-Eye Dance.* If you are very good persons, I shall teach it to you."

"O yes, it will be lots of fun," the fat little birds say.

"Then we will build a little dance lodge," *Iktomni* says.

Iktomni makes a special ceremonial lodge of birches and the spruce grouse come inside. They make a great circle around the fire. *Iktomni* then begins to beat on a hand drum and sing the song of the Closed-Eye Dance:

"Close your eyes tightly my little brothers and dance hard in a big circle when I sing the special words:

'O the beautiful young daughter of the spruce grouse chief is dancing round and round with her eyes closed.'"

The spruce grouse begin to dance in a great circle with their eyes shut. *Iktomni* sings on. The grouse dance on. The drumming is slow. And *Iktomni's* voice is as soft as moss. His mellow song lulls the grouse into the world of sleep and dreams. Each grouse dances slowly by him in the circle.

Suddenly he grabs every fourth grouse dancing by and wrings its neck. Still singing, he grabs one after another of the dancing grouse and breaks their necks. The grouse are having a good time dancing. Pretty soon, there is a big pile of dead grouse at *Iktomni's* feet. Still, he sings on.

However, one of the small grouse hens is having a little trouble keeping up with the great moving dance circle. The small hen opens one of her eyes just a little to get a better footing. At once she sees that *Iktomni* is killing them while they are dancing past him.

"*Iktomni* is killing us!" screams the little hen. "Run my brothers. Run!"

The few spruce grouse that remain alive immediately scatter. They bolt and fly up and perch on the birches nearby.

Iktomni comes out after them and speaks to them saying:

"Those of you who have opened your eyes will be short-sighted for as long as you live. And for breaking up my special dance, you will lose most of your power to fly."

And so, to this day, the spruce grouse carries *Iktomni's* curse. It is not only short-sighted, but cannot fly very far.*

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand/"Fish Child"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Listen from a high tree branch
or from a high solid boulder
to the songs of the brother
who-would-shut-my-eyes-and-sing-to-me.*
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Doris Ear
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: March 3, 1940
Mother's Name: Leah Ear
Father's Name: Alec Ear

Iktomni and the Lame Fox

part two

It is the-tender-grass-moon.*

There are many dead spruce grouse at *Iktomni's* feet.

Iktomni is singing the song of the golden bird* that soars before it falls.

He finds a nice spot in a forest clearing overlooking Lower Kananaskis Lake. And as he sings, he begins to pull the feathers out of the grouse. Then he makes a big fire and begins to cook them. His mouth waters just watching the tallow drip.

When the spruce grouse are done, he places them together in the embers and covers them with some green aspens to cool.

Just then he sees Fox walking along a narrow ridge.

West Wind has told Fox that *Iktomni* is making a big feast. And so Fox picks up the cooking scent and follows it just like a trail.

"Good afternoon my brother," says Fox. "What are you doing?"

"Good afternoon Fox," says *Iktomni*. "O, I have just cooked some fat spruce grouse for a feast."

"It is a good day for a feast," says Fox, eyeing the green aspens.

Now *Iktomni*, who runs like the wind, says:

"My brother, if you will run a footrace with me around Lower Kananaskis Lake, I will let you join in my feast."*

"O, I cannot," protests Fox, "for I am lame."

"That is nothing," says *Iktomni*. "Come, I'll tie a big rock to my foot so that we will have a fair race."

"But *Iktomni*," pleads Fox, "I am too lame to run."

Iktomni is already looking around for a good rock. Fox frowns and shrugs. But *Iktomni* insists. Fox allows himself to be coaxed into the footrace. *Iktomni* gathers up a big rock and ties it to his foot with a braided coil. Fox sees that *Iktomni* has made himself lame. And the race around the big lake is on.

With every step that *Iktomni* takes, the big rock crashes to Earth and makes a big thumping noise. The rock boom echoes in the big forest. The animal people hide. *Iktomni* struggles along and curses himself for not having devoured the grouse while he

could.

Meanwhile, Fox is limping along very slow. Fox is just ahead of *Iktomni*. Now and then, Fox lets out little lame sounds of one-with-a-thorn-in-his-leg. Fox pulls his body in as one-who-twists-in-pain.

They turn a bend around the lake. And for one moment they lose sight of each other. Fox at once abandons his lame playing and bolts, running as fast as he can, but not around the lake.

Fox returns to the place where the fat spruce grouse are cooling under the green aspens. He is shaking with hunger. They are done just right. Fox wolfs them down, every one. After he has devoured the last grouse, Fox puts all the bones back in the same place. He even puts the feet of the grouse back up into the air. Then he sprinkles aspen leaves over the bones. The grouse look undisturbed with their feet sticking up in the air.

Inside his ears, Fox can still hear *Iktomni's* rock booming and bouncing.

Fox is happy as a young Mink.

Then Fox goes along his way.

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand/"Fish Child"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*He who invites a fox to race
invites his own disaster.*
-from the Stoney

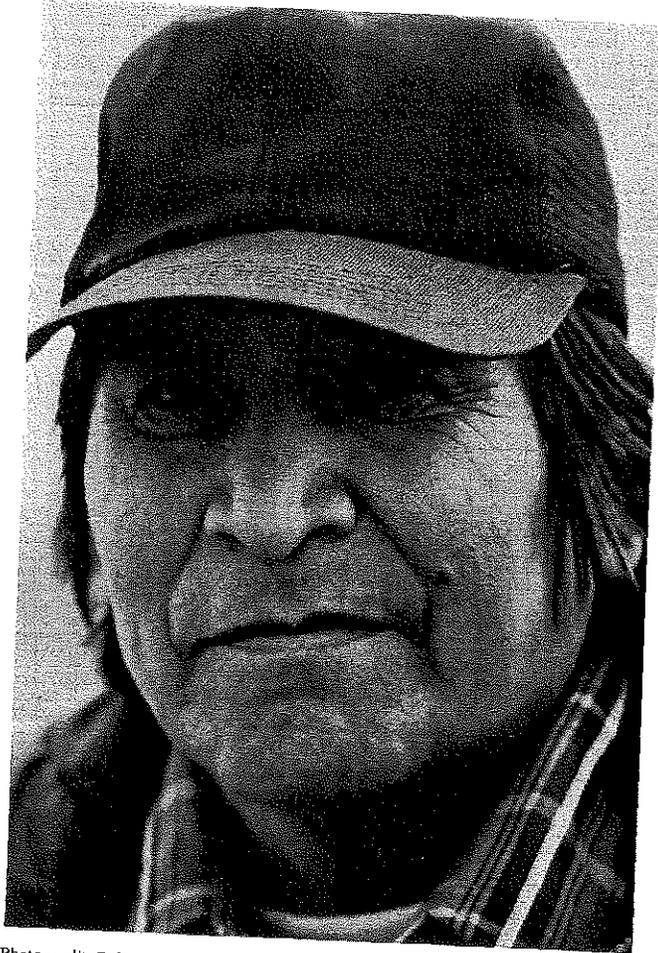


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Earl Wildman
Stoney,
bus driver,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: December 18, 1924
Father's Name: Louis Wildman

Iktomni's Revenge on Fox

part three

It is the leaning-back-moon* of making fat.*

Fox is walking towards Upper Elk Lake.*

His belly is so swollen with spruce grouse that each step becomes a struggle.

"O, it is too hot to walk," he says to the ankles of the mountains.

Fox comes upon an old birch lair. And soon he falls fast asleep.

Meanwhile, *Iktomni* is still trying to catch up to Fox. The big rock lashed to his foot makes him sing the song-to-absorb-much-pain. For *Iktomni* knows that a man endures pain, loneliness, hunger and cold. And a strong man laughs at these. After much struggle, and wet in his own sweat, *Iktomni* circles Lower Kananaskis Lake, and so arrives at the starting place of the footrace. He is as hungry as a bighorn ram in the dead of winter moon-of-popping-trees.* He smiles inside his mouth when he sees that the cooked spruce grouse are still in place. He unties the big rock from his foot and wipes the sweat from his face.

"Soon," he says to the green aspen leaves, "there will be no grouse left for Fox. That skinny-legged Fox almost ruined my big feast. And now, he is not only lame, but also lost. This Fox is a mouse."

Iktomni is panting at the smell of the cooked spruce grouse. He sits down beside the green aspens and pulls at the feet of two spruce grouse....

"O....O....O....O....Fox, old thief....O, I am going to get you for this! I am going to get you even if you go to the ends of the Earth. You are surely going to die! There is no place on this black-horn-Earth* where you can hide," *Iktomni* curses into the clean grouse bones.

With flames pouring out of his eyes, *Iktomni* sets off tracking Fox. The winds and rivers told him of the trails Fox had taken. And these hid from *Iktomni's* great anger.

After Sun had climbed a little higher, *Iktomni* smells Fox scent. Gliding on the balls of his feet, *Iktomni* finds Fox curled up with rounded belly sleeping among some birches.

"Skinny-legged thief, you are going to die now," *Iktomni* whispers into the birch lair.

Iktomni sets a big fire on all sides of the sleeping

Fox. The flames shoot lodge-high. Suddenly Fox's nose twitches and he jumps up. He sees the fire closing fast all around him. Crazy by smoke, Fox leaps high into the flames. And he is immediately swallowed up by the big fire.

But Grandfather Sky is watching and takes pity on Fox. And Fox breaks through a place of thin smoke within the wall of flames, and escapes. When Fox stops running some distance away, he turns and sees *Iktomni* staring into the big fire.

Iktomni's anger is so great that he waits all day and all night until the fire dies out so that he can see with his own eyes that Fox is really dead. But when the fire finally goes out in the morning, neither Fox nor fox bones can be found. *Iktomni* knows that he has got away again.

"Fox, Old Thief, you have cheated me and now you laugh at death," *Iktomni* mutters into the embers as he turns slowly and heads back into the forest.

And as he leaves the smoky circle, he is sure that he can feel Fox's eyes following him. *Iktomni* laughs lightly.

It is said that when Fox leaped into the flames, he burned his four sandy legs. That is why to this day Fox has black-tipped feet.*

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay/"Rolling Buffalo"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Revenge on a fox is a dream.
-from the Stoney

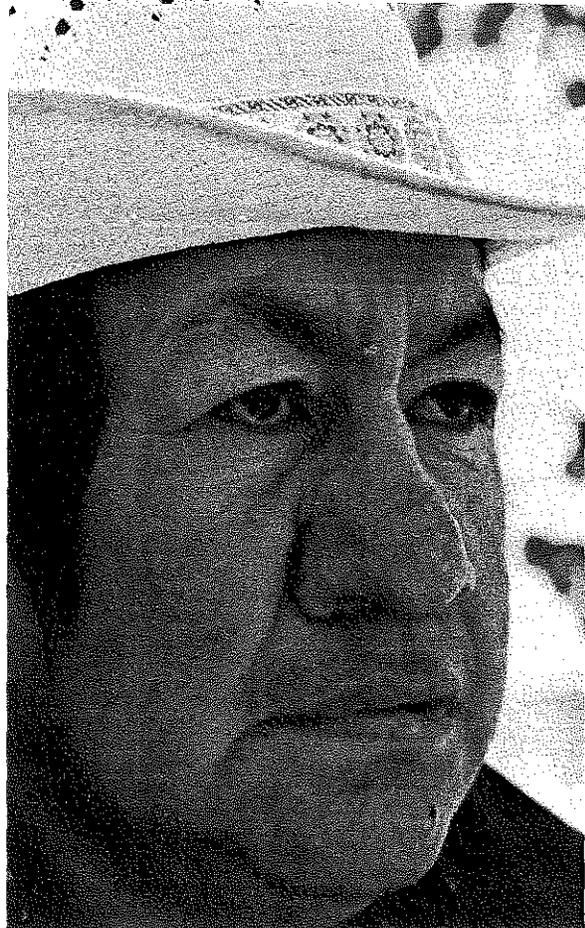
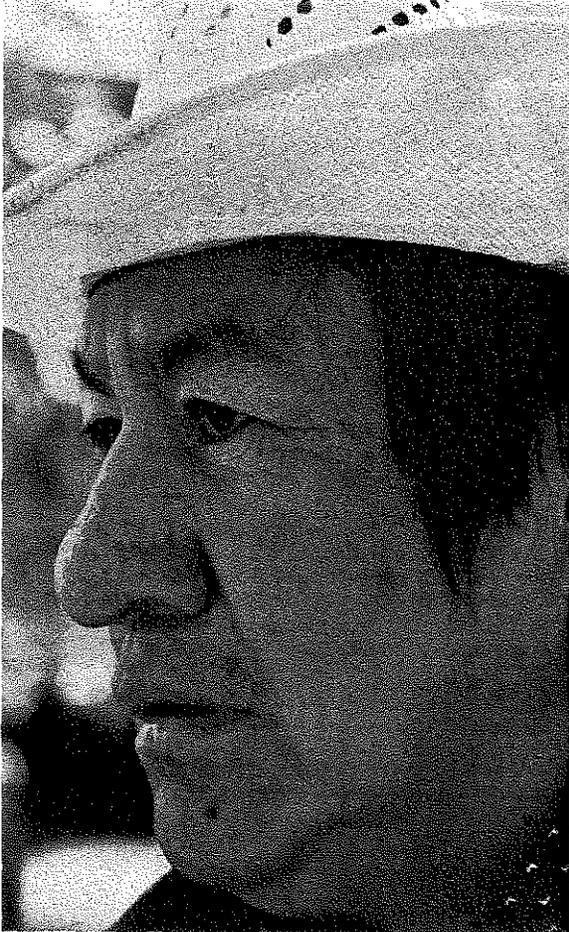


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Victor Poucette
Stoney,
retired carpenter,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: May 8, 1935

Iktomni Appoints Frog as Moon-Watcher

In the beginning there is only the long-day-moon* when-ravens-freeze-in-trees.

At a great gathering, *Iktomni* speaks to the animal people:

"*Waka Taga*, Great Mystery, has given me the power to decide with you what kind of seasons and moons will yield themselves for all living things. Now, as you know, Grandmother Earth is always in the snow moon.* Streams are frozen and never thaw. There are no summer moons. And I have chosen Wolf, Lynx, Buffalo, Wolverine and Fox to be my workmen in the ice moons. Wolf has big-paw speed and has a circling power to curl under a snow-storm. Lynx has big padded feet and does not sink in the snow like Deer. Buffalo can face any blizzard. Wolverine has deep fur and laughs at the forest snows and the cold needles. Fox digs his den deep and so escapes the hunting eye that-is-everywhere. Fox, like the other big-winter-walkers, is wise enough to survive the hard moons. But do these ice moons bring good and comfort to all?"

Beaver is the first to speak:

"I want the days of winter to be as many as the number of scales* on my tail."

Bear speaks:

"No. If the cold moon sits that long, he will become as a guest who does not see the lodge flap. I want two moons to catch trout in the thawed rivers. Old man winter is welcome here for no more than ten moons."

Suddenly Frog crashes up through the layer of ice over his pond. Frog speaks:

"My brothers, I have no fur. If the ice moon will not journey to visit his northern relatives, many small ones will die. There is much talk of strength. But remember also the old ones, the yearlings, the mothers. Remember those with bad legs and scars and wounds. Seven cold moons is good and plenty."

The animal people laugh at Frog. And they mock at Frog saying he is a grub among the animals, he has little wisdom, and speaks for no one. But Frog will not stay quiet. Frog begins to sing the song of the five warm moons. Finally, Wolf slaps Frog and knocks him down.* And even though Frog is senseless and on his back in the snow, he holds up seven of his toes high. The big animal people throw

Frog back into his pond again and again. But Frog always gets to his feet and sings of the summer moons and shows seven green toes.

The Bird nations listen to Frog. And these speak:

"Frog is right. Constant frost moons will kill off all living things. These moons will become so powerful that they will be the killing moons. Many of us small ones can hardly even move in the snow. The smallest nations will suffer most if Beaver and Bear have their way. Even as the small ones now suffer greatly from the icy fingertips of cold moon. For nothing can survive if life is just like living on top of an ice-field. Even Cougar, Deer, Porcupine, Squirrel and many others have no robes to face these moons."

The hooters,* drummers,* woodchoppers,* fishers,* buffleheads,* trumpeters,* claw catchers,* warblers,* flycatchers,* and the rolling-diving sparrow nation all make the approving sound.

Iktomni speaks:

"My brothers, the tufted heads give good counsel. *Waka Taga* gives life to each of you with special powers. Wisdom must hold the thong over these powers. The winter moons must not be too harsh for any living thing. On this day, I appoint Frog to be the sacred keeper of the winter moons. It sits with Frog to count no more than seven frost moons.* Frog will answer to all living things for signalling the warm moons. And I shall pull out Frog's other toes so that he will not mistake the moons. From this day, Frog shall have only seven toes. When the seventh winter moon dies, Frog must give all the animal people the sign that summer is here. In celebration of this, I appoint Frog to announce the first Sun Dance to the Stoney Nation."

And so to this day, Frog tracks the snowbound moons. And when the warm moons arrive, Frog begins to sing. This is the message for the Stonies to celebrate the summer moons by making the sacred Sun Dance.

And that is the Stoney origin of summer.*

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon/"One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Remember the old ones, the yearlings, the mothers,
Remember those with bad legs, and scars and wounds.*
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Mary Wildman
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: August 5, 1930
Mother's Name: Peggy Rider
Father's Name: Jonas Rider

Iktomni and Scare 'em Away, Medicine Woman

It is the moon when-colt-comes-out-of-mare's-belly.

Iktomni is walking, following the Pipestone River.*

He comes upon some mountain lodges. He hears sounds of talking and laughing coming from one of the lodges. He enters and sees four small children inside.

"Where's your mother?" asks *Iktomni*.

"Digging for roots nearby," the children say.

"What's your mother's name?" demands *Iktomni*.

"Scare 'em Away, Medicine Woman," shout the children.

Iktomni decides to play a trick on this medicine woman. He steals her children and hides them all inside his big hide bag. He slings the bag over his shoulder and heads out onto a mountain trail towards Bow Pass.*

When Scare 'em Away returns to her camp, she sees at once that all her children are gone. There is only one set of heavy tracks made by someone with big feet heading west.

"It must be a man who steals my children. But why? I shall not rest until I get my little ones back. I shall follow the big ugly feet."

For a long time, Scare 'em Away tracks the one-with-big-feet. After four days, she comes to see where he is heading. Immediately she takes a shortcut to Bow Pass. Then she hides in the rocky brush along the mountain trail. She waits and watches.

Meanwhile, inside the big hide bag* on *Iktomni's* back, the children plan their escape. They loosen the rawhide cord around the top of the bag. One by one they weasel out of the bag and, quiet as Loon, slip away into the mountains.

Iktomni walks along. Tired now, he does not notice that the bag* he carries is empty. The mountain trail is getting higher and higher.*

Just then Scare 'em Away leaps out at *Iktomni* from behind a bush with a blood-raising scream. *Iktomni* is stunned. He loses his balance and falls off the steep mountain trail bouncing off the gorge into the river below.

The children run to their mother. They stand and watch something bashing around on the river rocks

far below them. Slowly the five begin their descent. At the bottom of the gorge, they haul the man out of the river. His stomach has been ripped open and his entrails are hanging out. He is dead.

Scare 'em Away begins to sing the song-that-breathes-life-back-into-a-dead-one. The song tells the children to put the man's insides back into his body with much care.

Then Scare 'em Away rubs bear fat all over the dead man. She sings for him to smell the living Bear power. The song jumps inside his ears and fills him with life. *Iktomni's* nose twitches. Scare 'em Away, bending over him, gives him a good smell of the Bear medicine. His big nose comes to life and his lips part. Suddenly *Iktomni* begins to breathe again and rises to his feet.

"I must have been sleeping all day long. Scare 'em Away, you have the power of the healing herb and the medicine of forgiveness. And nothing, higher. When I was dead, Bear came to me and told me that peace comes only in forgiveness. And in peace, a nation grows."

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay/"Rolling Buffalo"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

The smallest act may bring life to the other.
-from the Stoney

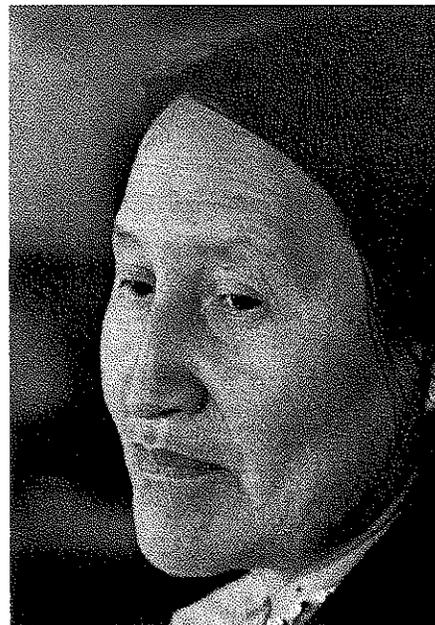
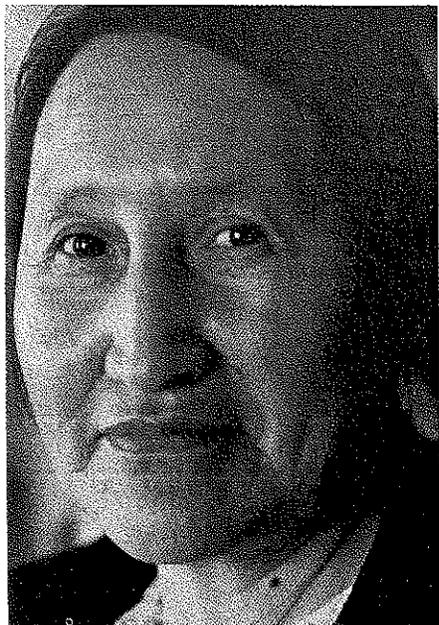


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Eileen Lefthand
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: August 5, 1935
Mother's Name: Mary Lefthand
Father's Name: Mark Lefthand

Iktomni and the Big Rolling Rock

It is the moon when the body of thunderer turns into buffalo stones.*

Iktomni is walking along the Porcupine Hills.*

His path leads to a big rock.

“What’s your name?” *Iktomni* asks.

“My name is ‘Rock.’”

“Everything must have two names. What’s your other name?”

“‘Rock’ is my name. That’s all.”

Iktomni lowers his nose over this mouth, saying:

“You shall be known as ‘Rock Mountain.’

Now I want to run a footrace with you.”

Rock says:

“But *Iktomni*, I have no legs. I cannot run a race with you.”

Iktomni laughs:

“I’ll take you up to the top of that mountain over there and roll you down. I shall race alongside.”

And so *Iktomni* pushes the big rock up to the top of the mountain. Then it begins to roll down.

Iktomni is running ahead of the tumbling rock, but the rock is getting closer and closer. *Iktomni* turns this way and that but the rock is now even closer. Then it rolls over *Iktomni* and makes his body flat like a buffalo chip.*

Iktomni lays on the Earth for three days. He never moves. On the fourth day, Coyote comes along and jumps over his body. *Iktomni* rises up. He sees the big rock beside him.*

“O, I’m very sure your name is just ‘Rock.’”*

Iktomni follows the hills.

But a cloud of mosquitoes descends on him and he hides in a pond.

When the mosquitoes are gone, *Iktomni* plays with some prairie rocks and throws them into the pond.

Later he sleeps on a big flat rock. His body is wet with mosquito bites, and he leaves the impression of himself in the rock.

The Stonies say that to this day you can still see his red mark of himself in the rock towards the Porcupine Hills.

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand/“Fish Child”
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Every man hurts somewhere,
Even if it is forty robes deep,
and the man is the pain.*
-from the Stoney

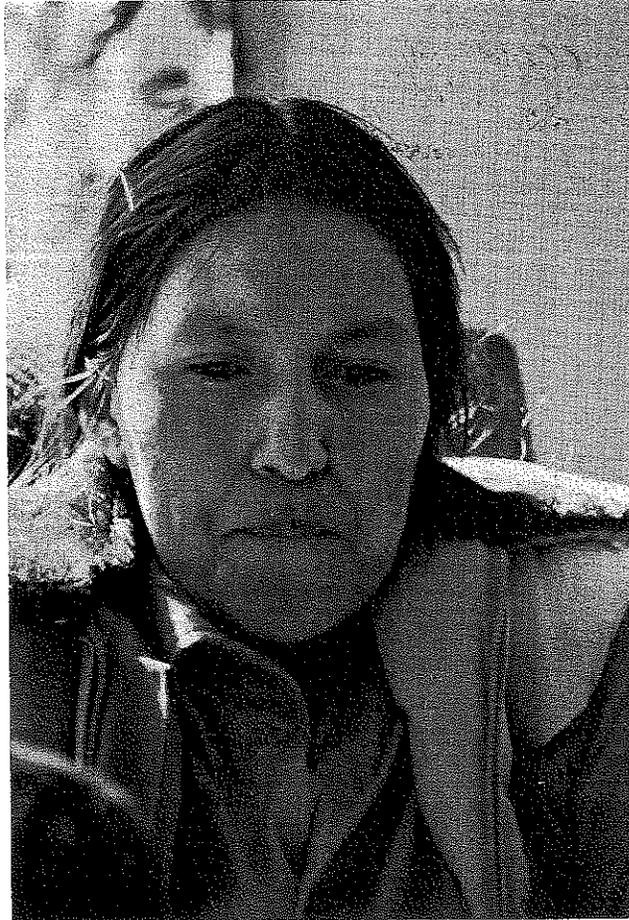


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Annie Dixon
Stoney,
housewife,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: 1916
Mother's Name: Jean Ear

Iktomni and Wapiti Girl

It is the moon of the elk-in-heat.*

Iktomni is walking along in Lake Minnewanka* country.

He meets two Stoney scouts. They talk of Wapiti girl, the daughter of the Stoney Chief, White Otter. The beauty of Wapiti Girl is legendary.

White Otter welcomes *Iktomni*. Each day *Iktomni* watches the Chief's daughter. He comes to know every movement of Wapiti Girl.

Then, one day, Wapiti Girl sees *Iktomni* coming out of her father's lodge. "What's *Iktomni* doing here? He's bad-looking. I don't like him," she says.

Iktomni is hurt. He goes away to a rock hollow. He wonders how he can play a trick on Wapiti Girl. And all day he dreams how he can make himself into a good-looking man.

Four days later, *Iktomni* hears someone come. It is Long Shell Man. He is young, hawk-nosed, with a handsome face. He wears fine quilled and shelled buckskin leggings and shirt.

"Ho, my brother, why do you sit all alone?" Long Shell Man asks.

Iktomni tells him about Wapiti Girl, about beauty and rejection.

"Give me your body for four days," asks *Iktomni*.

"No," says Long Shell Man. "You might take my shell powers away."

But *Iktomni* promises to make him even more powerful.

"If no man will then match me, I accept," says the hawk-nosed man.

Iktomni tells him:

"Lie on your back. I will walk into your body."

But Long Shell Man warns:

"Wapiti Girl will not be able to resist you. But you must not stay with her for four days, because then I will take back my body and you will have no face."

Iktomni agrees and enters into the body of Long Shell Man.*

A handsome *Iktomni* then walks into the Stoney camp. Chief White Otter asks his scouts to find out who this new stranger is. But the scouts are frightened, for this new stranger is powerful in the ways of hand-rubbed stones and shells from far away.

"I come from the South," *Iktomni* tells them. "I have been travelling for a long time — even before Coyote is born. And I am tired."

Chief White Otter invites him to stay. That evening, a big welcoming-dance is held in the dance lodge. All the young girls of the camp wait to see the stranger enter. But the evening grows late and the stranger does not come. On the second evening, another dance is held and *Iktomni* enters the dance lodge. He is stunning in white robes laced with shells. Wapiti Girl is also dressed in her finest skins with coloured quills and elk teeth. She whispers to her father that she would have this stranger for her man.

Iktomni sits to one side of the lodge with the men. The women sit on the other side. An Owl Dance is held. The dancers and singers and drummers charm the people. As the night deepens, Wapiti Girl crosses the circle and walks up to *Iktomni*. She puts her hand out. Everyone is watching. But *Iktomni* refuses her. He acts shy.

Each night Wapiti Girl dresses differently and is more beautiful. And each night the wonderful stranger refuses her. All the people are talking among themselves. Then, on the fourth night, Chief White Otter announces the end of the welcoming-dances.

Wapiti Girl is hurt. She leaves and waits beside *Iktomni's* lodge. It grows very late. When *Iktomni* returns, Wapiti Girl calls to him and takes his hand and leads him to her own lodge. They stay the night there together. Wapiti Girl is happy. She feels herself now to be Wapiti Woman. She dreams that the stranger will make a fine husband. But as the fourth night dies, she wakes up just to have a look at him asleep beside her.

But there, in the place of the fine, handsome, brightly-shelled stranger, lies old man *Iktomni*. His body has come back to him. Fury enters Wapiti Girl and she screams. *Iktomni* wakes up. He looks at her and laughs.*

This is how *Iktomni* tricked the girl who was too good for him.*

Based on narration by Wayne Lefthand/"Antelope"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Men are like insects caught in spruce gum.
-from the Stoney



Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Bonita Jimmy John
Stoney,
secretary,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: September 23, 1958
Mother's Name: Elsie Jimmy John
Father's Name: John Lefthand, Sr.

Iktomni Kills Bear

part one

It is the moon when Bear takes his robe down from the sky hooks.

Iktomni is walking along the Bow River forest floor in the Sawback Mountain Range.*

For three days he walks along without seeing anyone.

"How good it would be to find someone to stay with," he says to the spruces.

On the fourth day he sees Bear eating saskatoon berries.

"Bear, why do you eat those berries?"

"O, I am going to store them as tallow for my winter sleep," replies Bear.

"My brother, I will help you pick some berries. Let us stay together for the summer moons."

Bear is so happy that he gives *Iktomni* all the saskatoons he has gathered. Throughout the greening moons, they search for berries and juicy roots. But *Iktomni* tires of serving Bear. Instead of berries, he fills the bark containers with moss and sprinkles berries over the top. When the autumn moons come, Bear is real fat. He is ready for the first frost and winter sleep.

To *Iktomni*, Bear's fattening only means the ensnaring work ahead:

"Soon it will be time to kill my brother Bear like Weasel pounces on Rabbit from nowhere at night. Then I will feed off his fat over the coming winter moons."

And from that day, *Iktomni* begins to watch for a way to kill his brother so that he might have a great feast.

The day arrives when *Iktomni* is ready. He tells Bear:

"My brother, we have been sitting together in your big dark cave all the summer moons. Now my eyes are becoming blurry and fuzzy. I am slowly going blind. We must make a sweat lodge right away. Only a medicine rubbing will heal me. Your eyes must also be bad from the dark cave. Let's have a medicine sweat."

They make a willow sweat lodge. Bear builds a fire. *Iktomni* gathers rocks. He places the white rocks in the fire until they glow red. While Bear is working,

Iktomni goes into the forest and catches a Rabbit. He kills the Rabbit and takes both its eyes out.

Then he goes back into the sweat lodge and calls Bear. *Iktomni* places the rabbit's eyes over his own. Then he picks up two small hot stones from the fire and rubs them against the rabbit eyes. The rabbit eyes burst.

"Bear," *Iktomni* says, "the spirits have given me a new pair of eyes. Look, you can see the old eye skins. It's so bright and clear and I can almost see to Cuthead Creek.* Bear, rub your eyes with the hot stones. Then the spirits will give you a new set of eyes too."

Bear picks up the two hot stones and places them against his eyes. His eyes sizzle and burst. Blind and crazed, Bear stumbles around.*

This is the moment *Iktomni* dreams about. A fattened, powerless Bear. *Iktomni* takes up a big club and beats his brother to death.*

Laughing, *Iktomni* says: "Bear sure fixed his eyes good."

Then *Iktomni* begins to sing the victory song.

There will be much bear fat over the coming winter moons.

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand/"Fish Child"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Deceit ends in the death of my brother or sister.
-from the Stoney

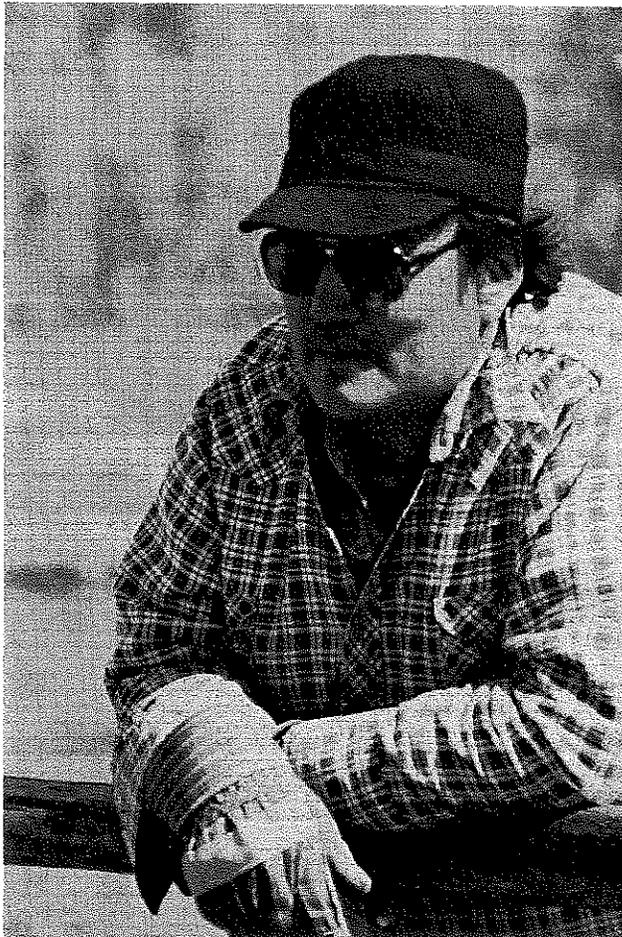


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Garvin Rollingmud
Stoney,
housing supervisor,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: July 8, 1946
Mother's Name: Mary Rollingmud
Father's Name: Harley Rollingmud

Iktomni and Stone

part two

It is the moon of the smoky meat racks dripping with much bear fat.

With his brother dead at his feet, *Iktomni* prepares to skin and carve up Bear.

He speaks to some Whiskeyjacks and these bring him a leaky, rotten, old, cooking pouch. The kind he likes. Then he begins to build a fire. He cooks Bear. And while Bear is being smoked, *Iktomni* is sitting on a big Stone, singing to his dead brother.

Suddenly *Iktomni* shouts into the forest:
"Everybody come and eat!"

And all who live in the great Sawbacks come and feast on Bear. Many animal people appear: Wolf, Porcupine, Coyote, Badger, Fox, Marmot. *Iktomni* is cutting up the bear meat into small strips and passing it around. He keeps the bear head for himself. He sits on top of the big Stone. After a little, the big Stone speaks:

"I am hungry too. Give me the bear head. I want to eat it."

Iktomni ignores the Stone. Again and again, Stone asks for the bear head. *Iktomni* is not listening.

After the fourth time, the big Stone is angry. It curses *Iktomni*. *Iktomni* wants to get up but he cannot. He is stuck fast to the Stone. Stone is holding him hard and will not let him go. *Iktomni* cannot move. Then all the animal people at the bear feast see that *Iktomni* is stuck fast to the Stone which has great power. And the animal people say:

"He cannot free himself."

Then the animal people grab up all the bear meat and bearfat and drag it away and run off with it.*

Only then does *Iktomni* see the power and anger of Stone. He begs Stone to let him go. He promises that he will do anything.

"Stone, I will give you anything you ask for."

But Stone turns his hard ears to the north.

After four days, some colourless Kingfishers are flying by. *Iktomni* speak to these:

"Hear me, Kingfishers, my brothers! When Sun falls on this fourth day, Stone will pound me into a swamp with his bony, sticky fingers. Free me, my little brothers. Free me, and I will make you Chiefs of All Birds."

The Kingfishers come closer. And being cunning even in a trap, he says:

"If you free me, I will paint you greater than Sky. I

will give you a great blue crest with white below and a blue band and white neck. I will give you a power to dig into steep, clay banks to make long tunnels where you may lay your eggs without fear. I will give you the gift to fly south in the winter moons. You will be known and loved as belted Kingfisher."

"We will fight for our eldest brother," say the Kingfishers.

They rise high and fall hard, knocking into him. Stone moves just a little. The fourth time they slam into him, the Kingfishers get him loose from the Stone power.

Once freed, *Iktomni* says:

"You are the Chiefs of All Birds.* You will never go hungry as long as I live."

Then *Iktomni* runs after the animal people who broke up the bear feast.

Soon he catches up to Frog who is jumping along with a piece of bearfat in his mouth.

"You have no power, *Iktomni*," says Frog.*
"Stone is greater than you."

Iktomni seizes his bearfat and crushes Frog. Then *Iktomni* is running through the Sawback forests, eating the bearfat and impatient to catch up with the rest of the animal people who took away his meat and laughed at him.

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand/"Fish Child"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

If you lose your power, they will broil your ribs.
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Larry Daniels
Stoney,
carpenter,
Longview, Alberta
Date of Birth: July 11, 1951
Mother's Name: Mary Daniels
Father's Name: Archie Daniels

Iktomni and Longtailed Fisher

part three

It is the moon when Grandfather Sky scatters many blue stars in the ocean sky.

Iktomni is heading south along Lost Horse Creek.*

He comes upon a pool of clear water.

After eating much bearfat, his throat is dry.

"O, I am very thirsty. I will drink here," he says to the clear water.

He bends over and puts both his hands on the cool, moist earth. But as he puts his mouth to the water, he sees something in the water right in front of him. It is Longtail eating away at some bearfat which he has carried away from *Iktomni's* big feast.

Angered by this-one-who-steals-his-feast, *Iktomni* rises and dives into the water. But there is nothing there. He comes out soaked. He looks into the pool again. And there, right in front of him is Longtailed Fisher.

Iktomni dives into the water again. Again nothing. No Longtail. He slaps the water this way and that. Nothing. He comes out soaked again. Then he looks into the water very slowly. And sure enough, there is Longtail sitting in the pool of water right in front of him.

For the third time, *Iktomni* jumps in, all ready to grab the Fisher. But again he catches nothing. And now he is good and mad.

As he is about to jump in the fourth time, Longtailed Fisher, who is sitting up on a tree just above the water, speaks:

"What are you doing, my brother?"

"What!" *Iktomni* cannot hide his shame. He sees that the image of Longtailed Fisher is only a reflection in the water.

"What are you looking for, my brother?" Longtail asks.

Iktomni's face is on fire. His anger broils on hot white stones:

"O, Longtail, old friend. O, it's you...O, I am looking for some pretty, red shells in the water for my grandchildren. And my brother, I am hungry. Will you drop some of that bearfat down to me?"

Longtail answers:

"Come and stand just below me. Open your mouth real wide. And close your eyes. And then I will drop

a piece of bearfat in your mouth."

Always hungry, *Iktomni* stands below the tree and opens his mouth. Longtail drops the smallest bit of bearfat right in.

"How good it is, little brother," *Iktomni* says. "But it is very small. Let me have a little more."

"Open your mouth still wider and close your eyes real tight."

When *Iktomni* does, Longtail drops a big, flint knife right in his mouth. *Iktomni* is killed* where he stands.

Afraid that *Iktomni's* spirit will come back with bad medicine, Longtail runs deep into spruce country and has rarely been seen to this day.

On the fourth day, Raven flies over *Iktomni* and breathes life back into his older brother.

Iktomni heads East with Raven sitting on his bag of smoke.*

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay/"Rolling Buffalo"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Greed brings death an arrow length closer.
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Elizabeth Bearspaw
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1896
Mother's Name: Flora McLean
Father's Name: George McLean

Iktomni and the Green Tomato

It is the moon when the cottonwood buds are fat.

Iktomni is walking along the black soils east of Antler Hill.*

He comes upon a wild green tomato growing in the Earth.

"My brother," says *Iktomni*, "what is your name?"

"My name is 'Fight,'" replies the tomato.

"O, that is a very fine name," *Iktomni* smiles back of his palms.

He grabs the little green tomato from the green plant and puts it in his mouth and eats it.

Iktomni is walking along the great, red soils of Earth.

A little while later, he hears a voice speaking inside him. It says:

"Fight, fight."

Iktomni says to the red soils:

"It must be that wild tomato who is talking to me. I shall run to those mountains over there and see if he follows me."

He runs almost faster than the wind. But when he reaches the mountains he still hears the tomato voice deep inside him. It says:

"Hoooo. Hoooo. Hoooo. Hoooo."

Now every step that *Iktomni* takes is a struggle. And each time he stops to rest, he hears the eaten voice within him say, "Hoooo."

Iktomni becomes very sick and he lays down on the Earth.

Still, the little voice taunts him: "Hey! Hoooo! Hey! Hoooo!"

"O Grandmother Earth," says *Iktomni*, "I have made the sacred soils for this green one to grow and to sing to Moon, but he turns his poison sacs against his elder brother. Grandmother, do not go the way of north wind. O bring me rest from this one."

Iktomni is groaning. He says to the gray-banded mountain:

"I must climb a tall pine tree and jump off. I must kill this little tomato who gives me such a fight."

Iktomni climbs a great pine. But north wind has

heard him speak. And about half way up, north wind comes up and shakes the pine and the sick tomato-eater tumbles down to the ground.

The little tomato is not dead. It has more fight than ever.

"Hoooo," it laughs.

After four days, Grandmother Earth brings *Iktomni* some hot sacred herbs and he heals himself of the power of the green, evil one.

After the tomato has gone away, *Iktomni* enters a Stoney encampment. He teaches the people about things that bring harm.

From that day, no person ever eats the wild, green tomato for it lives up to its name. The wild tomato will put up a very good fight and make any person who eats it very sick.*

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay/"Rolling Buffalo"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

A man has no power against a mosquito.
-from the Stoney

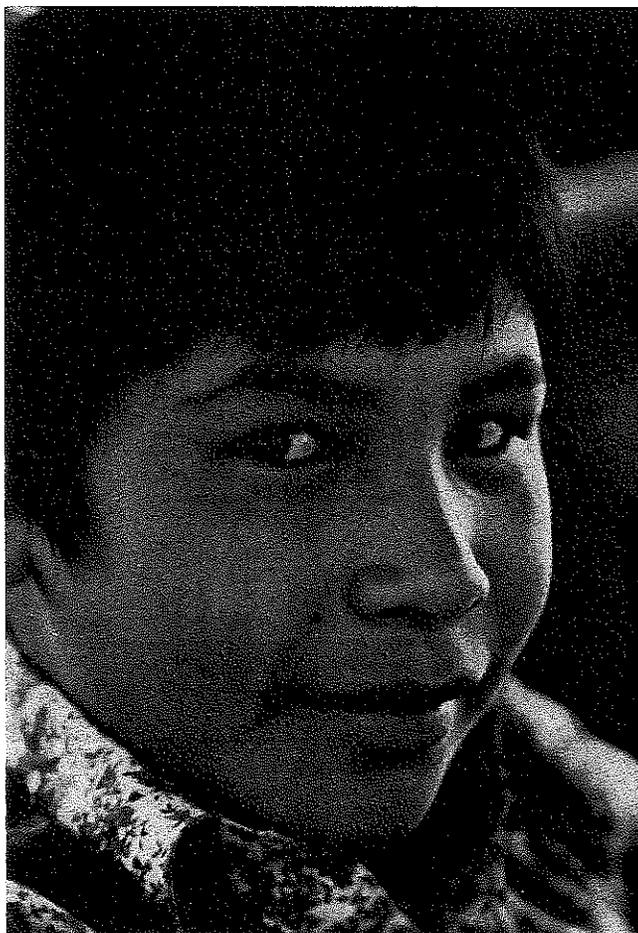


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Kelly Poucette
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1969
Mother's Name: Ina Poucette
Father's Name: Glen Stevens

Iktomni Becomes Bluerobe Woman

part one

It is the red-grass moon when the prairie is ablaze with flaming flowers.

Iktomni is walking along,* following Mosquito Creek.*

He sees two women gathering cottonwood. He sits on a dwarf butte and watches these.

"I wonder what it is like to be a woman," he says* to the butte.

Blue Grouse is sitting on a birch log nearby and eating flowers and buds.

"O hooting Blue Grouse," *Iktomni* says, "lend me your feather robe. I want to live among the Stoney women. Lend me your blue-gray robe and I will bring you all the berries and seeds you can eat. And I'll make you some good buckskin to wear too."

And so *Iktomni* puts on Blue Grouse' robes and makes himself into* a good-looking woman. Then he goes over to the place where the women are gathering firewood. But the women back off and put their hands to their mouths. *Iktomni* calms them saying:

"My sisters, I am alone. My family and my people have all been killed in a big raid. I have been running for many days. O, they are all dead."

And *Iktomni* makes little tears come down his face. The two women put their arms around him and take him to their father's lodge.

The two wood-gathering daughters tell his story to their father and the Elders. The old ones make the consenting sounds. Old Moccasin, the father, says that Bluerobe will stay with them. Bluerobe looks away from the father as is the old custom. The people come to call *Iktomni* "Bluerobe Woman."

At dusk, the camp dogs bark. The women greet their brother, Summer Hand, returning with fresh meat. The father, Old Moccasin, takes his son, Summer Hand, aside:

"I want you to put your sleeping robes beside Bluerobe."

In the second evening that comes, a feast is prepared. The father and son amuse the people with their stories and songs. *Iktomni* teases Summer Hand and keeps nudging his arm as the night wears on. As the first stars come out, they embrace. Later, *Iktomni* cooks some deer ribs. Summer Hand is as happy as a leaping trout.

There are four days of joy for the new couple. Then, one evening, *Iktomni* says: "Husband, I have a hunger for some boiled blood."

The next day, Summer Hand returns from being-out-for-elk. He brings *Iktomni* the warm blood in a wolverine sac. *Iktomni* is happy. And he makes good meat for his lodge. But *Iktomni* hides some of the blood.

The burnt summer moons pass.

Then, one day, *Iktomni*-Bluerobe pretends that he is with child. He puts a little of the elk blood on his blue feather robe. The people see that Bluerobe is walking with a weight. They wonder when a baby will be born to Bluerobe. Old Moccasin wonders if Bluerobe will give Summer Hand a boy.

Owsni Ti, Old Man Winter, comes hard and swiftly shaking his white lynx rattles.

Old Moccasin moves the Stoney lodges to Pekisko Creek:* a place of thick brush - away from the killing winds.

When the eagles and hawks return from the south, *Iktomni*-Bluerobe announces: "I am going to have a baby son in the moon of first blossoms.* But I want to bring him into the world alone. I ask my people to allow me to give this life alone. Do no more than putting up a birthing lodge for me."

The people gather poles and hides to build the new lodge.

The people whisper among themselves that a new Stoney life sits among them.

Based on narration by Wayne Lefthand / "Antelope"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Do not sleep when snare-maker walks,
Be watchful: the one with many tricks
and many curiosities is at the lodge,
Hide the flap. (Can't you hear his scratching?)
Be alert.*

-from the Stoney

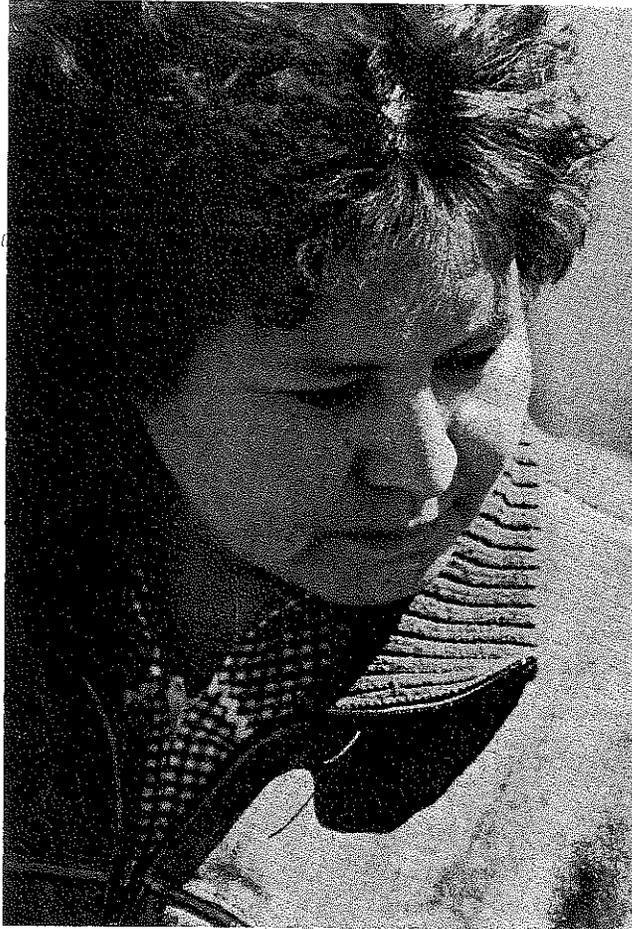


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Bernice Daniels
Stoney,
teacher's aide
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1950
Mother's Name: Mary Daniels
Father's Name: Archie Daniels

Iktomni Gives Birth to Red Fox

part two

The birthing moon lies on its back.

Iktomni wears a woman's blue robe.

Early one morning, *Iktomni*-Bluerobe goes down to Pekisko Creek for water.

Down at the creek, Red Fox sees a water-woman coming. Frightened, Red Fox is about to run away. (Red Fox carries the memory of the great betrayal of Fox by Man.)

"My brother, mountain dog! It's me, *Iktomni*! Hear me! Where do you run?"

"Then why are you wearing that blue robe? Maybe you're trying to trick me."

"No, my brother," says *Iktomni*. "I need you. Come with me and I will give you many goose eggs."

Iktomni gets Red Fox to climb inside his blue feather robe. Red Fox is resting on his belly.

Bluerobe enters the Stoney camp. The birth lodge is ready. Bluerobe looks heavy now with Red Fox sitting on his belly. Bluerobe walks real slow. A bearskin hide and moss bag are placed inside his lodge. A fire crackles inside the lodge.

The moment comes near and the people wait outside Bluerobe's lodge. *Iktomni* says:

"If you hear the baby, do not be impatient. Wait until the new mother has made everything as the whitehairs have taught."

Inside, *Iktomni* squeezes Red Fox just a little. Red Fox gives out a little cry...

