Mr. John Helen Carter
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Carter:

I wish to thank you for
the wonderful memorandums you
have had before for our in the
Blackfoot or Blackfoot Indians.
I had an idea of improving on
you to this extent; for I usually
needed a fair copy for writing
statements.

I am, however, glad to learn
so much as been written on the
subject.

I appreciate your kind assistance.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
MEMORANDUM FOR DR. A.K. FISHER ON THE PROPER USAGE OF THE WORD BLACKFOOT OR BLACKFEET, AS APPLIED TO THE PieGAN INDIANS OF MONTANA, AND ON THE FAMINE AMONG THOSE INDIANS IN THE WINTER OF 1883-1884.

September 29, 1900.

I. Correct usage appears to be Blackfoot tribe, Blackfoot Indian, and Blackfoot reservation.

1. Bulletin 30, Bureau American Ethnology, (1870), Vol. 2, p. 370, in an article by Hookey, under the head of Sikaika, gives the following: "Sikaika. ('black foot', sikaiko 'black', ka the root of oskatah 'foot'. The origin of the name is disputed, but it is commonly believed to have reference to the discoloring of their moccasins by the ashes of the prairie fires; it may possibly have reference to black-painted moccasins, such as were worn by the Pawnee, Sihassga, and other tribes)."

2. An English-Blackfoot Vocabulary, Based on Material from the Southern Piegans by C.G. Uhelenbeck and H.H. van Gulik, Amsterdam, 1929, at p. 30, gives the following:
   "Blackfoot Indian, Sikeikko, animate. Plural, Sikeikkoika.
   Blackfoot tribe, Sikaiko (ua) animate.
   Blackfoot woman, Sikeikko, (ua), animate. Plural, Sikeikko." A Blackfoot-English Vocabulary, Based on Material from the Southern Piegans by C.G. Uhelenbeck and H.H. van Gulik, Amsterdam, 1936, at p. 345, gives the following:
   "Sikeika (Siekika) animate, Blackfoot tribe, Obliative, Sikeikal (1)
   Sikeikko, animate, Blackfoot Indian, Plural, Sikeikkoika."  


5. Walter McClintock in his books entitled The Old North Trail and Old Indian Trails makes use of the word Blackfoot in referring to the Piegan Indians residing on the Blackfoot Indian Reservation in Montana.

6. George Bird Grinnell in his book entitled Blackfoot Lodge Tales refers to the Piegan Indians as Blackfoot Indians, and also employs the word Blackfoot Indians.

7. Around the Blackfoot Agency, Browning, Montana, local usage occasionally employs the words Blackfoots, when speaking of these Indians, not collectively, but as a number of individuals.

8. While Blackfoots as the plural for a number of Piegan Indians residing on the Blackfoot Reservation might be correct, literal translation of the plural of Blackfoot in the language of that people, yet the word Blackfoot, when speaking of a number of Blackfoot Indians, and not referring to them collectively, as a tribe, appears to be better English.
II. Common usage by writers, and by the United States in treaties, executive orders, acts of Congress, and by the courts, use Blackfoot or Blackfoot, when referring to the Piegan Indians of Montana.

1. L.B. Palladino, E.J. Indian and White in the Northwest, I ed. 1st Edition, 1894. 2nd Edition, 1922, employs interchangeably the terms Blackfoot and Blackfoot in referring to the Piegan Indians. This Jesuit Priest worked among these, and other Indian tribes of Montana for a period of over thirty years.

2. W.P. Clark, U.S. Army, in the Sign Language of the Indians, prepared by him at the request of General P.H. Sheridan, and entitled 'The Indian Sign Language,' refers to the Blackfoot Indians as the Blackfoot.

3. The manuscript of Alfred J. Miller, (Files of the Bureau of American Ethnology contain a copy), of 1837, reference is made (p. 73) to the Blackfoot.

4. In the treaty of Fort Laramie of September 17, 1861, (Rev. Indian Treaties, 1047) Article 5 of the treaty refers to 'The territory of the Blackfoot Nation.'

5. In the treaty concluded near the mouth of the Judith River, October 17, 1855, (11 Stat. L., 557), one of the parties to the treaty was 'The Blackfoot Nation, consisting of the Piegans, Blood, Blackfoot, and Gros Ventres tribes of Indians.' 'Blackfoot' is also used in a proviso to Article 4 of this treaty.

6. In an unratified treaty concluded at Fort Benton, Montana Territory on September 15, 1866, (IV. Kappeler, 1138), Article III of the treaty describes the 'Blackfoot Nation, of Indians, consisting of the Piegans, Blackfoot, and Gros Ventres tribes.'

7. In papers relating to the unratified treaty of 1866, above referred to, in the files of the Bureau of Indian affairs ('Treaty Jacket, Blackfoot, 1866, Indenture: Montana 16363'), Governor Meagher's letter of December 14, 1865 to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs refers to the 'Blackfoot Nation,' the 'Blackfoot Nation,' the 'Black Foot tribe,' and the 'Blackfoot.' The latter appears to be used in the sense of numbers of individual Indians, as Meagher says: 'So far beyond our line have the Blackfoot thrown themselves.'

