

MAJOR L. I. COOKE
3305 STATE STREET
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

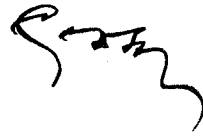
March 30, 1940.

Dear Schultz:-

Thought you might be interested in the enclosure, which is a copy of the notes descriptive of the various scenes portrayed on that elk skin by Big Nose. You doubtless have heard him hold forth about some of them!

Keep this copy, if you wish. Hope you are feeling better, and that I may see you in case I can arrange to make a trip to Glacier this summer. I would like very much to visit the Blackfoot Reservation again, for I have not been there since I left in 1894, or was it 1895?

Sincerely



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Major L.L. Cooke
3305 State Street
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Events in the life of "Three Sons" (otherwise known as "Big Nose"), last war chief of the Piegan Indians, as portrayed by him on an elk skin.

This elk skin was given by Big Nose to Captain L.W. Cooke (later Brigadier General, U.S.A.), 3rd U.S. Infantry, while Acting Indian Agent for the Blackfeet, Blood, and Piegan Indians, in 1893-1894. The following notes, interpretive of the various pictographs on the skin were made by Captain Cooke at the time from verbal descriptions given by Big Nose himself. At that time Big Nose was about seventy years old.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-X

Scene 1. (year 1870)

Represents the capture of eight Pondera (Pen'd Orielle ?) Indians by the South Piegans, with whom they were at war. A large village of the Piegans were in camp in the Cypress Hills near old Fort Walsh, Northwest Territory. The Piegans succeeded in surrounding their foes and were about to kill them, when Big Nose interceded in their behalf, thus saving their lives and permitting them to return to the Flathead country from ~~which~~ whence they came. It seems that at some previous time Big Nose had received a large silver medal from the U.S. Government at Washington, and was told at the time that he must not kill or permit his people to kill anyone, and that he and his people must make peace with all tribes as well as with the whites, hence his efforts to save the lives of this party.

Scene 2 (1867)

Piegan camp near the Cypress Hills, Northwest Territory. Five Sioux Indians were discovered attempting to steal horses. Big Nose with a party of thirty Piegans attacked them, killing ~~five~~ ^{of the party} all five, with the loss of one Piegan. Big Nose killed the first one. One Sioux escaped. (Apparently there must have been at least six Sioux!)

Scene 3. (1860)

A fight with the Crows on the "swift stream" which empties into the Yellowstone just west of where Fort Keogh is now situated. The Piegans, led by Big Nose, ~~numbered~~ numbered forty-two, and the Crows, twelve. The Piegans charged and

the Crows ran into the brush. Their leader, however, stood his ground and was killed by Big Nose. Big Nose threw down his gun and closed in on the Crow, grappling with him. Another Piegan shot the Crow in the stomach; the Crow then drew a knife but before he could use it ~~on~~ the man who had already wounded him, cut his arm causing him to drop the knife. Big Nose then stabbed the Crow to death. For this deed Big Nose was given the name of "Crow Chief".

Scene 4. (1861)

Near White Sulphur Springs, Montana. A surprise by the Pondera's. The Indian falling being the brother of Big Nose. The Piegan party numbered eleven, and the Pondera's sixty. The former retreated to the brush. The brother recovered, and one Pondera was killed.

Scene 5. (1855)

Sweet Grass Hills, the east butte. At this time the Piegans and the Pondera's were at peace, and sixty lodges of the Piegans and ten lodges of the Pondera's were ~~engaged~~ camped together. Late at night when soundly sleeping Big Nose heard a gun fired and then another. They all sprang to arms and when they emerged from their lodges they discovered that they were surrounded by about four hundred Sioux. So close had been the fire that the Piegan horses corraled inside the circle of lodges were nearly all killed. Those not killed made their escape except the sorrel pinto horse ridden by Big Nose. The Sioux by this time had possession of one half of the Piegan lodges. Big Nose on his pinto, which was wounded in the neck, and then exchanged for the yellow horse, held his people together in the other half of the village, fighting till morning. The yellow figure was a Sioux, wounded by a Pondera, and who ran off followed by Big Nose, who pursued and stabbed him to death. The Sioux then withdrew with a loss of sixteen killed; the Ponderas and Piegans losing eleven.