"O, the baby has come," says Summer Hand, the waiting husband. "Let's go in and see it."

But *Iktomni* warns them to stay away:

"The Sun is not in the right place," he says through the lodge hides.

Iktomni places Red Fox in the moss bag and says:

"Listen, my brother. I will feed you goose eggs at night when they are all asleep. In the day, when I give you my breasts, just pretend to suck my milk. If you turn back now, they will kill us both."

Iktomni then wraps the bearskin around the moss bag. Red Fox is all covered up.

"My wife," says Summer Hand, "is it a boy or a girl?"

"It's a boy."

"O, let me see him then."

"No," says *Iktomni*. "You must observe custom and wait for four days. If you do not, the baby might die."

Again, *Iktomni* pinches and squeezes Red Fox to make him whimper and cry like a baby.

He feeds Red Fox when the camp is asleep.

On the fourth day, Summer Hand stands in front of Bluerobe's lodge.

"My woman, this is the fourth day. Now I'm going to see my baby."

"No. No. You must come back tomorrow," *Iktomni* says through the lodge skin. But the husband insists: "No! I'm going to see my son right now and no one will stop me. Enough!"

Summer Hand bursts into the lodge. *Iktomni* and the husband wrestle. Each one is trying to pull the moss bag away from the other. Back and forth they struggle, tugging, until the laces on the moss bag loosen. The bag is ripped open.

Suddenly Red Fox leaps out of the bag. The people are stunned. Red Fox, terrified, runs off for the hills. *Iktomni* is running right behind him, laughing so hard that his belly almost breaks.

The husband tries to shoot *Iktomni*, but misses in the panic.

"O, don't hurt me husband," laughs *Iktomni*. "I tried to be a good wife."

Red Fox and *Iktomni* disappear into the hills.

Based on narration by Wayne Lefthand / "Antelope"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

A fox is forty colors.
-from the Stoney

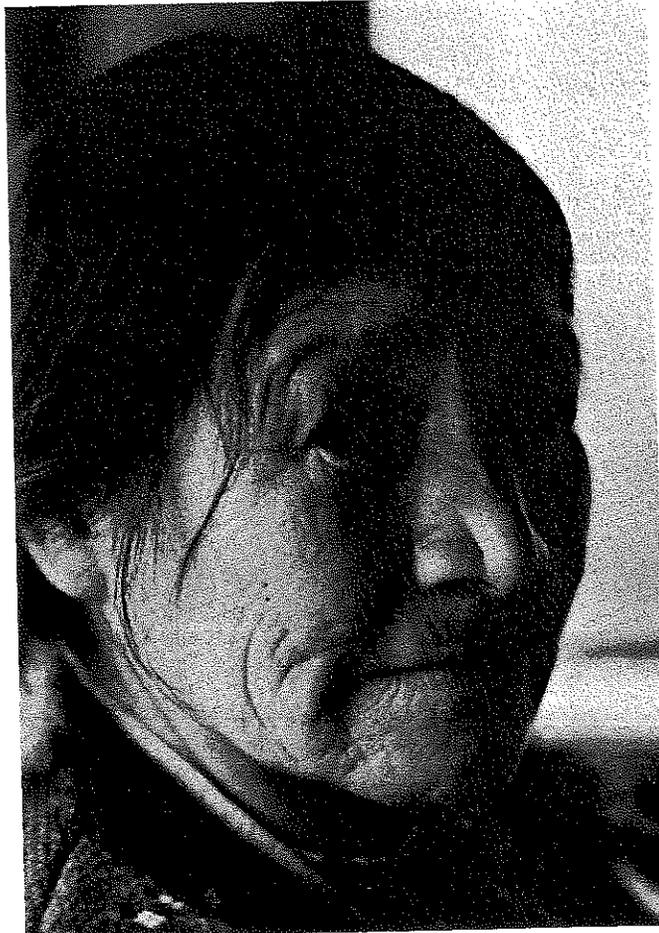


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Jesse Fox
Stoney,
labourer,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: March 5, 1924
Mother's Name: Agnes Rabbit
Father's Name: Jake Rabbit

Iktomni and the Eagles

It is the mountain moon when the Eagles rub wings with Grandfather Sky.

Iktomni is walking towards the Flathead Mountains.*

He sees two Eagles soaring high up, riding wingback.

"Looking at these, I can see that a man is born to fly," he says to Grandfather Sky.

Raising his face to Sun, and cupping his hands over his mouth, he calls to them:

"Hoooo, my brothers, I want to fly with you."

The Eagles look down. They look at each other. A thin smile comes over their curved beaks.

"Yes, let's have some fun with this earth-crawler," says the first.

"But *Iktomni*," says the second Eagle, "how can we lift you?"

"Wait!" shouts *Iktomni* "I shall make myself as small and as light as a coyote pup."

And suddenly his feet do not even leave tracks in Grandmother Earth's soft belly.

Seeing this, the Eagles swoop down and carry *Iktomni* up into the Sky. They fly very high, up to where Sun does not go, among the great white Flathead summits. *Iktomni* is so happy that he sings just like the bald eagle.

But the Eagles tire of their burden. They will serve no creature who dreams only of stepping on the backs of others. The Eagles make a great circle and set *Iktomni* down on a thin ledge of ice high above North Kootenay Pass.*

"You must wait here," they tell *Iktomni*. "We need to rest a little."

Iktomni waits on the edge of ice. One move and he would fall from the mountain top and go crashing to Earth. He waits and waits. The Eagles do not return. The ice begins to melt where *Iktomni* is sitting.

Thin clouds surround him. The Eagles have been gone four days. *Iktomni* waits. Just before the ice ledge melts right through, the Eagles return. The Eagles call to *Iktomni*:

"If you want to fly, you'll have to grow your own wings."

The ice ledge breaks off. *Iktomni* falls through Sky down to Earth. The Eagles fly alongside just to watch *Iktomni* crash to the ground.

Looking down as he is falling, *Iktomni* sings:

"O Grandmother Earth, it was I who first breathed life into your clay-mud pools. Remember your oldest son."*

Iktomni crashes into a giant mud field. And as he hits the mud, he becomes a man again. Then he is stuck in the mud up to his waist. The Eagles fly past him and laugh:

"*Iktomni* is crazy. No man can fly. But he begged like a moose calf. So we took him up. He got his wish. He must be dead now. No man can fall from Sky and live."

Three days pass. *Iktomni* does not move. Word passes among the mountain animal people that he is dead. But on the fourth day, Wolf comes along* and licks this coyote-trickster until he comes back to life.*

Then *Iktomni* rises from the mud.

Soon *Iktomni* is walking again.

He is back.

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand / "Fish Child"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*If you want to fly,
you'll have to grow
your own wings.*
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Cody Wildman
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: November 26, 1948
Mother's Name: Violet Wildman
Father's Name: Percy Wildman

Iktomni Makes Raven a Scavenger

part one

It is the-heaving-moon when Beaver begins to break up the river ice.

Iktomni walks across the gray soils singing to Sun.

Near Eagle Hill,* he comes upon some old Stoney burial-poles-raised-for-death. The dead are wrapped in robed bundles and set high out of the reach of marauders. *Iktomni* sees that the meat and berries left for the dead have been eaten. The bark bowls and the meat bags are empty. Ravens are gouging out the eyes of the dead persons.

"Raven is a thief!" *Iktomni* shouts. "This cannot be forgiven. Our dead persons must see clearly to find an open trail to the spirit world in Sky. When these return and see that dishonour has sat at their old earth bodies, they will anger at all living things. And if Raven makes a day-to-day circle of this act, then Grandmother Earth herself will shake from the breaths of the dead persons. And, as he is always taking-from the little animal people, the elder animal people should sit in council on Raven."

At the meeting, *Iktomni* speaks to the animal people:

"Raven shames our dead brother. He will not take and eat of the fruits of the land as we receive these. Raven dishonours our dead. This will bring us much loss. He offends the spirit of the dead. And he laughs. He violates our dead brothers. I want my cousin Raven to live. But dishonour means death. And so Raven must die for his dishonour. Let the others speak on these things."

No animal person disagrees.

Each of the animal people speak at the council circle. And as they speak, Magpie, little brother of Raven, sees the gathering and sneaks up real close to listen. For Magpie and Raven are blood brothers. They take much pleasure in raiding the smaller animal people and in harming the ones-who-have-fallen. And they upset nests and fill in earth holes.

Slowly, forgiveness turns to war.

The animal people and *Iktomni* speak about who will bring death to Raven. And when Magpie hears of the words-to-kill Raven, he rises up into Sky and circles the gathering below.

Magpie mocks them:

"I have heard your tongues speak. I have watched

your hands and faces. I have listened to your ugly voices. No living person shall harm my brother. For Raven is wise in his ways as you are wise in yours. Sky has many trails. You may warn Raven. But you shall not kill him. Until Sun does not rise any more, Magpie will stand between man and death. Now I fly to tell my brother to hide from your eye."

Iktomni leaps up and shouts after Magpie:

"A fool stampedes to his own waiting death. Yes. Go. Fly to Raven. Tell your brother with the blood-of-the-dead-ones-on-his-curved-beak that all living things will suffer for his greed. The council has sat here and many have spoken saying that when the spirit of desire is poisoned, it is far better to build a fire for the-one-who-has-lost-his-feel-for-the-Earth-and-Sky. Go to Raven. But you will find no Ravens left to warn because, before this Sun falls, they will all be dead. And the ones who survive the anger of this council shall for all days have bitten wing tips and shall have no song but a rough throaty 'krawk' and shall eat that which no other living thing will touch."

And that is why to this day Raven is a chief among scavengers.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Dishonour is the keeper of death.
-from the Stoney

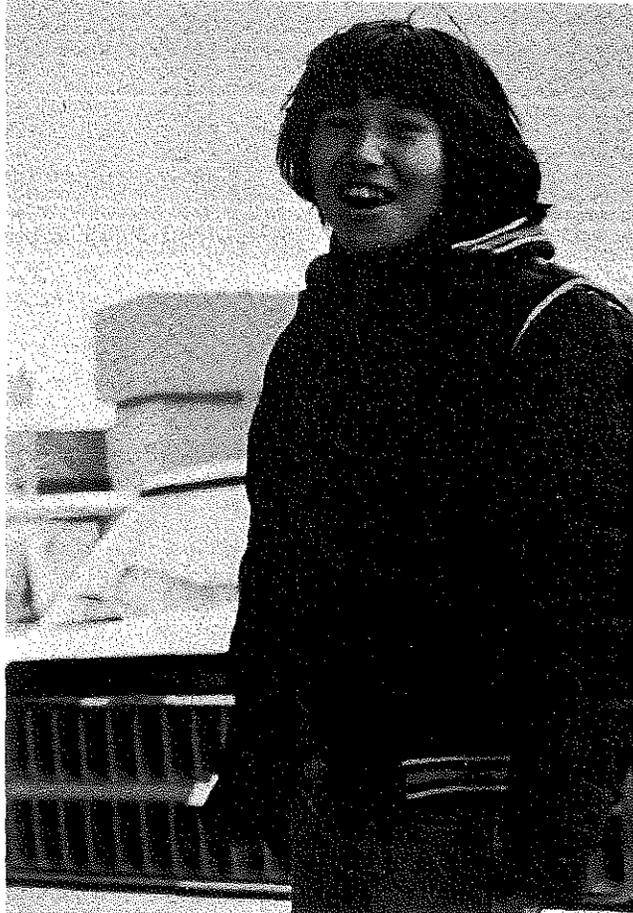


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Venus Onespot
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: February 6, 1965
Mother's Name: Marlene Onespot
Father's Name: Norman Onespot

Iktomni: Big Raven Escapes from Ta Taga part two

It is the moon of the-dark-red-calf.*

The animal council elders follow the Little Red Deer River* to the home of *Ta Taga*, Buffalo Chief.

Iktomni and the animal people in-council have chosen Buffalo to destroy the Raven nation for dishonouring the dead persons. The council recognizes that Buffalo has great horn-knives. And these shaggy persons will track Raven all over this coyote continent.

Ta Taga, Chief of all the Buffalo, listens to *Iktomni* and the animal people.

Ta Taga speaks:

"I will lead my short-horned brothers on the war-path against Raven. One by one these great black birds will fall until Grandmother Earth is free from their scar. Our black noses will follow their tails until they are rounded and can easily be distinguished from Crow."

The Buffalo, led by *Ta Taga*, snorting, bellowing, hooting, howling, send out scouts at once to find the Raven camps. Soon they surround a large flock of Ravens. On a great braying signal, blowing through much hanging hair and running saliva, the herd stampedes and tramples and hooks many Ravens. Thunder enters their hooves, and the roaring storm petrifies the Ravens. Only one, Big Raven, escapes. and to this day, Raven is black because Buffalo trampled him in the mud.

But Big Raven is captured by the finest Buffalo bowmen who snare him in one of his Sky rolls with a long, rawhide cord with carrion bait. Raven's great black wing with four sharp feather tips is broken and he cannot be-one-with-Sky and he tumbles to Earth in giant spirals.

Buffalo prepare a great mound of prairie chips and put Big Raven in the middle. Then *Ta Taga*, Bull Buffalo, comes forward and with a hard jerk sets fire to the chip mound.

Flames close around Big Raven. And Big Raven remembers his blood brother, Magpie. Suddenly Big Raven makes a great death cry and a war song to Magpie Spirit. Then a great wind comes up. Magpie descends rapidly from Sky in the sharp talons of Thunderer Bird. These carry much fury. *Ta Taga* is calm. Suddenly Thunderer Bird opens one of his eyes, and a giant bolt of lightning races across Sky.

The lightning crashes in the middle of the Buffalo herd and, where it falls, a giant mountain rock becomes embedded in Earth. Then, in a swift rush, Magpie takes up wing-crushed Raven and carries him to the top of the giant mountain rock.

The Buffalo become very angry that Big Raven has escaped their thunder. The Buffalo herd surrounds the mountain rock and ram it and hook it. Buffalo bowmen shoot many chips against its Rock, but the Rock does not move. Slowly the great Rock begins to grow into the Earth.

Ta Taga speaks to his Buffalo warriors:

"Brothers, Magpie has tricked us. This Rock has great medicine power. But now both Raven and Magpie shall die. We will circle the giant Rock and make water around it. We shall turn the Earth upon which it rests into swampy muskeg."

For four days the Buffalo circle the giant Rock emptying their huge water pouches. The Earth becomes like a yellow swamp. And the Rock begins to sink in the yellow mud. *Ta Taga* and his brothers lean against the Rock with their horns and nudge it hard. They press against it and dig their hooves in calling on the soil spirits. Slowly, the great Rock begins to move. Soon, they set Rock rolling and Big Raven falls to the Earth. Rock rolls towards the horizon and the Buffalo rush to trample and hook Big Raven. Their heads are low-to-Earth and they charge.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Raven is wise in his own ways
as you are wise in your ways.
Sky has many trails.*

-from the Stoney

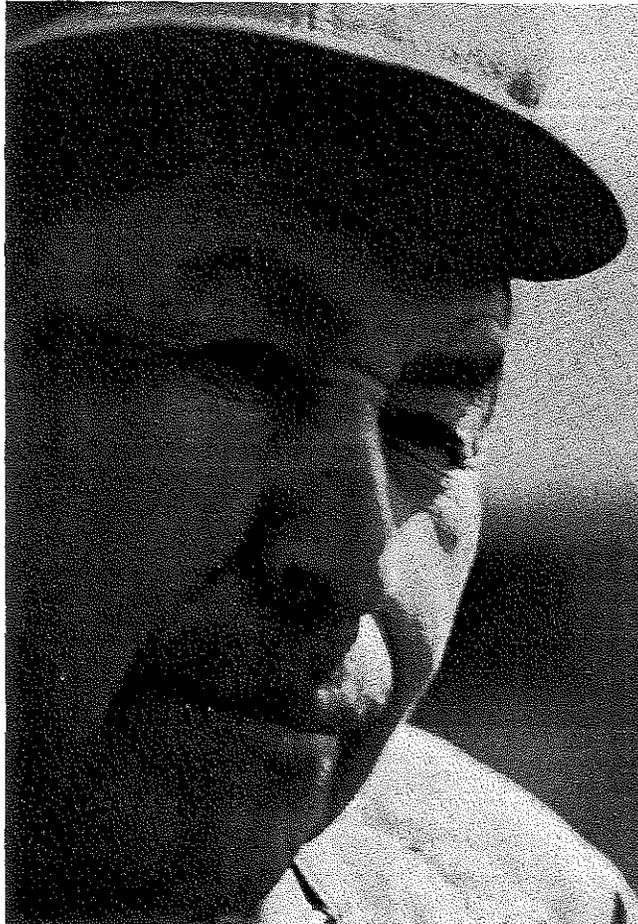


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Albert Amos
Stoney,
bush pole-cutter,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: July 24, 1927
Mother's Name: Annie Amos
Father's Name: Amos Amos

Iktomni Among the Bones Picked Clean

part three

It is the moon-coming-down when the sandhill crane is restless.

The Red Deer hills are black with Buffalo.

The Buffalo charge straight at Raven with trampled wing.

Raven looks up. Again he remembers Magpie. Big Raven calls and again Magpie descends from Sky. As he flies, Magpie chews on a little, golden stone. When he reaches Big Raven, Magpie spits out the piece of gold before the rushing Buffalo herd.

Suddenly, the golden stone turns into a golden lodge, blazing with light. Magpie scoops up Big Raven and sets him down on top of the golden lodge between the smoke flap lodgepoles.

Fire is coming out of the horns of the Buffalo. They are circling the golden lodge and passing water as they go around. But after one full moon-in-the-round, the shining lodge will not sink.

Big Raven sees that the Buffalo cannot harm him and so begins to sing his victory song. In his croaky, crackling voice, he sings four songs:

"Sitting here, I watch my brothers circle. My heart hears their anger. But the power of Magpie has pushed death back under the Earth. Magpie and I are of one blood. His herbs will heal my crushed wing. My nation will live again. No enemy will ever face me again. E e e - yay, eee-yay."

The Buffalo cannot hook the golden lodge. And Big Raven's song breaks down their spirit.

Ta Taga speaks:

"Brothers, Big Raven is stronger than the death in our hooves. Our great nation which raises the bark-coloured dust up to Sky and rubs the lips of Sun, has no medicine against Big Raven. We have failed *Iktomni*. The power that sits with Big Raven can come only from Thunderer Bird. We must go back to the wintering hills or Big Raven may turn his power to take revenge on us."

The Buffalo grow afraid and scatter all over this coyote continent. That is why they are to be found in every place.

After the Buffalo are gone, *Iktomni* comes and speaks to Big Raven:

"They are gone. You have a strong heart. The old forest council wanted to teach you the ways that we honour. But Thunderer Bird sees another path for

you. Come down. We will feast."

But Big Raven will not come down from the golden lodge. And *Iktomni* heads back towards Eagle Hill country.

Then Magpie comes along:

"Big Raven, the Buffalo sit on the four horizons, where the Sun, Moon and Stars meet the Big Oceans. Their horns go with them. Come down. Eagle, Hawk, Crow and the others invite you to a big victory feast. These have found a fallen Elk. Come. . . ." But Big Raven is afraid:

"No, little brother. For forty days these have brought only death and tricks. My wings are broken and my people are dead." Magpie leaves.

When Sun goes home, Big Raven gets lonely and hungry. He comes down from the golden lodge and struggles along with his bruised wing until he comes to the fallen Elk. It is picked clean. *Iktomni* is there among the bones. At the sight of his victory bones, Big Raven crawks to *Iktomni* that no small piece of elkfat was left for him at his own feast.

Iktomni speaks:

"The bird nations waited for you Big Raven. But you would not share in your own honours. You have offended many tribes here today. These say that to the end of all days, you will be alone always. No living thing will call you brother. No person will share with you. You will wander all your life. You will have no home. No rest."

And to this day, Raven carries a black pipe for a brother he cannot find.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

A fool stampedes to his own waiting death.
-from the Stoney

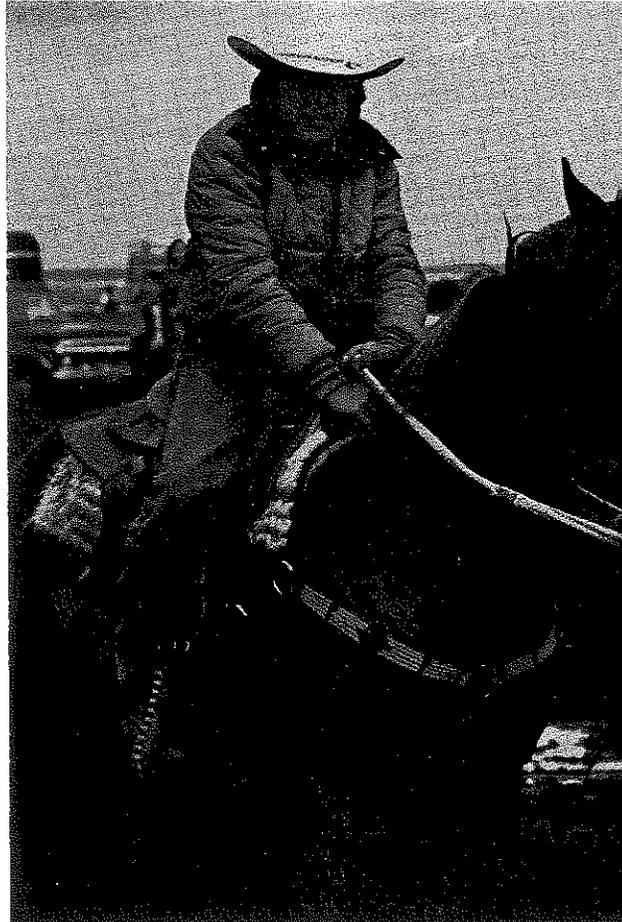


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Ollie Benjamin
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: October 11, 1965
Mother's Name: Lily Benjamin
Father's Name: Paul Dixon, Jr.

Iktomni and the Gift of Thunder Horse

It is the moon when-deer-rub-their-horns.*

Iktomni sits with *Waka Taga*, Great Mystery. *Iktomni* speaks to this sacred one:

"I come as bearer for the Stonies. They must travel great distances and need some animal spirits who will serve to carry them and share their burdens."

Waka Taga speaks:

"Go among the animal people which we have made and call them to a great meeting. Ask which one of them is willing to carry the Stoney nation on its back and serve the people."

Iktomni goes from Sky to Earth on a shooting star. He brings word to the animal people that a big council will be held. All the animal people assemble from the four directions. *Iktomni* speaks to them. He describes his visit with Great Mystery. He talks of his task:

"*Waka Taga* would appoint one of you to bear the Stonies across the great distances. Who among you will come forward?"

Moose is the first to walk into the middle of the great circle. "O *Iktomni*, I will serve *Waka Taga* and the Stonies. No one here can match my strength to swim twelve miles. I gladly give my back and my hooves. I move swiftly through the thickest forests. I will carry the Stonies long and hard on my back for as long as I live. Then my children will carry them."

Iktomni listens, then gives his counsel:

"Moose, you are a generous person. And your strong back matches your strong heart. But your home, where you feed on roots and bear young calves is within the great northern forests and the still waters of muskeg. The Stonies are a buffalo nation. And they have chosen to walk the rolling foothills and the open prairie."

Buffalo then walks into the great circle to speak.

"Let me serve the Stonies, *Iktomni*. Even Old Man Winter, who would be Chief over all the Earth, cannot match my long-haired robe. And nothing living can stand to my bulls. My horns will become like shining knives against the enemies of the Stonies. I will defend the Stonies with my life."

"My brother," says *Iktomni*, "you are the finest and most loyal of the great beasts. But you have already chosen another path to give your brown-earth body to the Stonies so that they may eat your prairie-reddened heart and celebrate your spirit, so

that they may grow. Your home shall always be the high prairie. You have already given enough of yourself."

Mountain Goat is the third to step forward.

"I shall give myself and my mountain nation, *Iktomni*. Let me carry the Stonies. None on all Grandmother's Earth has my power of foothold. For I am the firstborn mountaineer. No enemy will pursue the Stonies to the crags and mountain faces where I shall hide them."

"My brother Goat," *Iktomni* begins, "you are the first climber and the most sure-footed of all. But the Stonies cannot live that high up in the mountain clouds as you do. You would be unhappy to leave the place for which you have special gifts."

The fourth creature to come forward is carrying a small leaf in his mouth. He is crying softly. It is Horse.

"O *Iktomni*, let me serve the wishes of *Waka Taga*. I am as strong as Eagle. And as swift as Pronghorn. Like Raven, I can go anywhere. The Stonies are as light as the leaf in my mouth."

All the animal people nod and make the approving sounds. *Iktomni* raises his hands to Sun and gives Horse to the Stoney Nation, saying:

"From this day, the Stonies will teach you and care for you. They will make honouring songs in your name. You will be much-loved."

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Give, until there is nothing left to hold onto,
and then you begin to give with your heart.*
-from the Stoney

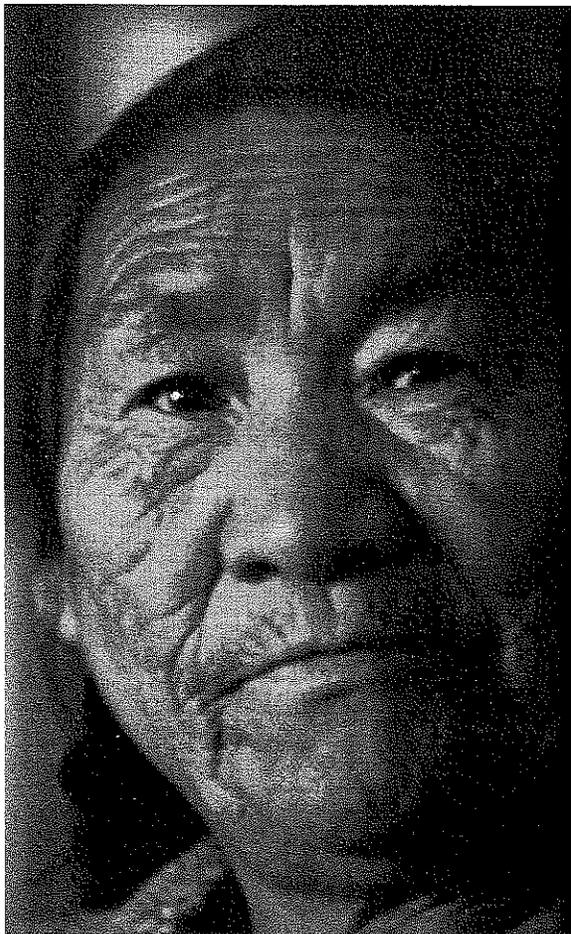


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Flora Dixon
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: April 23, 1923
Mother's Name: Annie Hunter
Father's Name: Willy Dixon

Iktomni and She-Beaver

It is the hard-frost-moon* when Great Bear turns over on his side.

Iktomni lives in a beaver lodge under the ice of a frozen creek. He mates with She-Beaver.

The moon of ice-on-the-creeks passes and break-up begins. When the swans return, six little ones are born in the beaver lodge. Sun thaws the hard soils. Earth heaves and the creek begins to run.

One day, after the first lark arrives, She-Beaver leaves the round lodge to hunt for aspen and willows. For her nation loves to eat these trees. The little Beavers watch *Iktomni* as She-Beaver swims upstream.

Iktomni is very hungry after a long winter fast.

She-Beaver is away a long time. *Iktomni* kills and eats all the little Beavers. He knows that She-Beaver will fight him when she discovers what he has done, so he runs away.

Iktomni walks a long time. The mud of the creek-bank squishes into his moccasins. He is getting very thirsty. He looks with much desire at the water running in the creek.

"Grandmother Earth tells me that She-Beaver is angry with me. The red willows tell me that she is on my trail. White clouds saw her setting snares for me. Listening to these, I do not dare drink from this creek," *Iktomni* says to the little stones in the water.

Still, he looks longingly at the fresh water.

Under the red-grass Sun, *Iktomni* walks all day long. Sun gets very hot. Finally, *Iktomni's* throat is so dry that sparks are shooting out. He bends over on one knee. His hands are flat on the Earth. He begins to drink from the creek. The water is icy and sweet.

Suddenly, She-Beaver rises out of the water and bites *Iktomni's* nose right off.

"O-O-O-O-"

Iktomni is howling. His hands are soaked in his own blood. He stands up. One hand is clutching the hole where his nose has been. Pointing with the other hand to She-Beaver diving, *Iktomni* says:

"Chaba, this time you got me!"

Satisfied with her revenge, She-Beaver is gone.*

Iktomni walks over to a coulee of blue spruce trees. He cuts some gum from the spruce bark and begins to chew it. When the gum is soft in his mouth, *Iktomni* takes it out and places it over the hole where his nose was.

Looking at his reflection in the creek, *Iktomni* says to the sweet water:

"Yes, I like my new nose."

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand / "Fish Child"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*If you cannot pay in horses,
then you must pay in blood.*
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Veri Poucette
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: March 23, 1967
Mother's Name: Evelyn Poucette
Father's Name: John Poucette

Iktomni Offers Kinnikinnik* to Buffalo

It is the moon when saskatoon berries ripen.*

Iktomni is resting on his black buffalo sleeping robes.

Soon he hears the sound of hoofs.

"Many Buffalo coming," he says to the lodge skins.

Frightened, he gets up and looks outside his lodge. He sees nothing.

"It must be bad ears," he says to the grasshopper wind.

Buffalo hoofs come again. The lodge begins to shake. *Iktomni* looks through the hide flap of his lodge and sees many Buffalo heads. The Buffalo try to hook him, but he hangs up his coyote robe and squeezes through the belly of the lodge and starts running south.

He comes to a gulch tree stump and makes a song:

"Brother Gulch Tree! Hide me from the Buffalo!"

The gulch tree stump says to *Iktomni*,

"Come into my body." He touches the rotten bark and climbs inside and crouches low. But one of his raven plumes is sticking out. When the Buffalo arrive, they see the tree stump with the human smell and the human eyes and begin to lick it with their tongues. The tree stump offers its neck to the horned ones. A gray Buffalo hooks the rotten stump and breaks it apart. *Iktomni* jumps out and runs away. *Iktomni* is very tired and very frightened. And the Buffalo are thundering right behind him, gaining....

He runs to a saskatoon bush and sings:

"Brother Saskatoon, hide me from the Buffalo."

The saskatoon bush begins to grow on *Iktomni's* head and covers him with its leaves and roots. Buffalo arrive and eat the saskatoon leaves and berries. A charcoal Buffalo tries to hook the saskatoon bush. But the saskatoon is very wise. It circles out of reach each time the black buffalo horns brush the ribs of the bush. Then the Buffalo circle around the saskatoon and make it twist round and round.

Iktomni unwraps his redstone pipe tied to his waist and says to the Buffalo: "I am going to smoke a pipe. Will you smoke with me?"

Buffalo says, "Yes. Let's have a pipe."

Iktomni says, "Do you smoke black tobacco from the saskatoon bush?"

Buffalo says, "No."

Iktomni says, "Do you smoke cut bark tobacco from the white birch?"

Buffalo says, "No."

Iktomni says, "Do you smoke twist tobacco from the red willow?"

Buffalo says, "Yes. Pack down a bowl."

Iktomni makes twist tobacco, which the red willow yields up. He fills the pipe and gives it to the Buffalo. But the Buffalo cannot make the pipe speak.

Iktomni takes the pipe and raises it upward to Sun. He offers the stem to the four sacred Winds. He calls down Thunder to breathe flint medicine into the bowl. Sun and Thunder bless the tobacco and *Iktomni* draws its smoke. The first pipe on Earth breathes. Ablaze with power and fire, tobacco smoke curls up to Sun.

Buffalo says,

"This saskatoon chief must be a man of great power. Sun enters his pipe. We should not play with this pipe-keeper."*

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay/"Rolling Buffalo"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

A great chase often ends in sharing.
-from the Stoney

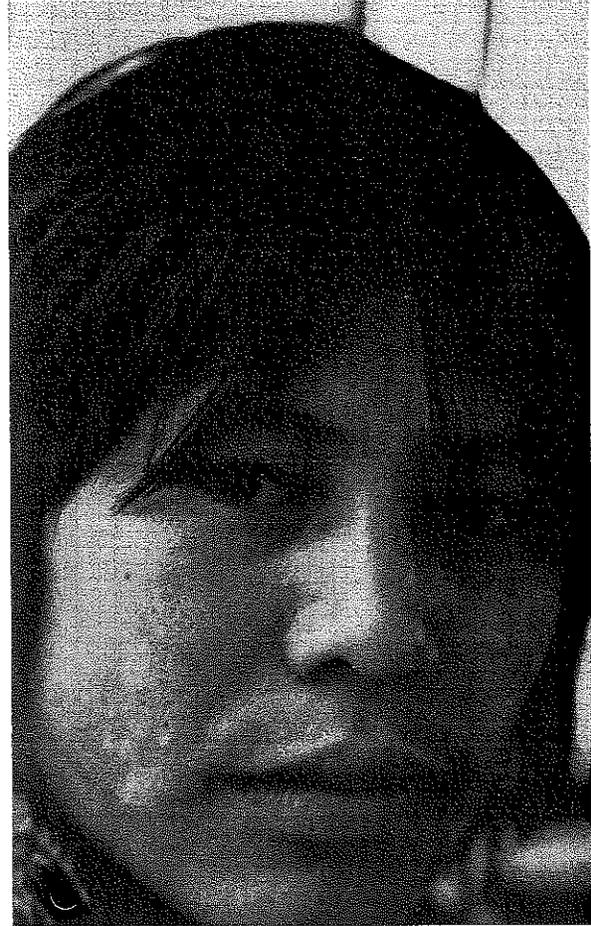
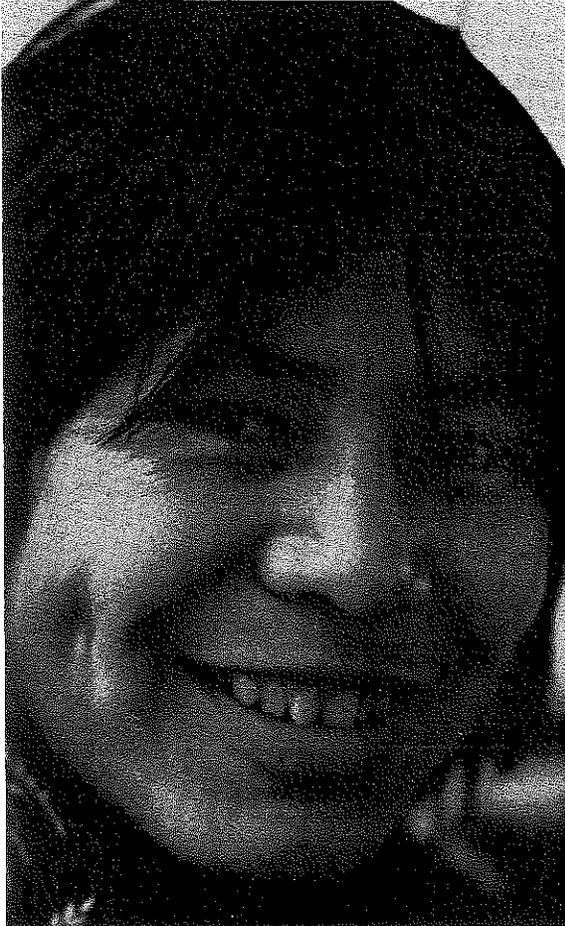


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Gardner Poucette
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: April 12, 1966
Mother's Name: Lily Poucette
Father's Name: Lazarus Two Youngman

Iktomni Trades a Scabby Horseshin for Many Beaver Hides

part one

It is the moon when wild horses take the green hills.

Iktomni is dreaming near the banks of the Pembina River.*

He dreams about making a good trick to fool the Stonies. And he makes a little plan so as to fill his belly at the same time.

Iktomni has one scabby horse with bad hoofs and no tail.

So he kills it, skins it and tans the hide. Then he walks all around Pembina country wearing the horseshin on his back. He places many bright flowers and colourful leaves and whiskeyjack feathers on it. The people see that he is up to his old tricks. They smile but keep a sharp eye on him.

One day, *Iktomni* comes upon the lodge of an old enemy, Long White Nose. But Long White Nose is out. Just his fireside-woman is in. So *Iktomni* goes inside the lodge.* He tells her how special this horseshin is. Later, Long White Nose comes back. The fireside-woman tells him about the magic horseshin. As he sits down, *Iktomni* crackles some willows and shells. But Long White Nose thinks that it is *Iktomni's* horseshin creaking and whispering.

"Who's there? Who's that? Who's creaking?" demands Long White Nose.

Iktomni looks most surprised: "O, it's the horseshin making visions."

Long White Nose is curious: "What does it say?"

Iktomni says:

"O, I cannot tell you that. It's full of secrets. It's always telling mysteries. It knows many things. It can tell of things to come. It has never been known to bring evil. Much good sits inside this skin. Wearing this skin, you will count no enemies, betray no friends. It is said that with such a mysterious skin, the wearer may never die. A talking horseshin like that is not even to be found in any other place. It is so rare that it is worth many beaver hides. I once saw a copper trader from the people of the coast give many, many hide bags of copper and shells for even a smaller speaking horsehide."

Long White Nose says: "How many?"

Iktomni says solemnly: "No less than one hundred beaver hides. All prime."

Long White Nose rises saying he will bring *Iktomni*

the prime beaver hides for the talking horseshin. He goes out.

When Long White Nose returns, many relatives are carrying the beaver hides with him. *Iktomni* looks over the beaver hides one by one. He frowns at some. Then he begins to count them very slowly. Long White Nose is losing all patience. Finally, *Iktomni* gives him the scabby horseshin. *Iktomni* bundles up a couple of coyotes and they pull a couple of dog-travois laden with the beaver hides back to his lodge on the Belly River.*

Four days later, a smiling *Iktomni* reaches his own lodge on the Belly.

He meets a close relative, Least Bobcat.

"My brother, where did you get all those fine beaver hides?" asks Least Bobcat.

Iktomni laughs:

"O, I met a man so tired of life that he took a sliver for the Sun. Then he made a trade for my scabby old horseshin."

Least Bobcat becomes very excited. He goes out and kills his only good horse and skins it. Four days later, he takes the horseshin all over Belly country looking to trade, but the people only point and laugh at him and his worthless horseshin.

And on some days, *Iktomni* was that way.

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand/"Fish Child"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

All things are made to be given out to others in a gifting circle. Gift and give to others - everything. Give things, keep things going around to people. Pass things around. Keep things moving.

Attaching yourself to a point within the circle, diminishes the person and raises the thing. Raise the person to the highest levels by giving, giving.

-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Rhonda Ear
Stoney,
housewife,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: March 23, 1959
Father's Name: Calvin Ear

Iktomni Trades his Grandmother's Head for Bear Robes

part two

It is the frog moon.*

Iktomni is crossing the Wapiti River.*

His song is drowning out the great early mountain river runoff.

That night, *Iktomni's* grandmother dies in her sleep.

After observing all the old rites, *Iktomni* takes his dead grandmother and cuts her head off. Then he sticks it back on her neck.

"I'm going to take you to a person's lodge, grandmother, so stay calm," he says to the sitting head.

Iktomni brings his grandmother to the lodge of Gnawed White Chin — an old enemy. Gnawed White Chin eyes *Iktomni* while he prepares some herbal tea.

"Does your grandmother take tea?" asks Gnawed White Chin.

"O yes, give the old one some tea," *Iktomni* says.

Gnawed White Chin hands the grandmother the tea, but she does not move.

"Just nudge her a little. She may be dreaming," says *Iktomni*.

But when Gnawed White Chin gives the old woman a gentle little push, the head of the old one falls off and rolls along the ground.

"O, you've killed my grandmother!" *Iktomni* shouts.

"What had she done to you? She was as frail as the first flower that shakes the old snows from her robes. O, what have you done? I must go and tell the Chief."

"No, don't tell him," Gnawed White Chin says, "I will give you many robes so that your grandmother may enter the land of her spirit relatives in honour surrounded by many robes."

"My grandmother knows many persons in the spirit land. All the spirit people will come out to greet her. There will be many relatives and many persons," says *Iktomni*.

"I'll give you one hundred bear robes so that your grandmother may go in pride to enter the spirit world. The hides will release her spirit in the old way," says Gnawed White Chin.

The grandmother is still sitting across them, watching them without her head.

"O, look at her. The robes will have to be very fine. Old man hunger never visited her lodge. Her buckskin gowns were the finest in Wapiti country. Her spirit relatives will want to see these things," *Iktomni* says.

"I will bring you as many fine bear hides as there are days in the spring-season of the waters-swelling," Gnawed White Chin promises.

Iktomni builds a death lodge. He places the smallest, thinnest of the mountain of bear robes around the shoulders of his dead grandmother.

Four days later, *Iktomni* leaves for his lodge in the south near Maskinonge Lakes.* His wolves are pulling the dog-drags loaded down with bundles of rich bear hides.

In the days of bone knives, *Iktomni* did things like that.

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand/"Fish Child"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*A man will do anything to gain or profit.
He will trade the eyes of his dead mother,
her body still warm, for a coloured pebble.*
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Lily Benjamin
Stoney,
janitor,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: September 10, 1925
Mother's Name: Libby Benjamin
Father's Name: Jonas Benjamin

Iktomni Trades Death for a Herd of Deer

part three

Chief Mountain* sits in council with the bitten moon.

Iktomni is going home, watching the ridges of Loaf Mountain.*

He is singing the Yarrow Creek* song of this favourite wintering place.

After returning to his lodge and resting, *Iktomni* meets Least Bobcat, a close relative.

"Ho, brother! Where did you get all those fine bear robes?" asks Least Bobcat.

"O, I stayed with a man who wanted life to run according to his little song and he gave these to me for my grandmother's head," *Iktomni* replies.

So Least Bobcat goes to his grandmother's lodge and cuts her head off. Then he takes the old head all around the camps to trade it off, but the people are terrified. And the Head Shirtman* tells Least Bobcat that he must not return to the tribe for four years.

"It was my brother *Iktomni* who made me do it," he says. Then he runs away.

The Head Shirtman summons *Iktomni*:

"We're going to put you in a burial bundle and take you out to the big lake called Kintla."* So the tribal shirtmen put *Iktomni* in a big burial bundle and wrap him alive and tie up the bundle so that he cannot move. Then the shirtmen leave for a little while, to bring the spirit man.

After a little, Least Bobcat comes along:

"O, what's going to happen to you, *Iktomni*?"

"O my brother, didn't you know? The shirtmen are honouring the dead grandmother spirits with this wraps-him-alive rite. Even now, the shirtmen have gone to bring me one hundred very rare otter robes and then to take me around Kintla Lake in tribute to the dead spirits.

"O, let me go in your place," asks Least Bobcat.

"You will still have the otter robes. And you can take my herd of mountain deer."

"O, it is a good day for a rest in my lodge. And I am tired from trading up in the north country. That's good then. Undo this bit of rawhide so that we can trade places."

Soon the shirtmen return. They take the wrapped bundle with Least Bobcat inside and bring it to a

rock lookout above Kintla, the mountain lake. This body will stay with the spirits of the lake. The shirtmen drop the bundle into the lake.

Four days pass.

Iktomni is walking along, talking to his herd of grazing deer. The Head Shirtman happens along. He cannot believe his eyes!

"Where did you get all those deer? Did we not put you in the big lake?"

"Yes," replies *Iktomni*. "You put me in the big lake. When I got to the bottom, I found all these grazing deer there. These wait also for you down there."

And so *Iktomni* ties the first Shirtman inside the bundle:

"When you get to the bottom and want to bring up the grazing deer, just give this rawhide a little tug."

The bundle crashes into the lake and fills up with water. *Iktomni* turns his back and walks away.

"O, I'm sure he finds the living too tempting down there. After all, he left this good world for those dark waters. Must be lots of deer and pretty country. I'm sure he'll stay a long, long time."

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand / "Fish Child"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*The robes around your shoulders
are the same as
the robes around your heart.*
-from the Stoney

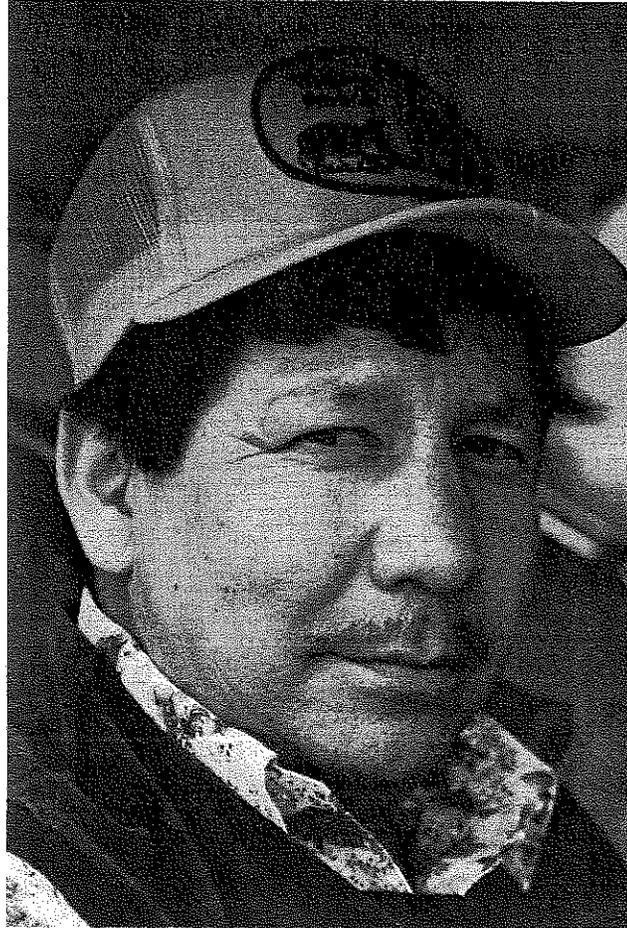


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Floyd Runner
Stoney,
rancher,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: July 12, 1940
Mother's Name: Rose Runner
Father's Name: George Runner

Iktomni and the Sage Grouse

It is said that the moon hides because the sage grouse once startled him when he walked on Earth.

Iktomni is walking towards Handhills Lake,* watching the prairie.

He is singing the song of the returning grasses which-are-everywhere.

Iktomni sees some birds in the sage brush making a strange dance.

“Ho! What are you doing there?”*

The birds tell him:

“We are making a ‘Round Dance.’ This is the way that Great Mystery, *Waka Taga*, taught us to mate with each other.”

“Ho! Tell me then what kind of birds are you? What are you called?”

“We are ‘Sage Grouse.’ ”

“O... You cannot fool *Iktomni*. Every living thing must have two names. What is your other name?”

“*Iktomni*, we only have one name. We are ‘Sage Grouse.’ ”

“You are making me angry. You must have two names.”

The sage grouse become very frightened and all of a sudden, in a great burst of wings, they fly away.

“I am going to call you ‘Scared People,’ ” *Iktomni* roars after them.

Iktomni laughs to himself and continues his great walk in the Hand Hills.

After a while, he comes to a river. It is very deep. And he prepares to jump across.

Just then, the sage grouse arrive. They say:

“*Iktomni*, we will help you jump across the river. We will count to four and you must jump on ‘four.’ ”

Iktomni agrees and gets in a springing position.

“One... Two ... Three ...

“Four!”

Then, just as *Iktomni* jumps, suddenly the sage grouse all burst into a great explosion of wings. The great wing rush startles and scares *Iktomni* and he loses his ‘jump’ and falls into the river and disappears deep into the water.

When he comes back up, wiping away the water from his eyes and nose, he is laughing hard:

“Yes. You are the ‘Scared People.’ ”

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand / “Fish Child”
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Even a grasshopper will return for revenge.
-from the Stoney

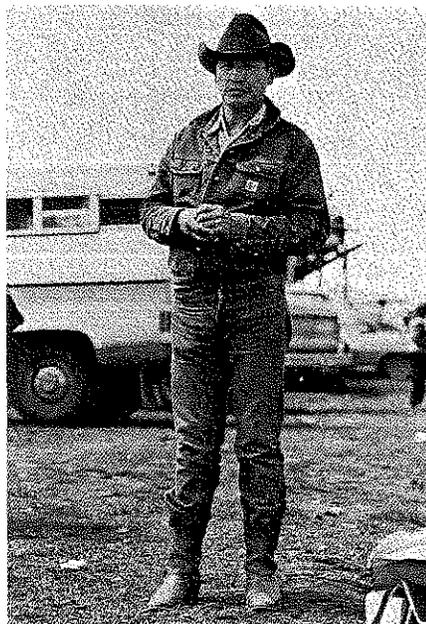
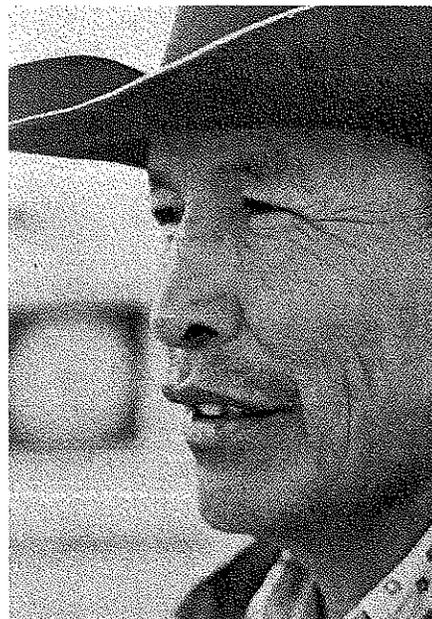
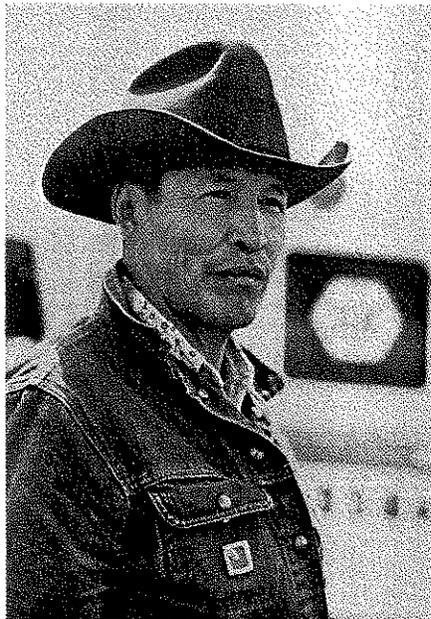


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Fred Powder
Stoney,
ranch manager,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: March 23, 1932
Mother's Name: Lucy Powder
Father's Name: Isaiah Powder

Iktomni and Old She-Beaver's Most Beautiful Daughter

It is the moon when *Chaba*, the-one-who-swims-with-a-stick-in-his-mouth, raises great river lodges.

