



View west from
Morley

Some Individuals

Before we leave the reserve, I would like to introduce a few of the interesting and important characters who have made their mark in the history of the Stoney Nakoda people. Here are a few members of the tribe who I personally wish that I'd had a chance to have met...

George McLean (Walking Buffalo)

Born near Morley in 1871, named *Tatâga Mâni* in his native tongue, Walking Buffalo attended the signing of Treaty No. 7 at Blackfoot Crossing in 1877 and subsequently witnessed a period of immense change and upheaval for his people. His mother died while he was very young and he was adopted into the family of John McLean, a Methodist missionary from whom he received his English name. After graduating from the Morley school at 16, George McLean went on to study at the Red Deer Industrial School and then St. John's College in Winnipeg. He worked for the NWMP for a while before returning to Morley to work as an interpreter. He quickly attained a reputation of great status among his people, becoming a medicine man, and being elected a chief of the Bears paw band.

One of the things McLean is best known for is his involvement in the Moral Rearmament movement, and he travelled the world extensively as one of its emissaries in the 1950s and 1960s. This movement, which was based largely in Europe but spread internationally, pointed to the military rearmament on the eve of World War II and called for a parallel spiritual and moral strengthening. The MRA had Christian origins, but embraced a multi-faith approach and multi-ethnic inclusiveness that appealed to McLean.

This man, who had seen his people lose their traditional way of life but who had personally gained a level of comfort in the international, multicultural milieu, expressed his perspective on the Indian transition into white culture to Marius Barbeau: "Our old father told us that the civilized people were coming from the east. These civilized men were called the white people, Red Coats. The savages were told by the white men to stop slaughtering each other. And then, later on, the white traders told us that the buffaloes were going to be gone. We just laughed at them. We could not believe that. In later years, we saw the preachers coming to western Alberta. Every summer the white people increased in number. Then we heard through the traders that the white people were rulers come to the Western country. Even the white traders did not think the savage Indians would be able to live under the civil law. But they passed a treaty in

Gleishen. They were trying to make a treaty. But most of the Indians wanted to destroy all the police, the Mounted Police. The elders and the chiefs sat united to keep down the Indians. They said, 'Maybe a better life those civilized people live than our lives, because when there is no law, there is firewater which kills a lot of Indians. And a lot of people steal our horses among ourselves; a lot of people steal the homemade saddles and homemade raw ropes, the blankets.' And the elders and the chiefs allowed the policemen to stay, to see what this civilized life really meant. We found now that the life was easier and more peaceful, but we could not be happy as we had been. We were not used to this new civilized life. We were feeling like we were living in captivity."¹⁶

A man of insight, dignity, and adaptability, McLean also had a keen sense of humour. At an international event, he was introduced to another man, who explained that his own heritage was Scottish. George quickly responded that they had that in common, pointing out his own surname.

George McLean died in 1967, the year before his people gained self-government.

Tchatkta and Hector Crawler

A man known as *Tchatkta* was believed to have been among the first Stoney Nakoda to have accepted Christianity. Despite his conversion to the white man's faith, *Tchatkta* appears to have been comfortable with maintaining strong elements of his native beliefs and practices. George McLean commented to Marius Barbeau of this man: "He was the first to believe in Christianity among the Stoney. He would not go to war but sat in his tent and just prayed. He believed in Christianity so strongly that when he heard of war or shooting, he would go into a fast, not eating. He was a brave man just the same. In the old days, chiefs were not in general of a bad kind. But because they were brave, they fought. These men were leaders, and they had to face war. They were not afraid of being killed."¹⁷

Hector Crawler, or Chief Calf Child, seems also to have had a strong mystical inclination. A medicine man, he went into the mountains on several occasions and returned after

having had intense spiritual experiences. His powers of healing were well known among his people. Crawler worked as a guide in the new Rocky Mountains Park, and it is said that he was the one who told Tom Wilson that there were hot springs at the base of Sulphur Mountain – a significant event in the development of Banff Park, as we shall explore in a later chapter. Serving as chief of the Wesley band, Hector Crawler tried to govern his people in a way that honoured their traditions.

William Twin

William Twin – a.k.a. William Hunter, or *Nâ sho da*, meaning "Embers" – was another Stoney who also found work off the reserve. Twin's life characterizes the tenuous balance that some of the Indians achieved, with one foot in his traditional culture and the other in the white man's world. William was, indeed, a twin. His brother, Joshua, also became well known through his work with outfitters in the Banff area.

Born in 1847, William Twin was 30 years old when Treaty No. 7 was signed. He experienced the move onto the reserve, the transition to ranching and outfitting, and all the upheavals that the advent of the 20th century brought to the area. He is said to have met with James Hector when the explorer travelled through Twin's traditional hunting ground in 1858. Twin harvested hay from the Vermilion Lakes area for John Brewster in the 1880s and had a long association with the Brewster family's outfitting business. In 1894, Twin was employed by the CPR at Lake Louise, where he cut trails and guided tourists. Twin was one of the guides hired by Samuel Allen and Walter Wilcox from Yale University as they explored this area.



Tom Wilson and Hector Crawler, Stoney Chief, at Banff, Alberta, 1927, Glenbow NA-673-24