

The Blackfeet Indian Tribes' name for Wolf Creek is the longest name that they have for any feature of their once vast territory. Vast it was, extending as it did from the Saskatchewan River south to the Yellowstone River, and from the Rocky Mountains between those streams, eastward for about four hundred miles. Our Wolf Creek, which we cross when travelling between Great Falls and Helena, was their Mahkwiyi Nutsitohpaipi Ituktai: Wolf Also Jumped Creek.

In the very long-age, before the time of Lewis and Clark, perhaps before they met the first white men that they ever saw, fur trader Anthony Hendry and his party, near where Calgary now stands, in 1754, the Blackfeet had a buffalo fall on a cliff of the stream, several miles above ~~the~~ <sup>the present little</sup> town of Wolf Creek. It was one of their many buffalo falls in various parts of their country. At the foot of the cliff and extending out from it in a large half-circle, was a high stout fence of such materials as they could gather, fallen logs, driftwood, rocks and brush. Beginning at the top of the cliff, above the half-circle corral, two lines of rock piles ran far out upon the prairie in the form of a huge and ever widening letter V. Whenever one of the tribes was encamped in the vicinity of the fall, and it was decided to make a great killing of meat, constant watch was kept for the appearance of a herd of buffalo at, or not far outside the mouth of the the great V of rockpiles.

There were in the tribe, as in the other three of them, several buffalo callers, al men who had the very rare ability to approach a herd of buffalo without frightening the animals, and by certain actions and noises, cause them to approach him. The one of these ~~sakksksksks~~ men now named by the council of chiefs to do the calling, remained in his lodge, constantly praying the gods to give him success, and safety of person, in his coming exercise of sacred office.

At last, after perhaps days of watching, a herd of buffalo was discovered ~~grazing~~ <sup>right</sup> or resting in the ~~same~~ locality, and the wind being in

the right quarter, men women and children went up onto the prairie, sneaked on to the rock piles of the great V, and lay down behind them. Then the caller, wrapped in a buffalo robe and stooping over as much as his muscles would permit, went up through the center of the V lines and casually, haltingly, obliquely approached the herd. When near enough to it for his purpose, he began a muffled blating and jumped about, like a calf in distress, and soon attracted the attention of the herd, the cows particularly. They stared at him, suspiciously at first, then, convinced that he was one of their young menaced by a wolf or other beast of prey, one or more of the cows, doubtless those that had lost their young, started to the rescue, and the whole herd was soon following them, faster and faster until the pace was a swift run. Before them was the caller, running for his very life; into the mouth of the great V of rock piles and straight on toward the cliff at the base of it. As soon as the herd was well within the V lines, the people began rising from behind the rock piles, shouting and waving their robes, and the frightened animals ran still faster, not in pursuit of the decoy--he had turned aside and dropped in the shelter of a rock pile--but in frantic effort to get away from their greatest of enemies, man. They swerved to the right, the left, <sup>always</sup> ~~only~~ to be faced by the robe waving people. Only straight ahead did the way seem clear and on they went. And all too late the leaders saw the cliff edge; they could neither stop nor turn aside; they were pushed off it by the crowding, fear crazed ones behind them, and they blindly following, went over too, some of them to be instantly killed by the fall, the unhurt and the crippled to be dispatched by the arrows of the hunters manning the corral. Then what rejoicing there was; what praise for the sacred buffalo caller. Meat and hides there were for every family; plenty of meat to dry, to make into pemmican for winter use; Hides to work into soft tanned robes for wear, and for bedding, for leather for new lodge skins.

And once in that long-ago time, when the Pikuni (Piegan) tribe of the Blackfeet were decoying a herd of buffalo there, a wolf closely followed the animals into the mouth of the V lines, and ~~skixtsaxitax~~ soon realized his danger. But wherever he turned he was faced by shouting laughing people, so he

Heo, close at the heels of the rear animals of the herd, and looking back at his following two legged enemies and snarling at them, also went over the cliff, and was later found under a heap of the great bodies, the life crushed out of him. And from that day the ~~stream~~ stream under the cliff has borne its present Black-foot name, Wolf Also Jumped Creek.

Long ago, my old friends Joseph Kipp, and Hugh Monroe told me that the last decoying of a buffalo herd by the Blackfoot tribes, was in the autumn of 1859. It was the Pikuni (Piegan) tribe that made the great killing, and the fall was their favorite one, the cliff overlooking Two Medicine River, about a mile above the Holy Family Mission.

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