In the beginning, the Stonies had not yet received the gift of *Chaba*-yielding.

In a beaver lodge, *Iktomni* sits with Old *Chaba*. *Iktomni* speaks:

"O *Chaba*, let us smoke the pipe of seeing. Then we shall talk."

And so Old *Chaba* and *Iktomni* burn sweetgrass and red willow bark in a pipe bowl.

Then *Iktomni* says:

"*Waka Taga* asks that the Beaver nation yield itself to the Stonies. All living things pay tribute to the name of *Chaba*, one who builds great dams and fine lodges, and keeper of the soft robe. But no living thing can hunt after *Chaba* unless it first receives your sacred blessing for understanding the ways of the Beaver nation. For taking-without-blessing makes the heart empty."

Old *Chaba* speaks:

"O *Iktomni*, I pity the Stonies. Our nation of lodge-builders will yield so that the Stonies may live. Your words burn into my heart. But I will give the fairest of my daughters to a young Stoney warrior for the spirit-transfer."

When Sun sits on the river lodges, Old *Chaba* instructs Old She-Beaver how to pass the yielding powers to Beaver Girl. Then Old She-Beaver takes her most beautiful daughter, Beaver Girl, and teaches her the ways of Beaver that the daughter is to give to the Stoney warrior.

Night after night, *Chaba's* daughter speaks to the Stoney warrior in his dreams.

Then, one day, Fox Tail, a Stoney warrior is walking through Snow Creek.* He recognizes a special place there from his dreams. This is a place he has seen night after night in his sleep. He hears laughter floating down the creek. Then he sees two She-Beavers cutting wood with their sharp teeth. Immediately he remembers *Chaba's* daughter. When their eyes meet, they recognize each other.

After greetings and gifts, *Chaba's* daughter presents Fox Tail to Old *Chaba* and Old She-Beaver, her parents. Inside the river lodge are willow bark, poplar bark, red willow bark, and birch bark. Much happiness sits on the lodge floor. The Stoney war-

rior and the Beaver Girl are to become husband and wife. Old *Chaba* says that Fox Tail must become a strong swimmer. He teaches the Stoney the endurance of the Beavers.* Medicines make his teeth powerful. Then Old She-Beaver prepares willow bark tea. Much feasting follows. Fox Tail and (now) Beaver Woman live together through the winter moons. And with break-up, Beaver Woman gives birth to two beaver pups. There is much joy in the beaver lodge.

Meanwhile the parents of Fox Tail grieve because they believe that he has drowned. His possessions are found near deep water. His parents go to see the Stoney spirit man. The spirit man says that Fox Tail dwells in a big pond and the family must dig for him. The family begins digging. Four days later, they dig right into Old *Chaba's* lodge.

The Stoney family bring Fox Tail home. Fox Tail then teaches the Stoney hunters the ways of *Chaba*. The Stoney hunters learn all the secrets of the-one-who-swims-with-a-stick-in-his-mouth. Fox Tail visits his wife at the big pond every day.

But when summer races southward, some hunters are out after Beaver. They recognize the beaver lodge marked out by Fox Tail. Still, they dig deep into the forbidden lodge.

Fox Tail sees them digging. He dives deep into the water. Together, Fox Tail and the Beavers start digging even deeper into the Earth. For four days they dig until they can hear the beating heart of Grandmother Earth. The hunters give up and go home. Fox Tail's father asks the spirit man to bring back his son from out of the Earth. A voice speaks from the mouth of the spirit man:

"Fox Tail shall not return. With his wife, Beaver Woman, the Stoney warrior lives under a big mountain in the Bare Range.* He will become old with Beaver Woman. And Beaver Woman will become *Hungu Shne*.* You will never see them again. They will dwell there always to release the blessings for the Stonies."

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon/"One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Look!
There the reddening prairie grass.
Look!
There the old man asleep on the burning hills.
Look!
Can you not see these spirits rubbing your shoulders?*
-from the Stoney



Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Mary Anne Abraham
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: October 29, 1964
Mother's Name: Mabel Abraham
Father's Name: Charlie Abraham

Iktomni and the Itchy Berry

It is the moon of summer redness.

Iktomni is walking along the prairie towards the Middle Sand Hills.*

He comes upon a little red berry on a sharp prickly stem.

"What's your name?" asks *Iktomni*.

"My name is 'Berry.'"

"Everything must have two names. Tell me your other name."

The little berry does not want to talk with *Iktomni*. But he keeps asking for its second name. Finally, the berry says:

"If you eat many berries like me you will have an itchy rump. And then you can call me 'Itchy Berry.'"*

Iktomni says: "I'm going to eat a bunch of you."

He wolfs down a good many of the red berries. When his belly is full, he starts walking to the west.

"You see," he says to the Sand Hills, "the little berry wanted to swallow the Sun in front of my eyes."

But after a while, *Iktomni* is scratching himself.

"O, this is going to be real nice. It feels good."

Soon, the itch gets stronger and *Iktomni* is scratching himself harder and harder. The smile between his big nose runs away and hides in the hills.

Then comes old man pain, shooting his barbed arrows at the berry-eater's body.

Iktomni runs to a little pond. He sees many berries sitting on the water, sunning themselves. He plunges into the water. But the berries disappear. Every time he jumps into the water, the berries vanish before his eyes. Then he sees that the real berries are hanging from a tree just above him.

"The reflection of the berries tricks my eyes," he says to the water.

But still the itchy pain grows. *Iktomni* is scratching until blood begins to flow. Then he cannot walk. He lies down on the moist Earth. His hand is soaked in his own blood.*

Iktomni is very angry at the Itchy Berry.

He builds a fire. Then he burns his rump from-where-the-itch-comes. Then he walks through the

burning hills.

That evening, he comes back to the same spot. He takes his burnt flesh and puts it on the trees, where it makes gum.

And that is the origin of the gum-bearing tree.

Based on narration by Wayne Lefthand/"Antelope"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Don't be fooled:
even a small berry has great power,
and medicine as strong as yours.*
-from the Stoney



Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Bruce Dixon
Stoney,
recreation assistant,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: October 5, 1959
Mother's Name: Margaret Dixon
Father's Name: Don Dixon

Iktomni and the Great Cottontail Race

It is the moon when badger digs his holes.

Iktomni is walking across Stoney country towards Bighorn River.*

His song is for *Sunga*.* Soon many dogs are at his side.

“Good morning, old friends! I have seen only wintering camps that are empty. Where are the Stonies?”

“O *Iktomni*,” begins the dog leader, “the Stonies have fast thunder horses. These are so swift that Pronghorn hides his face east of the South Saskatchewan River. And the great black herds stand in the gulches and put out many buffalo scouts. The people forgot us. So now we sit and smoke and talk of the old burden days and make many new games. In the old days, the people would talk to us and they would care. But now we sit on the far outer circle of their camps. It is sad when brothers forget.”*

“My brothers,” *Iktomni* says, “I have come from the rim of the Earth to stay with you. We have many things to do together.”

Iktomni and the camp dogs stay together throughout the warm summer moons which-make-the-earth-soft.

One fine day, *Iktomni* calls the camp dogs and says: “Let’s have a big footrace along the Bighorn River from the North Saskatchewan River to the mouth of the Bighorn. The country where the Bighorn empties into the Saskatchewan is a special place to me. And to have a fair race, let’s put our noses into a big pile and mix it up well so that no one has any special advantage. When we get back to this pile, we’ll grab our noses and put them back on our faces. Then we’ll race through the First Mountain Range* where there is much fresh rabbit meat.”

The dogs say that they will race to the ends of the Earth after cottontail. When all the noses are piled waist high, the race begins.

But when they reach the middle point at Littlehorn Creek,* *Iktomni* begins to outrun his brothers. For only the wind runs faster than *Iktomni*. And he is the first to reach the pile of noses where he found his own nose immediately because it was the biggest one there, and stuck it back on his face. Then he ran off again as fast as he could to the rabbit place. However, he missed an old stallion landmark and

was off in the wrong direction.

Soon the pack of camp dogs arrive at the pile-of-noses. The dogs stuck on any one of the noses that they could grab. In the scramble, all the noses looked the same and there were so many of them. And in their great haste, the dogs rushed off again after *Iktomni* in the second race to the place of many rabbits.

But soon the dogs cannot smell right and lose the old trail and lose sight of each other and become lost. Pretty soon they begin to feel that they have stuck the wrong noses on their heads.

By now, they are all lost, running circles in the First Mountains. And so they go along in confusion, looking for their own noses, but cannot find them.

And so it is told they are still looking for them. And very often they think that it is *Iktomni* who might have got their nose. But they cannot find him either. That is why they bark into the wind. And that is why when a dog sees a person, he’ll get very close to see if they got his.

And *Sunga* is still looking for his nose* to this day.

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay/“Rolling Buffalo”
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*A man who has no thunder in his nostrils,
a man who has no ears for spirits-that-are-everywhere,
this one is already grass on the earth.*
-from the Stoney

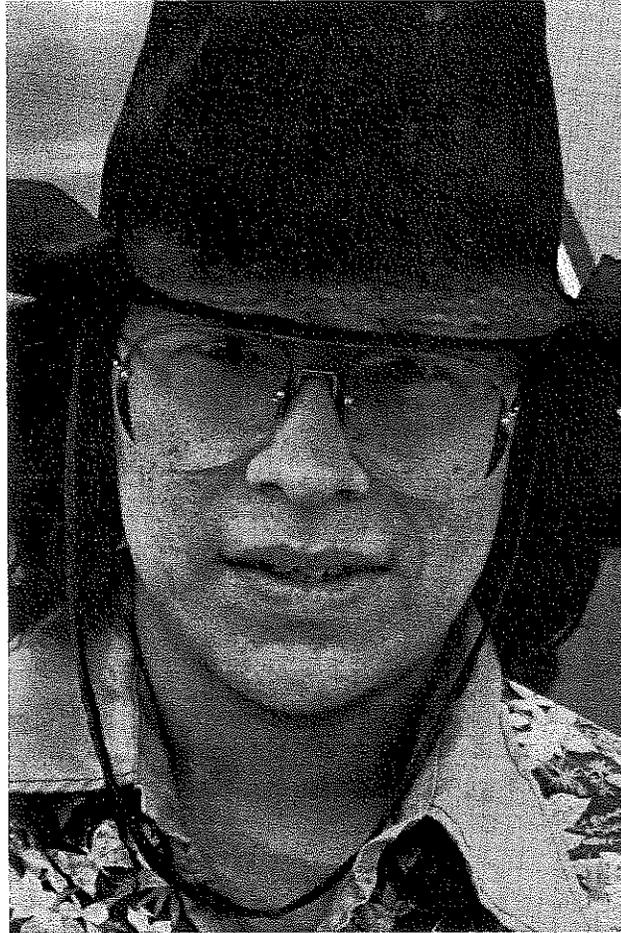


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

David Wesley
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: January 10, 1963
Mother's Name: Mary Jane Wesley
Father's Name: John Lefthand, Jr.

Iktomni and Bear

It is the autumn moon when the big winds blow.*

Everything is fattened and overripened and ready for the long winter sleep.

Iktomni is asleep in his lodge.

He dreams about walking and singing songs with the Sleep Spirit, *Istumah Tata*.*

But Bear comes around and wakes him up.

Iktomni runs away. He goes over a hill. Then he circles back to his lodge because he is very tired. But Bear chases him out of his lodge again.

Iktomni grabs Bear's tail. He swings Bear around and throws him to the ground.

Bear is angry and chases *Iktomni*.

Iktomni runs past a sleeping Marten.

Iktomni hides behind some wild flowers. He digs up a buffalo skull. He puts the buffalo horns on his own head. Then he chases Bear. Bear is very frightened.

Then they get so confused that they are chasing each other.

Bear is running very hard.

Iktomni is running very fast. But he is very tired. And he cannot run much farther. When he sees that Bear is about to catch him, *Iktomni* jumps behind a big tree and hides. But Bear sees him. Bear chases *Iktomni* round and round the big tree.

Before long, Bear is very tired too and cannot run anymore. So Bear lies down inside *Iktomni's* lodge and falls asleep on his warm sleeping robes near the fire that is crackling.

Iktomni is very tired too. He lies down and falls asleep.

Bear and *Iktomni* sleep side by side in the warm lodge as the flames dance on the lodge skins.

Outside, the yellow-leaf winds blow and blow and blow.*

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay/"Rolling Buffalo"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Men pursue men
until one falls
or both collapse.*

-from the Stoney



Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Carl Lefthand
Stoney,
janitor,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: June 7, 1929
Mother's Name: Mary Lefthand
Father's Name: Mark Lefthand

Iktomni and the Gift of Fire

part one

It is the ancestral moon when-the-smouldering-fire-is-carried.*

It was Thunderer Bird, *Mu*, who first gave *Iktomni* fire in a dream.

Iktomni is walking through the Fisher Mountain Range.* As he passes Nihani Creek,* he wonders how the Mountain Stonies are meeting this hard winter moon.

Nearby, chickadee, *seetahn*, perches on a gooseberry bush, saying:

"*Iktomni*, you are called up to these sacred mountains."

But *Iktomni* does not hear this little one. Again *seetahn* sings his message.*

Iktomni turns his head:

"O little *seetahn*, your words are a power as great as the strongest that moves."

Iktomni walks to the mouth of the Elbow River* and climbs high up into the Opal Mountains.* He meets four great rocks at a certain place. He bends down and moves the flat green rock aside. Underneath is a white rock. Then a red rock. Finally, a black rock. He moves all these aside with his great strength. The mouth of a dark cave opens up leading deep into the Earth-that-breathes-and-pulses.

Iktomni then passes by four underground guards. Each one guards a sacred herb. "What sacrifice do you bring to come here, *Iktomni*?" each asks.

"I am the eldest brother of all living things. I know you for I made you. I am called up here to bring many gifts to the Little People."

At the bottom of the fourth pass, *Iktomni* enters into an underground world filled with clear blue sky and shooting flowers and medicine herbs.

Many Little People gather around him. They bring *Iktomni* to their Chief's lodge. Chief Little Man greets *Iktomni*. *Iktomni* gifts him with a special white bear robe which She-Lynx got from the sealing nations. But the Little Man shows no delight. And *Iktomni* sees that the Little People are unhappy. A great sadness sits here. There is much emptiness in this great land of nectars and herbs. And the people's hearts are empty.

"O my brothers, what evil wind has passed through your fresh and blue land? I will teach you to be hap-

py. I have come to bring you delight. There is much pleasure and purpose and glory in these lands of richness and sacred mountains. But first we will share meat and water."

Makah,* the underground crier announces a feast that evening. And four hunters are sent out in each of the four sacred directions. These return towards sundown with elk, bear, deer, pronghorn, and mountain sheep. The meat is carved up and brought out on big leaves and herbs and spruce boughs. Everyone is preparing to feast except *Iktomni*. Looking at the Little People, he asks the Chief: "Why are the fires out? Are the Little Women not going to cook this meat?" But Chief Little Man does not understand.

"We have no fire here. Our meat is good meat here as it is."

"I will give you a power to make fire," *Iktomni* says. "Send out your camp crier to find the man with the longest flint lance and bring him to me."

Makah, the old man with the sharp shrill voice, takes up a cry. Soon he returns with a tall fighter with a great stone of flint.

Iktomni takes up the long flint lance and gets a fire going on the fourth wind offering.

Iktomni speaks to the people:

"Fire is the gift of *Mu*, Thunderer. It will be sacred to your fathers. Your lodges will face the ice moons with ease. This gift will bring much comfort. It will smoke meat. It will soften your robes. Its tongues will drive off the summer sandflies. You will have a little sun in the night always. And do not neglect to bring this sacred one to the Stonies."

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*There is much emptiness
in this great land of nectars
and herbs. And the people's hearts are empty.
Unless the people share and open . . .
For when these things are not shared
among the people, it is better that
they remain in Sky or in the Earth.*

-from the Stoney



Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Myron Smalleyes
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: February 1, 1958
Mother's Name: Margaret Smalleyes
Father's Name: Cecil Smalleyes

Iktomni and the Gift of the Sacred Pipe

part two

It is the moon when charcoal snake warms the earth stones.

And it is said that the great Shining Rocky Mountains are the Stoney ancestors turned into stone and boulder and rock.

And that is why these mountains are places that are sacred.

Iktomni, first pipe dreamer, feasts with the Little People.

After the feast, *Iktomni* gifts the Chief and the Little People with five pipes.

And taking a bone knife, *Iktomni* carves a pipe from the poplar tree. His hands bless poplar. He fills the bowl with kinnikinnik, a bark tobacco from the bearberry shrub-that-creeps-along-the-belly-of-the-sandhills. But the poplar pipe catches fire and burns up, and its ashes become white prairie soils.

With his hands, *Iktomni* then makes a dried clay pipe. But when he lights it, the pipe cracks and breaks apart, and becomes great clay cliffs.

Iktomni then makes a black buffalo horn pipe. But the pipe bone gets so hot that it melts and turns into a river.

The pipe-maker then makes a sandstone pipe. He carries many red and brown sand grains in bags from the river and pounds these into a fine mixture. But when he brings fire to the sand, it turns to dust.

Iktomni goes and speaks with Rock. Rock yields himself. *Iktomni* then makes a medicine pipe with four red willow stems - one for each of the four winds - and a bowl of hard redstone.

The long-stemmed redstone pipe glistens in the Sun. The curved bowl is inlaid with many small quills and shells.

Iktomni wraps the red pipe with otter fur. He ties choice black horsehairs to the stem.

Iktomni speaks to the Little People:

"The long-time medicine pipe and the peace pipe will be the most sacred possession of the people. Keep this one near the lodge fire, always.

"To smoke the sacred pipe is to speak with *Waka Taga*, Great Mystery. For the pipe is alive with a spirit life inside it. No person on Earth has a

stronger power.

"Pass this one to each other with the stem pointing upwards to Sun. Appoint the pipe-holder and pipe-dancers with much ceremony. Transfer of the pipe must honour the stone and sky spirits.

"The peace pipe and the war pipe belong to the tribe. The one who smokes from the war pipe pledges to fight to the death for his people.

"Respect the pipe. Its stone is the people. Its wood stem is all vegetation. Its feathers, birds. Its fur, animals. Bring these gifts to the Stonies. Return these gifts to *Mu*.

"Honour the pipe."

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Leave it to their weapons which dry like bones in the sun.
Leave men to their horses which fall under clouds of arrows,
Leave men to their little visions, their giant fears.*
-from the Stoney

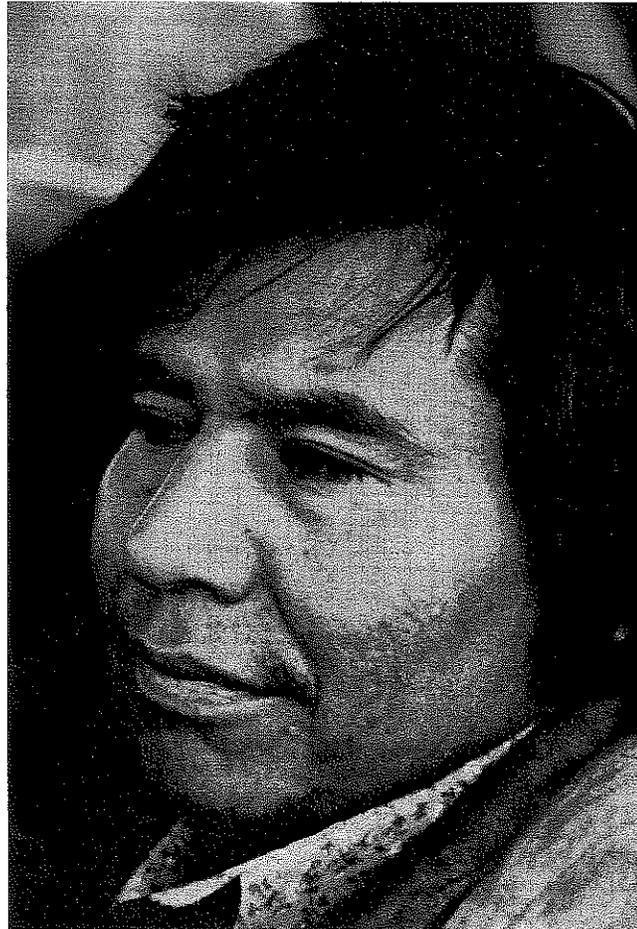


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Harold Stevens
Stoney,
grader operator,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: September 7, 1947
Mother's Name: Nora Stevens
Father's Name: John Stevens

Iktomni

and the Gift of Drum, Song, and Dance

part three

It is the moon-in-the-round when a singing nation is born.

Iktomni and the Little People smoke many pipes in the camps filled with first fires. Then the people rest.

But *Iktomni* sees that some of the people still are not happy.

"Why are the people still unhappy?" *Iktomni* asks the Chief.

"There is nothing here. All we know is how to eat and sleep and hunt," Chief Little Man observes.

"Great Mystery has sent me to bring you happiness. Send some of your hunters out to bring down a big birch bark tree and bring it to me. Have the women skin the hide from a moose and scrape off all its hair."

After this is done, *Iktomni* hollows out the birch log and stretches the moose hide tightly over it. After four days, it is finished. *Iktomni* takes the drum and begins to beat on it.

"Give me four men. They shall receive the teachings of the sacred drum. The drum is the voice of the people. His voice is so pure that he speaks no words."

Then *Iktomni* teaches another four the special and sacred songs.

"Honour Bear and Eagle and the Thunderer Birds. Observe these songs and pass them to your sons."

The first song celebrates *Waka Taga*.

"Song is the living breath from the people to the spirits. Song is the spirit of the people. Song is spirit itself."

Iktomni shows another four many dances. The Sun Dance. The Eagle Dance. The Round Dance. The Buffalo Dance. The Circle Dance. The Bear Dance. The Grass Dance. The Owl Dance. The Rabbit Dance. The Deer Dance. The Prairie Grouse Dance.

The first dance celebrates *Ta Taga*.

"In the dance, the dancer speaks to the people. His body moves like a tongue before the tribe. His dance is the physical presence of the spirit. He is wearing his whitest and is at his strongest. The paint on his face also speaks its colour. He becomes spirit or animal or medicine or evening or lover."

In the ceremonial dances, some are all men's, some all women's, and others are mixed.

Iktomni teaches the people the eagle war headrobe game.*

That evening, *Iktomni* stands on a hill. He sees many fires. Drumming, singing and dancing fill the camps of the Little People. The people are happy. Chief Little Man stands beside *Iktomni*. He brings two good-looking women to *Iktomni*. *Iktomni* rests with them for four days. The others continue to sing and dance.

After forty days, *Iktomni* sees that his work is done. The sadness is gone from the people and the land. The people delight in the smallest and simplest games and dances and songs. *Iktomni* says farewell to the Little People. He leaves them a singing people.

Iktomni goes back up through the four underearth passes. Then he sets the four great stones back in their places. As he rolls each stone in its place, it speaks to him and echoes back and forth as it thunders through the passes. The stone thunders go up to Sky.

Iktomni walks on.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*The green mountains sing green songs
singing, singing I ran their greenness
but now I am old and brown and spotted
and one morning I will be food for the green singing, singing.*
-from the Stoney

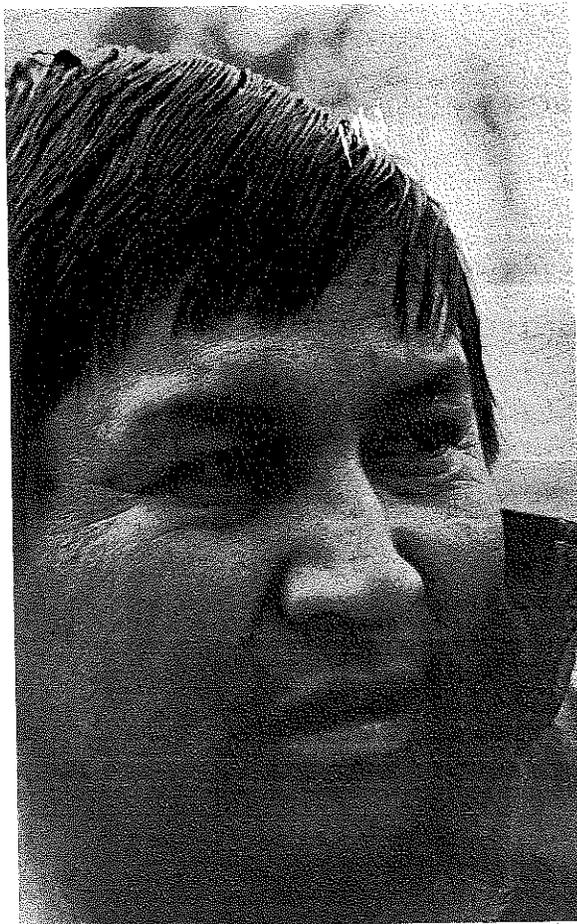


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Stoney

Iktomni and the Origin of the Four Giant Stones

It is the moon of sudden storms.

Mountain Lion, the brother of Buffalo Head, has a great dream.

In the dream, the Earth is tilting. Rivers are spilling. Trees become crooked. Sliding rocks are everywhere.*

In the dream, Mountain Lion has the power to bring down the Sun and Moon.

The Stonies say that Mountain Lion's power has great medicine. But although this is a very great power, even Mountain Lion can do nothing for the Earth-tipping-over.

In the dream, Thunderer Bird speaks to Mountain Lion saying that all life on Earth will soon drown unless the Earth is set in balance once again. Unless the tilting stops, all life will die.

In the dream, Mountain Lion sees *Iktomni* speaking with *Waka Taga*, Great Mystery. *Iktomni* is asking that *Waka Taga* give him the strength to lift four giant stones and carry them on his back from the great shining mountains to those places which Bull Moose Carrier has marked with coloured buffalo stones. For only the four giant stones can balance the Earth. Only the four giant stones will set the Earth at rest. Only the four giant stones will prevent the great flood.

There is a great roar in the mountains as giant walls of rock open and expose the four giant stones. *Iktomni* hears the roar all the way up to the Sky world. It is the signal from *Waka Taga*. *Iktomni* goes to the place of the giant stones. Bull Moose Carrier is waiting there for him. *Iktomni* and Bull Moose Carrier take the giant stones on their backs, each to its appointed place.

Bull Moose Carrier takes the first giant stone to the place of the red buffalo stone near a river which *Iktomni* calls "Old Man Playing River."* As Bull Moose Carrier places the first stone down, Grandmother Earth shifts and the waters run back into the rivers.

Iktomni carries the second stone to a place near Akamina Pass* deep in the Flathead Mountains.* All at once the rocks do not slide any more.

Bull Moose Carrier brings the third giant stone to a place just west of Okotoks.* Grandmother Earth does not tilt any more.

Iktomni carries the fourth giant stone to a mysterious place.

The four giant stones are sacred and the places where they sit are holy grounds which guard the balance of Grandmother Earth, the land and the people.

It is said that the lodge of Grandfather Sky rests on the four giant stones.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Hurry no more than porcupine hurries to his rest,
Rush only as badger rushes to his sleep,
Run as the river runs, winding in a sacred way.
Sing on your feet,
For the medicine song restores life.*

-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Frank Poucette
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: December 27, 1954
Mother's Name: Beatrice Poucette
Father's Name: Douglas Poucette

Iktomni Places His Daughters in an Eagle's Nest

part one

It is the moon when She-Fox digs a den to bear pups.

Iktomni is staying with his adopted daughters* at West Stony Creek.*

He is singing the song of snare-maker gathering twigs and rawhide thongs.

He builds a great eagle's nest high up on top of a tall pine tree. He places his two adopted daughters inside. They sit inside the nest. On his way down, *Iktomni* rubs buffalo fat on the spine of the tree.*

Then *Iktomni* sings a challenge to a group of young Stonies sitting nearby:

"He who climbs this special tree and brings down one of my beautiful daughters will be my honoured son. Go up this sacred tree and carry down a good-looking woman and some eagle feathers. The feathers for my arrows. The woman for your lodge fire."

Good Bear, a young Stony, makes ready to climb the big tree. But *Iktomni* has cut all the branches off. And the tree has a slippery power - its ribs are greased with much fat from the black-horned-one. As Good Bear nears the top, he slips and falls to his death.*

Not far away, Long Elk Shirt is walking. He meets some Mice Women.

"Where are you going, my grandson?" they ask.

"I am looking for my brother, Good Bear," he says.

"Beware," they warn. "Not far from here, *Iktomni* is playing at tricking and snaring young boys. He has already sung your brother into his own death. Walk like Fox. If you must climb high, do not look down. Go and make the death rites."

One of the Mice Women gives Long Elk Shirt a bone ring with many mouse hairs on it.

"When the evil eye sits in front of you, blow hard on this."

Long Elk Shirt tracks *Iktomni* until he sees his brother, Good Bear, lying dead on the ground.

"This one had never even lived," he grieves.

Weeping, he sings the mourning song and promises the living spirit of Bear that he will kill *Iktomni* and enslave his daughters.

Suddenly he hears *Iktomni* sing the challenge song of his daughters in the eagle's nest. Long Elk Shirt

begins to climb the tall tree. But as he gets mid-way up, one of *Iktomni's* daughters looks down at him and laughs. Long Elk Shirt looks down but he cannot see the ground. But Long Elk Shirt has strong medicines. And when he gets to the top of the tall pine tree, he enters the eagle's nest. Then he takes one of the girls - the one who laughs at him - and throws her out of the nest. Down she falls, and lands right on *Iktomni*. *Iktomni* pushes his daughter away and stands up:

"Nobody can play with me like that! I am going to teach that boy," he shouts.

Iktomni turns himself into a giant black Raven and flies up to the eagle's nest.

Meanwhile, Long Elk Shirt falls in love with the younger daughter. She takes his hand just as Raven makes his shadow above them.

Long Elk Shirt suddenly remembers the words of the Mice Women. He blows on the bone ring with the mouse hairs. Then the lovers float down just like a leaf. *Iktomni*-Raven circles the eagle nest tree four times. By then he sees that the brother of Good Bear has used a strong power to escape. The Raven-changer sees big tracks in the Earth far below. Two persons run away from here. These disturb things on the Earth that only young runners disturb. *Iktomni* follows the tracks all day until suddenly they end nowhere.

The younger daughter and Long Elk Shirt are running. They come to a swift river. Long Elk Shirt remembers the Mice Women again. Soon a grazing elk arrives and takes them on his back across the raging water. The elk speaks to the lovers: "*Iktomni's* power is very great. Do not fight him. When you see him, turn yourselves into the one-who-jumps-with-four-legs-hanging."*

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Alternate version by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Look at this ochre hill:
his wisdom runs deep;
night after night he watches
Sun return to his copper lodge.*
-from the Stoney

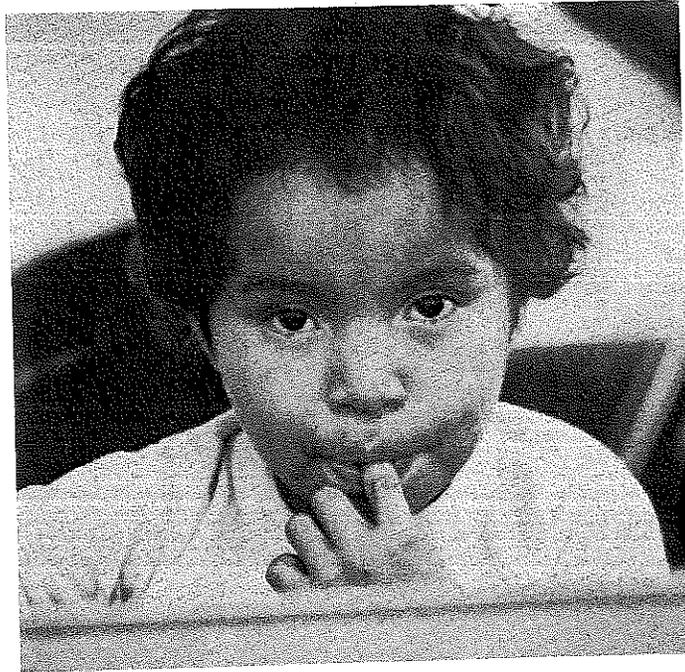


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Petrina Dixon
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: March 10, 1978
Mother's Name: Christine Dixon

Iktomni and the Rubbing, Tickling She-Willows

part two

It is the bow moon* when berries are scarlet.*

Long Elk Shirt and *Iktomni's* younger daughter cross Eagle Creek.*

They are fleeing *Iktomni's* Raven medicines.

Rubbing the bone ring, Long Elk Shirt sings a medicine song to Grizzly Bear.

Long Elk Shirt and the girl are running east. But they are so tired that they lie down. They fall asleep and become a dreaming pair. The lovers dream that they make themselves into grizzlies. They are no longer persons. Now, nothing can harm them.

Iktomni is following Long Elk Shirt. He crosses the Burnstick hills.* *Iktomni* hears grizzlies close by. The bigger grizzly calls to *Iktomni*:

"If you come any closer, I will claw you, *Iktomni*."

Iktomni thinks:

"The first time I walked to the east following Long Elk Shirt, the tracks led me to no place. And now I meet my brother who says he'll kill me. This time I will just go home.

"Long Elk Shirt, your medicine is as strong as your brother's desire to mate with my daughter."*

Iktomni takes off his Raven robe and turns south.

"I will return to the lodges of my people. I will rest by their fires."

Sun is low. Soon it will be black sun.* *Iktomni* is so tired that his feet are falling asleep.

On the way home, *Iktomni* comes upon two women who are all alone. One of the women looks very beautiful. The other is ordinary. These sit tall in a grove of willows waving in the wind.

The good-looking woman speaks:

"O *Iktomni*, we are berry-pounders without lodges and without a man. We are good quillers and fire-keepers. And neither of us has known-a-man. Come and rest on your elbows beside us."

Iktomni agrees to stay because he is too tired to go on.

But now it is very late. And Sun is splashing the hills with red.

They stay the night in the low place surrounded by willows.

The women tell *Iktomni*:

"The four coloured soils are on your feet. You must

sleep between us and keep warm."

Iktomni sleeps on his side with his back to the ordinary-looking woman. After a while, she tickles *Iktomni* and he laughs and laughs, until his belly hurts.

"Woman, no more," he pleads, "I must get some sleep."

Iktomni turns over with his back to the good-looking woman. After a while, she tickles *Iktomni* too, and he laughs and laughs. This goes on all night long, and *Iktomni* gets no sleep. And in one moment in the darkness, *Iktomni* starts to go crazy, but the women comfort him.

When Sun shows his great head, the women stop tickling him. Then he sleeps all day long. And as the Sun goes down, it begins to get colder and colder. *Iktomni* looks around and sees a willow tree growing right in front of him and another willow in back of him. They are She-Willows. The willows are swaying. They are waving their arms back and forth. And as *Iktomni* watches them, one of the She-Willows tickles him from behind.

"It was the She-Willows!" says a startled *Iktomni*.

"The women were just a dream."*

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Alternate narration by Jonas Dixon, / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*My fathers brought me here
and gave me all the universe
and I own Moon and Rainbow and swift feet.*

-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Myna Lefthand
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1932
Mother's Name: Beatrice Poucette
Father's Name: Douglas Poucette

Iktomni and Bear's Ear, Spirit Man

It is the moon of the red-grass-appearing.

Iktomni is walking along the Milk River Ridge* with his adopted son,* Athabasca Coyote. Eight winters sit on the young one.

They are singing the song of lone-woman who gave her milk to folding hills.

They are leading two fine white horses.

They arrive at a Stoney camp on a North Milk River coulee.* The people are starving. The ribs of the camp dogs are showing. The pemmican bags are empty. The hunters return with empty hands. Buffalo have not been seen for many moons. The animal people seem to have fled back inside the Earth.

One morning, Athabasca Coyote goes out with the hunters. But they find no game. At sundown, the men come back to the camp - except for *Iktomni's* son. No one can remember seeing him last. Word spreads rapidly among the lodges that he must be lost. But the people do not go out into the night to look for him because many night spirits are waiting everywhere to carry them away, under the water, under the Earth. . .

In the morning, many people join in the search. But when Sun falls, they find nothing.

Iktomni brings one white horse to each of two spirit men* in the camp.

The young spirit man is called "Long Arms." The old horned one is known as "Bear's Ear." *Iktomni* asks them to find his boy. The spirit men are pleased with the horses. These white ones are rare and give the spirit men even more powers.

A sweat lodge is built. The spirit men shake their rattles. They sing to Thunderer Birds: for these see all. They sing the song-of-the-lost-one. They call down Sun-Moon powers to guide the father to the son. They burn a coil of sweet grass. They blow on whistles from Bear's bones.

Soon, Long Arms comes out of the sweat lodge.

"Loon has brought me a vision," he says.

Pointing to the west, he says to *Iktomni*:

"Your boy is sheltered by a river bottom a day west of here."

Then Bear's Ear emerges from the medicine lodge. A stone power speaks through his mouth:

"Bear has come to me and I have seen your son in a vision. But he will not be found in the place-where-the-Sun-sets. For in that place is a hungry animal. My looking-power and the sacred stones say to me that your son is sleeping among four white stones near Deer Creek in the Sweet Grass Hills* to the East. He is unharmed."

The people know that Bear's Ear speaks the truth for the power comes through him. Everyone can see that he has a stronger spirit power working for him than does Long Arms. The people know that Bear's Ear is Bear dreamer. They gather around Bear's Ear. Among themselves, they say that Deer Creek is a good place for the boy to have wandered and lived. *Iktomni* listens. Then he says that they will walk looking to the East.

Searching towards Deer Creek, the people are surprised to see a buffalo herd. The herd cuts the people in two but not before the Stoney bowmen bring down some fine buffalo bulls.

Not long afterwards, the people come to a place where the long grass has been trampled and matted. Someone has slept here. They find the four white stones. Among them is a small sleeping boy. *Iktomni* is running now and hugs his boy. He says:

"It's all over. The Thunderer Birds have spoken to Bear's Ear. And the medicine of Bear brings us many bulls. There will be much meat. Even now our hunters are bringing down the stragglers. It was Long Arms who brought us this starvation. His envy of the power of Bear's Ear has brought us many deaths. But Long Arms has lost his power. He is gone. Once again, the people stand before the Thunderer Birds."

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand / "Fish Child"
Record by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Here there is only the prairie
and the sky.
Look for nothing more.*
-from the Stoney

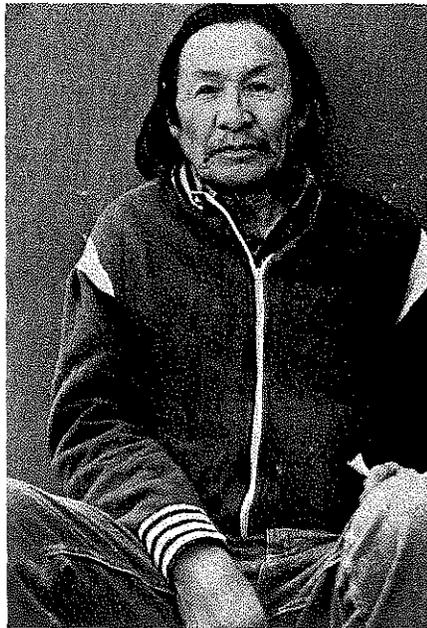
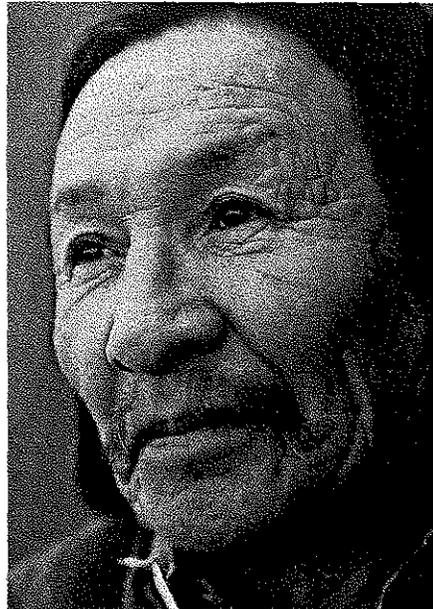


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Frank Lefthand
Stoney,
ranchhand,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: June 24, 1924
Mother's Name: Mary Lefthand
Father's Name: Mark Lefthand

Iktomni and the Origin of the Thunderer Birds

It is the full-leaf-moon.*

Iktomni dreams of *Mu*, Thunder:

In the old days, Thunder is chief of the sky people.

Thunder has medicine stronger than Stone.

Thunder is more powerful than Mountain.

It was *Mu*, Chief Thunderer, who first gave fire to the Stonies.

It was *Mu* who made the first sound on Earth long before snow goose is born.

When Thunderer opens his eyes, lightning spirits fill Sky.

In the old days, there were moons when the sky people and the Stonies on earth were at peace. At other times, there were great matches between them.

A long time ago, a Stoney Chief, Three Eagles, wants to fix Thunder, to bring his power down.

Chief Three Eagles has four sons. Thunder also has four sons. Thunder and Three Eagles meet face to face. Thunder says:

"We are going to have a footrace around the world. Your oldest son will race my son. If you win, you will keep the thunder pipe for all seasons. If I win, my sons will own the rainwaters that make your rivers flow."

The big race begins. Three Eagle's youngest son has the eyes of a prairie falcon. He can see all four horizons. He spots Rainbow Woman far away and climbs up her red and green bands into Sky to watch the great race. He announces that the Stoney is way ahead of Thunder's boy in the footrace.

When he sees the Stoney Chief's son in the lead, Thunder takes his sky pipe and lights it. But only white smoke fills Sky. And the Chief's youngest son is watching Thunder from his hiding place in Sky. He warns his father down on Earth. The Stoney Chief takes his earth pipe and takes the light of the Sun to make it smoke. Black smoke pours out of the Chief's pipe and separates Thunder from his sons.

Cut off by the black smoke, Thunder hides behind the painted stripes of lightning.

The Stoney Chief gets his two-pronged stick and tries to hook Thunder with it. This makes Thunder very angry and they fight.

Three Eagles pushes Thunder into a big fire with the

stick. The Stoney Chief calls to his son:

"Hold his hair down with your stick or he will get out."

With the two Stonies pinning him into the fire, Thunder cannot escape, and he burns up.

From the smoke, many little Thunderer Birds fly up into Sky.

Thunder's oldest son becomes lost in the dark clouds and races in the wrong direction. His three brothers also become lost in the black smoke and have not been seen to this day.

The little Thunderer Birds roam Sky to this day and with their great roaring try to escape the smoke made by Three Eagles.

And that is the origin of the Thunderer Birds.

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Can't you feel the stars
that have fallen out of the sky
and into your hand?*
-from the Stoney

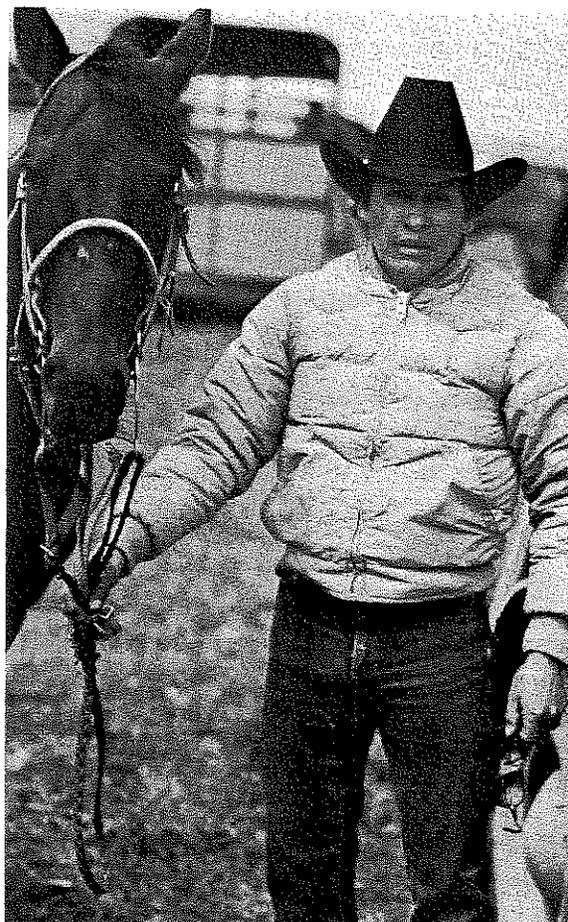


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Henry Halloway, Jr.
Stoney,
recreation band director,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: September 20, 1941
Mother's Name: Elsie Halloway
Father's Name: Eddie Halloway

Iktomni's Journey in Four Directions

It is the moon of cutting-and-drying-kinnikinnik.*

Iktomni is walking towards Buffalo Lake.*

One day he comes to a gray lodge. But only one man is there. The gray-lodge-man sees *Iktomni* and asks him where he's going.

Pointing north, *Iktomni* says, "North."

"What's your name?" asks the gray-lodge-man.

"I am 'Yesterday,' " *Iktomni* says.

Iktomni continues on his path. He comes to a brown lodge. Here, as before, only one man is to be seen. The brown-lodge-man sees *Iktomni* and asks where he's going. Pointing south, *Iktomni* says, "South."

"What's your name?" the brown-lodge-man asks.

"I am 'Today,' " says *Iktomni*.

Iktomni continues on his great earth walk. He comes to a black lodge. Here again, only one man is to be found. The black-lodge-man appears and asks *Iktomni* where he's headed. Pointing west, *Iktomni* says, "West."

"What's your name?" asks the black-lodge-man.

"I am 'Day-Before-Yesterday,' " says *Iktomni*.

Iktomni leaves and walks along. He comes to a white lodge. And again, only one man comes to greet him. The white-lodge-man asks *Iktomni* where he's going. Pointing east, *Iktomni* says, "East."

"What's your name?" asks the white-lodge-man.

"I am 'Day-Yet-To-Come,' " *Iktomni* says.

Iktomni walks East.

Four days later, an angry, snorting She-Bear* enters the gray lodge.

"Which way did he go?" snorts She-Bear.

" 'Yesterday' came through heading North," replies gray-lodge-man.

She-Bear runs many days and so arrives at the brown lodge.

"Has anyone come through here?" She-Bear fumes.

" 'Today' came through heading South," replies brown-lodge-man.

She-Bear arrives at the black lodge.

"Has anyone been through here?" She-Bear grunts.

" 'Day-Before-Yesterday' came through heading West," replies black-lodge-man.

She-Bear arrives at the white lodge.

"Anyone come through here?" She-Bear roars.

" 'Day-Yet-To-Come' went through heading East," replies white-lodge-man.

She-Bear says:

"That *Iktomni* is nothing but the wind. He is just a big circle. I'm going home."

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Sacred the rite
Sacred the pipe
What is best for the people?
What can I yield?*
-from the Stoney

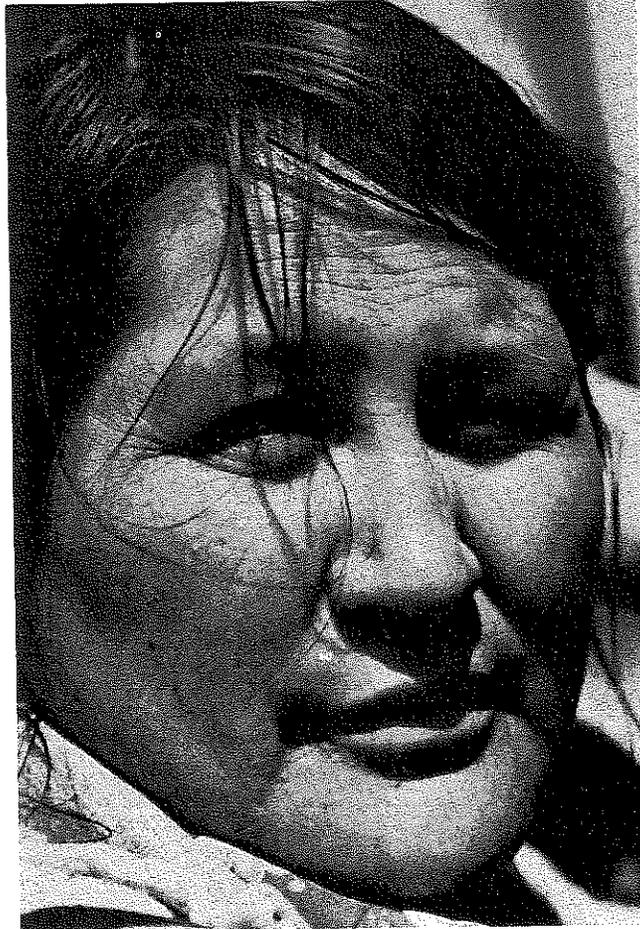


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Velma Powderface
Stoney,
janitor,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: November 5, 1948
Mother's Name: Lily Benjamin
Father's Name: Paul Dixon, Jr.

Iktomni and the Cattails

It is the moon when-the-frog-reeds-shoot-their-greenness.*

Iktomni is walking along the shore of Gull Lake.*

He comes to a place where many Cattails are growing.

“What’s your name?” asks *Iktomni*.

“Cattail.”

“O no, that cannot be. Everything must have two names. What’s your other name?”

“Just ‘Cattail.’ That’s the only name I have.”

Iktomni is not satisfied. He is twisting his face until the frog reeds are frightened. *Iktomni* looks down and asks over and over that Cattail give its other name.

Finally, Cattail gives up.

“I will tell you. My other name is ‘Big Thunder.’ I am ‘Cattail Big Thunder.’ ”

“Then,” says *Iktomni*, “I shall see if your name is fitting.”