Scene 6. (1855)

In the Cypress Hills, Northwest Territory. Two hundred lodges of Piegans were in camp. Two Sioux stole some of their horses. Big Nose and a few others gave chase. The horses of the Sioux gave out and they tried to escape on foot. Big Nose overtook the one shown in the scene, killing him with his knife.

Scene 7. (1860)

In the Judith Basin, Montana. Big Nose crawling up on a Pondera lodge under cover of night, taking the horse shown as picketed there. In the meantime the owner opened fire shooting Big Nose through the coat. There were thirteen Piegans in the party and sixty lodges of Ponderas. The Piegans were a hundred miles from their own people. The horse shown was the only one taken, due to the early discovery of the raiders by the Ponderas.

Scene 8.

Medicine pipes captured in battle.

Scene 9. (1855)

Near the Cypress Hills, Northwest Territory. Eight Sioux attempt to steal horses from the Piegans camped there. About four hundred lodges of Bloods and Peigans. The Sioux stole six horses, were pursued, overtaken and all killed but one. Big Nose holding the horse and exchanging shots with the Sioux leader, whom he kills.

Scene 10. (1859)

Pickly Pear Valley, near where Helena, Montana, now stands. Big Nose and party, twenty-one in number, left their camp where the the old Blackfoot Agency stood, on Badger Creek (15 Miles from the new Agency at Browning, on the Great Northern Railroad). Reaching the Prickly Pear they found a camp of sixty lodges. Big Nose and another brave crawled up. Big Nose cut a fast horse loose from a lodge to which it was tied, his companion being killed in attempting a similar feat at another lodge. (It was the custom to secure their best horses--war ponies--by passing the lariat through the door of the

lodge, and fasten it to a lodge pole inside). Six horses were obtained and the ~~raids~~ raiders all escaped except the one noted above.

Scene 11 (1847)

West Butte of the Sweet Grass Hills, Montana. Three hundred lodges of Piegans were in camp there. Fifty-three Crees made a night attack upon the Piegans, who were asleep when fired upon. Piegans fought but little during the night, but when daylight came a general charge was made upon the Crees. Big Nose mounted and charged among the Crees. His horse was shot in the head. After he was dismounted Big Nose killed one Cree with his gun, and two with his knife. All the Crees were finally killed, the Piegans losing thirteen killed and five wounded. Scene 11, lower down, also shows Big Nose after being dismounted, in combat with a Cree ~~ix~~ who hits Big Nose on the head with a flint lock gun, and a Piegan then shooting the Cree from the rear.

Scene 12 (1881)

Judith Basin, Montana. Forty lodges of Piegans were camped here. Three Sioux attempted to steal horses. They were discovered before they could carry out their design. All three were killed, by Under Bull, and Young Bear Chief. Big Nose taking, as shown in the drawing, the gun from one of them. He charged on the Indian whose gun would not fire.

Scene 13 (1875)

Cypress Hills, Northwest Territory. Two hundred lodges of Piegans were camped here. Four Sioux were discovered in a thicket, were surrounded, and would have been killed but for Big Nose. He took to the brush but his squaw caught hold of him and tried to pull him away. He put her to one side and went into the thicket, crawling slowly toward the Sioux until he could see them behind a breastwork they had made in a circular opening in the thicket. Three were armed with Winchester rifles, two belts of cartridges, with their knives lying in front of them. The fourth had an old flint lock gun. Big Nose parleyed with the Sioux telling them the Great ~~Farther~~ Farther wanted all the Indians to make peace. He displayed the medal already referred to and a pipe he had with him asking them to smoke, and to come with him and he would

feed them and send them safely home. They threatened to kill him, even poking their guns in his face, but he paid no attention to this, but continued to ask them to smoke. After making signs that they would not be hurt he could see that their leader was weakening. Big Nose then sprang inside the work and grabbed him; Big Nose squaw grabbing another and then they all came out, the Piegans not injuring them. They then turned the Sioux over to the Commanding Officer at Fort Walsh, N.W.T. He first sent word by an ^{now} Indian called Jack the Ripper, to the Commanding Officer that they had the Sioux prisoners, but he would not believe it until Jack made oath of it.

