

mony in 1968 she announced to the gathering that I was her newly-adopted grandson. For that I've been honored ever since by her large family of descendants.

During the time of these first visits, James White Calf ('Sakuena,' or Last Gun, also known as 'Apeesomachkan,' or Running Wolf) was the last living buffalo hunter and scalp taker anywhere. In addition, he was a son of the old Pikunni head chief White Calf. He was over 110 years old when he died on the reservation in 1970. Very knowledgeable about Pikunni tribal history and sacred rituals, he was the keeper of several important medicine bundles, giving me my first ceremonial initiations during a period of time when I camped by him. I've always considered it auspicious that at the start of my cultural path I was welcomed by the last living person able to give such direct contacts with traditional Blackfoot life and cultural ways.

After that, many other elders painted my face and transferred sacred ways and articles. In 1972 the Horse Medicine Pipe bundle of the Kainah was transferred to me, my oldest son, Adolf IV (Wolf Child), and my wife, Beverly Little Bear, while we lived near her parents on the Blood Reserve. This Pikunni photo-book project was moved aside, as my cultural and ceremonial studies became focused on learning the complex and ancient Medicine Pipe bundle ceremony, working with then-elderly fellow bundle keepers, along with the half-dozen acknowledged ritual leaders. At the head of them was Willie Scraping White ('Makwi-api,' Wolf Old Man), who at 97 was then the eldest. Before his passing he announced to relatives and friends among the Bloods that he had "given me his footsteps" to follow. My years of work with books and old photographs went from being a scholarly obsession to a life-long personal vow and commitment.

The Pikunni photo collection had meanwhile grown to more than a thousand prints. At the same time I was also gathering material and information about the Blood division, the Kainah, among whom I was then living. I had become closely involved with several leading tribal elders and their daily cultural affairs. The result was published in the mid 1970's by Harper & Row as a 370-page photo history titled, "The Blood People – An Illustrated Interpretation of the Old Ways," part of a special series on native topics. With hindsight, I didn't write it quite like I now wish, but it did bring together more photos and stories of the

Bloods than had ever been seen before. Family and friends joined many elders who said they were proud to have helped, and were pleased with the results. But some people criticized my efforts, saying that the traditions should not be written about, else claiming that I was 'selling' Blackfoot heritage simply to get famous and enrich myself. That hurt, since I'd spent a lot of time and effort on that book, but got very little money or glory from it. When a small militant clique threatened publicly to assassinate me, I got disgusted and packed up the material for this Pikunni photo history. For a few years I kept it safely packed away in a big trunk, concentrating my writing efforts on railroad history and photo books instead.

Fortunately, before I'd reached this discouraging stage all my elderly friends among the Pikunni had looked through the collection of photos at least once or twice. From them I got names and other information that only their generation would have still known. Even then, some of my 1880's and 90's scenes clearly showed proud men and women that no one left living could recognize, their names lost forever. It is the help that I got from those elders of the 1960's and 70's that really makes the information with this collection of old photographs such a priceless treasure.

Invariably those elders found friends and relatives in the photos, people whom they often hadn't seen in years. Sometimes there were strong emotional moments, especially when the pictures showed parents, or long-gone siblings. Occasionally I got real lucky by having elders find themselves in the photos. They would generally recall the occasion for me, thus adding further to my notes. Most of those who found themselves in pictures had never seen the actual prints, so whenever possible I brought copies for them.

Ben Calf Robe (Mekiapi, Red Old Man) was a noted elder among the Siksika, the Blackfoot Nation of Canada. He was a former chief, and the son of a chief. He had also been a Medicine Pipe and Beaver Bundle holder, an Okan sponsor, an all around wise and experienced man. He said he wanted to help me make a book about his own tribal division, based on stories he would tell to go with some of the photos from my project. The result was published shortly before his death in 1979, titled 'SIKSIKA - A Blackfoot Legacy.'

Ben Calf Robe urged me strongly to ignore criticism, and to go on with this Pikunni photo history. Around that same time he was also one of several eld-

ers who encouraged and advised a group of us younger people to revive the Crazy Dog Society, then to help put up the first Okan lodge among the North Pikunni in almost thirty years. Ben told us that as chief, and also as medicine bundle holder, he had often been criticized, even blamed by others for failures and accidents that had nothing to do with him. He said that most of the critics were envious of his accomplishments. He was one of the first in his tribe to get classroom schooling, then learn how to work as a printer, helping the early missionaries translate their religious books into the unwritten Blackfoot. Critics in the tribe said he and his relatives would suffer because of this. Instead, he carried on successfully for almost ninety years, widely revered, not bothered by his critics, encouraging others to do the same. I am following his advice with these books.

That special Okan took place in the summer of 1977. It was sponsored by North Pikunni elders Joe and Josephine Crowshoe (Weasel Tail and Distant-Nez-Perce-Woman), with the noted South Pikunni elder Mike Swims Under (Many Stars) working as Sun Dance priest, or 'father.' His partner was the elderly Kainah Sun Dance woman, Annie Rides-at-the-Door (Stealing-Different-Things-Woman), who worked as the holy 'mother.' It was a very beautiful and successful Okan, heralding a new era in the revival of Blackfoot culture. Many more Sun Dances have been held in the years since.

As I was then the only Medicine Pipe bundle holder among the younger group, Joe Crowshoe gave me the honor of working as Mike Swims Under's assistant, learning about the Okan ceremony and helping to sing the songs. That started a long relationship between Mike and I, first as friends, then later as ceremonial 'father' and 'son.' In 1985 I brought him to my home in the Canadian Rockies for a week, where my whole family called him Grandpa Mike, and he treated us accordingly. For the next fifteen years he came annually, as we worked together to revive the Beaver Bundle ceremony, which had not been held among any of the Blackfoot Confederacy for some 25 years. As a young man he was given the knowledge and rights to the ancient Beaver ceremony from his parents, who were Okan people and also had a Beaver Bundle. Mike helped our family to combine things old and new in order bring the ceremony back to life.

After these first efforts, Mike Swims Under helped