So *Iktomni* eats the heads of many Cattails until his belly gives him the groaning sign that it is full. But he laughs and eats so many of the Cattails that he can barely stand. He can feel the rustling sounds inside his belly of the Cattails rubbing their heads.

Then he continues his moccasin walk along Gull Lake.

After a while, one leg rises up and kicks just a bit. *Iktomni* bursts out in a little-cattail-thunder.

The second time that the cattail-thunder-inside-his-belly speaks, it lifts his body off the ground and into the sky. He lands back on the earth with a thud.

And now *Iktomni* can feel the third thunder raising its head. He runs to a willow tree and hangs on with both hands. The thunder-inside-him rushes to get out and the blow jerks the willow clear out of the earth with its roots. *Iktomni* crashes to the hard ground.

As the fourth thunder is ready for release inside his belly, *Iktomni* throws his arms around a big fat birch tree and hangs on real tight. When the fourth rustling-sac bursts, it comes like the giant tongue of thunder. The birch tree is torn out by its roots. There is a giant hole in the earth. *Iktomni* smashes

into the prairie. He is stuck in a mud hole.

“O Cattail, you’ve got the right name. The big thunder is hidden inside your furry serpent heads. Your roots are Wind. Give me back my medicines. You must let me go now.”

Cattail releases *Iktomni* and he crawls out of the mud.

Iktomni sees many snakes sunning themselves.

He changes some of the snakes into handwhips. Then he kills the snakes, one by one, by whipping them to death.

Then he walks South.

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand / “Fish Child”
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*The wooden pegs and pinning stones
and braided ropes do not exist that
tie a man down and make him slave
to small, petty things
until he sits down and chooses these.*
-from the Stoney

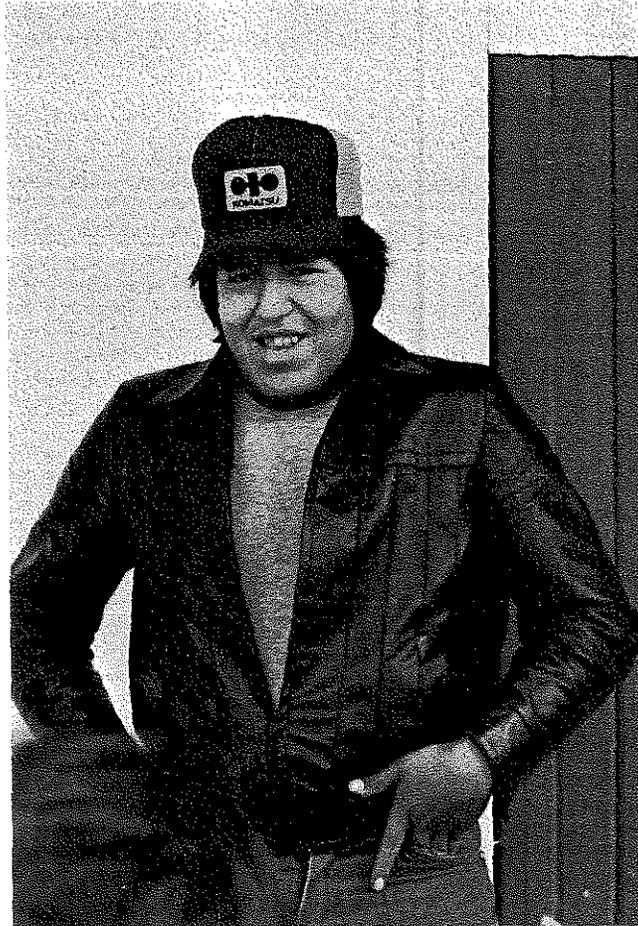


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Keith Cecil
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: November 7, 1963
Mother's Name: Joan Cecil
Father's Name: David Cecil

Iktomni and The Duck Tallow

It is the moon-of-fatness.

Iktomni sits over Crooked Lake.* He is happy. At his feet is a pile of dead Pintail Ducks.*

He makes a big fire.

His tongue dances-inside-his-eyes as the Pintails cook.

Then he lays out the duck meat on willows and red-paint-brush-leaves* to cool.

"O, it's very hot. I am going to sleep now. These ducks will be just cool when I wake."

Iktomni moves his summer robe to one side. Looking at his rump, he says:

"Rump, old eater, if somebody comes along, you wake me up. I'm going to sleep now."

Soon *Iktomni* is dreaming about duck tallow dripping into his mouth.

After a while, four wolves sneak up towards the duck meat. *Iktomni's* rump tries to wake him up.

"*Iktomni*, wake up. Wolf's nose brings him here."

"O, don't bother me now," *Iktomni* mumbles as he pats his rump with his hand.

Meanwhile, the wolves eat up all the fat duck meat and steal away without disturbing a leaf.

Iktomni is very hungry when he finally wakes up. He sits up and looks around.

He sees only the bones of the Pintails strewn all over.

"I told you to wake me if anyone came by," he tells his rump.

Iktomni gathers lots of wood and makes a big fire. Then he straddles across the fire. The fire burns his rump and it starts to scream.

"What do you holler for?" complains *Iktomni*, "You never would speak to me before."

A piece of flesh-scab falls from his rump into the embers.

Iktomni is so angry, looking at the duck bones, that he goes for a walk around Crooked Lake.

When he returns to the fire-gone-out, he sees a piece of burnt meat in the embers and eats it.

"O, someone is thinking of me," he says as he bites into the scab.

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand / "Fish Child"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Be easy with the earth just exactly as it is.

(How little do you need?

And how much have you taken?)

Stay with the earth-moment in silence.

For silence is sacred.

Let the moment come to you.

Take the moment with you.

-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Edlyn Kaquitts
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: November 21, 1968
Mother's Name: Alice Kaquitts
Father's Name: Ralph Stevens

Iktomni and Spotted Rock

It is the snow moon when-everything-is-asleep.

Iktomni finishes his journeys across Earth. Great Mystery summons him to dwell on an island far to the East, between Earth and Sky.

Iktomni goes for the last time to Morley.* He stands above a big hill and sings his farewell song* to the Stonies. Then he walks East as far as outer ocean. Here he washes himself of the smell of humans and prepares for the Sky world.*

In a dream, two young Stonies, Gnome Walker and Spotted Rock, hear *Iktomni's* drum. They dream about Old Man who waits for them in the East. For forty days they travel to the edge of the Earth. They stand before outer ocean.

Great Eagle hears their song and comes down from Sky. Gnome Walker and Spotted Rock prepare a pipe and tell Eagle of their vision. Great Eagle touches them both on their foreheads with his giant white wings. Their hearts are pure. Great Eagle carries them on his back across Sky. They soar for four days. At last Great Eagle comes to rest on a Sky island. The Stony warriors give Great Eagle their pipe and he returns to his nest in Sky.

The Stonies soon see an old man bending over some cottonwood. He greets them: "My grandsons, welcome. I am *Iktomni*. I am happy you are here. Go into my lodge and rest. I will bring along some wood for our fire."

Inside the lodge, the young men see nothing but green grass on the ground. When Old Man returns, he says,

"Welcome to Sky. My grandsons, it is an honour to me that you play with death in order to respect my summons. First we will bring out the sacred pipe to honour Great Mystery. Then we sing. Later we eat. And finally we talk."

And so they light the great pipe. Smoke rises to Sun. They sing to the wind spirits. Then their hands take up pemmican with loganberry, gooseberry, and wild blueberry. Afterwards the warriors sleep and rest a long time.

When Gnome Walker and Spotted Rock wake, they cannot believe their eyes. The lodge is filled with the furs and hides of many animal people. There are many thick robes on the ground of buffalo and mountain goat hairs. The Old Man transforms himself into *Iktomni*, now in the prime of manhood

and strength. To the East, above the lodge flap, there is a hand painting of Sun wearing a robe of gold. On the West, there is the painting of Morning Star wearing a bluegrass shirt.

Gnome Walker is the first to speak:

"Grandfather, my dream tells me to seek you out for only you can instruct me in the sacred ways. I have come to ask for a power to cure my people of suffering.

Iktomni speaks:

"My grandson, your words follow the path of your heart. I will share my knowledge and mysteries with you. I ask only one thing: that you use your gift only to strengthen and comfort your people. From this day, you shall be called "Gnome Walker Man." " And turning to Spotted Rock, *Iktomni* asks, "My grandson, what do you look to?"

Spotted Rock speaks:

"Give me a power that will let nothing ever hurt me or kill me. Let no weapon, spear, arrow or knife and no illness ever strike me down. This, grandfather, is what I ask of you." *Iktomni* replies: "You shall have what you desire."

He grasps Spotted Rock and carries him by one arm and one leg out of his lodge. *Iktomni* sets the young man down on the ground. Suddenly, Spotted Rock is transformed into a huge rock.

"It is as you wish," says *Iktomni*. "No weapon or disease will ever harm you."*

For a long time, *Iktomni* teaches Gnome Walker in the ways of the sacred medicines. *Iktomni* shares with him the special uses of the sacred herbs and root powers. These things only for healing and sustaining the people. Pointing to the big rock, *Iktomni* says,

"Without truth, power is nothing."

Iktomni then summons Great Eagle. As Great Eagle rises up into Sky, and heads back to Earth across outer ocean, Gnome Walker waves to *Iktomni* in the whistling wind.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Have the eyes of a snake-hawk when
the hot duck meat is cooling.*
-from the Stoney

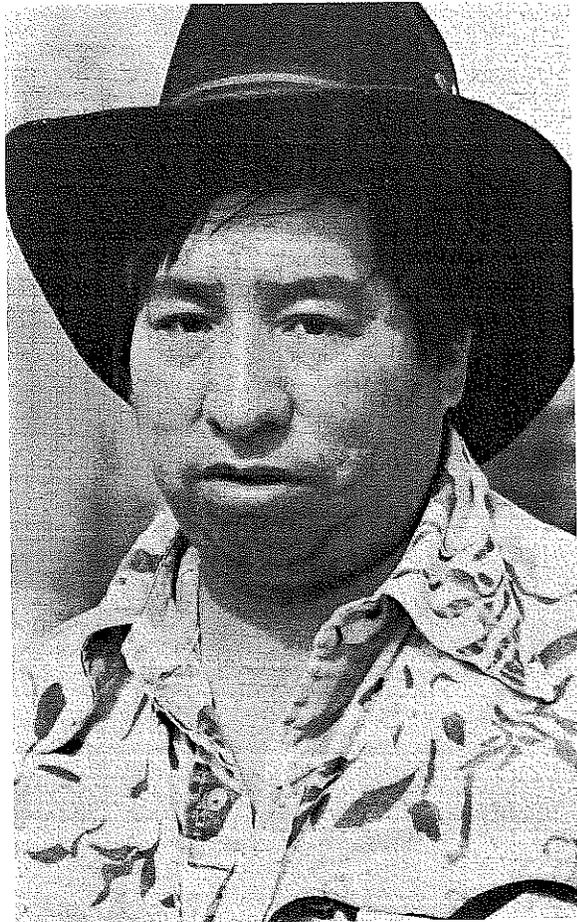


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

James Dixon
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: 1940
Mother's Name: Flora Dixon
Father's Name: Stanley Stephen

Iktomni in the Big Flood

It is the idle-moon.*

Iktomni is angered by the horned water beasts. These swallow his favourite river.

He sets a snare near the sunning place where the beasts come to dry their wet scales.

Two water beasts are caught in the snare. They accuse each other and then fight each other. Both die.

Iktomni wants to offer their scales and eyes and ears and tongues to the water spirits.

But Mink steals along when the fires go out and hides the meat and offerings.

Iktomni is very angry. But he does not know who the thief is.

To find the thief, *Iktomni* calls down Thunder.

Thunder makes a big flood.* Soon the water people sit everywhere. The burning water rises and rises. All the animal people without wings begin to drown. The only ones who do not die climb inside *Iktomni's* body.

Mink escapes. He squeezes inside *Iktomni's* belly between the Foxes and Coyotes.

Thunder looks down and sees all the deaths. Thunder is sure that Mink is dead and so he ends the long-time-rains. Thunder sees that all his children on Earth are devoured. It crushes his heart, but he does not cry because his tears will only bring more rain.

The big flood waters cover Grandmother Earth up to her forehead.

Iktomni also is flooded. He has climbed the highest hill in the rising water. When the last land is washed up, he sits on a big log and begins to float in the water-that-is-everywhere. While he is adrift, the animal people come out of his body and sit on the log beside him. On his right is Coyote.

The Earth is swallowed up by the water people. After forty days on the big log, *Iktomni* asks the animal people to dive to the bottom of the water and bring up a bit of soil.

She-Beaver dives at sunrise. She is gone a long time. She floats up dead.*

Otter dives. But the water is very deep. Otter almost makes it.

Loon dives. He comes up half dead. But he has spotted the bottom.

Muskrat dives last. He is gone so long that they give him up for dead. Finally he is back. The animal people revive Muskrat. In his paw, *Iktomni* finds a little earth-mud.

Iktomni takes the bits of mud and makes an Earth round like Sun. He breathes life into it and shapes the Earth. It grows and grows.

When it is big enough, *Iktomni* and the animal people walk onto the new Earth.

Squirrel is the first one on Earth: That is why to this day he is so excited.

After he has made a world from water, *Iktomni* rewards Muskrat. *Iktomni* asks Beaver and Muskrat to change tails.* The trade made them brothers to this day.

Then *Iktomni* made man. He gave them horses. And he filled Sky with birds.

Iktomni told all the animal people and the birds to appear to the Stonies in dreams and bring them medicines.

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Without truth, power is nothing.
-from the Stoney

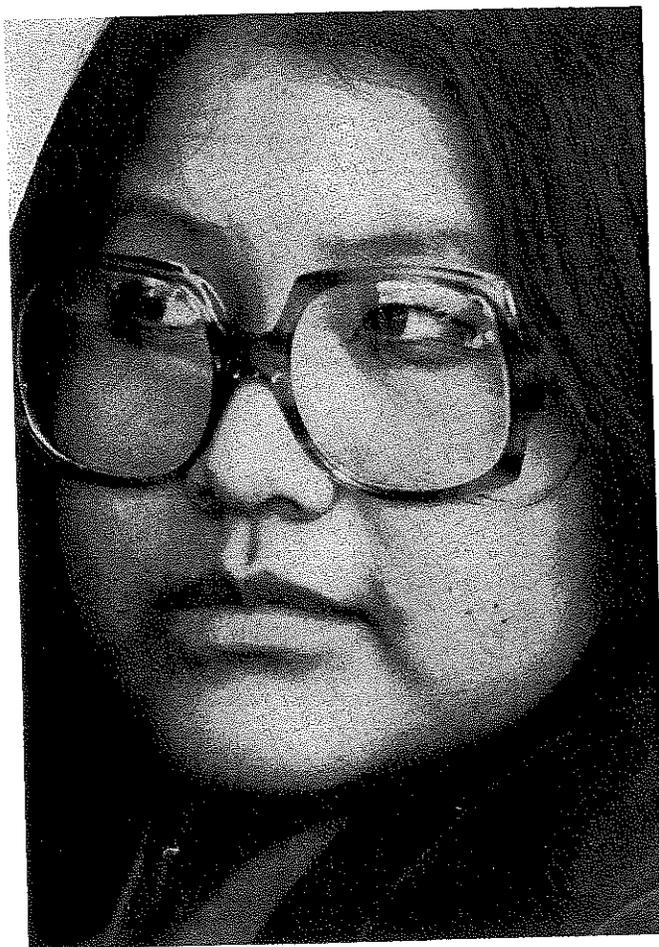


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Mayda Daniels
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: January 9, 1962
Mother's Name: Georgie Daniels
Father's Name: John Ear

Iktomni and the Yellow-Headed Blackbirds

It is the moon when-the-golden-mantled-squirrel-looks-back.*

In those days, *Iktomni* still had his flying powers.

Yellow-Headed Blackbirds teach *Iktomni* an eye juggling trick.

Iktomni learns how to throw both his eyes onto a birch tree. Later, they magically bounce back into his head.

But the Blackbirds warn him not to do the trick more than four times.

For doing anything more than four times brings bad luck.*

The Blackbirds leave. *Iktomni* gets very excited in the new trick-game. He bounces his eyes off the birch four times. But the fifth time that he throws his eyes onto the tree, they do not return. *Iktomni* cries out to the Blackbirds. But they do not answer. He loses his eyes and is blind.

Iktomni stumbles until he comes to a pine tree. He makes himself a new pair of eyes from the pine gum.

Later, the Blackbirds return and teach *Iktomni* the old trick-game of whittling off his feet.

And once again, the Blackbirds warn *Iktomni* - not too often.

Sure enough, *Iktomni* disobeys the old custom. He becomes stuck in the elbow of a birch tree.

At that time, *Iktomni* has great wings which he borrowed from Owl.

While he whittled, he gave his big wings to the Blackbirds to hold. But after he got stuck in the tree, they never returned his wings.

Finally, at night, when *Iktomni* is sleeping, the Blackbirds come back and give him back the gift of his legs. But they take away some of his power.

That is how *Iktomni* lost his power to fly.

And that is why Blackbird is so swift.

In the morning, *Iktomni* is angry because the Blackbirds have stolen his wings. When he gets down from the tree, he chases them. But they own his magical powers now. And he cannot catch them.

And *Iktomni* cannot find Owl because Owl looks just like the bark of the sleeping tree.

Finally, with the break-up of spring moon, he finds

their great nesting grounds.

But the Blackbird scouts see him and alarm the others. The Blackbirds escape.

But *Iktomni* catches the Blackbird Chief. And then *Iktomni* makes a big fire. He holds the bird's feathers and wings over the fire.

And that is why Blackbird is black as Raven's hair.

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Field notes by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

The man who has no beliefs will die.
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Verna Beaver
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: December 22; 1967
Mother's Name: Sheila Beaver
Father's Name: Nat House

Stoney Folklore

Porcupine and Bear Head: a medicine dream

Long ago, a powerful Chief, Bear Head, has a dream about a man called "Porcupine."

In the dream, Porcupine* takes one of the Chief's wives, Rib Pounder. Porcupine then dreams of Old Moth Man, *Istumah Tata*, who lives under the earth. Old Moth Man appears to Porcupine and gives him the power to make everyone in the camp fall into a deep sleep. Porcupine then takes Rib Pounder and runs away with her.

Bear Head is as angry as a wounded grizzly and he summons his spirits. But his powers will not give him a vision. Great quills block the vision. Mountain Cougar appears and warns him that Porcupine is *wichasta waka* - spirit man - and perhaps even more powerful than Bear Head himself.

Porcupine and the woman go far away. They live alone in the Sundance Mountains.* In the moon of hoarfrost, Rib Pounder makes him a great coat from porcupine skins, and a porcupine head robe with ermine tails. But soon Porcupine and Rib Pounder become very lonely. In the moon of first grasses, they talk of going back. When the shooting star moon arrives, they head back. It is the time of egging and birthing. Everything is green. Birds pour out of Sky.

Two Stoney deer hunters announce the arrival of the one-who-has-taken-Bear Head's-wife. Four days later, Porcupine and Rib Pounder enter the old camp. The people clasp their hands to their mouths. Bear Head is not among them.

In the morning, Chief Bear Head sends an older wife* to invite Porcupine to a feast that evening. Boiled moose nose, a much-desired delicacy, is to be served up. But the Chief is still very angry.

That evening, Porcupine puts on his great quill coat and ermine tail porcupine head.

"Come and sit. But where is my wife Rib Pounder?" asks Bear Head.

"I come alone," Porcupine says. "She is with child."

Bear Head is stung. But he ignores this insult. And he plays a trick on Porcupine. At the feast, there is meat of bear, moose, fox, cougar, wolf and coyote. But everyone eats the meat very quickly so that there is none left for Porcupine.

Angered by this insult, Porcupine boasts that his power is greater than the power of the Chief.

Porcupine goes to his own lodge and gives Rib Pounder a large robe made from forty badgers and weasels.

"Go and call all who are friends to us. Sit under this medicine robe and cross your arms. Death is here. But you will be safe," Porcupine says to his wife.

Porcupine goes to Bear Head. Porcupine takes off his great medicine robe and places it over some branches. Then he sits down underneath his robe. There is a ray of light that shines between his legs. Porcupine reaches out, grasps the ray of light and begins to pull on it like on a braided rope.

Sun and Moon come closer and closer to Earth as Porcupine pulls in the ray of light. Earth becomes very hot and it cracks like old leather. Grasses wither. Leaves shrivel. Creeks dry. Sky becomes fiery. The people become hot and thirsty, but there is no shade to cool in except underneath Porcupine's robes. The people go to the river but they see that the water boils. Fires break out. Smoke rises. The people are frightened and cry out to their Chief. Beads of sweat pour down Bear Head's face.

The Chief makes a dance. He waves his lance as he sings to Sun and Moon to make them go back into Sky. But the dance does not work. Sun and Moon come still closer and the Chief burns up in flames.

Porcupine* releases Sun and Moon and begins to sing his victory song.

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Based also on second version by Wayne Lefthand / "Antelope"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Nothing can match the power of Sun.
-from the Stoney

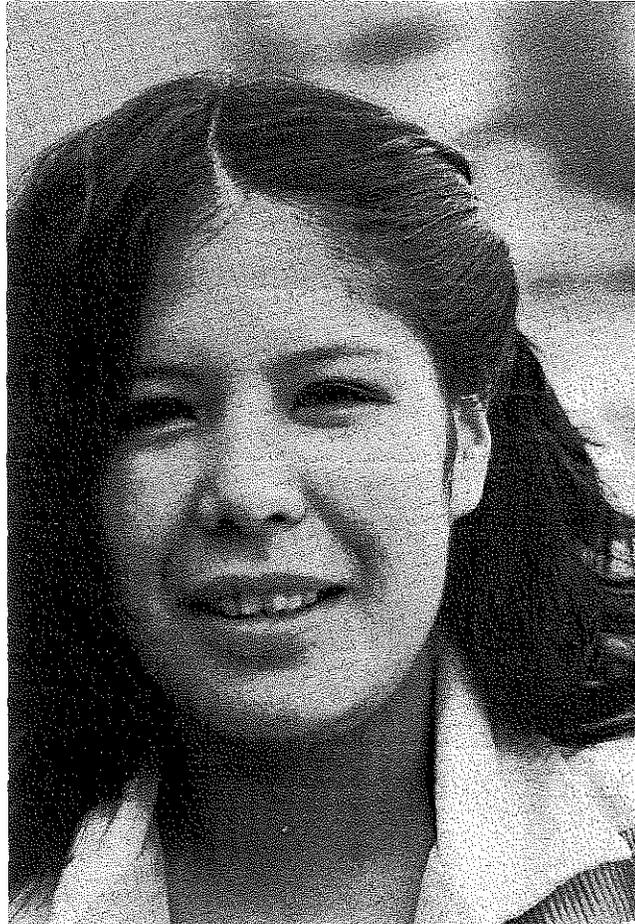


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Dawn Crowchief
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: May 10, 1959
Mother's Name: Dolly Morin
Father's Name: Douglas Crowchief

Flaming Woman

It is the buffalo moon.

Once, long ago, the Stoney meat-drying racks are empty. Buffalo are not to be found in the Sheep River hills.* The people are starving.

Swift runners arrive and point west. Many buffalo graze there. The people break camp at once. Soon all the lodges are down. The women tie down the camp dogs with small lodge pole drags. The tribe moves as-one-with the great herd.

Great loads of robes and bundles are pulled by the working dogs. These pull when they do not guard or play. It is the women who are the best breeders of dogs. Each lodge dog is known to all by name and especially for endurance in carrying or pulling. Good dogs like good moccasins.

Marrow Breaker, an old woman, does not move her lodge with these buffalo people. A widow, without child, she is too old and too tired to stay close to the big herd. She remains behind, alone.

All day long, Marrow Breaker cracks old buffalo bones to remove the marrow and fat. The first night passes with coyotes calling to each other. On the second night, she cooks the marrow and fat. As she watches the fat boiling, a tall enemy scout of the dog-eaters, enters her lodge. Marrow Breaker faces him without expression.

"He is not of our people. This one, from the dog-eaters. His hair belongs on our war lances," she thinks to herself while looking into his face.

Then, two other enemy scouts enter her lodge.

"I am to die in their hands," she knows.

Saying nothing, the dog-eaters sit down on small rabbit robes and begin to eat some of the hot marrow. Marrow Breaker is too old for fear. She bends over her cooking. She goes out and brings some wood for the fire. The enemy scouts are eating but they watch her closely. Still no one speaks.

The old woman picks up a burning stick from the fire and goes out of the lodge. There is no moon. At first she walks very slowly and quietly. Then suddenly she starts running as fast as she can, straight for the river.

She is running like Deer. Just ahead is a deep river bank. And now she can hear the shouts of the enemy scouts. They are right behind her. All that

they can see is the flame from the burning stick she carries. They follow the flame.

The old woman reaches the steep cut bank of the swift flowing river far below. She throws the flaming club into the swirling river below. Then she hides in the tall night grass. The enemy scouts, chasing the night flame, plunge over the cut bank. All three die in the river current far below.

The old woman goes back to her lodge and finishes making the marrow.

In the morning, she walks for a full day until she reaches her people's buffalo camp. She tells her story. The Chief and a large party take the old woman back to her lodge. They find the bodies of the enemy scouts.

They return at night to the buffalo camp singing the heroine song.

That night, the old woman comes to be called Flaming Woman. She sings and dances out the big chase for her people. She waves the scalps of the enemy scouts. The Chief speaks. These people do not move their camp again without their heroine. She comes to be greatly admired by her own people for her bravery and cunning.

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand / "Fish Child"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

One real act changes the world forever.
-from the Stoney

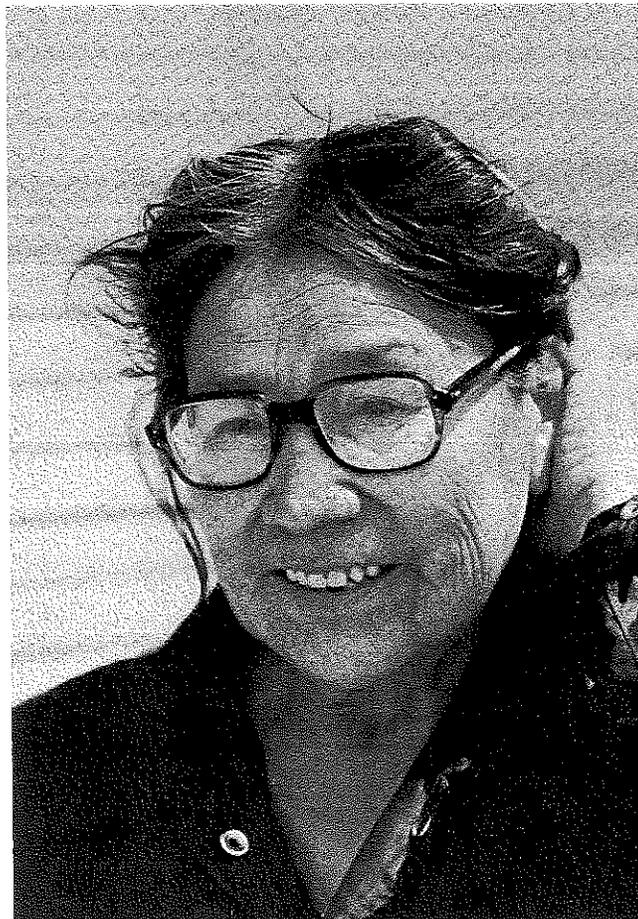


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Anna Two Youngman
Stoney,
retired school bus driver,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: October 17, 1923
Mother's Name: Mary Jean Patrick
Father's Name: Morley Beaver

The Big-Horned River Snake

It is the moon when deer calve.

Two Stoney deer hunters are out in the South Ghost River hills.*

Star Gazer and White Elk approach their best hunting grounds. Star Gazer carries a long bow and has a strong bow arm. White Elk can spot a deer rubbing its neck that no one else can even see. Every evening these two return with much meat over their shoulders.

Ahead of them is a big river. But they cannot cross because in the middle of the river is a great horned snake. The snake does not move to allow the hunters to pass.

Star Gazer and White Elk build a fire under the snake.

As it becomes juicy and tender, one of the hunters, Star Gazer, eats some of the snakemeat. After a hole has been burned through the snake, the hunters cross over to the other side of the river.

The big river snake is angry and makes a curse on them.

As they walk along, Star Gazer, the hunter who had eaten the snakemeat, sees, out of the corner of his eye, that his hands are becoming spotted. Yellow rashes appear on his fingers. Green patches cover his body. Soon scales appear on his face and arms. Slowly his flesh changes into snakeskin. He can feel a small tail beginning to grow.

It is sundown. There are many hills here. The hunters make camp in the deepest coulee.

"My brother, we have brought back many deer in many moons," Star Gazer says.

"Now I must go away, never to return. You are not to look back."

Just as Star Gazer leaves, there is a sharp hissing sound. Suddenly Star Gazer seems to be swallowed up by the earth.

White Elk races to the top of the hill and looks out. There, on the ground, where Star Gazer has just walked, sits a giant horned snake.

The old ones say that the meat of the-one-who-glides-on-his-belly is not to be taken.*

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*An evil spirit lives inside
the-one-who-runs-on-his-belly.*
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Donna Kaquitts
Stoney,
cook,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: October 8, 1956
Mother's Name: Alice Kaquitts
Father's Name: Joe Kaquitts

Pretty Feathers and Old Moth Man

part one

It is the moon when moose mate.*

Pretty Feathers, a Stoney, is taken captive by the Crees in the north country of the Saskatchewan River.* The Crees will not allow him to sleep at night but take turns watching him. Pretty Feathers longs to return to the foothill lodges of his people.

One evening, Pretty Feathers calls down Bear Rope Carrier. Singing to Great Mystery and to the Sacred Ones, he unwraps his sacred spirit pipe from his medicine bundle. Filling the pipe with kinnikinnik, and lighting it, Pretty Feathers offers the sacred smoke to the Four Winds. Then he offers the sacred smoke to Old Moth Man who lives under the earth. Pretty Feathers speaks:

"Hear me, Old Moth Man. Hear my song. I am captive here. Give me a power to return to my people in the south. Hear me."

Old Moth Man appears to Pretty Feathers in a vision. Suddenly the Cree watchers fall into a deep sleep. Old Moth Man greets the Stoney at the lodge fire:

"My grandson, I will give you a power. The Crees have snared you here to watch your spirit die. You are enemy this far north. These wait only to break your Stoney spirit. Sit here, and we will sing-as-one. 'O, Great Mystery, hear this one who cannot find his people and who wanders into the outer ring of enemy lodges and cannot find himself.'"

Old Moth Man and Pretty Feathers face the lodge fire. Old Moth Man sings:

"Na. . . . Na. . . . Na. . . . Na. . . ."

He sings the moth song which Pretty Feathers has never heard before.

A vision appears before them. In the vision, some Crees are dragging young Stonies into punishing lodges to be tied up at wooden stakes. The young Stonies have been tricked into a deep trance. An old Cree is calling up the spirit of Magpie to descend and seize the spirits of the Stonies. Magpie spirit is dark and powerful. Magpie is looking for a body to occupy.

Suddenly the spirit of Magpie appears before Pretty Feathers. Magpie is flapping his great black wings in a lodge-wind of terror. Magpie Spirit

transforms itself into a young Cree maiden, beautiful with youth and womanhood. But Pretty Feathers is strong and is not tricked. The young maid, with her womanhood belt removed and naked as a bather, hovers in the air above him.

But Pretty Feathers is strong. He does not bend to these lures. He calls out to his warrior spirit. Bear Rope Carrier appears and gives Pretty Feathers strength which no man has ever had.

Pretty Feathers leaps up and runs out of the lodge with the sleeping Crees all around him.

The male spirit of Bear Rope Carrier makes Pretty Feathers a running bear in the night. It is big moon. He reaches a camp of young poplar trees. With both hands, he tears a poplar out of the earth with its roots and races back to the lodge where Old Moth Man is waiting. Pretty Feathers smashes the poplar against Magpie Spirit Woman and rips her head off. It rolls along the lodge ground and falls into the fire where it burns up in flames.

The Cree guards are all asleep under the sleeping medicine of Old Moth Man. Nothing living can resist his drowsy spell. Quickly, Pretty Feathers gathers up his robe, his medicine bundle and pemmican bag and glides softly out of the Cree lodge and into the night. In the lodge fire, Old Moth Man nods slowly to him. Pretty Feathers circles the camp scouts. Soon he is running like Ferret under the big moon.

Based on narration by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Bear Rope Carrier, warrior spirit,
braid me a spirit power to stand up to
Magpie Spirit Woman who is ancestress,
temptress, a feathered she-dog, dark and powerful,
a male head under each of her black wings.*
-from the Stoney

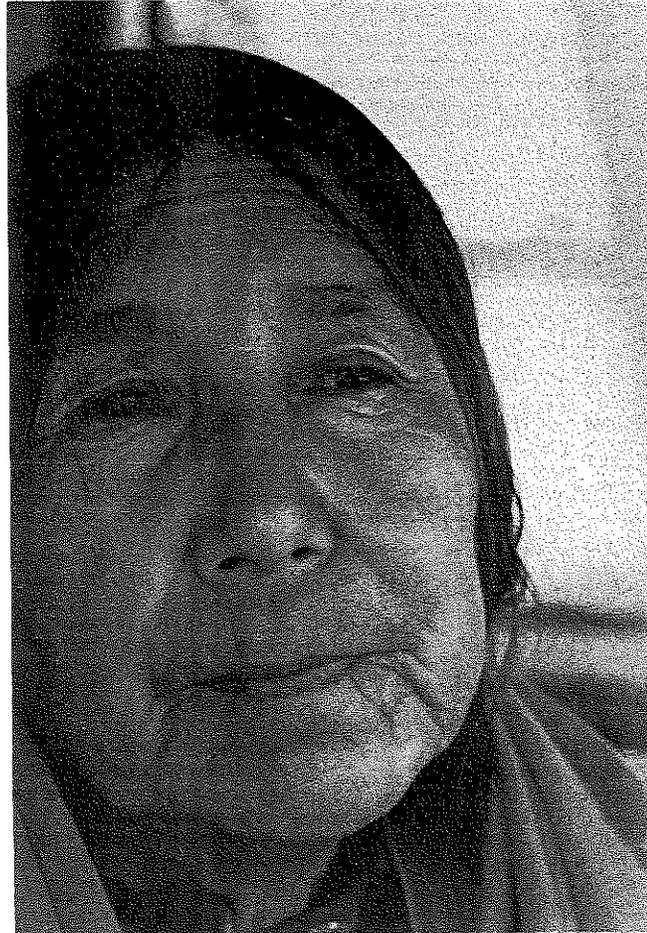


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Alice Kaquitts
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: 1913
Mother's Name: Jean Fox
Father's Name: Moses Fox

Pretty Feathers Destroys Four Tribes of Trees

part two

It is the circle moon.

Bear Rope Carrier speaks to Pretty Feathers:

"You are now only a captive of your own isolation. Return to your people. But hear my warning: Your journey will not be easy. Four tribes that grow giant roots will face you. You must stand and fight. I give you my strength. Take this coiled, braided, rawhide rope. And remember, until you reach your own lodges, you must take neither meat nor water. Stay with the spirit."

Pretty Feathers takes the braided coil.

Pretty Feathers is running south back to the lands of the Stonies.

The first tribe that Pretty Feathers faces is a hill-come-alive-with-small-warriors. And these change themselves into Red Willow Tree Persons. Pretty Feathers stands and sees that nothing living can count their numbers. These stand as wide as Sky. Many snakes coil in their roots. Pretty Feathers fights the willow warriors by uprooting them and breaking their backs with his sacred bear strength. He turns the braided coil of Bear Rope Carrier on the rearing serpents.* When Sun returns to his lodge, the Stony stands on the backs of the spirit willows.

The second tribe that stand in his path is a flat plain filled with middle sized tree warriors. These middle people make themselves into fierce aspen trees. Their yellow blades touch Eagle's nest. Pretty Feathers raises his eyes to Bear Rope Carrier and attacks the tree people. But these hurl big poplars at him. One by one he tears the white-barked, golden aspen warrior people out of the earth. He breaks their knees so they cannot stand. And when none stand, he drinks their hot root-blood.

The third tribe that looks at him with war club in hand is the great hill nation filled with big tree warriors. These are a horde of Blue Spruce persons that do not budge. And each of these as big as Cow Lake.* The blue giants advance but Pretty Feathers breaks their rib cages by stomping on these spruces with the bears paw powers that Bear Rope Carrier has given his feet. The ones he cannot bend and crush, he uproots. He tears their blue hearts out of the sacred soils. The valley is deep in spruce bones when he leaves. He goes south.

The fourth tribe that hungers for his blood is a mountain side filled with great jackpine persons. Their bone knives* scrape their boughs in the wind. The jackpine people are so tall that some stand above Sun. Some of their biggest warriors are mightier than grizzly. Pretty Feathers fights very hard. But the jackpine warriors are many and they slash his body until their needles are dripping his blood. Pretty Feathers calls out to Bear Rope Carrier for strength. Bear sees that the mountain side is red with the blood of Pretty Feathers. The Bear Warrior Spirit hears him and stands beside him. They fight, brother beside brother. They break the pulpy necks of the jackpine attackers until the mountains are scarred with the broken bodies of these. Pretty Feather's bear teeth gore the most stubborn ones.

Pretty Feathers speaks to the spirit of Bear Rope Carrier:

"Grandfather Bear, I honour you and your nation. The blood from these tree warriors runs in my hands. But am I worthy to return to my people? Once a man wanders from his nation, does the distance turn him into a stranger who is death?

Once a man is separate from the hoop and from custom, can he ever return?"

Based on narration by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*The devouring begins when a man
turns his back on the hoop and
calls himself separate from the circle.*
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Dolly Morin
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: September 9, 1931
Mother's Name: Jean Crawler
Father's Name: Morley Beaver

Pretty Feathers the Cannibal Beast

part three

It is centre moon's young brother* coming.

Pretty Feathers and Bear Rope Carrier smoke a pipe of thanks.

Then Pretty Feathers heads south. The Sun runs on his shoulders. The days pass. Pretty Feathers feels a great desire to take meat and water. The desire to eat and drink becomes like a wound that will not close. With all the fighting and fasting, and the strengths and powers given by Bear Rope Carrier, Pretty Feathers becomes a ferocious cannibal monster. The strength and the pain make him growl, and make killing sounds. When Pretty Feathers looks into some still water, he sees a horrible beast which is he.

Running along, he sees a fat deer feeding. But here there are no deer, only people. The people flee in terror. They have seen the evil one. And when Pretty Feathers sees a rocky place of water, these are not waters, these are living persons. But Pretty Feathers remembers the warning of Bear Rope Carrier. And Pretty Feathers does not yield to the unbearable temptation of hunger and thirst.

After many days, Pretty Feathers approaches the Stoney camp. His blood runs and he feels much joy. His brother, Bear Ear, comes out to meet him. But Bear Rope Carrier has appeared to Bear Ear in a dream - and warned the brother that Pretty Feathers would be returning as a cannibal. Many people begin to wail and shout and take up clubs and spears on seeing this evil one. Bear Ear cries out in despair:

"O . . . I have waited a great sun for the great and good sunrise when my brother, Pretty Feathers, would come back to my father's lodge, but there is only a monster. What have you done with my brother?"

Brother is facing brother. The cannibal monster growls in his belly and throat and kicks up some dust before attacking. Bear Ear fears the monster but he does not fear his own brother. Bear Ear raises his bow at the cannibal monster. He releases one arrow containing a medicine herb.

The monster falls. It is bleeding. But the blood is not human. Nor is it animal. It is the red needles from the pine. Its three ribs show. But they are not ribs of bone. They are ribs of blue spruce. And the skin of the monster is not human. It is the bark of the silver birch.

And as he is told to do in the dream by Bear Rope Carrier, Bear Ear cuts the monster's belly open and pulls out Pretty Feathers. Pretty Feathers is just barely alive. Bear Ear rubs his brother with the medicine herb. Slowly Pretty Feathers comes to strength. Soon he is human again just like the people of his tribe.

But the people are always fearful of him. Some say that the seed of the evil one is within Pretty Feathers and that he may turn back into the cannibal monster any day . . .

And one day, in the bitter winter moon, Pretty Feathers falls from his horse. The Stonies bind his hands and bury him alive in the deep snow. Then they run away, afraid of the cannibal seed inside him.

Some say that when the Little People thaw the Stoney soils in the spring moons, Pretty Feathers cries out from his burial place.

Others say that Pretty Feathers has become a ghost who lives in a cave near Ghost Lake* near the place where the Stonies buried him. No one goes there. The people say that when you get near his burial place you can hear the wind crying:

"Bear Ear, why did you not hold them back?"

Based on narration by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*It is the one who loves you
who will strangle your warmth,
make a burial of your freedom,
this the one who aches to return you to the ground.*
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Cecil Smalleyes
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: July 2, 1929

The Death of Big Onion

In the beginning of all things, there is Wolverine, who comes from the Caribou Mountains.*

Then *Waka Taga* and *Iktomni* make Bear, Elk, Wolf, Coyote, Badger, Antelope, Eagle, Hawk, and the other animal people.

Among these lives Big Onion, *Seejab Namnin Taga*, an evil spirit.

One day, Wolverine meets Fox. Wolverine speaks:

"Big Onion brings only torment to the animal people. He is a bullish and unkind person. He splashes Ferret in the eyes with his sticky water. He rises out of the earth and bites Elk calf. Not long ago, he fouls Bear with his sharp, bad smell. And remember when he steals all the young Kitfox and hides them under the Spray Lakes.* And he robs the fishing lines. He springs our Rabbit snares. Stampedes the Buffalo. Frightens Wolf's cubs. Smokes out Beaver. Have we not found Prairie Dog's body frightened to death and covered in clear scales?"

The animal people hold a council in secrecy deep in the forest.

"We must snare Big Onion," Wolverine says.

"But nothing can kill Big Onion. How are we to do this?" the others ask.

"We shall make a great net and wait to pounce on Big Onion," says Wolverine.

And so, as Big Onion sleeps in the Sun on a Bow River* flat, Wolverine descends on him, a deerbone pinning his nose shut. Wolverine bites Big Onion hard from behind. Big Onion howls and struggles to get free. But Wolverine does not let go. Big Onion cannot use his splashing powers, but he begins to wrap his foul scales around Wolverine.

With nostrils stuffed with balls full of buffalo grass, the animal people rush up and poke out Big Onion's eyes. They break his ears and bones.

Wolverine and Big Onion go round and round as Big Onion circles and circles.

Old Elk knocks the birch poles out and a giant net falls. But Big Onion and Wolverine fight on.

Wolf shouts out:

"Only Lynx, the one-who-walks-with-padded-feet, knows the one killing place. Only Lynx can finish him off. Antelope, you are fastest. Bring back Lynx. Run!"

Antelope finds Lynx feeding on a green winged teal. Antelope speaks:

"Lynx, you must come at once. The animal people have caught Big Onion. But he circles like the rough-legged hawk. His power will not allow his death."

They race back on Antelope's back. Then Lynx climbs a river flat tree and jumps on Big Onion's back and digs his killing claws into Big Onion's ribs. Reaching in deep, Lynx rips out Big Onion's heart. But Big Onion will not die.*

Old Elk knocks out the last birch pole and the animal people roll up Big Onion into a big fat foul scaly ball. Together, the animal people drag Big Onion to a big fire made ready by Squirrel. Pronghorn jabs him and Big Onion rolls into the big fire. As Big Onion burns up, the animal people jump away. The dying onion sprays his last great white sticky poison medicine. From out of the burning, dying smell, many little onions escape.

The river flat is quiet.

The animal people return to their lodges.

Wolverine swims East to wash himself of the smell from Big Onion. Wolverine swam all the way to the Winnipeg River. On the way, he came to a river which had no name. Wolverine named it *Minnesse Wapta*, Red River.

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Based also on second version by Wayne Lefthand / "Antelope"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*In the moon when deer-rub-their-horns,
the prairie withers
grass leaf by grass leaf.*
-from the Stoney

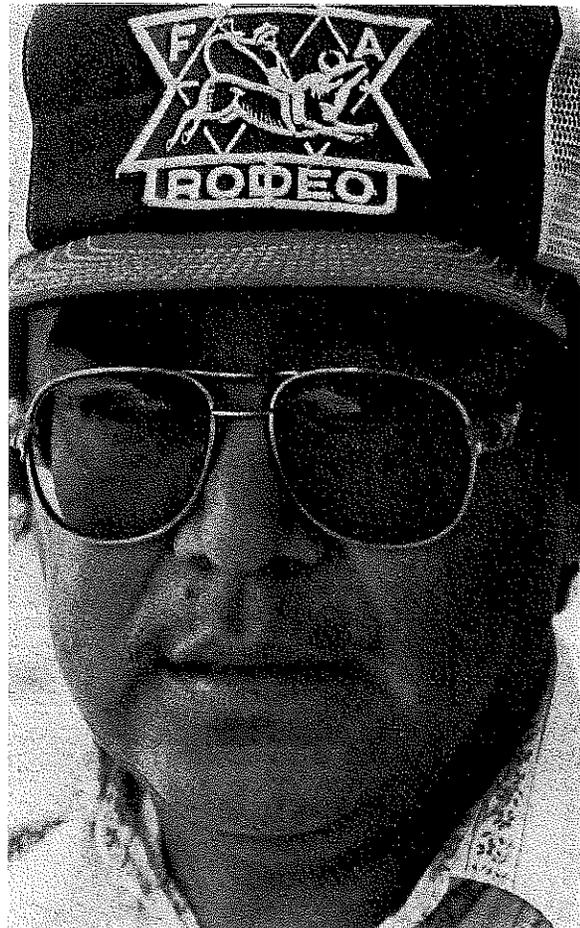


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Gerald Wildman
Stoney,
carpenter,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: April 23, 1948
Mother's Name: Violet Wildman
Father's Name: Percy Wildman

Istimah Tach Makes Love to Many Snakes part one

It is the moon of the long green rains.

Nine Stonies raise a lodge in a barren place.

Every day, with first light, Rising Eagle goes out for fresh game. His hunting brings much meat and many pelts to the lodge. *Istimah Tach*, his wife, fleshes the hides and cooks the raw tongues. Their six boys play nearby. The youngest is a little girl.

But, every day, when Rising Eagle is away, *Istimah Tach* would make sure that he is long gone. Then she would slip away and set off alone for the place-of-big-stones. But as Sun dips-his-head, she would return just before Rising Eagle would arrive at their lodge. But some days she is late.

One day, Rising Eagle returns early. He sees that *Istimah Tach* is gone. He asks his seven children:

"Where is *Istimah Tach*?"

"We have not seen her today. She goes to the big stones," they say. That evening, the husband asks his wife:

"Why do you go all alone into the wild, and leave the children?"

But *Istimah Tach* merely says:

"O, I flesh and scrape the hides out there. And it is too far and too dangerous for the children. The wilderness is good place to work."

But Rising Eagle senses that something is being hidden.

"I will follow her," he says to himself.

One morning when Sun sits on the horizon, Rising Eagle leaves for the hunt. He goes a little way and hides behind some swamp birches. He watches his wife's lodge. Sun is climbing straight up when *Istimah Tach* leaves the lodge. She looks all around, and heads for a rocky trail. Rising Eagle follows. Deep in a rocky gulch, *Istimah Tach* is swallowed up by a great rock. As Rising Eagle approaches, he sees a path leading inside a rock cave. He enters the big cave.

It is better that Rising Eagle had not been born than to see what he sees.

In a great nest full of hissing and rattling, *Istimah Tach*, his wife, is lying naked and making love to many snakes.

There is an old, old anger in a man that only warm blood can calm.

There is no throat with life in it to equal the death

scream made by Rising Eagle. Only a brother killing a brother carries such a death cry.

Leaping into the nest with his big hunting knife, Rising Eagle massacres the snakes, ripping open their soft bellies and chopping off their sun-glistening heads. He crushes their seed so that it will not breed human-snakes. Soon the pounding of these long-hearts stops.

Then he grabs *Istimah Tach* by the hair, and drags her out to a rock clearing. He kills her with one great blow. He chops off all her limbs. He destroys the seed in her limp body. Then he chops off her head. He throws the head into a rocky gulch. But the head rolls along the rocky trail until it stops near the lodge where the children play.

Then Rising Eagle makes a big fire and throws all the dead snakes into it. Finally he throws in the lifeless body of his wife, her hands and feet.

Rising Eagle returns to his lodge. He calls his children. He speaks:

"I have just killed your mother. From this day, you must care for each other. I am going north. I will not be coming back."

Rising Eagle gives each of his seven children a buckskin pouch containing buffalo weed and many powers. Each bundle has a great spirit power.

Rising Eagle sings the death song as he walks north alone.*

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay/"Rolling Buffalo"
Based also on second version by Jonas Dixon/"One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Walk with your head clear of all clutter
Walk clearly, slowly, easily
As when wolf walked when he was a man.*
-from the Stoney

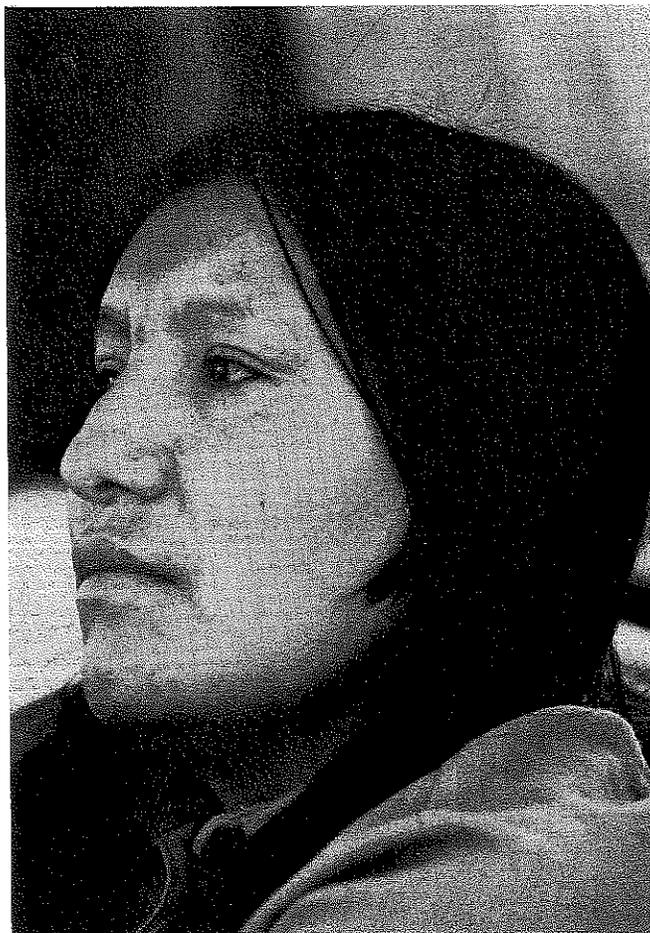


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Louisiana Lefthand
Stoney,
Longview, Alberta
Date of Birth: October 29, 1952
Father's Name: Albert Bearspaw

Origin of the Seven Stars

part two

It is the dry moon when the stars stay in their lodges. The seven children find their mother's head near Rising Eagle's lodge. But the head has no body. And the children are afraid. The head speaks: "If you care for me, I will live."