The Commanding Officer then sent seven soldiers and one officer and four extra horses and got them. When the officer came he was still incredulous but when shown the pit which was deep and the protection afforded by the heavy fringe of thorn bush he was amazed at the conduct of Big Nose, and made notes and a sketch of the place.

Scene 14.

Four bows and quivers; tomahawk; powder horn and bullet pouch. These were "coups" and were taken by Big Nose in his different battles.

Scene 15. (1863)

North Cypress Hills, on the Elbow River, Northwest Territory. A large war party of Piegans were on the march, when they came upon four Sioux, in thick timber, who had dug a pit in which they were well protected. The Piegans surrounded and fought them all one day, losing four killed and seventeen wounded. The tree shown as leaning over the Sioux was a large one up which Big Nose finally climbed, his squaw trying to pull him back. Armed with a double barrel shot-gun loaded with bullets he killed all four Sioux, although many times hot at, being saved by the large limbs of the tree.

Scene 16. (1854)

In the Snake River country. A party of one hundred and twenty-four Piegans encountered a lodge of Snake Indians, father, mother, and two grown sons. The gun shown was owned by one of the sons. The three men were killed, the woman

being spared. The Piegans then returned to their own country without further incident of note, which took thirty-six days, as they were not mounted.
 Scene 17. (1858)

On the Milk River, in Montana, where Chinook is now situated. The Piegan camp here consisted of five hundred lodges. Nearly as many Assiniboines and Crows were camped about twenty miles away. Fighting began about midway between the camps at about nine in the morning, ending in defeat of the Crows and Assiniboines who had seven killed and ten wounded, the Piegans losing one killed. The two horses shown were captured, one being wounded in the neck. The rider of the black horse when dismounted by the wounding of the horse, escaped into the brush. Big Nose ran up and the horse got away.

Sitting Woman, a noted Crow Chief rode the black horse and disgraced himself by hiding in the brush. During the next charge Big Nose captured the other horse. The sorrel horse being very fat, broke down and was captured, his rider getting on behind another Indian this making his escape.

Scene 18 (1856).

At a point where Great Falls, Montana, now stands on the Missouri River where it comes out of the mountains. A war party travelling at the time discovered a band of elk and thought to kill some meat. The elk ran into a large clump of timber, Big Nose following. While trying to sneak up on the elk, a bear surprised him by charging. The bear was almost upon him when the fatal shot was fired.

Scene 19 (1845).

On the Missouri River, south of where Helena, Montana, now stands. A war party of Piegans going into the Snake country, twelve in number. Travelling along they saw elk in the edge of the timber. Big Nose being a good shot went after them to get some meat. The brush was thick, and the bear was almost upon Big Nose when it stopped. He shot the bear being so close the animal was powder burned.

Scene 20.

Scalps taken by Big Nose. Some, however, were killed by others,--the first to take has the honor.

Scene 21.

Four Indians killed not shown in other scenes, viz:- two Sioux, one Snake, and one Pondera.

Scene 22.

Battles. Big Nose had been in thirty-six battles, not all shown. He had killed eleven (?) Indians in all, being himself wounded nine times,--six by gun shot, and three times struck over the head with a gun.

Notes.

Ne-oaks-ka-tose, or "Three Sons", commonly called "Big Nose".

His squaw was "Beaver Woman", - ~~Kix~~ Kris-tuck-ah-ke.

Events in the life of "Three Sons" (otherwise known as "Big Nose"), last war chief of the piegan Indians, as portrayed by him on an elk skin.

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A fight with the crows on the "swift stream" which empties into the Yellowstone just west of where Fort Keogh is situated. The Piegans, led by Big Nose, numbered forty-two, and the crows, twelve. The Piegans charged and the crows ran into the brush. Their leader, however, stood his ground and was killed by Big Nose. Big Nose threw down his gun and closed in on the crow, grappling with him. Another Piegan shot the crow in the stomach; the crow then drew a knife but before he could use it the man who had already wounded him, cut his arm causing him to drop the knife. Big Nose then stabbed the crow to death. For this deed Big Nose was given the name of "Crow Chief".

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