

One Battle at a Time

By: Brianne Fujimoto-Johnston

In 1830 on an unknown date by the Belly River, a hero was born. Chief Crowfoot was born in the Blood (Kainai) tribe but grew up with the Blackfoot (Siksika). His parents gave him the name Astoxkomi (Shot Close) at birth. He was given many names over the years until he received the name Isapo-muxica meaning Crow Big Foot which was later shortened to Crowfoot. Only a few months after Crowfoot was born, his father Istowun-eh'pata (Packs a Knife) died in a raid on the Crows. Crowfoot's mother Axxahp-say-pi (Attacked towards Home) was left alone to raise her 2 children; Crowfoot and his younger brother Mexkim-aotani (Iron Shield). A few years later in 1835, Axxahp-say-pi remarried Akay-nehka-simi (Many Names).

Before the age of 20, he went to battle 19 times (but unfortunately was injured 6 times). In 1865, he became the chief of the Big Pipes Band. Later in 1870, he became one of the three head chiefs of that tribe. Being the leader he was, he made peace with Cree. He later adopted a Cree named Poundmaker, who became a leader of his own people. During a Cree raid he rescued missionary Sir Albert Lacombe. Crowfoot also had 3 other children who were all girls. He lost most of his kids at young ages to smallpox and tuberculosis. He had numerous wives.

On September 12, 1877, Colonel Macleod and Lieutenant-Governor David Laird drew up Treaty 7. Crowfoot took a step forward and persuaded other chiefs to sign the Treaty. Though Crowfoot was known for his bravery in battles, he refused to join the North-West Rebellion in 1885 even though his adopted son, Poundmaker was a supporter of the rebellion. During the rebellion in 1885, Poundmaker was sentenced to 4 years in jail for "treason-felony". He was let out of jail after serving 1 year in jail because of poor health and passed away 4 months later while celebrating the Sundance. In 1886, Prime Minister Sir John A. MacDonald invited Chief Crowfoot and a few other chiefs to see Ottawa. He happily accepted and travelled to there. He soon became ill, (starting to cough up blood) and returned back home.

On April 25, 1890 at Blackfoot Crossing, Chief Crowfoot passed away of tuberculosis. He died at the age of 60 a hero and a role model for many. He was a wise man who did everything necessary for his people and for people in the future. He tried hard to maintain peaceful relations among others. He contributed much to help shape Calgary and Alberta making it what it is today.

Chief Crowfoot being the good man he was always put others before himself. He was man with a kind soul who never wanted to disappoint his people or anyone for that matter. Crowfoot succeeded in showing everyone exactly what **he** himself was capable of.

This strong and powerful leader has not only shown bravery and courage, he has shown heroism. He has showed me that creating peaceful relations with others and working hard is important and can take you far in life. People today spend most of their time on electronics when they can be helping around the community. I have learned that small things like volunteering or donating money to charity can make a big difference in someone else's life. By doing these things you can be a champion in your community and experience the difference it makes in your life.

To honor of his hard work, effort and dedication, Crowfoot Trail and the Chief Crowfoot Learning Centre are named after him.



“What is life? It is the flash of a firefly in the night. It is the breath of a buffalo in the winter time. It is as the little shadow that runs across the grass and loses itself in the sunset.”