The six boys make a sweat lodge. The head stays-with-the-spirits. On the fourth day, windmaker gives *Istimah Tach*, the head, a power to move, to walk-without-feet, to do the work of the living.

Head speaks:

"I will make soft hides for you. But I am a cursed life. If you look at me while I make buckskin, I will become a cannibal and destroy you all."

The seven children become very curious. One day, the youngest boy tempts the others to go up into the rocks and watch the head scraping hides. They go up and hide behind a rock. All seven peer out. They see the head rubbing a hide surrounded by many snakes who are soaking hides, removing hair, and stretching them across willow frames. The young girl cries out in fear: "Aiiieeee...."

Immediately the head falls to the ground and begins to roll straight for the children. They flee in panic. The head of *Istimah Tach* is rolling fast now down the rocky trail chasing the children and shouting a curse:

"You will all die if I have to chase you around the Sun."

The head is gaining very rapidly. The first boy hears the spirit voice of his father, Rising Eagle: "Unwrap the spirit ball I gave you."

The first boy throws the deerskin ball to his brother. As it soars through the Sky, some wild grass seeds fall out and onto the barren earth. Immediately a vast prairie of tall buffalo grass is born. The great prairie separates the children from the rolling head. After forty days, the head catches up. The children are just ahead.

The second boy throws the buckskin pouch* to his brother. It makes a curve in the Sky and suddenly great hills, coulees, buttes, valleys, bottoms, and foothills appear. The folding hills stretch as far as the eye can see. Buckling hills separate the children from the evil head. After forty days, the evil head comes out of the hills....

The third boy throws the buckskin ball to his brother. Some pine needles and wood slivers fall out and onto the empty earth. Immediately, great forests are born. The giant, green forests cover the hills and lands and slow down the evil head for forty days.

The fourth boy throws the medicine disc to his brother. Some grains of sand and pebbles fall out. Suddenly the mountains are born. Giant faces of rock appear between the children and the running head. Great icefields slow down the chasing head for forty days.

The fifth boy tosses the medicine ball to his brother. Some small feathers fall out. Immediately, rivers, lakes, streams, creeks and springs are born. The head fights swift currents for forty days. But now the children are very tired.

The eldest brother throws the buffalo weed ball to his younger sister. Immediately the muskeg is born with swamp and ponds and great fields of thistles. Head is stung by thistle spines and flies and thorns. After forty days, the bruised head sights the children slowing. The children cannot run much farther.

The little girl catches the spirit ball and offers it up to the Sun. And as she does so, the seven children begin to rise slowly up into the air.

Just then the head catches up to them. The angry head jumps and snaps at the children with her sharp teeth.* But they clear the birch trees.* And up, up and up they go, far and high into the Sky. They enter the Sky country and become as stars. They make a dipper shape. To this day, they can still be seen on a clear night. The little girl is the last and smallest and brightest of the seven stars.

And that is the origin of the Big Dipper.*

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Based also on second version by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*I am alive already in all things,
I am alive in-the-hills, on-this-morning,
I am alive feeling my ancestors in my son.*
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Arthur Daniels
Stoney,
retired ranchhand,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: September 14, 1911
Father's Name: Paul Daniels

Scraping Wolf Becomes Wolf Person

part one

It is the ancient moon when star boulders fall across Sky.

There is a great battle between a mountain tribe and a prairie tribe of people.

In all the dust and killing, a mountain mother leaves her two boys to drift on some tied logs to far off Spirit Island. An enemy warrior crushes her skull with his war club. But he cannot see Spirit Island with his eyes. Mist shrouds the island.

The brothers are cared for by wolves on Spirit Island. The wolves bring meat for the two boys. A place is made at the back of the wolf cave for the two humans to sleep. But one of the brothers will not take meat brought down by wolves. This one, Star Robe.

And so Scraping Wolf and his brother, Star Robe, live in the wolf den on Spirit Island in the middle of the big lake. They hunt rabbits and find fire.

Star Robe has a small spirit bundle around his neck. His powers come from hawk claws.

Scraping Wolf has a medicine rattle tied to his wrist that his mother put there.

The seasons run by just like thieves, and the boys grow into fine men.

One day, Scraping Wolf is fitting a wolf head into a sharp bone knife. He sits by the shore listening to the marsh hawk's song. In the distance he sees a lone figure coming towards him the on logs-that-walk-on-water...

Tom-min-see-Napi ("Braided Rawhide Necklace")* an old man, is coming towards him on a rough raft. The old man has a long pole in his hand.

As the old man comes near, he puts down the long pole and takes out some blue stones. He holds the stones towards Star Robe. But suddenly a wolf howls and the old man drops the stones. They fall into the water and disappear. Star Robe dives into the deep water and brings up the four sacred blue stones. The old man promises that he will return within four suns with a special gift.

"In four days you shall be a happy man," *Tom-min-see-Napi* says. The old man poles the logs away. "Grandfather," cries Star Robe... But the old man does not hear him. The tied logs glisten blue and disappear.

Tom-min-see-Napi poles back to his lodge. He summons White Hand, his eldest daughter.

"Take these tied logs and go to Spirit Island. You will meet the one-who-has-hawk-claws-round-his-neck. Bring this one back. He will be your husband. He will bring meat for our lodge. We will work our blue powers on this one," the old man says.

White Hand poles into the mist. Star Robe is pouncing on a rabbit when she sets foot on the island. She is the first woman he has ever seen and he becomes very curious. Her blue painted mask weakens him and he does not resist her. They stay four nights on the island. Then they return to *Tom-min-see-Napi's* camp.

Scraping Wolf is alone on the island. He watches his brother disappear with the tall woman. By night, he listens to the song of the wolves. He sings to the night spirits:

"I am going to make myself into a wolf."

Scraping Wolf sings to his wolf brothers for four nights. He makes a big fire so that they can sit with him. The one-who-gorges-himself-and-then-fasts, watches his brothers arrive. He howls to his robed ancestors. Sings to the moon. Slowly he returns to the old way. His hands become wolf paws.

On the fourth sun, he climbs inside the pounding heart of the great wolf father.

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Rest is the first goal:
Observe wolf; his nation rests
in many places throughout the day.*
-from the Stoney

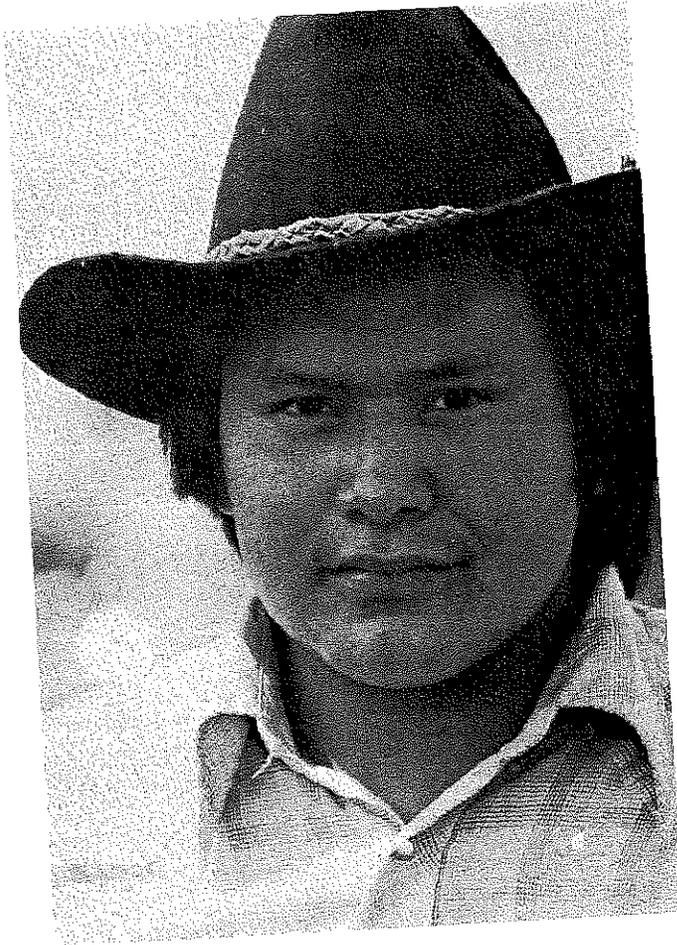


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Orville Daniels
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: July 19, 1964
Mother's Name: Barbara Daniels
Father's Name: Orville Daniels

Star Robe Destroys *Tom-min-see Napi*

part two

It is the chinook moon.

Tom-min-see-Napi and Star Robe talk of poling to Spirit Island to make bows from the saskatoon willow.

"There is some good wood on the island," the old man says.

Once on the island, Star Robe searches for some good willows. But the old man takes the tied logs and goes away, stranding him.

After a little, Star Robe sees two loons flying to the west.

"My brothers," he calls to them.

The loons carry him across the mountain lake.

In the morning, *Tom-min-see-Napi* and Star Robe return to the island to gather feathers for their arrows. But as Star Robe hunts for good feathers, the old man takes the tied logs and poles away. He does not hear the cry of the young man.

Soon, a big horned snake comes along. It is as long as eight tall hunters. And it has two sharp horns on its head.

"My brother," Star Robe calls to the snake.

The snake carries Star Robe across the lake. But Thunder sees them and sends lightning down on the snake. Star Robe leaps off and begins to swim. Lightning strikes the big snake and his long golden body bursts into smoke and scatters all over the lake. Star Robe is washed ashore, close to death.

That evening, Star Robe overhears as White Hand warns *Tom-min-see-Napi* that Star Robe must be destroyed.

"The four blue stones will make him grass," she says.

Then they plot his death:

"His spirit must be released only inside the evil stones so that the evil ones may live."

But *Tom-min-see-Napi's* wife warns him:

"Star Robe has very strong medicine of hawk claws. If you snare him on the island, you will not live another sun."

When Sun puts on his white robes, the old man and Star Robe set off for the island to hunt for elk. They cross the great lakes as if nothing has come between them. But while Star Robe is tracking through the forests on the island, *Tom-min-see-Napi* goes away in the rough raft.

While walking, Star Robe meets three Mice Women. They speak:

"*Tom-min-see-Napi* is an evil spirit. Many great suns ago, an old curse was made on an old man who drowned his brother in these waters."

The Mice Women blow into some elk bladders. These bloat with air and Star Robe crosses the lake.

The Mice Women appear to *Tom-min-see-Napi* in a dream. In the dream, the old man is placed on the floating logs by Star Robe.

When Sun walks to the east, *Tom-min-see-Napi* and Star Robe pole to the island for wolf robes.

Before Sun raises his great brown head, Star Robe carries the sleeping old man down to the water. He places him on the floating logs and sends him adrift. He watches as a current pulls the old man asleep on the logs to a dangerous place. In the middle of the lake, dogfish devour the blue stones and eat the old man.

Tom-min-see-Napi's leggings float back to shore. His wife says:

"The dogfish have eaten the little stones from his eyes. I warned him but he wanted this death."

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Death does not miss a man begging for release.
-from the Stoney

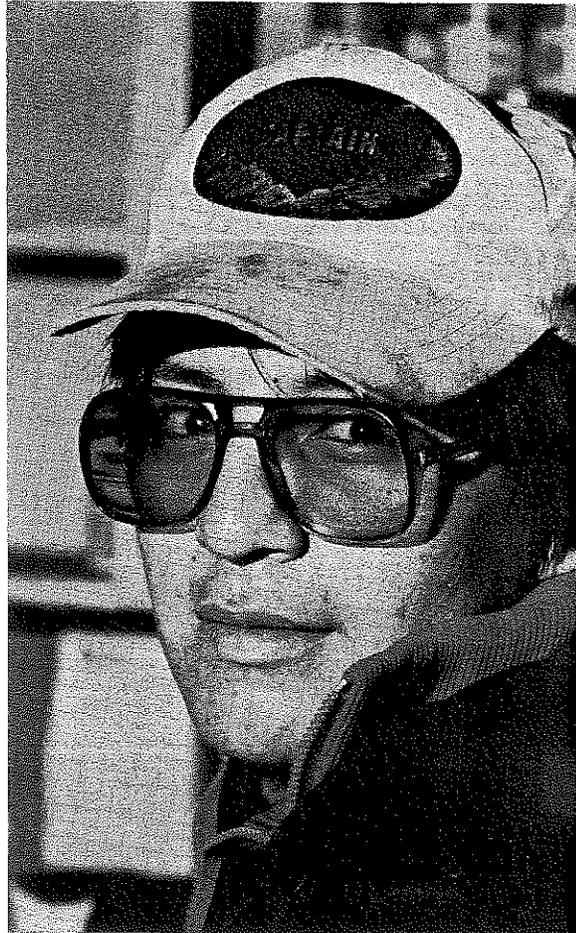


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Cameron Lefthand
Stoney,
farm helper,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: May 15, 1958
Mother's Name: Mina Lefthand
Father's Name: Carl Lefthand

Dogfish Devour Wolf Person

part three

It is the yellow-leaf-moon.*

Star Robe crosses the mountain lake to look for his brother.

On Spirit Island he finds some mysterious tracks. One footprint is human and the other is wolf. He follows this unknown trail. Soon he comes to a large wolf lodge. Many wolves are sitting in a great circle. A She-Wolf comes forward:

"Your brother is gone forever. No power on earth can make him Scraping Wolf again. Your brother is no longer a person. He is a wolf. He is my husband."

Star Robe asks the circle of wolves:

"What kind of meat does my brother like?"

"He likes the soft belly," they tell him.

That evening, Star Robe makes himself into an elk. On his antlers are many stars. Four icy blue stones sit at the tips of the antlers. At night, Wolf Person, his brother, returns to the wolf circle. Elk walks up to him and says:

"Are you hungry? Here, eat!"

Elk laughs a human laugh and says,

"It is I, your brother. Eat out my soft sides if you hunger. But do not tear out my heart yet. Know first that the old man with the blue stones was an evil walker, a snake person. And his daughter, White Head, snake woman. On their ribs sat the old curse of the evil blue stones. And the old one was the keeper of these. It was he who sent this pretty witch to roll my resistance into a ball of fat. But the lake takes this one. Just as he took his brother. And White Hand turns into many brown stones that roll to the north. And now I come back to my brother. I will not weaken our hoop."

Wolf Person does not harm his elk brother. But he tells Star Robe:

"I cannot turn my paws back into your feet. I am a wolf now — not a person. I must honour my new hoop, my woman, my trail. . . ."

Star Robe removes his elk robe and speaks:

"Even if you are Death, I am your brother. I will stay. I will hunt with you. I will wear the gray robe. I have spoken."

The wolves feast. The old wolves warn the brothers not to chase after a She-Moose if it goes into the lake. The old ones say:

"The dogfish will kill you."

But one day the brothers see a fat moose cow swimming across the lake. They cannot resist the chase. In the middle of the lake, Wolf Person is stung by the dogfish and dies. These water spirits then raise their blue hoods over him and devour him. Star Robe fights his way to shore.

It is the moon-without-leaves.

And Star Robe sits alone. His eyes on the red-black embers. He walks all night. He comes to the far end of the lake where he meets long tailed cougar. The cat spirit tells Star Robe that the island wolves say that he brought death to Wolf Person. And She-Wolf says this loudest. The wolves are searching the island for him. And these led by She-Wolf. Cat spirit hears when these hold council saying that Star Robe must die and his body be fed to the dogfish to release the spirit of Wolf Person.

By middle moon, Star Robe is well hidden in the ridges. He makes many folsom heads. Then he waits for the wolves to come. Fox sparrow announces the coming of the gray gorging nation. Star Robe kills many of the wolves. The rest run away.

He skins three of the wolves. He ties their ears and tongues around his waist. And he wears the head of She-Wolf on his skull. He wraps himself in wolf robes. He unwraps his reed flute and plays and sings to his brother's spirit. Then Star Robe leaves Spirit Island.

He journeys to the east, looking for his people.

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*The burning prairie in my heart,
where will I run?
The earth says there is only death
outside the circle.*

-from the Stoney

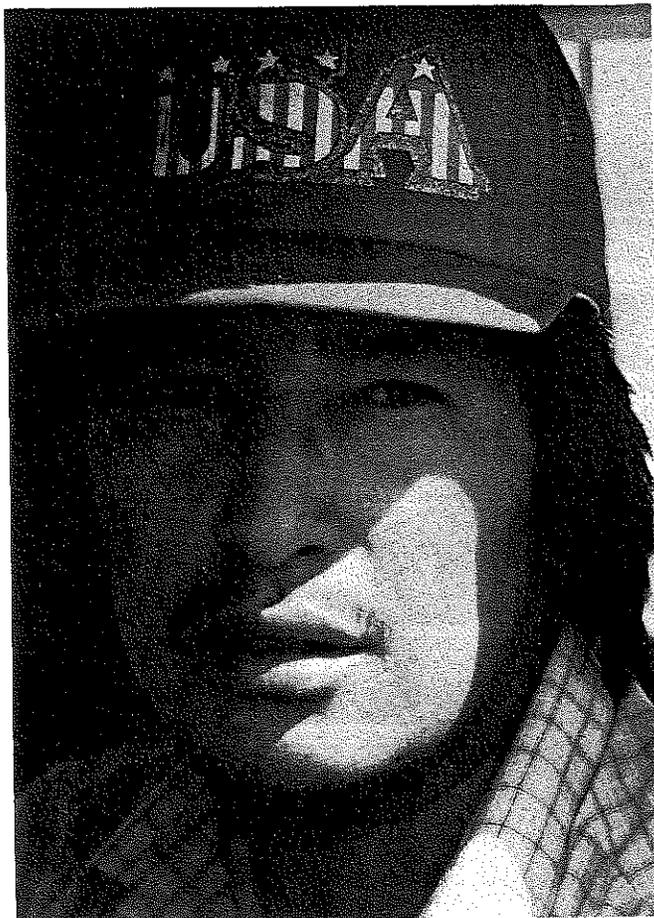


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Peter Wesley
Stoney,
council member,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: May 31, 1952
Mother's Name: Lily Wesley
Father's Name: Lazarus Wesley

Fish Woman

It is the moon of the mountain river runoff.

Five Stonies raise a lodge in a cluster of red willows beside Swan Lake.*

Bruised Horn, his wife Green Eyes, her mother Whitehair, his son Third Shot and a small boy Owl Child make a lakeside camp here.

One day, Bruised Horn goes off to hunt for moose. While he is away, the others make a rawhide swing and fasten it to an overhanging branch at the water's edge. Whitehair is the first to swing. She goes back and forth over the deep water. After a while, she stops. Turning to Green Eyes, the old one says, "Daughter, let me hold your baby while you swing." The daughter hands her Owl Child.

Soon Green Eyes is swinging very high. She swings out over the deep water. Whitehair takes a knife and cuts the rawhide rope. Green Eyes plunges into the water and drowns. Turning to the small boy, Whitehair snarls,

"My little green lizard, if you speak of this to anyone, I will cut you up with this knife and feed you to the dogfish just like your mother."

The boy, Third Shot, is frightened. Whitehair takes off her own robes and puts on her daughter's robes.

In the evening, after the hunt for moose and wild horses, Bruised Horn returns. He sees a woman in his wife's robes, but she is not the same one. He takes his son aside:

"That woman over there is not your mother. Who is she? Tell me or I will cut your ears off!"

Third Shot fears his father. He tells Bruised Horn what he saw that morning.

Bruised Horn is in a rage. He runs at Whitehair and cuts her head off with his great hunting knife. Then he goes off into the Raven hills* singing a song of mourning for his dead wife. He strikes at his own body with his knife.

Third Shot is holding Owl Child. They sit on the shore of Swan Lake. Third Shot is crying. Owl Child is wailing. Suddenly Third Shot sees something moving in the water. As it comes closer to shore, he sees that it is not a fish - but Green Eyes, his own mother. She dives back into the water.

"Come up again, my mother!" Third Shot pleads. The woman's head comes to the surface. Third Shot sees her big green tail.

"Your baby is crying. Nurse him."

Green Eyes swims up to the shoreline. The water is up to her waist. She nurses her baby in the water. "Here, take Owl Child now. I must go back to the underwater world."

She disappears in the deep water.

Bruised Horn is grieving. He sees Owl Child sleeping. He asks why the baby is so peaceful. Third Shot tells him of the meeting with Fish Woman. Bruised Horn says:

"Tomorrow, go back and call your sister again. But ask her to come just a little bit closer when she nurses Owl Child."

When Sun is climbing, Bruised Horn hides close by in the bush with his big knife drawn. Third Shot calls to his mother. Soon Fish Woman comes up to the surface and begins to nurse her baby.

"My mother, come a little closer. You might drop Owl Child in the deep water."

Fish Woman is almost out of the water. Third Shot can see that she is half woman and half fish. Fish Woman nods dreamily as she nurses her baby.

Suddenly Bruised Horn leaps out of the trees and cuts the woman in half with his sharp knife. He throws the fish-half of her body back into the lake and carries the human-half back into his lodge.

Herbal medicines make Green Eyes whole again.

Based on narration by Mary Lefthand / "Small Girl"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Do not fragment the mountain with your head
Leave the mountain to the eagles.*
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Shirléy Dixon
Stoney,
housewife,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: May 21, 1955
Mother's Name: Sylvia Dixon
Father's Name: Alan Dixon

Umbiska Waka, Eagle Catcher

It is the moon of the bald eagle.

A Stoney eagle catcher dreams that he traps four great eagles.

Umbiska Waka ("Eagle Spirit") climbs high into the mountains. There he meets Great Eagle who speaks to him:

"The gift of making the sacred eagle feather headrobe is yours if you observe the taking of eagles. Go and bring down rabbit. Take rabbit higher into these mountains. Dig a big hole and scatter willows over it. Place rabbit on top of the willows and wait. Take four eagles only."

Umbiska Waka waits in the eagle catcher's pit. He waits so long that his feet grow into the earth. And one day the eater of carcasses, Raven, comes to take rabbit. *Umbiska Waka* takes a sharp stick and pokes Raven hard. Raven shouts and flies East.

Soon four great bald eagles land on rabbit. *Umbiska Waka* gives his rawhide loop a pull, snaring the eagle's legs. Then he takes the four eagles in his hands.

"You are the gift that honours *Waka Taga*," he says. He breaks their necks. But when he tries to snare a fifth eagle, an angry Great Eagle lands. Great Eagle takes the catcher in his sharp talons and sets him down before four fierce warriors.

These are Bull Elk, Mountain Cougar, She-Grizzly and the Great White Bull Buffalo. *Umbiska Waka* comes to these four and gives a sacred eagle feather to each of them.

"Accept this, my brothers," he says, "it will bring you an even greater honour."

Bull Buffalo speaks:

"You face death as befits a Stoney. You show that you are gentle and caring. A good warrior knows that these are mightier than the power to bring death. Greed will only devour a man. Do not look to a fifth eagle. Honour the circle. Honour the cycle. Honour the teachings."

Then Great Eagle returns and honours *Umbiska Waka* with a feast. There is buffalo tongue, clear mountain spring water, and wild loganberries.

Great Eagle speaks:

"Grandson, I give you these four eagles, my brothers. I ask only that you honour these. Remember these in the Sun Dance. I give you these sacred

songs* for you to sing to *Waka Taga*. Sing these when the chokecherries ripen."

Umbiska Waka returns to his lodge with the four eagles under his arm. There he finds his wife with child.

"*Waka Taga* gifts us and honours us," he says.

Umbiska Waka begins to make a great sacred eagle feather headrobe.

In the winter moon, the child is born. *Umbiska Waka* sees that this one is unlike the other children in the camp. This child has eyebrows covered with soft eagle down. The head of his new son has fine little eagle feathers growing out of it. *Umbiska Waka* sees that this child is a gift from the sacred ones. It is not long before a small eagle beak begins to grow between the small one's eyes.

"I name you 'Eagle Child,'" *Umbiska Waka* says to his small son. "When the saskatoons ripen, I will hold the Sun Dance."

And as the suns and moons pass, there is no mistake that little Eagle Child possesses the wisdom of Great Eagle. And when Eagle Child grows out of childhood, a Sun Dance is held. Eagle Child stretches out his arms to Sky and grows eagle wings. His legs are plumed with featherdown. The eagle son ascends above the Sun Dance center pole and speaks to *Umbiska Waka*:

"Receive Thunderbird, Great Eagle, and the four eagles. Honour these. Remember *Waka Taga* in all things. Offer your songs and medicines and incense. Remember that the Sun Dance brings renewal, peace, health and well being."

Then the four eagles descend and sing as *Umbiska Waka* offers the sacred eagle headrobe to Great Eagle. And as Eagle Child ascends into Sky with his father, Great Eagle, he takes one of his own middle tail feathers and gives it to *Umbiska Waka*.

"Take his 'guider' feather for the top of your feather headrobe*. And remember, if you hold the Sun Dance for ten winters, your people will never die."

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Never go beyond the limits of the gifts you receive.
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Barney Fox
Stoney,
ranch foreman,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: February 6, 1950
Mother's Name: Jessie Fox
Father's Name: Joe Fox, Sr.

Chews-her-Braids

It is the sweetgrass moon.

The Stonies are moving to a buffalo camp near Springbank Creek.* The people fill the dust with song.

Chews-her-Braids, a young wife, has left behind a favourite bone scraper at the old camp. She turns her horse around.

An enemy raiding party of big bellies* comes upon the lone woman's trail. They follow her tracks, then begin to circle. Soon the big belly scouts see a woman riding towards them. The big bellies quickly conceal themselves in the tall sage brush flats, alongside her trail. As the Stoney woman draws close, the big bellies encircle her. Her horse rears and throws her.

"Have no fear," says White Claw, the son of the big belly chief.

"You shall live. I take you for my wife." They ride off.

Meanwhile, Prairie Man, husband to Chews-her-Braids, is looking for his wife. The people tell him that she has gone back to the old camp for something. Prairie Man mounts up and rides back to the old camp. He follows her trail but can find no trace of her. He follows the trail for three days. As the third night descends, he sees the fires from a big camp far into the darkness. He ties up his horse and makes his way in on foot. Keeping low, he approaches the enemy camp along the creek. He sings and calls down the pronghorn spirit to strengthen his blood. With first light, he hides in the shrubs along the rocky creek.

When Sun opens his eyes, on the fourth day, Prairie Man sees a woman coming down for water. She is brightly dressed and singing to herself. It is Chews-her-Braids and she looks happy. Prairie Man signals to her and whispers:

"My wife, how can we escape from here?"

Chews-her-Braids hesitates, then speaks:

"Let me return with the water, my husband. I will come when the camp is asleep. Stay here."

Chews-her-Braids returns to White Claw's lodge. She tells her big belly husband about Prairie Man. The big bellies storm the creek and capture the Stoney. They club him and drag him to the camp. Then he is laid out on the ground and stretched with

rawhide thongs to stakes. They pour hot embers from the fires down his throat and leave him to die in the burning sun.

When the stars close their dance, the big belly camp is broken. As the people ride out, an old big belly woman, Drumming All Night, watches the Stoney dying. Just as her people ride over the ridge, she returns to the Stoney and cuts the killing rawhide saying:

"My son, the scars in your throat are many and deep. It is better you live." She leaves her sharp knife beside him and scurries off. Prairie Man raises his head:

"Grandmother, you have put new grass between my spirit and death. From this day, always raise your lodge a little north from the main camp. We shall meet again in war. My people will not sleep. You shall not die when I return."

As the summer moons fade, the Stonies, led by the one-with-scars-in-his-throat, prepare to attack the big belly encampment. Prairie Man warns his warriors not to kill anyone in the north lodge for he has given his word that these alone shall live.

"But the main camp we shall destroy."

The Stonies attack. The big bellies are taken by surprise. When the dust clears, White Claw's scalp is in Stoney hands. Many scalps hang from Stoney horses. Chews-her-Braids is brought before Prairie Man. The one-with-scars-in-his-throat asks his own people if Chews-her-Braids shall live or die.

"Death by fire," the people shout.

A great fire is prepared for Chews-her-Braids.*

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand / "Fish Child"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

When the summer circle closes, the people grow older.
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Winnifred Snow
Stoney,
student,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: March 20, 1948
Mother's Name: Cora Snow
Father's Name: Tom Snow

The Buffalo Circle

It is the sore-eye-moon.*

In those days, when moose were many and fat, *Koot-nahey*, the Kootenays, would cross the mountain passes over the *Yahey Yamnaska*, to trade horses with the Stonies.

At the place where the Old Man Playing River* begins to flow onto the high prairie, a Stoney hunting party is out for buffalo.

Suddenly a killing storm comes up, bringing much snow.

Running Star is blown far away from the rest of the hunters. The snowwind blinds him. Soon he is making circles in the sheet of snow.

He stumbles into a coulee of saskatoon willows. He tries to make a fire. But the wind is too high.

Then it grows dark and very cold. Running Star is too tired to go on. But he stands up and walks on.

On the hill ahead he can see old man Death watching him.

Night falls. The storms still rages.

Running Star sings to the buffalo spirit:

"O *Ta Taga*, keep death on his hill. My nation has always honoured your bones. O give my knees strength."

As he sings, many buffalo come towards him. The buffalo sit all around him in a circle. Running Star is in the middle. All night the buffalo keep him warm with their breath from their mouths and nostrils. And as they thaw his body, the buffalo teach him four sacred songs. As the storm rages, the hunter falls asleep. Night passes.

In the morning Sun wakes Running Star. All the buffalo are gone back into the earth. There are no tracks.

With new powers, the hunter makes his way back to his people. Along the way he meets some Stonies who have been out searching for him.

"Only a ghost could live through that killer storm. The people say that all the hunting party has frozen to death. Only you live."

"I am alive as you can see. *Ta Taga* wraps his robe around me in the storm. Many buffalo make a great circle around me and these breathe life and warmth into me while winter moon storms. Throughout the night these are like a fire. Come, I will show you."

Running Star takes the people to the very spot where he passed the night.

There, all can see where the snow has melted in a big circle with a bare spot in the centre.

The people return to the Stoney camp singing honouring songs to *Ta Taga*.

The people sing the four sacred buffalo songs.

Offerings of buffalo ribs are made to the Sun and Four Winds.

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand / "Fish Child"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*I am already on the path of the spirit.
And only my heart on the path
will receive the spirit.*

-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Stanley Rollingmud
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1926
Mother's Name: Georgie Rollingmud
Father's Name: George Rollingmud

Ismun, Man of Hair

part one

A small boy is nourished and raised by She-Bear. As he grows, the hair of She-Bear grows into him. He comes to have the strength of forty meat eaters. One day, he dreams of Great Bear. In the dream Great Bear speaks:

"Hear me. I am the spirit of the hunter. I have listened to you. Where many would fall, you live. I celebrate your great strength. Go out now and find a Stoney spirit man who will make a sacred lance for you. You will know him. Keep this lance with you always. It will become as brother to you. You have my blessing. I give you the name of *Ismun*, 'Man of Hair.' "

Ismun walks until he comes to a Stoney camp at Jumpingpound Creek.* He asks the arrow maker to make him a lance "that will kill a bull elk yet not harm a killdeer."* The first three lances are light enough for boys. The fourth lance is so heavy that the lance maker cannot lift it. *Ismun* picks it up in one hand. *Ismun* gives the lance maker a great robe made from four grizzlies.

Then *Ismun* has a sky dream. In the dream, Great Bear says that *Ismun* is chosen and appointed to free the Stoney people who are held captive in the underground world by Scaly Water Beasts.

Later, *Ismun* has a dream of Dragging Timber and Tree Twister who live in sky country. These two argue over who has the greater power.

One day, *Ismun* comes to a valley. He sees that the whole forest is moving. *Ismun* descends into the valley to find out what is moving the forest of pine trees. *Ismun* sees a big man who is dragging the entire forest with a long rope.

"I am 'Dragging Timber,' " he says to *Ismun*.

Dragging Timber asks *Ismun* to his lodge to feast on moose. There, *Ismun* meets Tree Twister. *Ismun* watches as Tree Twister makes a coil rope by twisting the tops of young pines. As they feast on moose, *Ismun* speaks of his vision of the captive Stonies below the earth.

When Sun's fires are raging, these three leave to find the captive Stonies. Soon they come upon an empty lodge. *Ismun* and Tree Twister go out to hunt. Dragging Timber stays behind alone to guard the lodge. Dragging Timber is sleeping on a buffalo robe. A roaring noise wakes him. He sees a big hole

in the earth. The noise comes from here. Suddenly Scaly Slime Beast springs out of the hole. He has long whiskers and red-green scales.

"This is my lodge," says the Scaly Slime Beast.

Then he attacks Dragging Timber and breaks his back and goes back down into his hole.

Tree Twister and *Ismun* return with a buffalo cow on their shoulders. They see Dragging Timber on the earth. He does not move. They raise his head and hear him speak of the beast.

Ismun is a spirit man and for four days he sings to She-Bear and rubs bearfat onto the back of Dragging Timber. After four days *Ismun* says:

"You have been sleeping too long. Get up. We have a nation to heal."

Dragging Timber stands. His back is healed.

Then Tree Twister and Dragging Timber go out to hunt. *Ismun* sleeps a long time. Suddenly he hears a thundering coming from out of the hole in the earth. *Ismun* leaps out of his sleeping robes. He raises his medicine lance over the hole. The Scaly Slime Beast* sticks his head out of the hole. With a crashing blow, *Ismun* chops it off.

With sunfall, Tree Twister and Dragging Timber return with a fat deer over their shoulders. They see the slimy head of the Scaly Beast tied to the big lance in the earth.

Ismun says: "The head on that lance will not disturb your back again."

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand / "Fish Child"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*You have been sleeping too long,
Get up, my brother,
We have a nation to heal.*
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Hanson Two Youngman
Stoney,
farmer,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: September 16, 1938
Mother's Name: Georgie Two Youngman
Father's Name: Hanson Two Youngman

Ismun and the Four Rings of Underground Lodges

part two

Ismun announces that he will descend into the earth and find the underground country where the Stonies are held captive.

He asks Tree Twister to braid him a long rawhide rope. So Tree Twister weaves some skygrass and stargrass that grows in the clouds with some strips of cedar bark. But Dragging Timber takes some shooting stars and tries to cut the long rope. *Ismun* makes peace between them. Tree Twister then makes a big skin bag large enough for a man to climb into. The long rope is tied to the skin bag. *Ismun* puts his medicine lance into the skin bag and climbs inside.

Tree Twister and Dragging Timber lower him down into the beast's hole in the earth. *Ismun* descends where no living person has gone. Deeper and deeper he goes into the cold and black. Suddenly his medicine lance makes the bag glow with light and heat. After many days he enters the underground country. There is a big blue sky. From a hilltop, *Ismun* sees a camp of four circles of lodges. Red Scaly Water Beasts keep the Stonies captive here. The beasts guard the camp.

Ismun comes to the lodges of the outer ring. Here there are only Stoney women. These are guarded by underground cannibal beasts who are out hunting. Darkness comes and the cannibal-hunters are to return at any moment. *Ismun* waits for these. As they walk past a deep gulch, he chops their heads off one by one until the gulch is filled to the rim with their skulls.

But above - on earth - he can hear Dragging Timber and Tree Twister fight. Giant valleys of trees crash around them as they fight. *Ismun* puts all the Stoney women in the skin bag and pulls on the long braided rope. The women are pulled up to earth. When they see the women, Dragging Timber and Tree Twister stop their fighting.

Ismun comes to the second ring of underground lodges. Here there are only Stoney Elders. He meets an old Stoney woman.

"Grandmother, I am thirsty. Give me water." The old one brings him a bark container.

"My son, do not drink all the water. It would anger Cougar who guards us. He lives by the watering hole. He is much feared." *Ismun* drinks all the water. Then he searches for Cougar. He finds twelve

Cougars sleeping in a circle around the watering hole. *Ismun* wakes the Cougars by splashing them. These attack from twelve sides. But *Ismun* sweeps his medicine lance in a great circle and twelve cougar heads fall to the ground. *Ismun* returns to the Elders' lodges in a cougar headrobe, his spirit lance shining in the Sun. He brings much water to the old ones. Then he sends them up to earth in the skin bag.

Ismun comes to the third ring of lodges. Here, she-cannibals guard captive Stoney boys and girls. *Ismun* gathers the children in the skin bag and sets a circle fire to the lodges. When the she-cannibals run out to see where the smoke comes from, these burn up, seething and writhing. *Ismun* sends the children up to earth in the skin bag.

Ismun comes to the inner ring of lodges. Here, the Stoney men are held. *Ismun* sees a black lake with a whirlpool at its centre. In the middle of the lake are four pine poles, placed in each of the four directions. *Ismun* meets the Chief Scaly Water Beast. Behind him, the water is on fire in the black lake. *Ismun* sees that many skulls of dead men are piled high around the four centre poles. The Water Beast Chief tells *Ismun* that they will race in the fire lake - then they will feast. *Ismun* takes off his cougar robes and enters the fire lake alone with his medicine lance. He swims under the surface all the way to the centre, where he shakes each of the four pine poles. He hides his medicine lance in a place where skulls block the Sun. Then *Ismun* emerges from the boiling whirlpool unharmed. The Water Beast Chief is so angered by *Ismun's* powers that he removes his scaly leggings and breech-robe as he dives into the fire lake. But as he shakes the fourth pole, the medicine lance falls and cuts his head off. A black pool of blood rises to the lake surface as his heart bursts. Whirlpool spirit eats up the heart of the Water Beast Chief. *Ismun* frees the Stoney men.

Finally *Ismun* climbs into the great skin bag. But he forgets his medicine lance. Dragging Timber and Tree Twister hoist him up half way. They take a big knife and cut the braided rope. *Ismun* goes crashing back down through the black hole in the darkness. Falling on the skulls, he cuts both his feet off. But *Ismun* has strong medicine. He heals himself.*

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand / "Fish Child"
Based also on alternate version by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*I have given and shared and bought and gifted
until my father, Sun, takes offence.
But I do not sing my sorrows like a growing boy,
I have given with an open heart like Bear told me.*
-from the Stoney

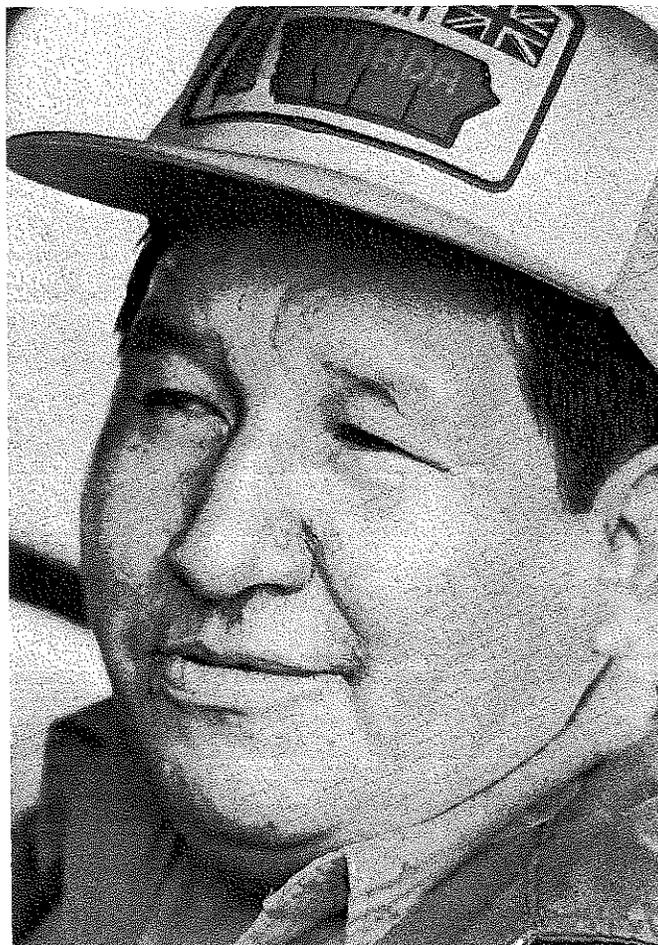


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Isaac Wesley
Stoney,
store clerk,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: August 20, 1945
Mother's Name: Mary Wesley
Father's Name: Judea Wesley

Sharp Claws and Woman-Who-Carries-Bark

It is the moon-of-everything-green.

Long ago, there was an old Stoney custom. If a young man and a young woman speak to each other in private, these marry.

Sharp Claws, a young Stoney, falls in love with Carries-Bark, a pretty young woman. The people say that she will make a good sits-by-the-fire wife. But Sharp Claws is very shy. Carries-Bark is kept in the lodge by her mother.* One day, Sharp Claws walks up to Carries-Bark. But just as he is about to speak, she turns away.

That night, in the green-moon-running, while the Stoney camp sleeps, Sharp Claws steals into the lodge where Carries-Bark is asleep. Lifting the stones off the lodgeskin, he reaches in and rubs Carries-Bark on her arm. Carries-Bark wakes, startled. But she is too afraid to cry out.

"Who are you?" she whispers.

"It's me, Sharp Claws."

"Never come back," the girl says. "Our eyes must not meet. My ears must not hear your mouth," the angry girl says. Sharp Claws goes away. He retreats into the big moon which hears the songs of wounded lovers.

But when the moon laces the clouds a little closer, Sharp Claws returns and rubs Carries-Bark's neck. The girl wakes and turns on him.

"If you come back ever, I'll set my father's dogs on you." Sharp Claws withdraws to his lodge. He sings to the moon-in-sky.

But he cannot sleep. He can only dream of this pretty girl. His desire for Carries-Bark grows and he dreams only of her. He sings a quiet night song to the spirit of greenness. How can he win the heart of this fighting girl?

When Sun is still on his sleeping robes, Sharp Claws rises and goes down to the river. He cuts some willows and makes a small sweat lodge. He covers it with skins. He brings up twelve smooth stones from the river. He makes a fire and watches as the stones begin to glow red. Then Sharp Claws goes and asks his grandfather to join him. They remove their buckskins and crawl into the sweat lodge. Grandfather sprinkles water in the four directions over the stone circle. Steam rises from the glowing stones.

"My grandson, something sits hard with you. Share your burden with an old one."

"O Grandfather, how can I win the heart of the young one who hides her face and her heart?"

Grandfather says:

"Go to the rocky forest and bring a long shoot of the wild rhubarb." When he returns, Grandfather says, "Carries-Bark will soon be yours." Grandfather counsels Sharp Claws in the old ways of love.

When moon rises, Grandfather and Sharp Claws wait until the camp sleeps. Then they steal to Carries-Bark's lodge. Grandfather slides one end of the long rhubarb under her lodgeskin so that it rests under Carries-Bark's sleeping robes. Meanwhile, Sharp Claws stands beside him and begins to sing just loud enough for the girl to hear.

"O underground spirit, carry my deep longing to the heart of this sleeping one." The girl wakes and says: "If you don't leave, I'll wake my father. Now go away."

Sharp Claws stamps the earth with his feet and makes his song again. When Grandfather hears this, he blows hard through the rhubarb shoot. It makes the earth under the girl rumble and shake. Carries-Bark cries:

"O please, Sharp Claws, tell underground spirit* to let me live." Grandfather speaks:

"O daughter, you have troubled underground spirit. He has given you many favours. But you had to show Sharp Claws that your feathers are brighter than Sun and Earth. Now you have angered the one who sets man and woman in balance on the log that does not tip."

Again Sharp Claws stamps the earth. And again Grandfather makes low groaning sounds by blowing into the rhubarb shoot.

"O Sharp Claws, don't let him take me under the ground. I have been like a young pup. Don't let him turn me into an underground person." Sharp Claws speaks:

"Underground spirit, Carries-Bark asks forgiveness. Let her live. Give her to me as my wife. Give us a long life together." He stamps his feet very softly on the ground. Grandfather slowly pulls the rhubarb away and steals back to his lodge.

The lovers embrace.

Based on narration by Wayne Lefthand / "Antelope"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

Love is won by great tricks.
-from the Stoney

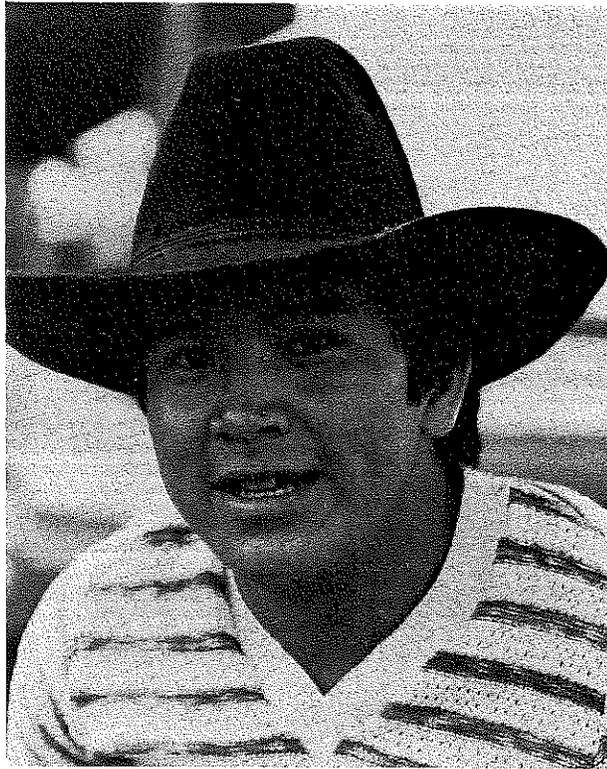


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Lionel Wildman
Stoney,
ranchhand,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: October 30, 1960
Mother's Name: Frances Wildman
Father's Name: Ken Fox

Origin of Morning Star

In the beginning, Great Mystery sang into being the stars* which are really persons living up in Sky.* In his wisdom, Great Mystery gave each star person the task to uphold the sacred light of the sky country.

Great Mystery asks two star brothers, Blue Star and White Star, to journey down to earth to the lands of the Stonies. These two brothers bear with them the teachings of the Great Mystery: The celestial rituals are to be observed in certain ways by the people to ensure that the sky will continue to uphold the sacred light.

The Stonies receive Blue Star and White Star with much ceremony. That evening the people bring out their finest smoked meats. Starlight, the Stoney Chief, has two beautiful daughters, Little-Striped-Wing and Fisher-Calling-Woman. After the feast and council, the star brothers gift the chief with many sky robes. They show the Stonies how to make sacred spirit bundles. The brothers fall in love with the two Stoney women and take the daughters of Starlight as their wives. After four days of feasting, the brothers return to their sky lodges with their new Stoney wives.

At first, all is well. But when Little-Striped-Wing and Fisher-Calling-Woman see that they must always stay in one position, they become very unhappy. All they can do is lie down and then stand up in the sky lodge. The sisters send messages* back and forth to each other across the stars. Fisher-Calling-Woman, the elder sister speaks:

"My sister, after four years, I am bored and cramped. And I am lonely for our people. It is a wonderful thing that we do not have to carry water, gather wood, smoke meat, and tend to the lodges. Yet I cannot bear it when I think that I shall never see Starlight again." Little-Striped-Wing, the younger sister, replies,

"Our work was never too hard for us, my sister. And we used to have fun. I loved leading the Round Dance. And the singing all night, until no one could stand. And what moments watching our warriors returning! I see now that the light of our fathers and elders grows weak. We must ask Blue Star and White Star to let us return for a visit." The star sisters then sing* a celestial song to Great Mystery.

The star brothers listen to the bundle of woes of the sisters. Great Mystery speaks:

"Let your wives return for forty days to the lodge of Starlight. But you, my sons, must remain in your star lodges where your brilliance serves as a gift of skyroof, beauty and direction to the Stonies. The heat from your star light would scorch the earth and kill off life if you stayed too long."

The star daughters return to the Stonies. A welcoming feast is held. Forty days pass. But the daughters do not tell Starlight that their appointed time on earth has passed and that they must return to the sky country. Instead, on the fortieth day, the sisters run away to where the rock begins to unfold. Here they hide.

Blue Star and White Star see that the sisters have broken their word. They know it is forbidden for a star to leave its sky post. Yet the brothers abandon their lodges. They descend to earth and begin to search for their wives. Meanwhile, some mountain badgers have hidden the women deep in the rock. The star brothers find nothing. They return to the sky country.

Great Mystery speaks to Blue Star:

"My son, you have taken a path that has brought much damage to life. You have given your word lightly. You shall then no longer sit in the great council of stars. You shall go to a low and shallow place and remain there for all time. You may see Fisher-Calling-Woman but only while Sun sleeps. You shall be known as 'The-Star-Which-Follows-The-Sun.'"

And speaking to White Star, Great Mystery says:

"You have done as your brother. You have upset the order of the sky country. The sky council of stars is no longer open to you. You too must go to a lowly place. However, you may sit close to earth so that you may watch over your Stoney wife. You may visit Little-Striped-Wing every night before Sun rakes his great fires. And you shall be the lowest of all stars. I name you 'Morning Star.'"

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*The stars are the sacred lodge poles
that hold up Grandfather Sky.*
-from the Stoney

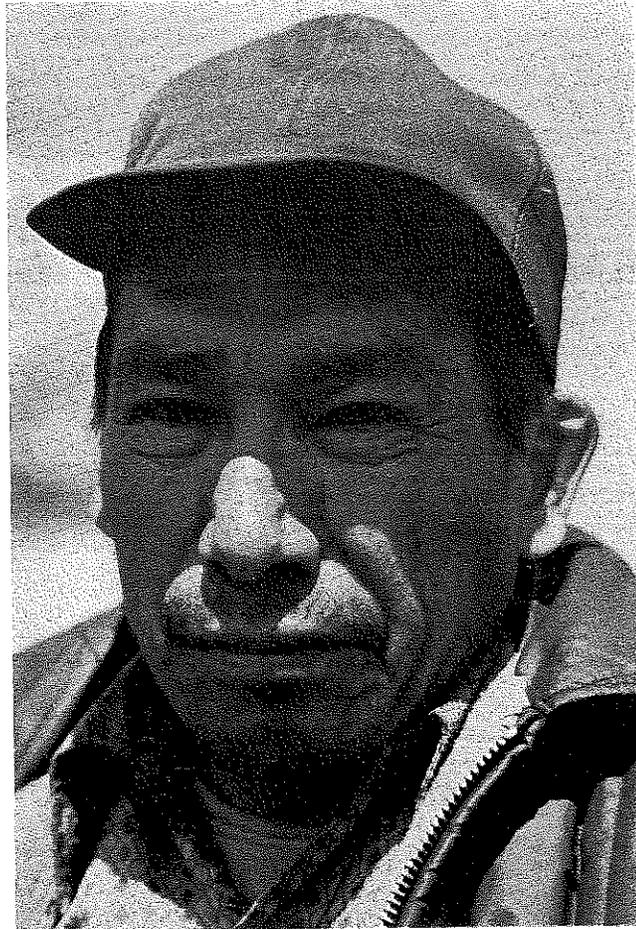


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Fred Chiniquay
Stoney,
post cutter,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: May 18, 1934
Mother's Name: Mary Jean Chiniquay
Father's Name: Maurice Chiniquay

Moccasin Carrier

It is the moon of the scattering winter stars.

Standing Horn leads some Stoney hunters on a buffalo hunt.

As they leave, a spirit man says:

"Accept the way of the hunt whether it leads to feast or famine."

Moccasin Carrier, who has seen eleven winters, is setting off with the men. His mother watches them walk over the horizon. Will she see her son again?

On the buffalo trail, Moccasin Carrier cannot keep up with the men and finally lags far behind. His father, Standing Horn, wearing a scalp shirt,* is heading the buffalo party. And he can see that his son is slow. But the youth is among warriors now. And he cannot be given the softness and greenness of a boy. Here a youth must keep up with the men or perish. But Standing Horn does not turn his head to see where his son follows.

Badger Pawing, one of the hunters, also slows. His leg begins to swell and becomes very bad. And soon he is too lame to walk. But the others cannot stop for him. For the tribe comes first. And a hunter looks to the people. And these bowmen look only to the tribe. An instant decision is made to go on without him. Moccasin Carrier will stay behind and care for Badger Pawing. The others walk on.

But the buffalo sighted by the scouts are not to be found. Their tracks end nowhere. And so the hunters turn back. On the way back, they see two persons sleeping on the prairie. When the buffalo leader approaches, he sees that his son and the lame man have been gored to death. Buffalo tracks surround the bodies. The father, Standing Horn, draws his hunting knife and cuts off his two great braids and the third small braid and makes gashes all over his body until he is running in his own blood. He touches Moccasin Carrier with his warm blood until his son's body is a dried red bundle. Singing the death song to Great Mystery, Standing Horn raises his son to Sky and offers his body to *Waheamba*, Sun. Standing Horn vows to Sun that he will fall from hunger before he will give up the search to find the one-who-has-gored-a-man. His song shakes the prairie and he asks Great Eagle to give him a power to find the herd.

It is treeless and there is no place to build a death scaffold. There is no cave for the bodies of Moccasin Carrier and Badger Pawing. Standing Horn says they will carry the bodies to a place of flat-lying rocks for burial.

But as they are about to lift Moccasin Carrier, Standing Horn shouts for them to stop. They circle the dead youth and see one of Moccasin Carrier's death fingers locked and clearly pointing to the south. After burying these, they follow the pointing until they come upon a new path hidden by surface rock. Many buffalo have come this way. Towards sundown they sight the stragglers of the herd. They set watches on the buttes and camp under the burning stars which are the mighty hunters of the eastern sky.

With Morning Star, the hunters are in position. Waving robes and shouting, the herd is driven towards the best bow hunters. Many shaggy ones fall. Some are wounded.

Standing Horn sees the herd father and runs after it. But it lowers its head and stampedes away. Just as it is getting too far to pursue, it stumbles and falls. It kicks its feet and becomes still. It never rises. The Stoney hunters run over and see a prairie rattlesnake disappear into some flat-lying rocks where it had struck the father buffalo as it stood with human blood on its beard.

"Moccasin Carrier's spirit is free," Standing Horn begins to sing in his spirit release song to Great Eagle.

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*A hunter looks to the people first.
Himself, last, always.*
-from the Stoney

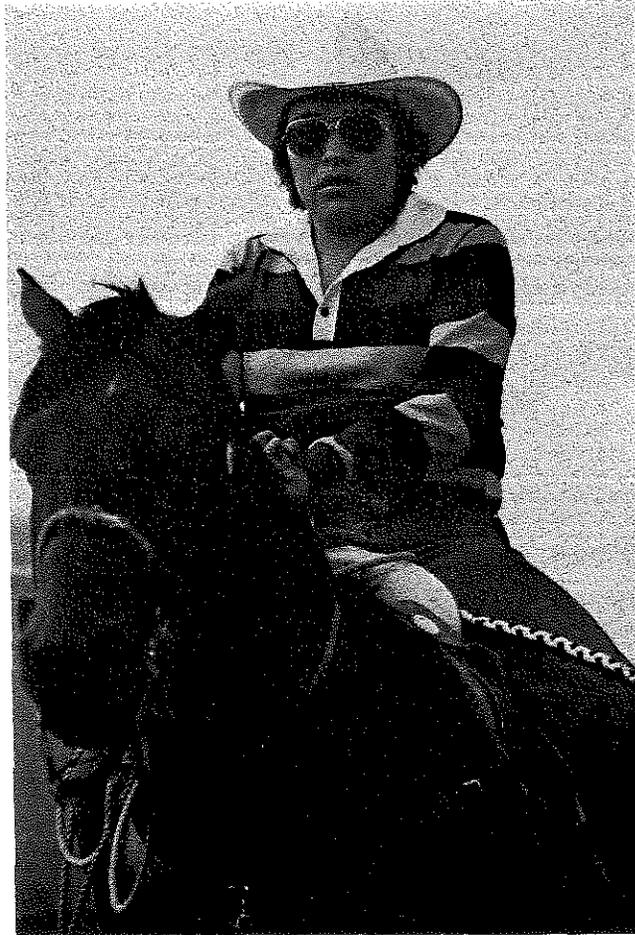


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Alvin Dixon
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: September 17, 1961
Mother's Name: Annie Dixon
Father's Name: Grady Rollingmud

Dog Ribs and Moon Woman

It is the moon when the wild prairie rose* blooms in her five pink lips.

Long ago, Sun, *Waheamba*, had a beautiful daughter, Moon Woman, whom he sent to dwell among the Stoney people.

Dog Ribs is an orphan youth who lives at the edge of a Stoney camp. He has no meat and no robes and no spirit dogs.* He has a bad scar across his face. Dog Ribs falls in love with Moon Woman. She is the most beautiful woman he has ever seen. Dog Ribs often hides behind rocks and trees just to watch Moon Woman pass by.

One day, Dog Ribs summons up his courage. As Moon Woman walks by he speaks to her:

"I dream of you. You make my heart dance. I would have you for my wife." Moon Woman smiles: "You must receive *Waheamba's* consent and blessing first."

Dog Ribs goes to the spirit man. How can he meet the mighty *Waheamba* who is the first hunter of the sky? Dog Ribs is told to sing and fast for four days. On the fourth day, he dreams of *Waheamba*. Great Eagle appears before Dog Ribs:

"Your open heart has brought me here, my son. Your song is pure. If your wish to meet with *Waheamba* is strong and pure, I will take you up to Sky." Great Eagle rises up into the white clouds with Dog Ribs on his back. They cross the sky regions where the sacred ones dwell. At last, Great Eagle descends in front of a pure white lodge. He says to Dog Ribs:

"Sun is journeying across Sky. He will return when Grandmother Earth sleeps. We must stay here until he makes his great circle."

They wait. Suddenly there are mountains of light. Great Eagle warns:

"No mortal may look into *Waheamba* for his power is fire. You must not enter the white lodge until we summon you."

As *Waheamba* enters the white lodge, only the wings of Great Eagle can shield Dog Ribs from the unbearable white light. Sun speaks:

"Great Eagle, I am pleased that you come to sit with me. What do you bring?"

"*Waheamba*, I bring Dog Ribs, a Stoney orphan who has become pure to stand before you. His song is clear. His heart is free. Hear him, *Waheamba!*" Dog Ribs enters.

"*Waheamba*, Sacred One, I have made my heart clear like water to stand in your presence. I am a mortal. But I have come to ask for your daughter, Moon Woman. I shall honour her as I honour you."

Waheamba speaks:

"Dog Ribs, I will sit down with Moon Woman. She will speak from her heart."

When the morning stars fold up their sleeping robes, *Waheamba* journeys to the Stoney camp. Moon Woman is just returning from her morning bath. They sit in a grove of wild prairie roses.

"O Father, yes, I want to be the wife of Dog Ribs. But though his spirit is strong, his meat racks are empty. And the people laugh at the deep scar on his face. Would you bring him a medicine power?"

That evening, *Waheamba* returns to his white lodge. He sits with Dog Ribs.

"Moon Woman is yours. But I must be certain that your heart is warm and that you will bring her honour, always."

"How can I open my heart?" the Stoney asks.

"You must make sacrifice to me. It will be long and you will suffer much, but it is the only path to the truth."

Dog Ribs promises:

"I will stand and sacrifice, for you, for her, for the tribe. I will make the first Sun Dance on earth."

Based on narration by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*The man who kills is only a taker,
But the man who heals is a giver.*

*In the beginning, when Bear was a Stoney,
did his giving not make a people strong as stones?*
-from the Stoney

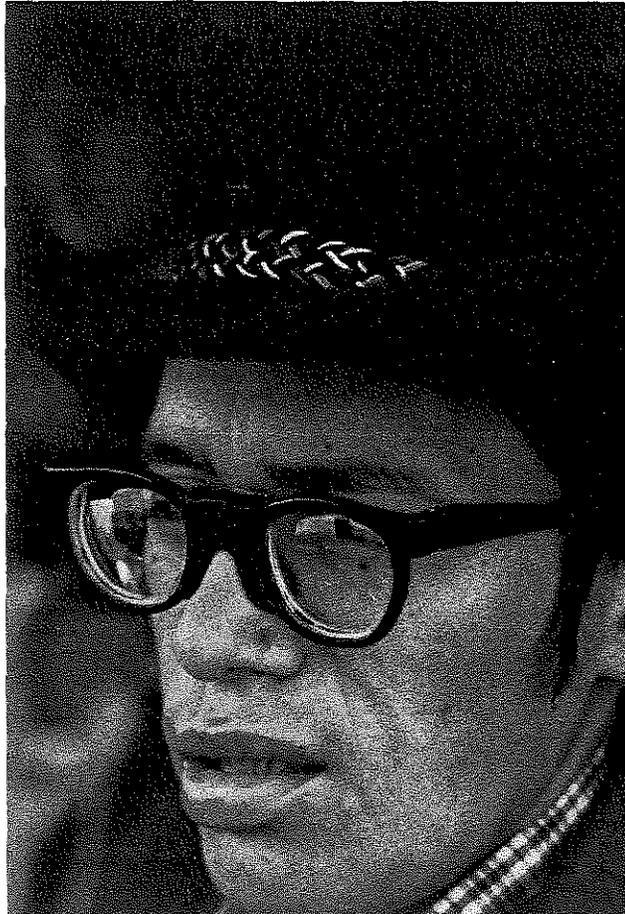


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Ed Halloway
Stoney,
rancher,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: August 16, 1950
Mother's Name: Elsie Halloway
Father's Name: Eddie Halloway, Sr.

The Sun Dance, *Ti Jarubi Chubi*, “Make-a-Lodge-for-Sacred-Ways”

part two

It is the stars that keep the earth from falling into outer ocean.

And as the star people slowly come out of their sky lodges, *Waheamba* brings a great dream to Dog Ribs.

In the dream, Great Eagle watches over the first Sun Dance sacrifice.

In the Sun Dance dream, the Stonies sing, dance, make offerings and sacrifice to receive the spirit of the Great Mystery.

In the Sun Dance dream, a Stoney vowing-woman-who-is-pure, promises Sun to lead a Sun Lodge ceremony.

Four singers carrying four hand drums open four days of songs.

A sacred cottonwood tree is found. And cut down. The falling tree is caught by many pole bearers. The cuts in the tree are healed with vermillion. A great procession of people shouting, singing, waving, running, arrive in camp, ahead of the tree. These carry cottonwood boughs of greenness for the sides of the Sun Lodge. The sacred centre pole to uphold the Sun Dance Lodge is brought into the camp. The people raise the centre pole. Then raise the Sun Lodge over it. Entrance faces East. The Sun Lodge is at the centre of the circle of Stoney lodges. A black buffalo tail hangs from the centre pole. Four buffalo skulls face East.

For four days the people sing from sunrise to sun-fall. Sacred societies open the ceremonies and rites with honouring songs to Sun, Thunder, Great White Buffalo, and Great Eagle. Dancers carrying eaglewing fans, hand drums, and rattles blow on eaglebone whistles. Drummers sit in a quarter moon.

The vowing spirit woman, made pure by rubbing sage leaves and sage smoke and chewing sage, becomes the Sun Lodge Woman. Paints that cover her are from the sacred red earth and white earth. She upholds the old ways. She is owner and keeper of spirit bundles. She wears a white robe. None can see her face.

Many sacred songs* are sung in a sacred way. In the singing, the Sun Dance Woman prepares many buffalo tongues. One of the sacred buffalo tongues is carried in a sacred circle around the hoop of lodges.

It rests on sagegrass and braids of sweetgrass. The people sing praise. Spirit women work on the buffalo tongues. Then the sacred-tongue-woman covers her face and conceals her sacredness. The people bring the Sun Dance Woman their offerings and gifts, such as pipes. The vowing spirit woman then cuts up one of the buffalo tongues and offers it to Sun. She feeds Sun the purity and honour which she is. Then the people eat of the sacred tongues.

Dog Ribs, the vowing man who upholds the teachings, speaks to the spirits. He vows to offer his body in a physical sacrifice to Sun. He sings for spiritual help from Sun. He will suffer before his people. He gives himself to Sun.

Great Eagle binds Dog Rib's wrists and ankles. The Stoney hangs from the air by rawhide thongs. Four buffalo skulls hang from his back. On the fourth day, he is free when the bear claws rip the flesh out of his body. *Pezutah Tawaeh*, the Keeper of the Sacred Herbs, appears and releases the medicines that give life. For it is the spirit that releases the body. *Pezutah Tawaeh* speaks:

“There is no higher sacrifice than to give up your blood and your spirit to Sun.”

The people offer pipes to Sun. Horses, incense, hides, are brought before Sun. Some offer rocks: Flint and sand rocks. Others set down buffalo skulls in front of the centre pole. Offerings of sacred bags and medicine bundles are made to Sun. The offerings become as the small fires of Sun.*

The Sun Dance is a sacred spirit lodge ceremony.

It is a sacrifice* to purify the tribe.

Sun sends dreams, heals.

For Sun is the origin of dreams.

Sun strengthens the hoop.

Based on interviews, discussions, and research studies.
Based also on narration by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

I own the earth and Sun owns me.
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Jeanette Ear
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1958
Mother's Name: Doris Dixon
Father's Name: Stewart Dixon

Gift of the Long-Necked Swans

It is the moon when the people take down lodges to follow the-shaggy-ones.

Stoney children are playing hoop games. They wander far away from the lodges. They are gone a long time. It grows dark. When the children return, the camp has moved. The children begin to tremble and cry.

Little Striped One carries her little brother, Gopher Belly, on her back. They are all alone in the black wilderness. She walks until she sees a fire. A single lodge sits just ahead.

An old woman sits beside the fire.

"My little pups, where do you come from? Why do your little moccasins walk in the middle of the night? Come inside. I am Scabby Crow. You will stay the night here."

But the old woman is a cruel torturess. And as the days go by, she makes Little Striped One work very hard, and beats her with willows all day. On the fourth day, Little Striped One takes up Gopher Belly and strips of meat on her back and runs away.

When Scabby Crow discovers that Little Striped One has fled, she picks up her stone club and chases after her. Little Striped One is running very hard. She sings to the buffalo spirit. Soon she meets a buffalo head. The buffalo head speaks:

"You must hurry. The old woman wants only your blood. You will see the swans by the river. Be kind to these. Hear the swans. Cross the great river. Your people are four days to the west. Go now."

Little Striped One runs to the Little Elbow River.* She sings to the river spirit. The current is swollen with swiftness. Suddenly two swans land beside her. They have very long necks.

"Scabby Crow, is coming fast. The old witch will boil us in bearfat. We must cross here," the girl pleads. The swans say:

"Be kind, Little Striped One, and rub our heads. Scratch our skulls just at the backs of our necks." The Stoney girl takes the swan's heads into her little hands and begins to spread the neck down back-and-forth. As she rubs, the necks of the swans begin to grow into hard and tall and long bridges like lodgepoles.

Then one swan swims to the other side of the river. And she stretches out her long thick neck across the water. The other swan stretches out his long firm neck to meet the first swan. A bony-looking arch is made across the river. The she-swan beckons to the little girl to cross. Stepping gently on the necks of the swans, Little Striped One carries her little brother over the water.

Meanwhile, Scabby Crow, the old tortured spirit, comes to the buffalo head.

"Where are those little snakes?" demands Scabby Crow.

"They belong to me. The girl is lazy. The boy smells bad like rotten cream. They are good for nothing. Which way have they gone?" The buffalo head says nothing. Scabby Crow is angry at existence. She smashes the buffalo head with her stone club.

Scabby Crow comes to the deep river. She sees that it is too swift to cross. The swans are sleeping nearby.

"Take me across this river at once," she shouts at the swans.

"O, grandmother, sky has given us a day with not-a-cloud. Why are you angry at existence? Before we cross, rub our heads just a little first," ask the swans. The torturess whacks the swans with her stone club to get them on their feet. The swans rise and stretch their great white necks to make a passage over the river. The old woman steps harshly over their necks. But when she is half way across, the swans quickly withdraw their heads and she falls into the swirling river. The current spirits pull her down and she drowns.

After four days, the buffalo head appears to Little Striped One. The little girl sights her mother's lodge in the distance at Raspberry Ridge.*

Based on narration by Mary Lefthand / "Small Girl"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*I give you kindness
because my ancestors
were snow swans too.*
-from the Stoney

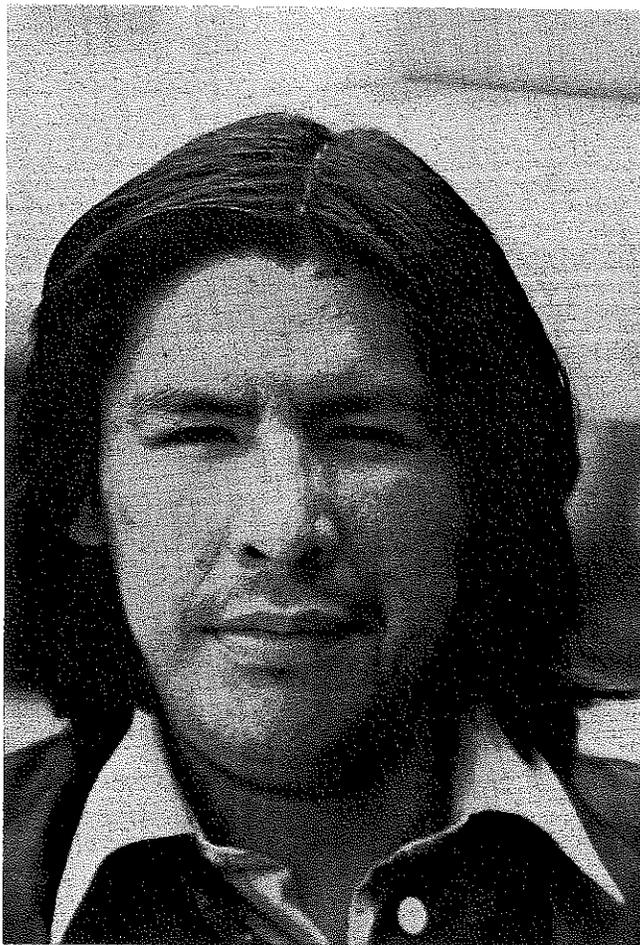


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Michael Crowchief
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: July 16, 1956
Mother's Name: Dolly Morin
Father's Name: Douglas Crowchief

No-Nose Woman

It is the duck-moulting-moon.*

Red Water, a proud, beautiful Stoney woman is filling her father's water bags when a Crow warrior surprises her by the reeds and carries her off.

He is Elk Beater, fearless. With the swiftest horse in the tribe, he takes her back to his own people, and makes her his second wife.*

Elk Bearer's first wife is a stay-within-the-lodge-Crow, who is just as fearless and looks only to please her husband. Red Water carries water, fleshes hides, cooks meat, sews buckskin, looks after horses. The Crows do not talk to her, often laugh at her, and sometimes beat her.

After the first great sun, Red Water does not count one person as friend here. Only a woman like her, who lives at the edge of camp, No-Nose Woman, shows warmth. Her husband one day accuses her of a lover who is not there and so cuts off her nose. The tribe scorns this one. Both women wear the robes of shame. The people laugh at these. Children point at these two.

Throughout the ripening moons, Red Water and No-Nose Woman become close.

One day, while the men are away, No-Nose Woman and Red Water run away. Sun sets.

Elk Bearer wakes in the middle of the night when the lodge fire has gone out. When he sees that his serving-wife has taken his finest horse, he quickly mounts up.

"She will walk with only one hand this day," he vows.

Red Water and No-Nose ride doubleback on Elk Bearer's best buffalo horse. They head towards the shining mountains. Red Water knows that Elk Bearer will take his knife to her if he catches them. They ride all night. With first sun, they hide near a river bed.

Hiding in the river bush, Red Water and No-Nose Woman are still.

Suddenly they hear the footfall of a horse on the river stones.

No-Nose Woman sings a sacred song to South Wind. The wind spirit listens and sends down a great duststorm. The dustwind slams into Elk Bearer and he cannot see the women almost in front of him. He rides on but the stormwind makes him circle nowhere. The wind becomes unbearable and Elk Bearer turns his horse around and heads back.

The women wait. When they are sure that Elk Bearer is gone, they begin to sing the thanksgiving song to South Wind. They sing together, then No-Nose Woman sings her special song alone. South Winds makes the sky clear. The women mount up and ride west. They ride for three suns. They ride until they become sore from barebacking. And they are losing their strength from hunger.

On the fourth day out, they sight a little mound of earth near a creek.

"Look, someone has cached a kill here until he could return for the rest," No-Nose Woman says.

The women uncover a slain deer. They sing to Grandmother Earth for their good fortune. They sing to South Wind and to the spirit of Deer. Then they make a fire and feast on the deermeat.

On the fifth day, the women sight the Stoney camp.

The people welcome Red Water and No-Nose with much celebration.

Based on narration by Mary Lefthand / "Small Girl"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*It is only a day ago that my grandfathers
shot killing arrows into the ribs of the black buffalo,*

*It is only a day ago under the blessing of Morning Star that my brothers
took horses from the ones-who-wear-scabby-ropes.*

*It is only a day ago that my people heard
the spirits singing in the stone-faced, knife-cut banks.*

*My ears know that the earth speaks through my forefathers.
My hands tell me the body of my ancestors is my own body.*

-from the Stoney

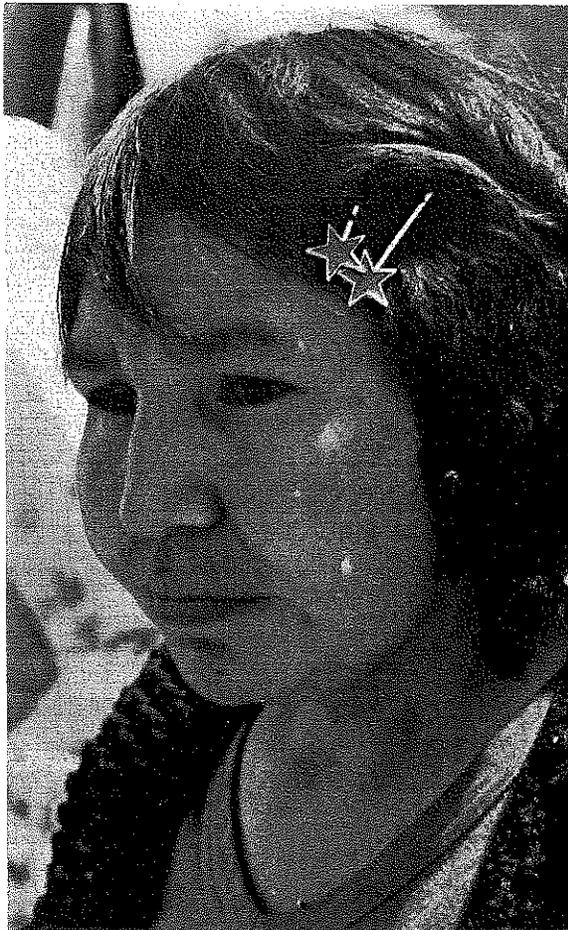


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Barbara Simeon
Stoney,
housewife,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: January 3, 1948
Mother's Name: Edna Simeon
Father's Name: Charlie Simeon

Big Skunk and his Poison Fog

It is the red-berries-moon.*

Big Skunk, *Seejabnam Taga*, walks in the Moose Mountain* summer.

Big Skunk is a medicine person who stands as tall as a buffalo bull. And he is as fierce as Badger. The sacs of his yellow fog hold many poison medicines. He would crush the other animal people and laugh. He would walk the earth and spray his foul yellow fog on his brothers. And when he was feeling bad, he would spray the Stonies too. O, it made an awful smell. The persons who would be caught by his evil spray cloud would always die slowly.

One day, Big Skunk sees the Stonies raising their lodges on the east shore of Lake Minnewanka (Lake of Water-Spirits),* and heads for their camp. When the Stonies see Big Skunk coming, they run away into the hills. Only grandmother One Eye, and her grandson cannot run. And suddenly in all the dust and shouting, the camp is empty.

Grandmother One Eye bundles up grandchild in a moss bag.

"You watch the brush with the eyes of a little hawk. If you see anything coming behind us, make the hawk cry to me." With grandchild tied to her back, grandmother starts out after the rest of the people.

Big Skunk enters the empty Stoney camp. He peers inside each lodge.

"O my friends. They are all gone. I wonder what made them leave in such a hurry?"

Big Skunk eats up all the pemmican and deermeat and berries. After his belly almost cracks, Big Skunk follows the human tracks leading into the hills.

Soon, grandchild sees something moving not far behind grandmother. Grandson sharpens his hawk eyes;

"Eeee... Eeee... Grandmother, Big Skunk is coming. He's bigger than Grizzly."

There is no place to hide.

"We must trick Big Skunk," says Grandmother One Eye. "He won't spray anything that's dead. Lie down and be still."

Big Skunk sees them both lying on the earth. He comes very close and begins to sniff the earth around the old woman and the child.

"O, Grandmother," says Big Skunk, "what has happened? Has someone clubbed you and this little boy? Has someone shot arrows into you?"

Grandmother One Eye and the boy do not breathe.

"O Grandmother," says Big Skunk, as he nudges her body with his paw, "your body is still warm. You couldn't have been killed very long ago."

The two Stonies do not move.

"O, the air is far from sweet here," Big Skunk says. "I'm going to search your body for the wound." He begins to dig his nose into the old woman. When he turns her head around, Big Skunk gasps.

"O grandmother, I see a big hole down there. That must be where somebody shot you. And they have clubbed your eye right out of your head. Poor old woman."

Big Skunk leaves them.

He begins to nose the trail left by the other Stonies.*

Based on narration by Wayne Lefthand / "Antelope"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*If you ask too many questions your head will roll
and not stop until it reaches the fox whose tongue is long.*
-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

John Poucette
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: September 16, 1940
Mother's Name: Jean Poucette
Father's Name: John Poucette, Sr.

First Sky Takes a Sits-by-the-Fire-Woman

It is the summer moon when bear slaps-salmon-out-of-the-water.

First Sky, a Stoney youth-becoming-a-man, lives with his mother, Sweetgrass, a spirit woman. They raise their lodge on the Rosebud River.* But nothing will make First Sky happy.

One day, Sweetgrass says,
"The other Stonies take a sits-by-the-fire-woman. Why do you look into the lodge fire alone?"

First Sky goes to sit with the Chief, Many-Bears-Coming. The Chief says,
"You have good raiding honours. Why do you bury your honours? My youngest daughter works only inside the lodge. White Elk would make a good sits-by-the-fire-woman."

First Sky offers his honours and horses for White Elk. The Chief warns First Sky to watch the girl if ever she goes outside the lodge.

Early one morning, the young wife of First Sky goes down to the river to fill her hide bags with water. First Sky is still sleeping. White Elk is alone and singing to the spirits of first light. Suddenly, Underground-Beast appears wet with slime and golden horns blazing. He seizes White Elk. The hide bags fall into the river.

Morning passes. But White Elk does not return. First Sky searches everywhere. He asks the Four Winds. He calls down Hawk. He sings to young-cropped-tail.* He sings to moon. But these were also asleep. First Sky returns, grieving, to camp. Then he shares a vision with Sweetgrass: First Sky asks his mother to prepare her lodge for guests are soon to arrive.

In the vision, four warriors enter the lodge. But Sweetgrass does not know which one is her son for they all look exactly alike. Sweetgrass makes a test to see which one is her son. She uses her medicines and tells the warriors,

"The wife of my son is being held underground. She is the captive of the one-who-lives-under-the-earth. Find the big white stone which sits near the river. You must move the stone. It opens into an entrance inside the earth. The underground-one is at his hunt today. The white stone has spoken this to me."

The first warrior goes to the stone. He laughs that it will be easy to move the white stone. But he cannot pick up the white stone.

"It is too heavy," he says. The second warrior tries to smash the stone with his war club. But he pounds too hard and the stone looks at him.

"The stone is too hard," he says. The third warrior makes smoke to dissolve the stone. But he forgets to offer the smoke to the winds.

"The stone is full of evil," he says.

Four lightning bolts strike nearby. The sky is black. Thunder shakes the earth.

The fourth warrior goes to this place. He takes a lightning bolt and places it in his quiver. Then he returns to the big white stone. He places the thunderbolt in his bow and raises his eyes to Sun. He releases the thunderbolt. There is much smoke and fire. When it clears, there is a large hole in the stone. He goes inside. Soon First Sky walks out with his wife, White Elk, who is weeping with joy.

That evening, Many-Bears-Coming speaks to First Sky,

"You have a strong vision power working for you. I am old and weak. You shall lead our people.

But First Sky says,

"I do not want to be chief over any person. I do not seek power. I seek rest. There are many people in our camp. You must go to these."

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*May all things be as in the ancestral moons
when our backsides were to the lodge fires
and our daughters wore coils of
sweetgrass necklaces.*

-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Beverly Lefthand
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1966
Father's Name: Wayne Lefthand

Spotted Bear and the Death Lodge

It is the moon of sudden storms.

Passing Blizzard Lake,* Stoney hunters head for the high prairie.

Suddenly a cold wind comes up. An early storm comes hard with no warning. The snow spirit bares his teeth and scatters the bowmen with blinding snow.

Spotted Bear, one of the hunters, is blown around in circles in the howling snowwind. Then, above the storm, Spotted Bear hears the sound of someone beating a drum.

"Death is tricking my ears," he whispers.

He stumbles towards the drumming until, at last, he sees a death lodge before him. The entrance hide flap, as is the custom, is sewn up from the outside to discourage strangers or coyotes. Spotted Bear undoes the laces and enters the lodge.

Inside, he sees a dead man dressed in fine skins lying on a buffalo robe. A medicine hand drum rests in his lap. Beside the dead man are his pipe in a fine otter bag, many sacs of kinnikinnik, a fine hunting bow, a bone knife with carvings of the male father buffalo, many killing arrows, water sacs, pemmican bags, and bowls of gooseberries and saskatoons. A great medicine bundle hangs near the dead one. Much firewood is stored to the west end of the lodge. Everywhere, there are robes and skins of bear, ermine, goat and wolverine. These, the warrior possessions of a hunter spirit.

For it is said that the spirit of a fallen hunter needs these things for its spirit journey. And in the passage into the spirit world, the release of the hunter spirit must honour all the old rites. It is also said that the spirit of the dead person may stay in the death lodge for a few days before it makes its way to the spirit world.

Spotted Bear takes some twigs and branches to light a fire. But each time his flint makes a flame, the dead man blows it out.

Spotted Bear speaks to the dead man,

"Drum-beater, my brother, you are dead and I am alive. The storm almost killed me. If I go out into the storm, I will become as grass-in-spring. If I do not light this fire, I will soon join your spirit. Let the

fire warm our cold bones. Let me stay one night with you here. I am dead without you. My hand will not rest on your belongings. Give me a sign if I may stay this night . . ."

The dead man looks at him but says nothing.

After the fourth time, Spotted Bear gets the fire going. Then he boils some wild tea leaves. He sits down to herbal tea and to feast on pemmican, berries and bannock.* He offers the dead one his pipe, tea and meat. After a pipe, Spotted Bear falls asleep.

In the morning, the storm passes.

Spotted Bear replaces the firewood. He fills the water sacs. And he gives the dead one his pipe and his finest killing arrows and moosehide quiver.

As he is leaving, he turns and says to the dead man, "Dead one, my brother. You have carried death on your back for me. Without your drumming in the storm, I would be as buffalo grass with the spring moons. My brother, you are my face in clear water. You have brought ancestral generosity from the other side of life. I give you my old time pipe and my best killing arrows and quiver. You are unknown. You are mystery. Goodnight old man."

As Spotted Bear sews up the lodge flap, he sees that the dead one's tea bowl is empty and his meat is gone. Still, the dead one says nothing.

As he mounts a butte, Spotted Bear hears a distinct muffled hand drum.

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand / "Fish Child"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Death is trackless
like a mountain cat
on boulders.*

-from the Stoney



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Rose Wesley
Stoney,
housewife,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: October 8, 1932
Mother's Name: Mary Jean Wesley
Father's Name: Moses Wesley

Mnazan, Wolverine and the Sacred Fire

The timber moon shows the weasels the rabbit trails. In the old days, when the world is just made, *Mnazan*, Wolverine, the eldest of the dog nation, goes to live with his younger brothers, the Wolves.*

Mnazan lives in the timber mountains. He nests in mosses and pine cones. His big flat paws keep him from sinking in the snow. He is not a fast runner, but he will chase a deer day after day, for three or four suns, until it falls.

Mnazan journeys to the eastern slopes of *Yahey Yamnaska*.* It is bitter winter moon. He joins the Wolves asleep in a big circle. But *Mnazan* is freezing. The open hills are just too cold for him. The Wolves tell *Mnazan*,

"Here, eldest brother, sleep in the middle of our circle." And so the Wolves point their bushy tails towards the centre and keep *Mnazan* warm. *Mnazan* wonders how their tails can be so warm.

When Sun arrives in the morning, the Wolf leader speaks,

"We, the wolf nation, keep the sacred power of fire in our tails." Then the Wolves gather twigs and branches, the Wolf leader jumps over the woodpile. On the fourth jump, the woodpile suddenly bursts into flame. A big fire is roaring. *Mnazan* says, "My brothers, teach me the secrets. I want to receive the gift of fire." The Wolf leader says, "You must go alone and circle the earth. When you come back, you will be ready to receive our teaching."

Mnazan is gone four great suns. But the Wolves know that he will return one day, for *Mnazan* never gives up the hunt for something that he wants with all his timber mountain heart.

One evening, *Mnazan* comes back to *Yahey Yamnaska*, from which he started out many years ago. And *Mnazan* is singing his great victory song to the Wolves:

"Oldest of the dog nation am I, with jaw-breaking strength and breath, in the day and night, to pursue my prey without end."

The Wolf nation holds an honouring feast for *Mnazan*. There is plenty of deer and rabbit meat. Then the Wolf leader grows solemn:

"Fire is sacred. It is a gift from *Waka Taga*. Fire brings the gift of speaking. This comes from the mouth of Sun. Look into the great rim of Sun. There, you see the fireglow of words that are hoops between all things. And this fire-hoop and fire-wave passes from Sun and goes through our mouths. And it is most powerful in tail-person.* This is how we talk with one another. Without it we have no warmth. For we are already Sun. Every day Sun gives his fires. The Sun circle-glow gives meaning to all things. We can stay open to this fire, or we can wedge up the flow with hard pegs."

One by one, the Wolves show *Mnazan* how the wave of fire passes through their bodies. *Mnazan* sees the small sacred circles of flame leaping between his brothers. *Mnazan* understands. Then, one by one, each of the Wolves blesses *Mnazan* by sprinkling deerfat and cedar leaves on his paws and ears and tongue. The flaming-wave enters *Mnazan's* body. Then the circle is broken and many farewells are sung out into the first light.

Alone, *Mnazan* makes his way slowly back into the northern forests.

In the moon of frost on the pines, *Mnazan* piles up many twigs and branches. Jumping over these, soon a fire is burning. But with morning, a great chinook arrives. Suddenly it is sunny and warm. The frost disappears. And *Mnazan* becomes lazy and remembers only the fire-working-for-him. He makes a fire when there is no need. He knows that he betrays the Wolf people.

And many mountains away, the Wolf nation can feel the abuse of the flaming powers. Again and again *Mnazan* jumps over a pile of brush, but it will not make flames. The Wolves make him lose his flaming powers.

The Wolves send icewinds and snowstorms down on *Mnazan*. *Mnazan* steals a squirrel's nest and hides under a circle of pine cones. The Wolves are angry and do not forgive *Mnazan*.

To this day, these do not meet as brothers.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*I have come to earth to care-for-the-other.
Without caring, all my dreams are dust.*
-from the Stoney

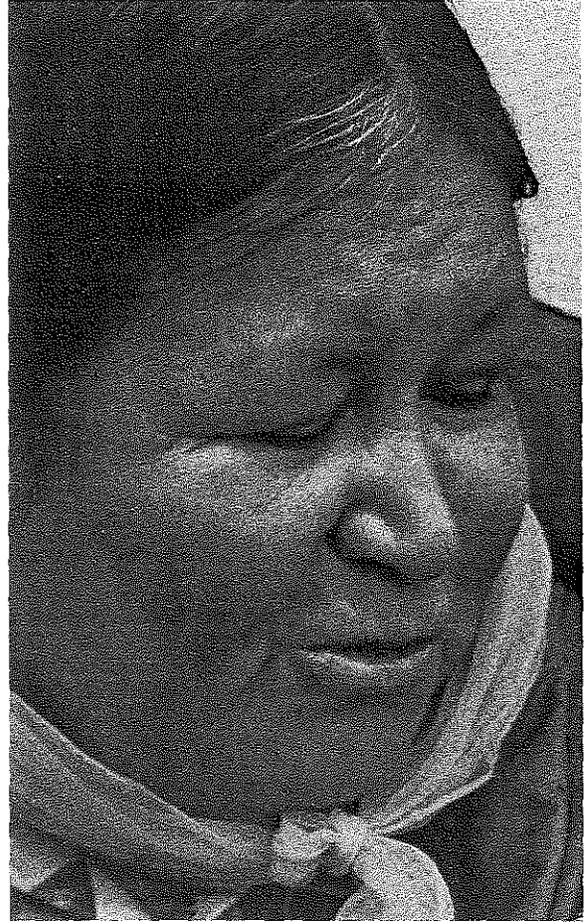


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Ruby Snow
Stoney,
housewife,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: May 10, 1930
Mother's Name: Cory Snow
Father's Name: Tom Snow

Isyo

It is the flower moon* when the wild prairie grouse mate.

Elk Tail has two wives, one young and one old. Many Rivers, the older wife, has a son, *Isyo*. Small Eyes, the younger wife, has no child and is jealous of *Isyo*.

One day, Small Eyes takes *Isyo* out hunting. The boy has now seen twelve winters. *Isyo* listens to the drumming sound of the mating dance of the prairie grouse. *Isyo* wounds a grouse and it runs into the river flat. Small Eyes runs after it and catches it. Then she raises her buckskin gown and allows the dying bird to scar her breasts and her neck.

That night, Small Eyes tells her husband, Elk Tail, that *Isyo* attacks her while they look for grouse. She brings a burning stick close to her body.

"*Isyo* will be grass of the hill in the morning," he says quietly. "No," begs Small Eyes. "Bring him pain, but not death."

When Sun sits on the mosses, Elk Tail tells *Isyo* to gather his bundles. They go to visit blind grandmothers who live where Sun sets. They walk to the end of the horizon where the two old ones live.

"Take care of these grandmothers," says Elk Tail as he leaves.

Isyo sees that the two, old, blind women have long, sharp horns on their elbows.

"Come inside, *Isyo*. We have food for you," the elbow-horned ones say. *Isyo* sits down. The lodge is filthy. The elbow-horned ones offer him no pipe. Instead, these give him bad meat that is moving-with-small-crawlers. It has a poison smell. *Isyo* gives it to a dog.

"Tell us when you rise to go out, *Isyo*. We must close the lodge-skin after you are gone," the two say.

"Grandmothers, your meat is good and now I must find my path," he says. *Isyo* hurls his bear robe through the lodge-flap opening. Suddenly the two old ones attack the sound-of-the-robe-brushing-the-lodge-flap with their terrible horned elbows. The bear robe is torn to shreds. *Isyo* watches as the blind ones kill each other in their fury.

Isyo puts a caribou robe over his shoulders. He rubs his body with sage. He walks along. Later he comes to a narrow stream. He sees a big dark cave. There is a rumbling sound. He hears big dogs barking. Suddenly a long-whiskered man jumps out of the cave. He is holding a big club in his hand. Many human hearts hang on a robe necklace from his neck. He

throws his big net lined with human scalps and then *Isyo* is inside. But as the long-whiskered one bends down to his dogs, *Isyo* turns himself into a weasel and jumps across the stream and leaps into an ermine hole.

After four great suns, *Isyo* is walking along when he hears the sound of someone gathering mushrooms. He steals up behind the pines. *Isyo* sees that it is his own mother, Many Rivers. She is grieving for her son. A whiskeyjack calls out to her: "Stoney Woman, why do you mourn? I see your son. *Isyo* is coming. He is here."

Many Rivers looks around. *Isyo* stands before her. There is much hugging and touching. Many Rivers can see that her son is now a mighty warrior. He wears the robe of mountain cougar. Many Rivers tells him how he was betrayed by Small Eyes who now fears his ghost.

When Sun sits on the smoke flap of his great lodge, *Isyo* appears in the camp of his father, Elk Tail. Suddenly, *Isyo* is ablaze in white skins. He appears out of nowhere and stands in the middle of the camp with a bow in his hand. Elk Tail stops in his tracks. "*Isyo*, we had given you up for dead. A big storm killed the two old grandmothers. But I am happy that you have come back." Elk Tail shakes with fear. That night *Isyo* stays in the lodge of Many Rivers. Many Rivers tells him that Small Eyes Woman has gone mad. And Elk Tail sits on fear for his life.

In the morning, *Isyo* walks through the centre of the camping singing:

"O, a world is set on fire."

The people hide from *Isyo*. *Isyo* takes his great bow and two arrows. He shoots a red arrow into his father's lodge. It is set ablaze.

His father grabs Small Eyes and they run to a tree hollow. *Isyo* releases a blue arrow into the trees. Immediately, the hollow is on fire with the two figures.

"This fire heals a woman's curved neck," *Isyo* sings as they die.

Based on narration by Wayne Lefthand / "Antelope"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*I am here to honour the pipe,
to celebrate the earth,
to carry the old ways on my back,
to be alive in Sun and Sky.*
-from the Stoney

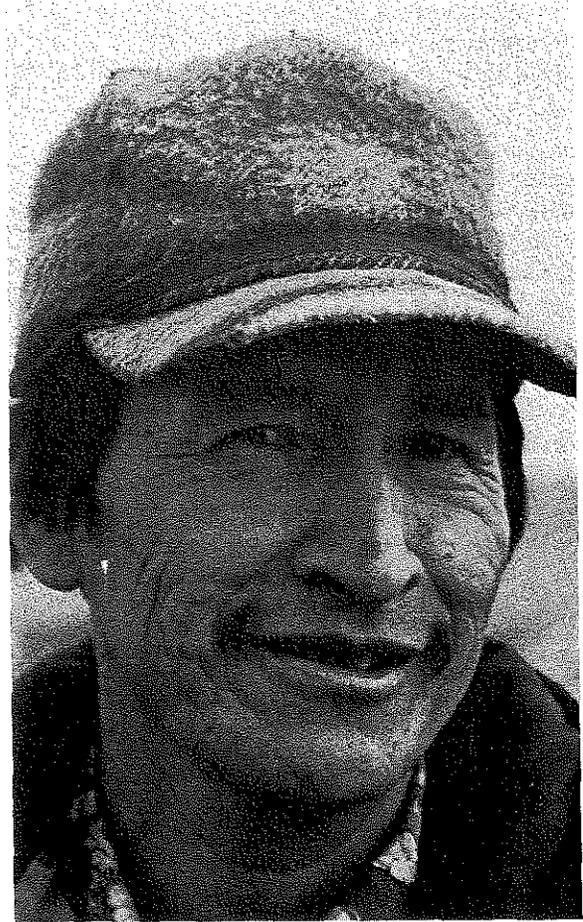


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

John Lefthand
Stoney,
ranch foreman,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: August 26, 1939
Mother's Name: Mary Lefthand
Father's Name: Mark Lefthand

Calf Child and Elk Bone

It is the white moon of the great snow horse whose roots are in Sky.

Long ago, a Stoney Chief, Falling Thunder, had a beautiful daughter, Calf Child. Many braves would come to win her. But she would have no men.

Elk Bone is the son of a minor Stoney Chief, Legs-Not-Moving. Elk Bone is a hard and fast fighter, handsome and fleet. He dreams of Calf Child. In the dream, a great white horse brings them together.

One day, Elk Bone watches Calf Child bring water pouches down to the stream. He steps quietly in her path:

"No woman is as pretty as you are. I would fight hard to have you as my wife." But Calf Child does not look at him. She carries her water bags as if he were not there. Just before her father's lodge, she turns back for a look. Something stirs in her. She sees that Elk Bone is pure and wears his honours proudly. She feels bad to walk past him.

As the red disc of the Sun sits on Grandmother Earth's shoulder, the tribe prepares the pipe wrapped for war against the corn eaters to the south. Calf Child sees Elk Bone, a hawk painted boldly on his hide shield. Mounted on his stallion, his head high, he is ready to die for his people. A power bundle sits in his hair. Calf Child goes to her father's lodge and puts on her finest deerskin robe. When the warriors leave, she follows them for a little, waving her eagle fan. Soon her beloved is no more than a moving disc.

The day comes when there is a great fight full of death and blood and glory.

Many moons later, the Stoney fighters return. Calf Child is watching. She waits for only one of these. But he does not come back. She is told that he has gone down in the clash. It is not known if he is dead or captured. It may be that the corn eaters take him for one of their own wounded and so bring him back to their camp. Calf Child rushes down to the river. She is sobbing and choking.

That night, she steals away for the enemy camp. After much walking, she sees the sleeping lodges of the corn eaters. Soon she is moving quickly from lodge to lodge. Finally she sees Elk Bone asleep on

some dark robes. With her hand to his lips, she wakes him.

"Let's go now," she whispers.

"You! O, Calf Child, I have an arrow in my leg. I cannot walk. When these corn eaters find out who I am, they will kill us both. Get away while you can. Now!" he says.

"I am here to bring you back. And we have spoken. When a Stoney woman has spoken with a Stoney man - I don't need to tell you our custom. We cannot be separated now. I will carry you on my back."

In the darkness, she carries him past the sleeping enemy. Dawn comes rapidly. His leg is swelling badly. They hide in some redberry bushes. The corn eaters search during the day but they find nothing. That night, the two start out again. She carries him like a dying man. On the fourth day, they reach the edge of the Stoney camp. But the camp has moved. All that remains are two dead horses which have been ceremonially killed in mourning for these two young ones. The lovers have been given up for dead.

They follow the Stoney trail. After many days, they see an old man in the distance, walking towards them. It is Falling Thunder. When he gets up close, he looks at them and faints.

"Father! It's us! We are not ghosts! Get up and help us!" The old Chief is sobbing. He is hugging his daughter.

"The spirits sent me," he says. "But how did you get out alive?"

"The great white horse comes to me in a dream," says Calf Child. "The spirit horse gives me a vision of my love wounded and captive. He tells me to go to him. He will silence the enemy camp dogs and war horses. He will help me carry my lover across the nights."

The Stonies rejoice. A ceremonial lodge is made for the couple. Beaver hides line the ground as the entire tribe honours and gifts the great courage of the lovers.

The children of the two Stoney Chiefs live long and good lives.

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand / "Fish Child"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*The saskatoon berries turn black
and still she does not speak.
The carving of the swan I gave her
may be in the mud or near her breasts.*

-from the Stoney

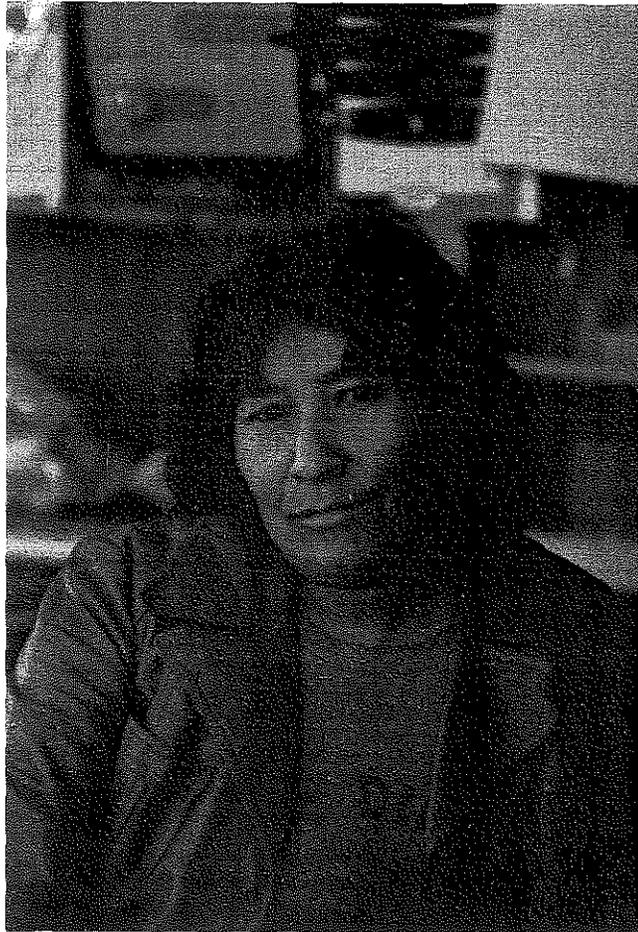


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Mary Jean Dixon
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: c. 1941
Mother's Name: Annie Dixon
Father's Name: Peter Dixon

Sun Calf and his Buffalo Power*

It is the moon of blackberries ripening.*

Sun Calf is a powerful Stony spirit man. He wears the sacred skin shirt of the white buffalo calf.

Chief Blackface is leading a hunting party to the south along Bluerock Creek.*

While Chief Blackface is away, a big dispute breaks out among the people. There is much argument. Many persons speak against Sun Calf, a lesser chief. Other persons shout against Blackface. Tongues become very hot and the people divide the camp.

In the heat, Sun Calf vows he will not fight his own people.

Sun Calf takes forty lodges with him and heads north to where the Blackstone River meets Lookout Creek.*

When Chief Blackface returns, he finds the lodges gone. Thirty remain. He is angry. He takes the remaining lodges with him and heads up to the North Saskatchewan River country. They cross the White Goat Wilderness.* Blackface catches up with Sun Calf north of the Wapiabi.* He enters the northern camp.

Stonies in the camp come forward and tell Blackface that they know the great spirit of their new leader, Sun Calf. They warn Blackface that Sun Calf has a strong buffalo power. But they fear their old chief. They ask Blackface not to kill Sun Calf.

"Settle in peace," some persons say.

"The hoop is already divided: Do not break it," the old ones warn.

As the day passes, Blackface approaches the lodge of Sun Calf and laughs him into a fight.* But Sun Calf ignores him by sitting and resting on his own robes and smoking his black stone pipe. Blackface is furious. But he will not kill a man smoking the sacred long-stem pipe.

That evening, four spirit men gather round. They talk about their medicine dreams and their powers. They sing songs to Thunderer Bird and Great Eagle. Sun Calf is in their midst. He claims that he has a buffalo power so great that killing arrows cannot harm him. The others do not doubt him. They honour his white bison calf shirt.

When Sun is high the next day, Blackface calls out four of his best bow hunters. These the deadliest among the Stonies.

Sun Calf strips down to his waist. He paints his face. He sings to Great Mystery. He offers his pipe to Great White Buffalo. Then he stands before some birches. He is ready.

The four warriors arrive. Blackface stands beside them. He tells the four hunters to shoot their sharpest arrows, one at a time, into Sun Calf.

The first warrior takes his position. He is the best bowman among the people. His dead aim is feared. He does not miss. Mouth-high, he draws back the arrow as far as it will go. And releases it. There is a terrible silence. Then Sun Calf makes a heavy grunting growl just like a charging buffalo and catches the arrow in his bare hand. The first warrior is dumb. He cannot accept what he sees with his own eyes. The second, third and fourth arrows are all caught in the same way. Sun Calf then breaks the four arrows and throws them at the feet of Blackface.

Blackface remembers this buffalo power from an old dream. He allows Sun Calf to leave as he wishes. Blackface gathers up his people and heads south to his old camp on Bluerock Creek.

Sun Calf calls for a renewal ceremony.

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

It is waka (medicine) that holds the hoop together.
-from the Stohey



Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Van Poucette
Stoney,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: June 8, 1960
Mother's Name: Lily Poucette
Father's Name: Lazarus Two Youngman

*Tetheehey*nin, The Scabby-Bellied One

Long ago, a scabby lung disease turned a Stony tribe into a death camp.

Moving north, a band of Stonies come upon the death lodges. The people see a small boy alone hiding among the corpses. The people are frightened by this death child. But an old woman, Bone Woman, takes the boy under her care. Soon the death camp is a speck in the distance.

The people raise their lodges in the Pelican Mountains.* But Bone Woman and the boy live on scraps outside the ring of lodges. The children call the boy "the scabby-bellied orphan," or "*Tetheehey*nin". No child will play with him.

When he is ten winters, *Tetheehey*nin says to Bone Woman:

"We do not eat scraps from this day. I will make a bow and bring in grouse and rabbit."

Moons pass. *Tetheehey*nin becomes a good hunter. Bone Woman sees that he carries deep wisdom. His prophecies are truthful and wise. One night, in the moon of new buds, *Tetheehey*nin dreams of Bull Elk. Bull Elk tells him that his birth is blessed by *Waka Taga*.

One day, *Tetheehey*nin meets Ochre Braids, the Chief's daughter. *Tetheehey*nin speaks to her by the firewood-gathering place. She turns:

"How dare you? All men in the circle desire me and my beauty. You are a disgrace you scabby-bellied outcast!"

Ochre Braids goes to a favourite old place where she sits and watches a deep prairie water pool. She sets her firewood down and calls to the Snake Spirit. *Tetheehey*nin watches from a little distance. Soon a black snake races from the rocks.

"My brother," Ochre Braids begins, "I cannot live with this paint over my she-being. Bring some ordinary face into my life." Snake listens. Then he shoots some sticky medicine into her mouth. Ochre Braids closes her eyes and is soon fast asleep.

Suddenly Snake speaks to *Tetheehey*nin;

"Now she sleeps. When she wakes, she is yours. One day, you will both be honoured by the people."

*Tetheehey*nin says to sleeping Ochre Braids:

"Our hearts have no colour. You will have my son."

But when Ochre Braids wakes, she runs from him in fear.

As the moons pass, *Tetheehey*nin watches Ochre Braid's belly grow. Soon the people know that she is with child. There is no father. Shame sits in the Chief's lodge. Ochre Braids does not speak when the women ask-with-their-eyes who the man is.

The child is born in the moon when the rivers are low. A sticky green medicine oozes from its mouth. The Chief is afraid. He goes to the spirit man. The spirit man dreams that the child passes the sticky green medicine into the mouth of the true father. The Chief passes the child from warrior to warrior. Nothing happens. The older boys are called. The child passes from hand to hand. Nothing.

"Bring in the scouts," the Chief says. When *Tetheehey*nin holds the child, it shoots out a thin green medicine into his mouth.

There is silence. Ochre Braids covers herself with a robe from the eyes of the people. She begins to wail. The Chief gives his daughter to *Tetheehey*nin.

With morning light, the camp moves. One outcast lodge remains.

*Tetheehey*nin takes Ochre Braids to the prairie water pool. Snake appears and speaks:

"Great Mystery has a sacred trail for you. Beauty is nothing. Only the way of the heart makes a trail. There is no other. Ochre Braids, on this day, I name you 'Macoyah Deweyah,' - 'Virgin of the Little People.*' And *Tetheehey*nin shall be father to 'Macoyah Demani,' - 'One-Who-Walks-Among-The-Little-People.' ***"

The three journey to outer ocean. There, *Macoyah Deweyah* sees that *Tetheehey*nin is not mortal. But her love for him is deep and she pledges herself to him. Together, they walk out into outer ocean. In these waters, they meet a horse nation.* They stay four great suns with the water horses. Each birthing moon, *Macoyah Deweyah* gives *Tetheehey*nin a child. These four are: Chief of Yearly Ages, Ismun, Dragging Timber, and Tree Twister. The four sons come to earth leading a herd of pinto apaloosa. The four stay among the Stonies. That is how the pinto, the most prized of all horses came to earth.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Wear your honours like Hawk wears his plumes,
Carry your honour in your robes and tails.*
-from the Stoney



Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Tom Daniels
Stoney,
cowboy,
Eden Valley, Alberta .
Date of Birth: May 21, 1965
Mother's Name: Hannah Daniels
Father's Name: Archie Daniels

White Horn Snares *Waheamba*

It is the moon of black chokecherries ripening.*

Long ago, Stonies got powers from dreams. Power to hunt, to make weapons, to fight, to kill, to track, to cure, to heal, to love, to lead. . .

It is in a dream that little White Horn sees the massacre of his people in a dawn attack. White Horn is playing on a ridge with his little sister, Little Hand. Before he can run to his father's lodge and warn the people, the camp is destroyed. A she-dog comforts brother and sister while the people fall.

Then White Horn tells his sister,
"I see only ten winters. But I am a man. I will take care of you now."

The children part from the she-dog. They scavenge the old camp. They haul pemmican and berries to a rough lodge on the ridge. "We are lucky," says White Horn, "there is enough meat for the winter.

One day, White Horn has a bow dream. When first Sun visits the ridge, he makes a bow and two arrows. Then he prepares to leave.

"Today I hunt for fresh meat. I will bring back rabbit."

White Horn walks until he comes to a clearing. In the middle is a great pine tree.

"What a fine day to be out for rabbit," the pine says. White Horn raises his bow and buries an arrow deep into the top of the pine. Then he climbs to the top of the tree after his arrow. But when he reaches the top, he remembers an old dream;

"I want to go as high as a man can go," he says to the topmost pine cones.

"Pine, take me high up into the sky country. Grow your pine needles and take me high up. Take me to the land of the Sun."

Suddenly the pine begins to grow. Soon there is nothing but sky all around the boy. Up and up the pine shoots. White Horn soon reaches the sky roof. He sees a little hole and climbs through. He stands on top of sky.

"O, the stars are asleep," he says.

Then he sees a path with strange tracks.

"Grizzly's paw is smaller," he says. White Horn follows the sky trail. It gets hot and he tires. He

takes some rawhide rope and makes a snare. He lays the snare across the sky trail. It grows late when he is done. He climbs back through the sky opening. The pine takes him back to earth.

That night, White Horn dreams that the pine is calling him.

In the morning, Little Hand is shaking him. It is very dark and cold.

"Wake up, my brother. Something is wrong. Dawn is still in his gray lodge. And morning has forgotten to come." But White Horn is so tired from his great sky climb he says:

"It's too early. It will be light in a little while." And he goes back to sleep. And he sleeps on and on. But no moons pass. Finally, after what seems like three days, Little Hand shakes White Horn awake. Outside the lodge, it is still night.

Suddenly, White Horn remembers the snare! He runs to the pine tree. Soon he is climbing through night clouds. He climbs through the hole in the sky. Immediately, he can feel scorching heat and blinding light. Shielding his eyes with his hands, he sees a Mouse Woman running along the sky trail.

"Mouse Woman!" he cries, "*Waheamba*, the Chief of Light, is caught in my snare. He is on the sky path, just ahead. Mouse Woman, all life on earth will die. You must go to *Waheamba* and bite through the braid snare with your sharp teeth. If *Waheamba* is not set free, all will die."

"No," she says. "*Waheamba* is flaming man. I will burn up if I touch him." White Horn wraps her in a green leaf. Mouse Woman gnaws the rope snare in two.

Waheamba bursts forward along the light path so fast that White Horn hears only a great rush of wind.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr.
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Once, a long time ago,
before man became a stranger to animal,
man's word was as strong as Mountain.*
-from the Stoney

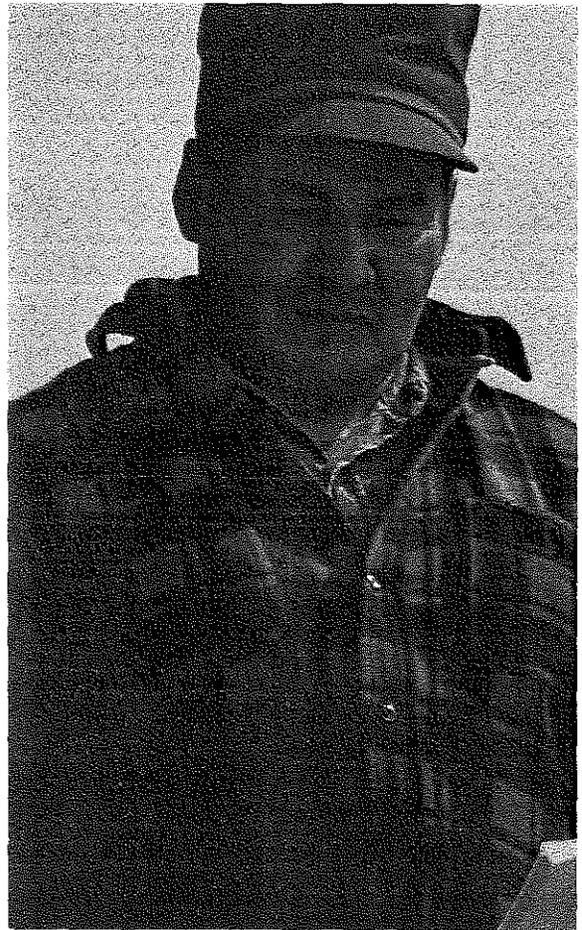
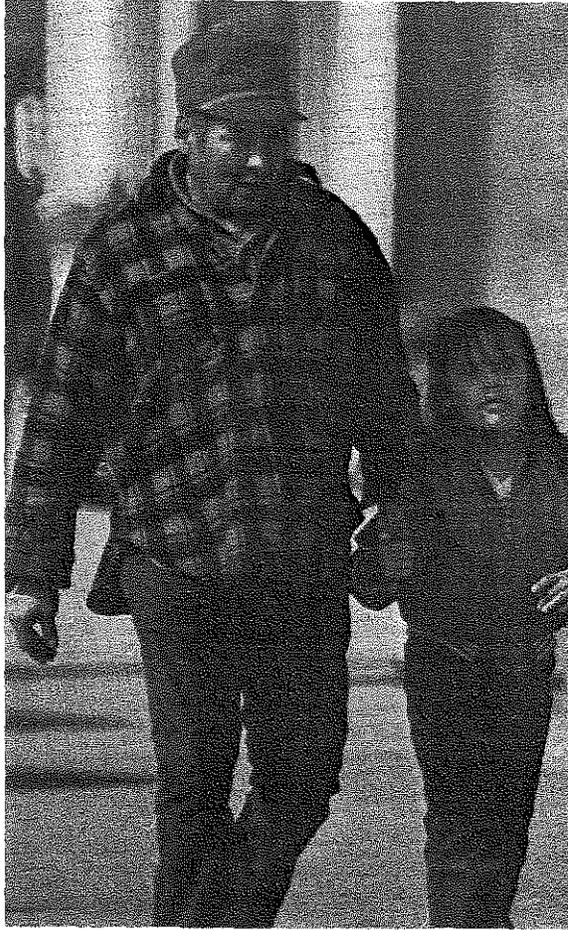


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Johnson Powderface
Stoney,
ranchhand,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: September 11, 1940
Mother's Name: Lucy Powderface
Father's Name: Isaiah Powderface

Yellow Quill and Big Hands

It is the golden eagle moon.

A young Stoney scout, Big Hands, has a dream about two pretty girls. One wears a buckskin gown with yellow quills. The other with green quills. The dream tells him to search for the yellow-quilled one.

Big Hands walks for four days. He comes to a river where two young girls are bathing. On the riverbank he sees a yellow robe and a green robe. He sits beside the yellow robe. Soon the girls come splashing out of the water. They see him and cry out. Green Quill dashes for her robe and quickly puts it on. Then the tall one comes out of the river. Big Hands has not seen a woman like this before. She raises both arms to sun and sky and puts on her yellow robe. Big Hands speaks to her:

"My dream has brought me to you. Show me how you makes those yellow quills."

They follow the river. Suddenly the river is flooding and rising. The girls fear. But Big Hands calms them. He finds a heron's nest and gathers heron feathers in three bundles. They tie the heron bundles to their feet. And so walk across the raging river.

Green Quill runs ahead to her father's lodge. She tells her mother, Otter Woman, "Big Hands is bringing Yellow Quill here. He has good powers. The river listens to him. We must prepare some meat."

Otter Woman prepares herb tea, pemmican, bannock and kinnikinnik. But when Big Hands arrives, Otter Woman says,

"Eat and rest. But go when Sun comes." The parents leave the lodge. When they return, they see two figures in the corner with robes over them. No sound, no movement comes from these. Bad Meat, the father, touches one of the figures. The robes fall off. No person is inside.

"O", he cries. "They have made empty persons of our gifts and run away!"

"Go after them!" shouts Otter Woman.

Bad Meat is running. But he is an old man. And his legs want to sleep. He climbs up a big hill. He sees only two young willow trees.

"O, how beautiful they are! Absorbing the power of the Sun," he says. He turns back. At the lodge, he tells Otter Woman what he sees.

"They tricked you!" she snarls. "Those willow trees are not willow trees but Yellow Quill and that stranger! Go back at once! Find my daughter! Hurry!"

Bad Meat is running again. He is tired. And he wants to watch the hunters making bets on the hoop throw. He climbs to the top of the big hill. The two willows are gone. Instead, he sees two big white stones.

"O, how beautiful they are! As pure as the white buffalo! And as sacred," he says. He blesses the stones with his walking stick. Then he turns and heads back. Otter Woman sees him coming.

"Where are they?" she cries. He tells her what he saw.

"They have tricked you again old man! Those stones are not stones but your daughter and that thief! Go back again! Find them!" she barks.

Bad Meat is running very slowly. He dreams of his back rest covered with goathairs. He dreams of smoking his favourite long pipe. Finally, he reaches the top of the hill.

"It cannot be! The white stones are gone! There are only two moles digging in the earth. But, O, how fine these look! Great Mystery sits in all things," he says. He blesses the moles. Then he walks back. Inside the lodge, Otter Woman is waiting. "Old man," she snaps, "those moles are not moles. They have made a fool of you. Go back right now. Bring Yellow Quill back with you."

Bad Meat is bent low. He dreams as he runs. He sits down many times before he gets to the top of the hill. Here he sits down. He is dizzy. He sleeps. It is very hot when he wakes. The moles are gone. He sees nothing. Slowly he descends. At the bottom of the hill, he sees two young beavers.

"O, how beautiful these are!" he says. "The mountains on their backs. Go and mate." He blesses the beavers.

At the lodge, he looks into Otter Woman, and says: "Big Hand's medicine is good. May these two live a long life."

Based on narration by Joe Kootenay / "Rolling Buffalo"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*The vision tells me that
man is nothing
without the digging moles.*
-from the Stoney

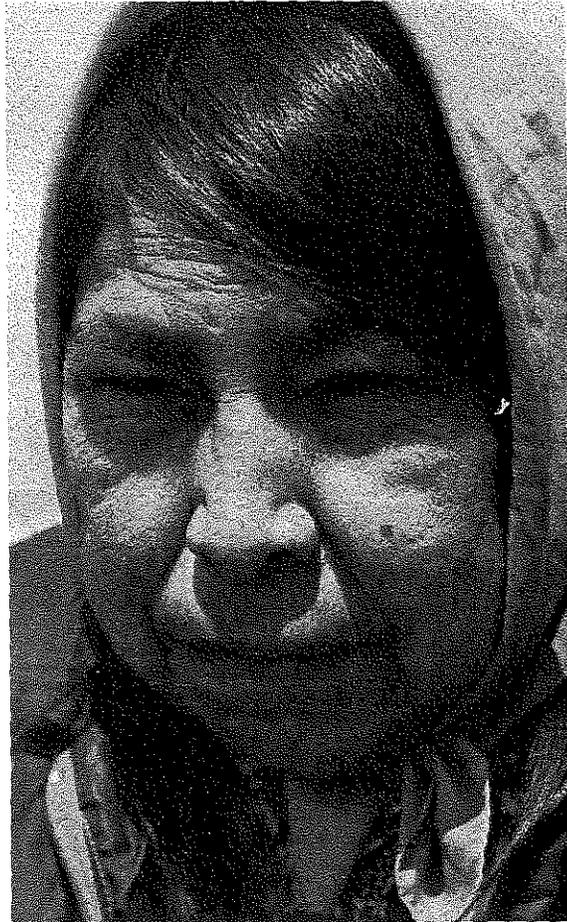


Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Clara Goat
Stoney,
housewife,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: April 18, 1941
Mother's Name: Flora Goat
Father's Name: Noah Goat

Wolf Keeper Tracks Kanasa

It is the frost moon when the Stoney men stay-in-the-lodges.*

Owsni Ti, the cold spirit, sits in a gulch watching the Stoney camp. His early snow is thin and scattered.

It is stardance. Under the moon-of-frost-in-the-lodges, a raiding party of tobacco planters take some horses from the Stoney camp. Among those taken is Kanasa, the Stoney Chief's much beloved buffalo runner.*

The Chief calls for all the men who can fight to go with him. Ten warriors come forward. A young brave, Wolf Keeper, is among these. The Chief warns him:

"A young brave is no match against a warrior. Go back to your father's lodge."

Wolf Keeper speaks:

"I will stand and fight for my people. The wolf spirit bundle on my wrist will keep me from harm. I carry the spirit of the wild mountain dog inside me." The war party consents.

Many horse tracks in the snow lead south. The Stonies follow these. Night falls. The trackers camp without fire.

Late that evening, Wolf Keeper has a vision.* The wolf spirit comes to him, calling him to be the eyes and ears of the party. Wolf Keeper unwraps his sacred wolf stones and gets a wolf-power working for him. He makes himself into a wolf. He gives four wolf barks and sits down with the Chief. The Chief says:

"Wolf, you go see if you can find out where the tobacco planters are, how many, where they go." When Wolf Keeper leaves, only wolf-tracks are left behind in the snow. The Stonies make a small circle and wait.

Moving like night-sun-lynx, Wolf Keeper walks many hills to the south. Just ahead, he can see the enemy campfire. But the tobacco planter scout sees only a wolf-shadow in the narrow-leaf cottonwoods. The scout sleeps. Wolf Keeper circles the enemy camp. There are many horses. He sees that these tobacco planters have brought down a mule deer. These fat-takers have feasted much and long and now their bellies give them dreams.

The tobacco planter's camp is asleep. Wolf Keeper circles and circles as he whispers and sings into his wrist spirit bundle. Then he lies up and ties whiskey-jack feathers to his feet and hair. These give him the power-that-cannot-be-seen to walk like moss.

It is predawn as Wolf Keeper enters the camp. He can hear the enemy warriors breathing in their sleep. "These have gorged themselves like Wolverine, for no one is awake to protect the camp."

One tobacco planter-raider is sleeping in a sitting position. A light robe is wrapped over his shoulders. In his hand, he holds the rawhide reins of Kanasa, the Stoney Chief's favourite horse. Wolf Keeper can see that this horse-keeper carries a war club and knife in his lap. Wolf Keeper says to his medicine bundle:

"If I crawl on my belly up to Kanasa, he may alert the camp. I will walk straight up to him."

His wolf paws and feathers make no sound. Softly he eases the knife and club from the horse guard. Then slowly he pulls the reins out of the keeper's hand. The keeper sleeps on. Backing Kanasa carefully, Wolf Keeper leads the runner out of the enemy camp. They glide out like two shadows of snow eagles.

At the edge of the camp, Wolf Keeper mounts up and frees the remaining Stoney horses and the raider's own runners and buckskins. Suddenly he is running hard, driving the big herd just ahead of him.

The shouts of the enemy raiders are lost in the night. These are on foot now. Wolf Keeper runs the horses across the treeless prairie dawn and into the waiting Stoney encirclement. Stoney scouts signal and hoot as Wolf Keeper returns. They gather in a circle around Wolf Keeper and Kanasa. Wolf Keeper sits down in the circle of men. Wolf Keeper turns himself back into a Stoney warrior.

The Chief fills his pipe with kinnikinnik. Praises flow like water.

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand / "Fish Child"
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

A man carries his daring on his face.
-from the Stoney



Photo credits: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Leo Lefthand
Stoney,
Eden Valley, Alberta
Date of Birth: February 28, 1970
Mother's Name: Susan Lefthand
Father's Name: Wayne Lefthand

Blue Flying Fighter

It is the moon of leafless trees.*

At the time of the great ancient glaciers, the Stonies are camped on the edge of a glacier field. It rains and rains. Floods force the people to constantly move camp. Rains drive off the buffalo, elk, and deer. Starvation comes.*

Blue Flying Fighter lives with his grandmother. He stands alone on a hilltop in sheets of rain and sings to *Waka Taga*.

"Hear me, Sacred One. Let the Stonies live."

Waka Taga appears to Blue Flying Fighter in a vision and tells him:

"Lead the people to the south. A great flood will come and all life here will soon perish. . . . Make four arrows: a white, a yellow, a blue and a red. Upon these I shall give my blessing. Then lead the people to the south. Take the Stonies to a deeper-warmth. But take no food on this journey. And fast."

In the moon of frozen moccasins, Blue Flying Fighter makes four sacred arrows. The people begin their great walk. It is a long, cold path. The people talk of the-land-of-the-Sun. But before they reach the place-where-there-is-no-rain, the people slaughter a tribe of tall-ears* and begin to devour these. They do not hear the warning. But Blue Flying Fighter resists:

"I am in the eye of *Waka Taga*. I will not fall." The tall-ears tempt him. Finally he allows his grandmother to slaughter their just-ribs-showing dog, and cook it.

In a second vision, *Waka Taga* forbids him to eat.

Blue Flying Fighter wakes and takes the red dogmeat and throws it to the earth, even though his belly is reed-thin. Blue Flying Fighter speaks:

"We are asked not to take this meat, grandmother. *Waka Taga* watches and speaks. We must fast and sing. And be-as-one. And stay-with-the-spirit. A terrible thing will come if we abandon the way-of-the-spirit."

Suddenly Sun hides his face in the breasts of Great She-Bear.

It grows very dark. The sounds of the people laughing, talking, eating tall-ears comes to an abrupt end. A great silence descends. The old one smells death nearby.

"O my grandson, these would not listen. Now we shall all die!"

In the darkness, *Waka Taga* speaks to Blue Flying Fighter:

"Stay inside your lodge. The others have brought stone ears to my message. Death sits with these. There is nothing but filth outside your song."

A black robe covers Sun. Suddenly grandmother rushes outside the lodge. The camp is quiet. Nothing moves. Grandmother peers inside the nearest lodge. In the dying fire, she sees that all the people have been turned into reptiles, lizards, toads and snakes! She screams and runs back to her grandson. Shaking and wailing, grandmother throws herself into the arms of Blue Flying Fighter.

Just as he consoles her, the reptiles attack. He fires the four sacred arrows at the beasts. He shoots the red arrow at the snakes. The blue arrow at the toads. The yellow arrow at the lizards. The white arrow at the worms. Then he touches the dying beasts and they are transformed into people again. Sun opens his eyes.

Blue Flying Fighter walks out into the centre of the camp holding his pipe. He sings:

"We sleep too long with stone ears. O receive the teachings of the four coloured sacred arrows." With his elk shoulderblade knife, Blue Flying Fighter points to a thundering herd of buffalo.

That night, many meats are brought out. There is much feasting, much celebration. Blue Flying Fighter cuts a piece of buffalo intestine. He fills it with the blood of the buffalo and brings it to his grandmother. She is greatly pleased by this old custom.

Celebration songs are sung. The people remember *Waka Taga*.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon / "One Boy"
Translated by Alfred T. Dixon
Recorded by Thomas T. Williams
Written by Sebastian Chumak

*Look within.
Listen to your heart.
Even Stoaat will tell you
the only hands a man calls enemy
are his own.*

-from the Stoney

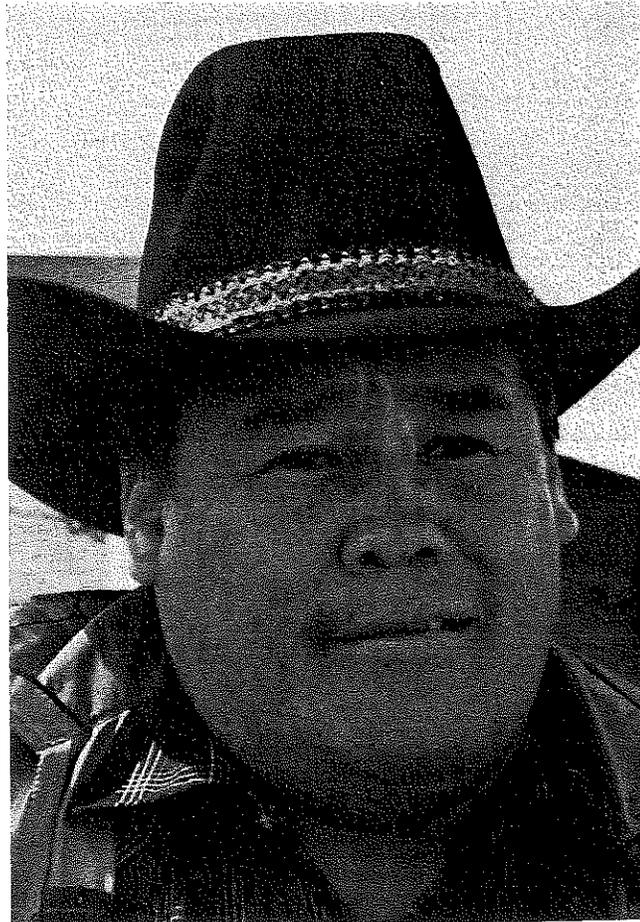


Photo credit: Bob Mackie © The Alberta Foundation

Casey Poucette
Stoney,
labourer,
Morley, Alberta
Date of Birth: August 13, 1950
Mother's Name: Mary Poucette

FOOTNOTES

Great Mystery, *Waka Taga*

- * *Waka Taga* is Spirit.
- * *Iktomni* is Matter, Man.
- * *Waka Taga* makes the spirits, all life, and all things, only after sitting down and consulting with *Iktomni*. *Iktomni* is an equal partner in making the spirit world and the material world. There is always first counsel and then joint action between *Waka Taga* and *Iktomni*.
- * *Waka Taga*, *Iktomni*, and all the Sacred Ones dwell only in the spirit world of visions and dreams.
- * It is due to *Ta Taga* yielding that the Stonies become a buffalo people.
- * *Waka Taga* cares for his special people.
- * These gifts provide for the people and ensure their existence.
- * Traditionally, the name "*Waka Taga*" (Great, Sacred Mystery) has been too sacred to be spoken.
- * Being all things, *Waka Taga* is also Fire.

According to the first pioneer translators, "*waka*" is the sacred and the mysterious. *Waka* is sacred mystery. All nature and all natural forces are *waka*, mysterious. The Sky, Sun, Space, Earth, Water, Fire, Stars, are all persons, sacred and mysterious.

"Great Spirit" is inaccurate and mistranslated. "Great Spirit" points to monotheism (the belief that there is only one great deity). Ancestral Stonies held no such belief. "Great Mystery" is the closest and most accurate version of the great, natural life-force and life-flow.

"*Waka*" lies far deeper than spirit. It is a oneness-within-mystery. "*Waka*" is man naked within Being. "*Waka*" contains and is all things that are beyond mind. Sunshine, ice, fog, clouds, plants-bending-in-the-wind, river current, are all *waka*. Pipe is *waka*.

- * Chief narrator on Genesis is Jonas Dixon.

Iktomni: Immortal Mystery and Spirit Man

- * The Sacred Ones always will be. They are timeless (spirits). However, some say that *Iktomni* is as old as the stars. Others say that there are eight snows on his shoulders.
- * The Great Star is Sun.
- * The blue lodge of Grandfather Sky is the celestial lodge, the firmament.
- * The Four Thunderer Birds are the sons of *Mu*, Thunder, or the Spirit of Thunder. The symbol of Thunder is Eagle.
- * *Iktomni* is the equal of *Waka Taga*. (However, some Stony Elders were not sure of the exact relations between *Waka Taga* and *Iktomni*.)
- * *Iktomni* is *Waka Taga* made manifest, made comprehensible, made material, made physical.
- * *Iktomni* is the first physical manifestation of *Waka Taga*.
- * Life and Man are, ultimately, Mystery.
- * *Iktomni* "is" before birth, before death.
- * *Iktomni* is the first spirit of *Waka Taga*.
- * *Iktomni* is all forces and powers, visible and invisible. He is totality.
- * *Waka Taga* sits as pure being.
- * *Iktomni* sits as material being.
- * *Iktomni* is the physical presence of Spirits.
- * The will of *Waka Taga* is expressed in the voice of *Iktomni*.
- * As mediator, *Iktomni* will work to equally benefit two parties.
- * The four great paths are *Iktomni's* purpose, his task, his major roles.
- * *Iktomni* is the first spirit man to conceive of *Waka Taga*. *Iktomni* is spirit man. "Medicine man" is inaccurate, mistranslated. Our emphasis here will be on spiritual strength.
Iktomni is *wichasta waka*: man-mysterious, or man-within-mystery. His power is spiritual vision.
- * *Iktomni* is the first spirit man to discover the will, the wishes, the desires of *Waka Taga*.
- * *Iktomni* is the first force to act according to the wishes of *Waka Taga*.
- * *Iktomni* is the first consciousness to blend spirit and man.
- * *Iktomni* is man-being-here-on-earth.
- * *Iktomni* is all contradiction.
- * *Iktomni* is all opposites.
- * *Iktomni* is not the "son of" *Waka Taga*: he is not "begotten of" *Waka Taga*.

FOOTNOTES

* *Iktomni's Four Great Medicine Dreams*

And it is told that in the beginning *Waka Taga*, who is The Great Mystery, gives *Iktomni*, the Spirit Man, four dreams.

In the first dream, *Iktomni* becomes *Thicha Yuski*, a magical being. *Thicha Yuski* is a mysterious magician and medicine tempter-hunter who becomes-many-things and changes into many beings and shapes. This one wears many robes.

In the second dream, *Thicha Yuski* mates with She Spider.*

Thicha Yuski then becomes a small wingless insect who lives among the ant people. She Spider gives *Thicha Yuski* a flowing power to attract the insect people and to fill his sacs and pouches with these.

Watching and listening to flowing She Spider, *Thicha Yuski* slowly begins to weave smoky webs and soon becomes a fine web maker. Then he goes out among the insect people to hunt with these smoky, sticky snares. He makes his traps of the sweetest fluids. He entices many insect persons to walk over the edge of the world. All day he polishes and patches his colourless web of honey-like gluc-nectar. When darkness comes, *Thicha Yuski* feasts on the little feeders dancing in his traps. She Spider teaches him to play dead until the insect walkers are within reach.

In the third dream, *Thicha Yuski* sees that She Spider's web fluids are one-with the saliva of the human.* *Thicha Yuski* sees the human birth and the human becoming ensnarer like She Spider. This one will be spinner of snares. One-who-hides-in-flowers. He will be the power of his web. *Thicha Yuski* sees human saliva feeding by snares on other life. This one will become net maker. Web-weaver. *Thicha Yuski* sings and laughs while bringing death to the insect nations. He becomes feeder-without-horns. First trickster. *Thicha Yuski* becomes changer. Transformer. He is one with Insect, Spider, Raven, Coyote, Woman, Serpent, Man.

In the fourth dream, *Thicha Yuski* changes back into *Iktomni*, Spirit-become-Man.

With *Waka Taga*, *Iktomni* then makes Space, Sun and Sky out of spirit clay.

She Spider appears to *Iktomni* in the fourth dream. She Spider will give *Iktomni* the true power of the net: Web Power. She Spider asks *Iktomni* to make a great web-net in the clouds. For four suns,* *Iktomni* takes down Sun's rays of light and weaves a fine spider web across Sky. On the fourth day, *Iktomni* snares Sun in his own rays. He brings down Sun. Such are his powers.*

When *Iktomni* releases Sun, he knows the way of the Sky net. He stands in his coyote robe with four raven feathers in his long black braids. He is ready to make a world. It will have one path: All living things will have power that flows only from Sun, who is father to all.

Great discs and coils of space begin to grow from *Iktomni's* black braids. Space is ablaze with dreams. He rolls up space into a big sky bundle. *Iktomni* has a vision of four suns. The four suns will have power that pours from his tongue. Then he becomes Coyote and walks East in the burning space. *Iktomni* sings:

"Grandfather, Great Mystery, Sun is my medicine. When painted earth opens her eyes, bring her the fire of the Great Star. When these things are born, give them an honouring place."

Based on narrations by various Elders. Based also on interviews, discussions and research studies. Spider origins narrated by Jonas Dixon/"One Boy". Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr. Recorded by Thomas T. Williams. Written by Sebastian Chumak.

- * *Iktomni's* origins lie in She-Spider.
- * One sun is one day.
- * *Iktomni* is snare maker without equal.
- * It is of no importance that the human is not yet made. This vision occurs in a dream. The time is mythical.

Iktomni: Eldest Brother of All Living Things

- * Ancestral Stonies would pray to *Iktomni*, as to a supreme Deity. But today, Stonies regard *Iktomni* merely as a trickster or gamesman.
- * *Iktomni* is bringer of recognition of the truth of *Waka Taga*. *Iktomni's* main task is to celebrate the truth of *Waka Taga*.
- * *Iktomni* is in the midst of all things. He is bringer of unity and understanding. *Iktomni* perceives all things. As one-who-is-aware, he is the power to see, to know, to listen. He is the source of visions.
- * *Iktomni* is one who reveals, makes known the sacred.
- * *Iktomni* is one who points to a cold and uncaring reality.
- * *Iktomni* is trickster, joker, clown, buffoon, entertainer, blunderer, fool.
- * *Iktomni* is one who preys on the one who preys. *Iktomni* out-positions, out-hunts, out-lives, out-survives all. No Spider can outweave him. No Fox can out-circle him. No Wolf can out-hunt him. He is the first hunter, first predator.
- * *Iktomni* brings honouring laws or morals, natures, codes, ways.
- * He has powerful, muscular arms. Yet he is retreating and cowardly.
- * He cannibalizes his own children-beavers.
- * At times, he is out-weaseled, out-foxed by those he would trick. At moments, he is just plain stupid.
- * *Iktomni* is the bestower of names. He gives special, sacred, meaningful, ceremonial names to living things. His words and names are significant, descriptive, ontological, symbolic, purposeful. The bearer of the name then becomes real, existent, responsible. The naming reveals something vital, timely, appropriate, suitable.

FOOTNOTES

- * He is unpredictable, crazy, ungrateful.

On his way to a meeting with the sacred ones in the east, *Iktomni* comes upon two She-Prairie Grouse who are also on their way to the same meeting. "I must go there too," *Iktomni* says. "But I am very tired. I want you to carry me there." "But *Iktomni*," the little hens squawked, "you are much too big for us to carry. We cannot do it." "Yes you can. If the two of you walk side by side, I can stretch myself across your backs," *Iktomni* says. So the little Prairie Grouse carry *Iktomni* on their backs, almost breaking under the hot sun. Along the way, *Iktomni* mates with the two hens. When they see what he has done, the hens throw him off their backs and run away. *Iktomni* cries out in laughter to the fleeing hens: "Where do you go, my little hens? You have been given the gift to lay eggs from this day on. Come and sing and dance with me in celebration." The Prairie Grouse disappear into the cottonwoods.

The Four Winds

- * The Four Winds uphold all celestial worlds, Earth, and fast-moving clouds.
- * The four seasons are the four directions.
- * The Four Winds are *Waka Taga*, and *Waka Taga* is (also) the Four Winds.
- * The Four Winds are life itself and bestowers of being. The Four Winds are the power of breathing.

The Four Winds are all the natural forces, and all powers over the natural forces.

The Four Winds bring time into existence. They bring divisions of the year into being.

All life depends totally on the Four Winds.

The Four Winds control all climate, and regulate the weather.

The Four Winds contain all natural strength, all natural laws.

The Keepers of the Four Winds

- * Eagle = East = White
- * Mouse = South = Green
- * Bear = West = Black
- * Buffalo = North = Yellow

- * The Little People also guard the West Wind.

- * A great sun comes every twelve months.

- * Sky pipe = clouds.

- * The Stonies sing to all the sacred Keepers/Guardians.

All Guardians listen to and watch for Stoney sacrifice. The Guardians point to directions that will balance illnesses and point to paths that will circle calamities. Guardians neutralize evil spirits.

Without the blessing of the Guardians, medicines and rites have no power.

No man can ever see the Guardians, for they are figures in the spirit world.

Keeper of All the Sacred Herbs/*Pezutah Tawaah*

- * In mythical time, it is of no importance that Sun and Earth are not yet made.
- * *Waka Taga* appoints and chooses *Pezutah Tawaah*.
- * *Pezutah Tawaah* is a spirit, a being, a sacred one to be reached only through a medicine vision or a medicine dream.
- * Sacred herbal teachings are Stoney secrets.

Bull Moose Carrier, *Tomnoga Menage*

- * The beginning refers to the time of sacred origins.
- * No more is known about this spirit Keeper. The rest is lost.

Great Bear, *Ozinhah*

- * Great Bear is a spirit. No mortal man can ever see him for he comes only in dreams or visions.
- * Bear Society is very sacred and secret.

Thunder, *Mu*

- * Medicine spirit birds are creature-spirits.
- * *Mu* nest in cold layers of sky ice. *Mu* dwell high above the clouds where Sun sets. They dwell where no mortal can ever go.
- * Thunderer Birds, Thundering Birds, the Four Thunderers, Thunder, Thunderbird, *Mu* - all these are one.
- * *Mu*-fire is lightning.
- * The voice of *Mu* is thunder.

FOOTNOTES

- * In the old days, the people knew that *Waka Taga* favoured them and blessed them and remembered them when Thunderer would bring sufficient rain to feed the great herds.
- * Stonies were given the gift of the fire bag where they became keepers of flint. A man was much valued who had good flint stones. Usually these were carried in a fringed buckskin bag.
- * The dead body of the Great Horned Water Snake, belly up, angers Thunderer Bird.
- * *Mu* is plural. *Mu* means many-thunder-spirits. It is said that *Mu* never use their power to make fire to harm or kill a human being.

The Four Thunderers and the Great Horned River Snake

- * Tokuum Creek is west of Vermilion Pass in the north Kootenays.
- * Ottetail River is in south Yoho National Park.
- * South Willow Creek country is in the north end of the Porcupine Hills, in Alberta.
- * Snakes, fish and all underwater creatures are subjects and messengers of Great Horned Water Snake. The body of Great Horned Water Snake turns into stone when he dies.

In Stoney mythology, whenever a nation of snakes or prairie dogs is destroyed, almost invariably, one or two animals are left alive to regenerate that form of life.

- * Amiskwi River flows west of Mount Carnarvon in northwestern Yoho National Park.

Great White Buffalo, *Ta Taga Skan*

- * *Waka Taga* is buffalo-maker. *Ta Taga Skan's* origins are divine.
- * *Ta Taga Skan* is "buffaleness." *Ta Taga Skan* is the Spirit of all Buffalo. He is all buffalo.
- * "The Old Woman" is Earth.
- * The beaverfoot Mountains run along the Columbia River, southeast of Golden, B.C.
- * Wabiskaw River.
- * *Ta Taga Skan* is an immortal spirit.
- * "From sun to sun" implies from horizon to horizon.
- * *Ta Taga* is the buffalo herd bull leader. Every buffalo herd has a bull leader.
- * All life is dependent on other forms of life.
- * In the old days, the people were a digging, gathering and hunting culture before they became a horse culture.

The Four Sacred Coloured Horses

- * The four sacred horses are spirits.
- * The Old Man referred to here, is Grandfather Sky.
- * Wildhorse Creek flows east of the Bare Range, near Eagle Lake.
- * When a warrior would fall in battle, his horse would be killed in order for him to ride the spirit horse to the spirit land.
- * Spirit dogs are real, living horses. They are also known as Big Dogs, Elk Dogs, or Medicine Dogs.

The Little People, *Macoyah Debe*

- * The Selkirk Mountains lie south of the Rocky Mountains, and east of the Purcell Mountains, and south of the Columbia River.
- * The Stonies are "the-people-who-cook-with-hot-stones."
- * The Little People are also known as the Bush People.

Nine Spirits

- * Sacred greenness: vegetation.

The Four Sacred Soils of Grandmother Earth

- * "Sun," in this context, refers to warmth (temperature).
- * "Thunder," here refers to water (moisture).
- * "Little People" here represent biological activity.
- * "Many great suns" here refers to that time during evolution and glaciation.
- * "Plants" here refers to vegetation.
- * "Boulders" here refer to rocks and mountains (from *Mu*).
- * "Water" here refers to drainage systems (from the claws of Thunderer).

FOOTNOTES

- * "Growing moons" refer to climate and the seasons.
- * The great power of the root-soils are the powers to give life, to destroy life.
- * "Water-run-up-into-sky" refers to high evaporation.
- * "Hot breath" refers to the hot, dry, south winds.
- * "Fire-soil-person" refers to soils that contain sulphur, energy.
- * Muskeg country refers to the northern soils of Alberta.
- * This reference is to central Alberta.
- * "Black buffalo father" here refers to the thin black soils (chernozem).
- * "In a half moon:" As in an arc across south-central Alberta, beginning at the Saskatchewan border.
- * Sable Creek flows south of Glacier National Park in southeastern B.C.

Loon Announces the First Stoney Women

- * In an alternate version, it is *Iktomni* (and not Loon) who discovers the first Stoney women (who have never beheld a man). In this version, it is *Iktomni* (and not Loon) who announces the presence of the first Stoney women to the first Stoney men. Later, after the first marriage ceremonies, the chieftainess of the first Stoney women chooses *Iktomni*. After *Iktomni* rejects her, he does not turn into a solitary tree, but simply remains single.
- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* alone decides that men must die and that death will be final (no life after death). Then he gathers up all the animal people, and leads them into a big hole in the earth.
- * *Iktomni's* farewell song is very sacred and may be sung only by a specially appointed person and only during high ceremony.

Nakoda and the Origin of the Stonies

- * According to Edward Curtis, some 400 years ago, there were "seven divisions of the Dakota in the region between the headwaters of the Mississippi and the western end of Lake Superior."
"One band of Dakota, deserting their tribesmen in anger, says tradition, over wrong done to their chief's wife, moved away to the north and east...
"Thus was born the Assiniboine tribe, first mentioned as distinct from the Dakota by 1640 (in the Lake Nipigon region).
"... the Assiniboine (began) drifting westward (until) by 1670 they had reached Lake Winnipeg.
"(Here they) established themselves on the shores (of Lake Winnipeg) and along the Saskatchewan and Assiniboine Rivers.
"Gradually they separated, the two (Assiniboine) divisions becoming so distinct by 1744 as to be noted under different names.
"One band continued to hold the valleys of the two northern streams, and became known as the Stonies ...
"(After the outbreak of smallpox) ... In 1907 ... the various small bands of the (Assiniboine) tribe (including the Stonies) in Canada aggregate 873."
- * The time of great war occurred some 400 years ago.
"Many people have often wondered why there are so many different tribes. The truth is that all Indians came from one big tribe. But people began to wander here and there in search of food. They wandered away and didn't see each other for a long time. Then, when they met again, people didn't recognize one another. That is why they fight ..." - spoken by Jonas Dixon
- * *Wasichu* is "the long whiskers" or the white man.
- * Ancestral Blackfoot called the Stonies "the scalpers." Ancestral Crows called the Stonies "the cutthroats."
- * The Magic Hills are in South Dakota.
- * Sky is multi-tiered.
- * And that was the last time that *Nakoda* has ever been seen ...

The Prophecy of *Iktomni*

- * The moon of lizards = very hot summer.
- * The Neutral Hills lie south of the Battle River, and east of Sullivan Lake.
- * The long whiskers are the Europeans.
- * Lightning sticks indicate guns, rifles.
- * Warriors fall from bullets.
- * Shining knives indicate metal knives (arrival of iron culture).
- * Sun metal is gold.
- * The stone age culture had no consciousness of entire land empires for one man.
- * "Rolls-along-the-ground-on-hoops" indicates wagons, Red River carts, trade wagons, whiskey wagons, etc.

FOOTNOTES

- * The reference here is to discovery or invention (as a tampering process).
- * "Runs-without-leaving-earth" indicates the wheel.
- * "Water-like-fire" indicates whiskey, rum, etc.
- * "Metal stars" indicates spurs (on boots).
- * "False stones" indicates beads (mass-produced in European factories).
- * Beads were machine-made in Europe and ultimately destroyed tribal value systems.
- * "Sacred black bear hides" indicates "trade".
- * "Snares" indicates trapping.
- * "Words-without-honour" indicates empty promises.
- * "Longstick buffalo hunters" indicates bounty hunters, sharpshooters, professional killers, wolfers.
- * "Black death" indicates epidemic, disease, smallpox, etc.
- * "Leaves-with-a-power" indicates writing, documents, treaties.
- * "Leaves-wrapped-in-ropes" indicates sheets, pages, books, reports, documents.
- * "Big logs" indicates fort.
- * "Bundle of dried leaves" indicates book.
- * "Metal horse" indicates railroad, trains filled with pioneers.
- * This reference is to the influx of "settlers" on Stoney lands.
- * "Measure and mark" indicates survey, surveyors.
- * "Medicine line" indicates border, boundaries.
- * "Paths of stone" indicates roads, roadbuilding, canals, railway lines, "right-of-way."
- * "Shining bundles with a metal heart" refers to a watch.
- * "Spotted buffalo" are cattle.

Iktomni: Mates With She-Lynx

- * The Burnt Timber hills lie just south of the Red Deer River and east of the Panther River, in southwestern Alberta.
- * *Iktomni* is also known as *Sitconski*, *Inkumni*, *Thicha Yuski*, *Sichayuski*, and *Thichamski*.
- * Lynx is approximately three feet long, weighing 25 to 30 pounds. Lynx has a heavy grayish-brown coat. His long hairs have a northern icy look. His tail is short. His body slopes gently because his front legs are shorter than his hind legs. His feet are very big. Lynx is an excellent snow walker and snow hunter. Long legs with much fur and sharp vision make him an outstanding predator.

Iktomni and the Mouse Dance

- * *Pisko* is a very small bird.
- * In an alternate version, the dancing mice chew up *Iktomni's* hair. Then he cannot get his head out of the buffalo skull.
- * In an alternate version: "Finally, on the fourth pounding against the rock, *Iktomni* smashes the buffalo skull and frees himself." - Joe Kootenay
- * In alternate version: "Some say that to this day, *Iktomni* can be seen walking along the foothills with the buffalo skull still stuck fast to his shoulders." - Joe Kootenay
- * Diving birds are swallows.
- * It is known that *Iktomni* had no true daughter(s) but only two adopted daughters.
- * The number "four" is ritually and ceremonially sacred. It is a symbol of first-made life, which is four, yet one (The Winds).
- * In an alternate ending, after the diving birds free him, *Iktomni* mocks them by saying he has no daughter.

Iktomni and the Medicine Leggings

- * White Horse Lake is in the Middle Sand Hills between the South Saskatchewan River and the Red Deer River, in southeastern Alberta.
- * The South Saskatchewan here refers to the South Saskatchewan River.
- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* promises he will stay up all night in order to guard the special medicine leggings. But as he is kept from sleep, he changes his mind and steals the leggings.
- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* claims that he had recaptured the special leggings from some night hawks who had stolen them.

Iktomni and the Geese

- * The Blackstone River is northwest of Nordeaz, and north of the North Saskatchewan River, in westcentral Alberta.

FOOTNOTES

- * Thunder Lake is north of the Blackstone River, in westcentral Alberta.
- * In an alternate version, it is the Stonies who shoot *Iktomni* out of the sky.
- * In an alternate version, the geese drop *Iktomni* into a mud-hole.
- * In an alternate version, the people throw "filth" on *Iktomni* for several days.
- * *Iktomni* is immortal. He cannot stay "dead" for longer than four days.

Iktomni and the Closed-Eye Dance

- * The moon of shedding ponies is May.
- * The Kananaskis forests are south of the Goat Range, and west of the Fisher Range, in southwestern Alberta.
- * The correct wording is "spruce grouse." Sometimes they are improperly called "spruce hens."
- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* places green moss in two huge hide bags.
- * Lower Kananaskis Lake is at the south end of the Kananaskis Range, and is north of the Elk Range, in southwestern Alberta.
- * *Iktomni* uses the moss to stir the curious Spruce Grouse.
- * The Closed-Eye Dance is also known as the Shut-Eye Dance.
- * Spruce grouse live in the Rockies. They are ground dwellers and good runners. They have short, rounded wings. Their nostrils and legs are covered with feathers. Seven to fourteen brown eggs are guarded in ground nests. Spruce grouse are capable of strong, rapid bursts of flight for short distances. Spruce grouse eat green herbage, flowers, berries, seeds, buds, needles, twigs, insects.

Iktomni and the Lame Fox

- * The tender grass moon is April.
- * The golden bird is Eagle.
- * In inviting a hawk-eyed fox to share in his feast, *Iktomni* shows that, although naive, his basic tendency is playful and sharing.

Iktomni's Revenge on Fox

- * A new moon is said to "lean back" when the weather may be either good and bad, and the moon watchers cannot foretell which.
- * The moon of making fat is June.
- * Upper Elk Lake is in the Rockies between Mount Rae and Mount Joffre.
- * The Moon of popping trees is December. Deep inside the cottonwood tree, the sap would freeze and the cottonwood would burst into loud "popping" sounds.
- * A parallel version is titled "Why Fox is the Slyest of All the Dog Nation."

In the beginning of all things, Fox was the smallest of all the dog nation. But he was very swift. In his great journeys across Grandmother Earth, *Iktomni* sees that Fox is without a thick hide. *Iktomni* calls Fox:

"My black-footed brother, I will teach you the ways of the foothills. We will stay together for four great suns. I will teach you how to scent, how to track snowshoe hare, how to circle, how to pounce, and how to wear the skins of dying rabbits."

After four great suns, Fox is ready to set off on his own path. But *Iktomni* says:

"I will let you go only if you can fool me. If you can trick *Iktomni*, first trickster, then you are ready to face your own path."

One day, Fox pretends that he is wounded and wraps dried grass and mud around his leg. *Iktomni* sees Fox limping along. Fox moans: "O, *Iktomni*, a diving eagle almost killed me. Look how he tore up my leg. Now it will be many moons before I can bounce and run."

"Have no worry, Fox. I will care for you. But remember my teaching: If you allow it, you will always be the prey of those who would feed upon you."

Iktomni gathers goose eggs all day while Fox limps along behind him. Putting all the eggs into one big pile, *Iktomni* turns to Fox: "Now we will race from here to the foot of Poboktan Mountain, east of the Athabasca. I will tie a big rock to my foot. The first to race back, wins these fat goose eggs."

Iktomni and Fox set off for Poboktan Mountain. Fox is limping badly: "O *Iktomni*, how can I walk when my leg wants herbs?" *Iktomni* says, "Fox does not remember the survival teachings. Absorb the pain Fox, or there are no goose eggs for you."*

But once *Iktomni* is out of sight, Fox takes the dried grass and mud off his leg and races like the wind back to the original place. Running, he changes himself from red to brown to black to silver.

Fox is wild with hunger. He sees the eggs. Fox takes the first egg and with a lynx claw, punches a little hole on the top and sucks out all the yolk. Before long, he empties all the eggs. soon his belly will burst if he moves. Stuffed, and becoming sleepy in the hot Sun, Fox drags himself across three hills and finds a nice spot in the shade to lie down in.

Many days later, the big rock pounding his foot, *Iktomni* returns to the original place of the goose eggs. He sees that the eggs have not been disturbed, and even have a little dust over them. "Fox, stupid one. I waste my breath with this one. He learns nothing."

FOOTNOTES

Hungry like a woman after giving birth, *Iktomni* picks up a big goose egg. His eyebrows wrinkle when he finds that the egg is empty. He does not see the little hole that someone has made. "O, some little Lizard must have eaten one of my eggs." *Iktomni* picks up another egg. His jaw drops. Then another egg. And another. And another. "They have been emptied! And only Fox knew of these eggs!"

Iktomni looks in the direction of Poboktan Mountain. "O Fox, you are too foul to be eaten by a grub. Fox, old worm, you will not rest on this Earth."

Blazing with revenge, *Iktomni* unties the big rock from his foot and starts tracking Fox. But he soon stops. For *Iktomni* remembers his own words to Fox on the laws and secrets and ways of cunning and survival. And slowly his mouth parts and he begins to smile. In the next breath, *Iktomni* is roaring with laughter. His booming laughter wakes Fox sleeping some hills to the east. *Iktomni* shouts in the direction of the three hills: "Fox, you are ready now, your paws, wet with yolk, are running with the way of the hills. You carry the dog nation in your blood. You are free, sly one!"

And that is how *Iktomni* was beaten by Fox.

And that is why to this day, Fox is very hard to snare, for he is the slyest of the great dog nation.

Based on narration by Jonas Dixon/"One Boy. Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr. Recorded by Thomas T. Williams. Written by Sebastian Chumak.

- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* tells Fox, "But who ever falls asleep first may abuse the other."

Iktomni was the first to fall asleep. Fox abuses him. Later, when *Iktomni* is making a nature, small foxes fall out from his body. He chases the little foxes. But they disappear and there is only filth on his robe.

Iktomni Appoints Frog as Moon Watcher

- * The long day moon is February.
- * Grandmother Earth is always in the snow moon because Summer is kept captive in a big bag owned by a medicine man. The bag is bound tightly to his lodge pole. *Iktomni* comes to earth to steal back Summer for the people.

Iktomni occupies the medicine man with a long talk. Meanwhile, Fox steals Summer. Fox gives Summer to the animal people who wait in a long line. The last of the animals, Muskrat, escapes with Summer.

Later, *Iktomni* meets the animal people all assembled. Muskrat gives him the bag. *Iktomni* opens the big bag and so makes Summer.

- * Beaver has countless scales on his tail.
- * In another version, it is *Iktomni* who knocks down Frog.
- * Hooters: Sage Grouse.
- * Drummers: Blue grouse.
- * Woodchoppers: Woodpeckers, flickers.
- * Fishers: Belted kingfisher.
- * Buffleheads: (water fowl) ducks.
- * Trumpeters: Swans.
- * Claw catchers: Eagles, hawks, owls.
- * Warblers: Wood and mountain warblers and waterthrush.
- * Flycatchers: Nighthawks, swifts, swallows.
- * The seven winter moons have made the number "seven" sacred.
- * "Time Keeper Frog, on the seventh month of winter, will awaken and sing the coming of summer and the time to rejoice and celebrate by making the Sun Dance." - Jonas Dixon

Iktomni and Scare 'em Away, Medicine Woman

- * The Pipestone River flows in the Premier Range of the Rockies between Mount Richardson and Mount Willingdon.
- * Bow Pass is found between Bow Lake and Peyto Lake in the Premier Range of the Rockies.
- * In another version, *Iktomni* roasts one of the little boys. After he is eaten, the others decide to escape.
- * It is said that *Iktomni* is never without his hide bag. Sometimes this is a bag out of which creation pours: animals, trees, people, herbs, etc. Sometimes, it is a bag of smoke (tricks). The use of the bag seems to reveal his intent at any given time.
- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* kills the children. The women form a party and chase him. *Iktomni* hides under the earth. He digs a tunnel. But when the women follow him under the ground, he allows the tunnel to choke them to death.

Iktomni and the Big Rolling Rock

- * It is said that in the birthing moons, Thunder (*Mu*) comes to Earth as small, black, buffalo stones which are sacred to the people.
- * The Porcupine Hills run from north-to-south just east of the Livingstone Range, at the foot of the Rockies.
- * In the old days, the prairies were filled with buffalo droppings (popularly referred to as "buffalo chips" by early pioneers).
- * "*Iktomni* and the Big Rolling Rock" illustrates the folly and the torment that man sustains when he tampers with natural forces (or nature). The question arises: Why is *Iktomni* unhappy or uneasy with Rock just exactly as Rock is?

FOOTNOTES

- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* does not challenge Rock, he abuses Rock. Then, *Iktomni* does not race with Rock, rather, Rock chases *Iktomni* and kills him. (Rock punishes *Iktomni* for his abuse.) In the end, *Iktomni* calls down Thunder to destroy Rock. Rock explodes.

Iktomni: and Wapiti Girl

- * Elk rut in September.
- * Lake Minnewanka is south of the Ghost River Wilderness, in southwestern Alberta.
- * In an alternate version, Long Shell Man does not exist, and *Iktomni* makes himself into a handsome man by his own magical powers. Once wearing ragged, scabby, torn hides, *Iktomni* now wears very fine buckskins. He entices and seduces the Chief's daughter, and so gets his revenge.
- * In an alternate version, after seducing the woman, *Iktomni* vanishes naked in the middle of the night. He abandons his fine buckskin robe which immediately is transformed into excrement.
- * In still another version, *Iktomni* takes the woman, but breaks custom in not observing man-woman taboo. The woman runs away. *Iktomni* pursues her, but instead finds only a buffalo cow. Some buffalo bulls catch him singing to the buffalo cow and drive him off.

Iktomni Kills Bear

- * The Sawback Mountain Range is found between the Cascade River and the Bow River, in southwestern Alberta.
- * Cuthead Creek is at the eastern end of the Sawbacks, just north of the Cascade River, in southwestern Alberta.
- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* places the two rabbit eyes on the red hot stones. The rabbit eyes burst. *Iktomni* pretends to have new vision. Then Bear takes his eyes out of his head and places them on the red hot stones. Of course, they sizzle and burst.
- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* suffocates Bear in the darkness of the medicine lodge.

Iktomni and Stone

- * In an alternate version, Stone captures *Iktomni*, not because *Iktomni* would not give it the bear head to eat, but because *Iktomni* would not gift the Stone.
- * In the same version (above), the birds do not free *Iktomni* by slamming into Stone, rather, by making a big wind with their feathers (which breaks up Stone).
- * In still another version, it is Frog who tells the other animal people that *Iktomni* is caught by the Stone power.

Iktomni and Longtailed Fisher

- * Lost Horse Creek is south of the Bow River and east of Stanley Peak.
 - * "Iktomni was killed, but he came back to life after four days. *Iktomni* had been dead a few times (before), but he had always come back to life in four days." - Stoney Elder
- Iktomni* is immortal: He cannot die.
- * The big hide bag that *Iktomni* carries, contains, at times, physical objects, and, at other times, songs, illusions, dreams, fears, visions, etc.

Iktomni and the Green Tomato

- * Antler Hill is south of Red Deer, in southcentral Alberta.
- * This is a taboo folklore story. Ostensibly, its intent would serve as a warning to Stoney children.

Iktomni Becomes Bluerobe Woman

- * *Iktomni* steals away from his old wife and goes wandering. (However, some say that he never really had a true wife.) At the end of this legend, he goes home. He does not tell his old wife the truth about the experience of marrying a young man. *Iktomni* lies to his wife.
- * Mosquito Creek is west of Nanton, and north of the Porcupine Hills, in southwestern Alberta.
- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* does not wonder at all what it is like to be a woman. Rather, he has been rejected by a woman. He is out for revenge.
- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* changes himself by his own magic.
- * Pekisko Creek is south of the Highwood River, east of the northern tip of the Livingstone Range, in southwestern Alberta.
- * The fact that it will take *Iktomni*-Bluerobe twelve months to conceive and deliver a baby is of no importance: Mythical time is valid no matter what its expression. Mythical time is beyond the realm of ordinary reality. (Also, the fact that *Iktomni* is male, makes this situation absurd.)

Iktomni and the Eagles

- * The Flathead Mountains are east of the Lizard Range just north of Montana, and south of Crowsnest Pass, on the Alberta-B.C. border.
- * North Kootenay Pass is on the Alberta-B.C. border, between Mount Darrah and Mount Haig.
- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* sings his Death Song as he falls to earth: "O Great Mystery, Welcome me to your land. I come my arms reaching towards Sun. Proudly I live, Proudly I die."
- * In an alternate version, Wolf speaks to *Iktomni*-Coyote: "Stoney, why do you sleep? I, Wolf, come to you. Rub your eyes, Stoney!"
- * In another version, *Iktomni* falls from the mountain ledge into a swamp. Wolf does not free him. *Iktomni* frees himself from being dead. Then *Iktomni* makes himself into a moose. He seduces the Eagles out of Sky. After the Eagles begin to feed on *Iktomni*'s own mooseflesh, he kills them.

FOOTNOTES

Iktomni Makes Raven a Scavenger

- * Eagle Hill is near the Little Red Deer River, between Olds and Sundre, in southcentral Alberta.

Iktomni: Big Raven Escapes from *Ta Taga*

- * The moon when calves grow hair is September. (Also known as moon of the black calf, or dark red calves moon.)
- * The Little Red Deer River runs north from the foothills to the Red Deer River itself, in southcentral Alberta.

Iktomni and the Gift of Thunder Horse

- * Deer rub-their-horns in (the autumn moon of) September.

Iktomni and She-Beaver

- * The hard-frost-moon is January.
- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* does not cannibalize his own children. He abducts the six beaver pups. Later, knowing that She-Beaver waits to kill him under the water, he dies of thirst. Magpie brings *Iktomni* back to life.

Iktomni Offers Kinnikinnik to Buffalo

- * Kinnikinnik is a bark tobacco.
- * Saskatoon berries ripen in July.
- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* is walking. In his path is a buffalo skull. He kicks the buffalo skull until he smashes it to pieces. But the tiny bone skull pieces become a big living buffalo. The big buffalo chases *Iktomni*. *Iktomni*'s tobacco offering finally makes peace between them.

Later, *Iktomni* travels with a buffalo calf. (He pulls the calf out of a swamp where it was stuck.) Suddenly the calf becomes a big bull. *Iktomni* also changes himself into a big buffalo bull.

Iktomni and the bull take two Stoney women. Other bulls attack them. They fight. *Iktomni* wins. The bull goes away. He calls down many buffalo for the Stonies.

Iktomni Trades a Scabby Horseskin for Many Beaver Hides

- * The Pembina River flows east of the Athabasca River from Redcap Mountain east through Drayton Valley and then bends north, in westcentral Alberta.
- * *Iktomni* cannot seem to resist getting into trouble with women. Elsewhere, he alarms some women by telling them that a big disease is coming. He tells them exactly what they must do. But when the women follow his words, he exploits them by transforming himself into the big disease.
- * The Belly River flows north from Mount Cleveland in Glacier National Park (Montana) into the Oldman River just west of Lethbridge, in southwestern Alberta.

Iktomni Trades his Grandmother's Head for Bear Robes

- * The frog moon is April.
- * The Wapiti River runs south of the Birch Hills. It is between the Peace River and the Kakwa River, on the Alberta-B.C. border.
- * Maskinonge Lake is found at the north end of Waterton Lakes. It is east of Mount Blakiston, where Alberta-B.C.-Montana meet.

Iktomni Trades Death for a Herd of Deer

- * Chief Mountain is in Montana. It can be seen from the Blood Reserve (Alberta).
- * Loaf Mountain is north of the Waterton Lakes country. It is east of the Alberta-B.C. border.
- * Yarrow Creek is northeast of Loaf Mountain, in southwestern Alberta.
- * The Head Shirtman is the leading tribal authority. He ensure law and order among the people.
- * Kintla Lake is just west of Kintla Peak in Glacier National Park (in Montana).

Iktomni and the Sage Grouse

- * Handhills Lake is north of the Red Deer River. It is east of Drumheller in the Hand Hills (of southeastern Alberta).
- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* abuses the Sage Grouse in an ugly way.

Iktomni and Old She-Beaver's Most Beautiful Daughter

- * Snow Creek is in the Bare Range of the Rockies (in northeastern Banff National Park).
- * The Beavers teach Fox Tail how to cut down and haul trees and poles. They tell him the best place to build a lodge: "Find a place in the river where the wind blows around in a circle. Build your dam there. This way you may catch the smells and scents of our enemies Wolf, Bear, Coyote, Lynx, Cougar, long before they come upon you."
- * The Bare Range is part of the Premier Group of Rocky Mountains (of southwestern Alberta).
- * *Hungu Shne* is "the dry or barren female." It is said that Old Beaver Woman or *Hungu Shne*, dwells under the earth and releases her sacred medicines and blessings to Stoney spirit seekers.

FOOTNOTES

Iktomni and the Itchy Berry

- * The Middle Sand Hills lie between the Red Deer River and the South Saskatchewan River, in southeastern Alberta.
- * In an alternate version, the berry is called "Scratch-Rump."
- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* says, "O, Itchy Berry, you have the right name. Please let me go now." And the Itchy Berry stops making this itchy feeling, and the power goes away.

Iktomni and the Great Cottontail Race

- * The Bighorn River is a tributary of the North Saskatchewan River, west of Nordegg, Alberta. It is east of the White Goat Wilderness in the heart of the First Range (mountains).
- * *Sunga* is Dog.
- * It is said that, at that time, the Stonies forgot *Sunga* because *Sunga* had been cursed by *Waka Taga* (Great Mystery):
A long time ago, when *Waka Taga* asked each of the animal people to yield himself to the great circle of life, *Sunga* would not come to the great yielding place. *Sunga* had found an old favourite place to sun himself and would not allow anyone to disturb his sleep. *Sunga* dreamed of the evil herb.
Waka Taga cursed *Sunga*: "You will carry bundles for the Stonies and pull their travois. You will possess no spirit. Dog will come to mean 'no hope' or 'condemned.' All things will possess spirit except dogs." - Jonas & Alfred Dixon
- * The First Range is northwest of Abraham Lake, in western Alberta.
- * Littlehorn Creek is at the south end of the First Range (mountains).
- * In an alternate version, *Sunga* is looking for his rump, and not his nose.

Iktomni and Bear

- * The big winds blow in October.
- * The Sleep Spirit is Old Man Moth (*Istumah Tata*) who lives under the Earth and whose medicine is sleep.
- * This is a bedtime story for children.

Iktomni and the Gift of Fire

- * Traditionally, upon breakup of the wintering camps, a carrier would take a hollowed log where fire was smouldering on coals, and walk with it to the new camp. Fire was carried, in the ancestral days (before flint) from camp to camp. A fire keeper was appointed to ensure that the people always had fire, even when moving their camps or when following herds.
- * The Fisher Mountain Range is found between the Elbow River and the Kananaskis River, in southwestern Alberta.
- * Nihani Creek flows north of the Little Elbow River, in southwestern Alberta.
- * Sometimes, the most sacred is manifest through the smallest of living things.
- * The Elbow River has its source northwest of Mount Rae in Kananaskis country, in southwestern Alberta.
- * The Opal Mountains are found between the Fisher Range and the Kananaskis Range, in southwestern Alberta.
- * *Mahka* means Polecat (in this case, a man's name).

Iktomni and the Gift of Drum, Song and Dance

- * "The eagle war head robe game: A deadly game between courageous warriors.
"Two groups of warriors stand about one hundred paces apart. In the centre of this space are four poles. Each pole is as high as a man's chest. An eagle war headrobe is placed on top of each pole by a Stoney spirit man."
* "Then, with each warrior group taking turns, one man (stripped down to leggings and breechrobe) would mount his fastest horse and race towards the four poles. His warrior group would cheer him and sing medicine songs for him, while the opposing group would shoot at him with killing arrows."
"Sometimes a man's horse was shot. Sometimes a rider was shot. Sometimes both."
* "If a warrior succeeded in taking the eagle war head robe from one of the poles, he could claim it as his prize. Cheers and shouts would go up from his warrior group."
"The prize, the eagle war head robe, would give its owner strong powers, such as fighting fiercely and becoming invincible against enemies." - as spoken by Johnny Chinniquay

Iktomni and the Origin of the Four Giant Stones

- * These things were said to happen before the great flood.
- * Old Man Playing River is believed to be the home country of *Iktomni*.
- * Akamina Pass is south of Festubert Mountain, near the Alberta-B.C.-Montana borders.
- * The Flathead Mountains lie between Pincher Creek, Alberta and Fernie, B.C.
- * The third giant stone sits to this day a little west of Okotoks, just south of Calgary.

FOOTNOTES

Iktomni Places His Daughters in an Eagle's Nest

- * Is is said that *Iktomni* never had any true daughter(s).
- * West Stoney Creek is south of the Clearwater River. It is east of Corkscrew Mountain, in westcentral Alberta.
- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* plays dead. His old wife buries him. But at night, *Iktomni* comes back and steals his own daughters. When he is found out by his old wife, he runs away only to try the same thing later.
- * It is said that *Iktomni* never killed a human being - he is not a murderer. He does, however, set up tempting and alluring situations where a man may die - but only through his own folly.
- * Frog is the one-who-jumps-with-four-legs-dangling.

Iktomni and the Rubbing, Tickling She-Willows

- * The bow moon is the crescent moon.
- * September brings scarlet berries.
- * Eagle Creek is south of the Red Deer River, and west of Bowden, Alberta.
- * The Burnstick hills are east of East Stony Creek, in westcentral Alberta.
- * Many of *Iktomni's* thoughts are preoccupied with escaping from his old wife and seducing his adopted daughters. But it is not clear if he succeeds in this.
- * Moon is black sun.
- * In an alternate version, *Iktomni* digs a tunnel to reach the good-looking woman, but the plain she willow grows her roots across the tunnel and *Iktomni* gets stuck under the earth as he tunnels towards the good-looking woman.

Iktomni and Bear's Ear, Spirit Man

- * Milk River Ridge lies between Lethbridge, Alberta and the Montana border.
- * *Iktomni* had no real son of his own.
- * Milk River flows just north of the Montana border. The south arm of the river flows into Montana.
- * "Medicine man" is too corrupted a term for usage in this text.
- * The Sweetgrass Hills straddle the Alberta-Montana border.

Iktomni and the Origin of the Thundering Birds

- * June is the full-leaf-moon.

Iktomni's Journey in Four Directions

- * Kinnikinnik is a bark tobacco.
- * Buffalo Lake lies between the Battle River and the Red Deer River - east of the city of Red Deer - in southcentral Alberta.
- * Apparently, there always seems to be an animal-brother who has a score to settle with *Iktomni*. When someone is not chasing or tracking *Iktomni*, then the old man is probably inviting a situation which will result in some form of punishment.

Iktomni and the Cattails

- * This refers to the herbage sprouting at the edges of a small lake.
- * Gull Lake lies between Red Deer and Pigeon Lake in Alberta.

Iktomni and the Duck Tallow

- * Crooked Lake lies west of Gull Lake, and north of Red Deer, in Alberta.
- * In an alternate version, these are eggs (not ducks).
- * This is a mountain flower.

Iktomni and Spotted Rock

- * Morley (townsite) sits on the south bank of the Bow River between Calgary and the Rockies, (in Alberta).
- * *Iktomni's* farewell song is so sacred to the people that, if sung by an Elder, would summon the Spirit down to Earth.
- * *Iktomni*, to this day, dwells in Sky country. His missions to Earth are rare and require great importance and urgency.
- * In an alternate version, four Stonies visit *Iktomni* in Sky country. The first asks for immortality. He is turned into rock. The second asks for *Iktomni's* daughter. He wins the woman, but breaks an old custom and she dies. The third and fourth ask for, and receive, medicines. They stay four days with *Iktomni*. The four days become four years.

Iktomni in the Big Flood

- * The idle moon is May.
- * The water beasts all die off because they have nothing to eat.

FOOTNOTES

- * Other Elders say that She-beaver is restored to life.
- * "In the exchange of tails, Muskrat (*Sumpte*) says, "Chaba (Beaver), I can see that your skinny tail is not of much use to you in your work. I have a broad, flat tail. It is no good to me because it is always getting in my way." Chaba then used his new tail for swimming, diving, building, and warning others by splashing water." - Jonas Dixon

Iktomni and the Yellow-Headed Blackbirds

- * The golden-mantled squirrel looks back in October.
- * This taboo probably ensured that the customs honouring the sacredness of the number "four" would be observed and maintained.

Porcupine and Bear Head

- * In the old days, the origins of ancestry lay in birds, animals, spirits, landforms, etc. The great spirit of Porcupine came to the man in this legend and gave him sacred songs and tasks.
- * The Sundance Mountains lie between the Goat Range and the Mitchell Range, in southwestern Alberta.
- * At that time, it was the custom for a Chief to have several, sometimes many, wives.
- * "Porcupine, the man, was protected from the burning rays of the sun by the power of his special robe, just as porcupine, the animal, is protected from harm by the power of its special quill robe." - Thomas T. Williams

Elsewhere, in another Stoney legend, two Stonies escape from their deadly enemies after they receive a special power from buffalo-fat. Completely encircled by enemies, who hold a pre-death feast for these two, the Stonies call down Buffalo and proceed to rub buffalo-fat all over themselves. When they make a run for it, their enemies cannot grab hold of them. Buffalo has given them "a power to be slippery" and no power on earth can grasp them, and they escape.

Flaming Woman

- * The Sheep River hills are north of the Highwood Mountain Range - west of Turner Valley - in southwestern Alberta.

The Big-Horned River Snake

- * The South Ghost River hills are north of the Bow River and east of Lake Minnewanka, in southwestern Alberta.
- * This story is a taboo teaching.

Pretty Feathers and Old Moth Man

- * The moon-when-moose-mate is *Thaki Yuhabitawi*.
- * The North Saskatchewan River flows through central Alberta from the Rockies to the east.

Pretty Feathers Destroys Four Tribes of Trees

- * The serpents here are simply long roots of the willows.
- * Cow Lake lies just south of Rocky Mountain House, in southwestern Alberta.
- * The bone knives here are pine needles.

Pretty Feathers the Cannibal Beast

- * Centre-Moon's-Young-Brother-Coming means December is approaching.
- * Ghost Lake is a reservoir of the Bow River, in southwestern Alberta.

The Death of Big Onion

- * The Caribou Mountains are centred in the northern corridor of Alberta.
- * The Spray Lakes are south of Canmore in Kananaskis country, in southwestern Alberta.
- * The Bow River is a major tributary of the South Saskatchewan River, in southwestern Alberta.
- * Big Onion is immortal - he is spirit.

Istimah Tach Makes Love to Many Snakes

- * In an alternate version of this legend, Rising Eagle does not go north, but remains with his seven children. Later, his wife, the cursed, severed "head", returns and kills him.

Origin of the Seven Stars

- * The death head is as much chasing the children as trying to destroy their medicine powers embodied in the buckskin ball. If the children drop the ball, or if it falls to earth, they will perish.
- * The death head tries to catch the children and pull them out of the sky.
- * The death head curses after the children: "Come back or you will be cursed for all days. You will stay up in sky forever." The seven stars do not come down ever, because of this curse.
- * "After the children ascend up into the sky, the death head is all alone. She jumps into a big river and makes herself into the gill of a fish. After that, all the fish come to have gills. This is her contribution to the black side of life - she joins the creatures who dwell in darkness (underwater). Since that time, all fish have heads, but neither arms nor legs. And death head gives them the power to jump out of the water and snap at flies and insects."

FOOTNOTES

Scraping Wolf Becomes Wolf Person

- * *Tom-min-see Napi* is also known as "Rope Necklace."

Dogfish Devour Wolf Person

- * The Yellow-Leaf-Moon is September.

Fish Woman

- * Swan Lake is south of Rocky Mountain House in the Rocky Mountains Forest Reserve, in southwestern Alberta.
- * The Raven hills are in Raven River country, west of Innisfail, in southcentral Alberta.

Umbiska Waka, Eagle Catcher

- * Eagle carries songs within his wings.
- * "Among the Stonies, to this day, the gift of making the eagle feather head robe is a secret guarded by a few Elders. The teaching is passed on only when an Elder approaches death."
- * "Only the most courageous Stoney warriors were given the sacred eagle feather head robe to wear. This was a sign to all - friend or deadly enemy - that this man (the wearer) was under the wing of Eagle ... When the number of feathers was very long, the people knew that it displayed tremendous strength, honour and wisdom of the warrior." - Jonas Dixon

Chews-Her-Braids

- * Springbank Creek is south of the Bow River, in the foothills of southwestern Alberta.
- * The Gros Ventre, a southern prairie tribe (who no longer inhabit Alberta), were called the "big bellies."
- * Traditionally, a husband had tremendous (sometimes total) powers over his wife. However, the wife could "divorce" or "desert" her husband at any time simply by removing his belongings or possessions outside her lodge.

The Buffalo Circle

- * The sore eye moon is March.
- * Old Man Playing River is the ancestral name for the Oldman River in southern Alberta. Old Man Playing River is named after *Iktomni*, or "Old Man" as he is also known. This river is very special. Near it (in a mysterious place) rests a giant red buffalo stone - one of four) that balances the earth.

Ismun, Man of Hair

- * Jumpingpound Creek is north of Moose Mountain, in southwestern Alberta.
- * Killdeer are small wading birds. (Plover family.)
- * The Scaly Slime Beast is also known as Underground Man. Many figures live beneath the earth, including a whole assembly of beasts and monsters.

Ismun and the Four Rings of Underground Lodges

- * "Now *Ismun* is stranded by Tree Twister and Dragging Timber."

"All his strength cannot get him out of the dark, narrow hole. Legs healed, *Ismun* searches for *Mozho Tawe* who has a power to make himself into a giant with big pads (like lynx) on his hands and feet. The Elders had told *Ismun*, 'Only *Mozho Tawe* can take you on his back through the black hole. But he will want to be fed moose - there is no other way to climb back up into earth.'

"*Ismun* brings much moosemeat on his shoulders. The giant smiles. 'I will carry you up to earth. You hold moose. But when I call out to you, you must cut off a piece of meat and put it in my mouth.'"

"*Mozho Tawe* begins to climb. His pads make a bobbing echo. When he calls out, *Ismun* drops moosemeat into his mouth. But half-way up, all the meat is gone and the giant will not go on. Next day, *Ismun* has two moose on his shoulders. Soon one moose is eaten up. The meat from the second moose is gone just as the light at the end of the black hole appears. 'Give me meat,' cries *Mozho Tawe*. 'The meat is all gone,' says *Ismun*. 'Then cut off some of your own flesh *Ismun*. I must have meat,' the giant says. *Ismun* gives him a piece of the cut grass rope braided by Tree Twister. Soon they reach light and earth."

"But the earth is empty.

"*Ismun* walks for a long time. He comes to a big Stoney camp. But his own people do not remember him. The Stonies tell him, 'Dragging Timber and Tree Twister are Chiefs here.' *Ismun* goes up alone to a big hill. He watches the camp by night and sings to She Bear. Then he comes down to the camp-in-feasting. He sees that Dragging Timber and Tree Twister are nothing but old stumps with human hair. *Ismun* grabs them and ties them with the cut braided coil to his medicine lance. Then he tells the people that these have betrayed a nation and abandoned him to the Water Beast."

"I am going to dig a hole big enough to hold forty bears,' *Ismun* says. When it is done, *Ismun* throws Tree Twister and Dragging Timber into the hole and covers it with earth. 'These are the roots that devour,' *Ismun* says. 'There will be no more betrayal.'"

"*Ismun* then walks East."

Based on narration by Mark Lefthand/"Fish Child". Contributory narration by Jonas Dixon/"One Boy". Translated by Alfred T. Dixon, Jr. Recorded by Thomas T. Williams. Written by Sebastian Chumak.

FOOTNOTES

Sharp Claws and Woman-Who-Carries-Bark

- * Traditionally, young, unmarried Stoney women were chaperoned everywhere. They were very closely watched and almost guarded. A young man had to have nerves of steel and great daring to even penetrate the suspicious stares of the old chaperones.
- * In the old days, spirits were everywhere, in everything. Especially at night, anything that moved out of place, or carried a voice out of place (i.e., echo), was attributed to spirits. This story is no idle tale: It underlies the fact that spirits lived everywhere, and were, at times, controlled by certain people.

Origin of Morning Star

- * Stars are the natural posts of Sky. The job of stars is to hold up Sky. Stars are Sky pole bearers.
- * The star people look and speak just like us, except they have sky bodies.
- * As the star sisters speak, their sky breaths become as shooting stars. Ancestral Stonies (on earth) knew by celestial contact and by keeping with the celestial pulse, that shooting stars were messages sent by one star to another. The ancestral Stonies became wise in the way of stars. They knew that sometimes the message of a shooting star would serve as an omen, or signal of warning. A spirit man would then purify himself and make special rites to find the truthful meaning (or *Waka Taga's* intent). Such a celestial sign could warn of war, attack, flood, killing hail, prairie fire, early frost, killer snowstorm, the death of a leader, etc. But many star omens are bringers of good fortune. This is especially true of shooting stars in the autumn when deer-rub-their-horns.
- * Ancestral Stonies did not, by custom, pray to the stars. On occasion, however, they would make songs to them. A song might be sung to the Morning Star by a hurt Stoney lover. Or it may be sung in bereavement or mourning for a dead wife.

Moccasin Carrier

- * The prized scalp shirt was decorated with the scalps of as many enemies as the warrior has killed. Only the very bravest wore these.

Dog Ribs and Moon Woman

- * The five-petalled wild rose is Alberta's provincial floral emblem.
- * Spirit dogs are horses.

The Sun Dance

- * Most of the sacred songs of the Sun Dance are lost forever. (The opening ceremonial songs were an oral tradition.)
 - * Offerings by the people to Sun belong to Sun and become part of Sun. No mortal may disturb these.
 - * "The Sun Dance is made only to heal wounds. Even the dead may suddenly rise up." - Joe Kootenay
- The most sacred beings in the Sun Dance are Thunder and Sun. However, it is Thunder that is highlighted and worshipped in this ceremony.

Gift of the Long-Necked Swans

- * The Little Elbow River flows east of the Opal Range in southwestern Alberta.
- * Raspberry Ridge lies between Mount Burke and Courcellette Peak, in southwestern Alberta.

No-Nose Woman

- * "All this happened - a long time ago - when the prairies were open and there were no white men." - Mary Lefthand
- * In those days, it was the custom for a man to have several wives. A man might have a sits-by-the-fire-wife, and one or more serving wives.

Big Skunk and his Poison Fog

- * The red-berries-moon is July.
- * Moose Mountain lies northeast of the Fisher Range. It is south of Jumpingpound Creek, in southwestern Alberta.
- * Lake Minnewanka is east of the Cascade River and north of Carrot Creek, in southwestern Alberta.
- * At one time, *Iktomni* takes some power from Skunk. In his travels, he fights a dead tree. *Iktomni* loses Skunk's powers in destroying the dead tree. Later, he tries to seduce She-Skunk. He is caught and killed. Four days later, he comes back to life, but again is caught and made a captive. *Iktomni* convinces Weasel to destroy his enemy. Weasel sneaks into the body of his enemy and devours his beating heart. *Iktomni* paints Weasel white - like the clouds.

First Sky Takes a Sit-by-the-Fire-Woman

- * The Rosebud River runs east of Carstairs, in southwestern Alberta.
- * Young-cropped-tail is Fisher.

Spotted Bear and the Death Lodge

- * Blizzard Lake is northeast of Okotoks, in southwestern Alberta.
- * Bannock is a kind of Indian loaf-cake made thick with oats, meats, and baked into a meat-roll.

Wolverine and the Sacred Fire

- * *Sheenk-to-gay-jabi* (Wolves).

FOOTNOTES

- * The *Yahey Yamnaska* are the Cliff Mountains of southwestern Alberta. These are particularly special and sacred to the Stonies.
- * Tail-person is, tail. Apparently, hands, ears, tails are also (and equally) people. (This indicates a very old level of human consciousness.)

Isyo

- * The flower moon is May.

Sun Calf and his Buffalo Power

- * In this context, "Buffalo Power" is call "*Waka*."
- * Blackberries ripen in September.
- * Bluerock Creek is at the foot of the Highwood Range, in southwestern Alberta.
- * Lookout Creek is north of Abraham Lake, in western Alberta.
- * The White Goat Wilderness is east of Sunwapta Pass, in western Alberta.
- * Wapiabi Creek is just south of the Blackstone River, in western Alberta.
- * A warrior laughing at another warrior, or calling him a "woman" or a "dog" was a deadly challenge to a fight.

***Tetheheynin*, the Scabby-Bellied One**

- * The Pelican Mountains are just east of Lesser Slave Lake, in northcentral Alberta.
- * Ochre Braids is named (also) "Princess of the Little People."
- * *Tetheheynin* is named as father of *Macoyah Demani*, or Gnome Walker. Gnome Walker, (as will his four brothers), will avenge the wrongs committed by various beasts, monsters and cannibals.
- * The horse nation is descended from water beings.

White Horn Snares *Waheamba*

- * Black cherries ripen in August.

Wolf Keeper Tracks *Kanasa*

- * Men-stay-in-the-lodges in January.
- * Wolf Keeper call down *Shintogaya*, "the Spirit of the Black Timber Wolf." *Shintogaya* turns him into a black timber wolf.

Blue-Flying Fighter

- * The moon of leafless trees is November.
- * In times of starvation, ancestral people would boil old skins to make a kind of gruel-soup.
- * Tall-ears are rabbits.

Stoney Moons

January	- <i>Wichorhandu Waheamba</i>
February	- <i>Hoya Tawaeh</i>
March	- <i>Nowedescan Tawaeh</i>
April	- <i>Tabeyhan Tawaeh</i>
May	- <i>Woiya Waheamba</i>
June	- <i>Wapey Woshma Waheamba</i>
July	- <i>Wasasa Waheamba</i>
August	- <i>Pezeegasnabi Waheamba</i>
September	- <i>Worhpeyeh Waheamba</i>
October	- <i>Anokogeepa Waheamba</i>
November	- <i>Charhonga Waheamba</i>
December	- <i>Wichorhandu Sungagu</i>

Stoney Seasons

Winter	- <i>Waniyedu</i>
Spring	- <i>Weduh</i>
Summer	- <i>Mnageduh</i>
Autumn	- <i>Pdanyedu</i>

- Middle Brother Moon
- Long Day Moon
- Goose Moon
- Frog Moon
- Grass Moon
- Full Leaf Moon
- Red Berries Moon
- Ripening Moon
- Elk-in-Heat Moon
- Joins-Both-Sides Moon
- Frost-in-the-Lodges-Moon
- Younger Brother Moon

Stoney Moons

January, *Wichorhandu Waheamba*, Middle Brother Moon

January is also known as *Wicogandu*, Moon-in-the-Centre, Middle Moon, Centre Moon, and Big Moon.

January is the mid-way-moon in the seven cold moons. It is the Big Moon of the seven-moon winter season.

January is also known as *Witehi*, Hard Frost Moon, Hard Moon, Hard-Time Moon. This is a time of severity, scarcity, starvation.

January is also the Moon-When-Cottonwood-Trees-Burst, or the Moon-of-Popping-Trees. Deep inside the cottonwood tree, the sap freezes and the cottonwood bursts with loud popping and cracking sounds. Hearing this, the people know that Big Moon is watchful.

January is the Moon-When-Great-Bear-Turns-Over-on-His-Side. All living bears make this act of winter-sleep-turning. This occurs when the middle of the winter season is reached. This mid-winter event brings one of the coldest moons/(months). Then Great Bear goes back to sleep for the rest of the winter.

This is also the time when the bone marrow of the moose gets juicy.

February, *Hoya Tawaeh*, Long-Day Moon

February is also known as *Amhanska*, Long-Day Moon.

February is day-lengthener. Sun watches longer over Earth.

February is Eagle-Returning-Moon. It marks the return of hawks and eagles from their wintering grounds in the south.

March, *Nowedescan Tawaeh*, Goose Moon

This the time when wild geese return from the south. It marks the return of ducks as well. This is also the time when Stoney hunters look for bear who is still in his winter sleep.

March is also known as Sore Eye Moon, *Wicinstayazan*. This is the time for eyes to hurt from snow blindness or "whiteouts".

April, *Tabeyhan Tawaeh*, Frog Moon

April is also known as *Tabehatawi*, or *Tabehawi*: Frog's Moon.

At this time, the frog people begin to sing. And frog's song announces the first warm moons. In April, the frog people show their heads. It is said that frog holds up seven toes to signal that the seven winter moons have come to an end.

May, *Woiya Waheamba*, Grass Moon

May is also known as *Induwiga*, Idle Moon.
May signals the end of the winter moons.
May is the great pause before summer arrives.

May is Flower moon.
May, the Moon-of-Everything-Green.
May, the egging moon.
May, the birthing moon.
May marks the beginning of the growing year.

In Stoney chronology, the Flower Moon marks the beginning of each year. (The twelve Stoney moons correspond roughly to the Roman calendar.)

In the Flower Moon, all the wildflowers bloom.

It is said that *Owa Peskaskan Hunga*, the Chief of Crocuses, calls for his nation to inspect the earth. And if the snow and ice are all gone, then *Owa Peskaskan Hunga* will give the sign for all the crocuses to come out in bloom. The other wildflowers soon follow: Buttercups, Shooting Star, Sleeping Flower, and all their brothers. The Sleeping Flower, *Woiya Istima*, blooms in a "sleepy" way. The sacred herbs also blossom at this time.

In the greening moon, Bear wakes from his sleep and emerges from his caves and dens.

In the Flower Moon, the creatures of the earth and sky and water receive new-life-within-themselves. The seed is sprinkled with water. Eagle, Hawk, Sparrow, Magpie, Raven, Ptarmigan, Duck, Goose, build their birthing lodges and lay their eggs.

Flower Moon is the best time for hunting deer. It is said that this is the time when deer are fattest.

Stoney Moons

June, *Wapey Woshma Waheamba*, Full Leaf Moon

June is also *Waheqosmewi*, when-leaves-become-full.

June is Sprouting-of-the-Seeds-Moon. This is the time when grasses, trees, and other vegetation come forth with new growth and blossoms. The willow tree leaves burst forth from buds. The Ruler of the Sacred Herbs, *Pezutah Tawaah*, commands all the medicines to yield up their full powers.

This is the Moon-of-Blossoms when-a-world-becomes-green.

July, *Wasasa Waheamba*, Red Berries Moon

July is also the Tending Moon.

July marks the time when Thunder, *Mu*, tends to the growing vegetation by bringing rain. Lightning assists in pointing to specific areas where water is needed. Then the Thunderer Birds bring water to earth.

Ingeeshin, the Great Grandmother of the Earth, also tends to the sacred plant medicines.

In appointing *Mu* as rain-maker, *Waka Taga*, Great Mystery, reveals himself as *Wa-oshee-geeney-Waka*, Sacred One who cares for the Earth.

August, *Pezeegasnabi Waheamba*, Ripening Moon

August is also *Canpasapsaba*, Black Cherries Moon.

This is the "Berries Moon" when gooseberries, chokecherries, saskatoon berries, and rosehips are ripe for young Stoney girls to pick.

September, *Worhpeyeh Waheamba*, Elk-in-Heat-Moon

September is also *Wahpegiwi*, Yellow Leaf Moon.

This is "Turning-of-the-Leaves-Moon." Flowers, grasses and leaves turn from green, to yellow, to red, to brown.

September marks the beginning of the seven winter moons.

September is the rutting season of elk. (The time of sexual excitement for male elk.) This is the best time for Stoney hunters to take elk.

Blueberries and loganberries ripen at this time too.

The Yellow Leaf Moon is also known as *Takioha Wapa*, the time of the first snowfall. For snow can come at any time now.

October, *Anokogeepe Waheamba*, Joins-Both-Sides-Moon

Joins-Both-Sides-Moon is also known as *Anukope*.

Anukope is the dividing moon. *Anukope* is the mid-moon that comes between summer and winter. *Anukope* translates as "part summer and part winter." Joins-Both-Sides-Moon brings both warm and cold weather.

(Nowadays, it is referred to as "Indian Summer.")

October is also *Tasnaheja Hagitka*, the Moon-When-the-Golden-Mantled-Squirrel-Looks-Back, or the Moon-When-the-Striped-Gopher-Looks-Back.

In this ground squirrel moon, the prairie dog is observed by the Stonies as waking from his early hibernation. Prairie dog then sits on his little earthmound for a last look at the summer-racing-southwards. The Stonies would frequently see prairie dog singing to the full moon.

All of the birds, except Ptarmigan, Raven, and Crow, migrate south at this time. In October, moose rut. And the last of the leaves fall from the trees.

November, *Charhonga Waheamba*, Frost-in-the-Lodges-Moon

November is also known as Frost-on-the-Trees-Moon.

Sometimes, it is simply, *Cuhotgawi*, Frost Moon.

The first frost makes crisp the hills and sky. The trees are leafless. The air is very brisk.

In Frost Moon, Bear makes-a-home for the winter in dens and caves.

Frost Moon is also the deer rutting season.

December, *Wichorhandu Sungagu*, Younger Brother Moon

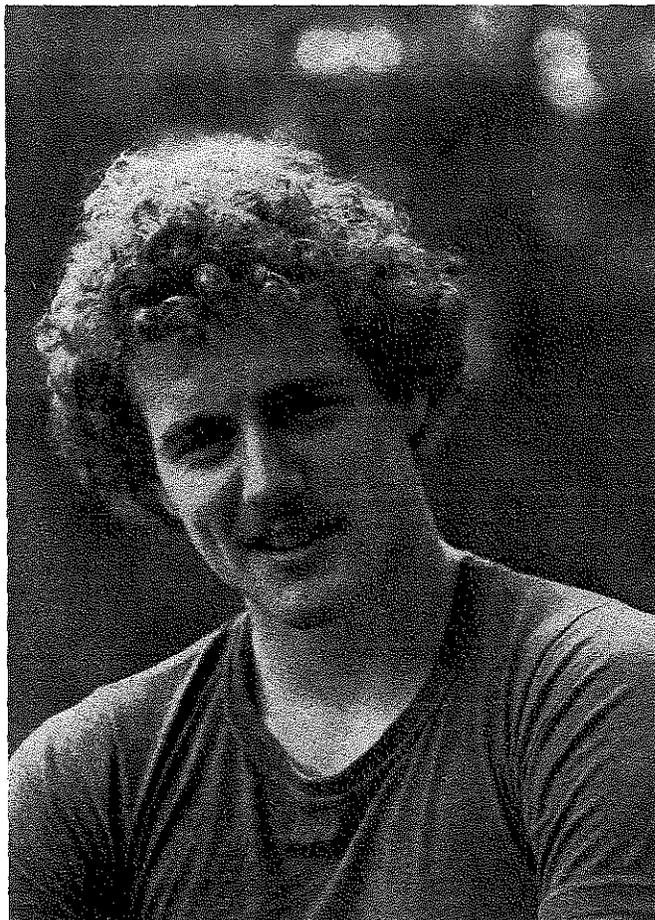
December is also known as *Wicogandu Sungagu*, Centre Moon's Young Brother.

January is Big Moon. And December is the younger-brother-moon who attaches himself to his elder-brother-big-moon.

December is rutting season for mountain sheep. Stoney hunters say that this is the best time for bringing back mountain sheep.

Bob Mackie

Photographer



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Born in 1961, in Cranbrook, British Columbia.

Raised on a horse ranch in British Columbia.

Bob held summer jobs as a ranchhand (B Heart Ranch, Baker Mt. Ranch). He also worked summers as a photographer, reporter, writer, editor with the Reflector (student paper) and the Journal (Edmonton).

Bob is a graduate of Journalism from Mount Royal College (Calgary).

Armed with a 35mm Nikon, and countless rolls of film, Bob travelled extensively to small Alberta backtowns, villages and scattered settlements attempting to photograph Reservation life. Bob spent all spring and summer of 1981 in the field photographing the Stonies. His field work illustrates the Stoney mythology project.

"I attempted to capture the faces, the depth, the feelings of the Stonies on film. I hope I have succeeded."

"Because of my country and horse background, I felt a strong kinship with the Stonies. I left with a far deeper understanding of the people than I had come. This understanding lives inside me."

Most recently, Bob works as a photographer for the Cranbrook Daily Townsman.

He lives with his parents in Cranbrook.