8. In an unratified treaty concluded at Fort Benton, Montana Territory, September 1, 1866, (IV. Kappeler, 1138), the words 'blackfoot nation' and 'Blackfoot nation' are used.

9. In an unratified treaty concluded at Fort Haysley, Montana Territory, July 13, 1866, (III Kappeler, 708), Article III of the treaty contains a reference to the 'Blackfoot nation.'

10. In Executive Documents submitted to an Executive session of the Senate on February 11, 1869, (Senate Executive Documents - Confidential - 40th Congress, 3d Session, Executive 77.), the unratified treaties of 1855, above referred to were considered, an action thereon deferred. The correspondence submitted by the President with these treaties mentions the 'Blackfoot nation,' the 'Blackfoot,' and the 'Blackfoot.'
The Executive Order of July 5, 1873, (1 Kessler, 356), makes reference to the "Blackfeet."

The Act of Congress, approved April 15, 1874, (16 Stat. L. 38), refers to these Indians as "Blackfoot."

The Executive Order of August 19, 1874, (1 Kessler, 356), refers to these Indians as the "Blackfeet."

The Executive Order of July 13, 1880, (1 Kessler, 356), refers to the "Blackfeet reservation" and the "Blackfeet."

An Act of Congress, approved May 1, 1888, ratifying certain agreements made by the United States with the Indians of northern Montana, (36 Stat. L. 135), refers to the Piegan as "Blackfoot" and "Blackfeet."

An Act of Congress, approved June 10, 1888, ratifying certain agreements between the United States and the Indians of the Fort Belknap and "Blackfoot" Reservations in the year 1887, (39 Stat. L. 350), refers to the "Indians of the Blackfeet reservation," and the "Blackfeet Agency." George Bird Grinnell was one of the Commissioners for the United States in making these agreements with these Indians.

An Act of Congress, approved March 13, 1884, (43 Stat. L. 31), gave jurisdiction to the United States Court of Claims to hear and determine the claims of the "Blackfeet, Blood, Piegan and Gros Ventre Nations or Tribes of Indians, residing upon the Blackfeet and Fort Belknap Indian reservations in the State of Montana."

In a decision rendered by the United States Court of Claims on April 8, 1899, in the case of the "Blackfeet" and other Indians against the United States, No. E. 437, these Indians are referred to as the "Blackfeet."

CONCLUSION: Anthropologists use the word "Blackfoot," while "Blackfoot" or "Blackfeet" is used, interchangeably, by writers in treaties, Executive Orders, Acts of Congress and in a Court decision.

III. Year of the great famine among the Piegan Indians of Montana.

1. George Bird Grinnell, Blackfoot Lodge Tales, p. 382, says:
"In the winter of 1883-84 more than a quarter of the Piegan tribe of the Blackfeet, which then numbered about twenty-five or twenty-six hundred, died from starvation. It had been reported to the Indian Bureau that the Blackfeet were practically self-supporting and needed few supplies. As a consequence of this report, appropriations for them were small. The statement was entirely and completely misleading. The Blackfeet had then never done anything toward self-support, except to kill buffalo. But just before this, in the year 1883, the buffalo had been exterminated from the Blackfeet country." (See through to p. 393 for Grinnell's account of this famine.)

"The year 1883-84, from fall to early summer, was an incredibly sad and melancholy one for the Piegan, one third of the whole tribe perishing from starvation. That we do not exaggerate, is evident from the official Report of David Urquhart, Jr., who, in the summer of 1884, was sent by Governor Crosby to investigate the facts in the matter, and by whom the following figures were taken from the Agency rolls. 'In August, 1883,' adds the Report, 'the heads of families that drew rations from the Agency represented 3144 souls; while on the corresponding day of 1884 the number to whom rations were issued was 2381. In reality,' adds the Report, 'the number of Indians does not probably exceed 3000 at the present date.' Whence the difference of probably even more than one third? 'The mortality among them,' declares Mr. Urquhart in the same report, 'has been ten times as great as it should be in the absence of any contagious disease.'" (See through to p. 194).


4. Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1883 and 1884 give the following figures for the population of the Blackfoot:

1883 ........................................4,500.
1884 ........................................8,300.

John G. Carter.
THE PROPER USAGE OF THE WORD "BLACKFOOT" OR "BLACKFEET" AS APPLIED TO THE Siksika, Kainan and Piikani, or Blackfoot, Blood and Piegans Tribes.

1. Usage among present day Anthropologists.


An English-Blackfoot Vocabulary, Based on Material from the Southern Piegans by C.C. Shalenbacher and H.H. Von Glinck, Amsterdam. P. 30 gives the following:
Blackfoot Indians, Sikaikekin, or Plur. Sikaikekoske
Blackfoot tribe, Sikitka (m) on, Blackfoot women, Sikiihake (m) or Plur. Sikiihakeas.

A Blackfoot-English Vocabulary, Based on Material from the Southern Piegans by C.C. Shalenbacher and H.H. Von Glinck, Amsterdam. P. 348 has the following:
Sikaike (Sikaike) m., Blackfoot tribe. Obv. Sikikei (1).
Sikaikekin, m., Blackfoot Indian. Plur. Sikiihakekoske.


Bulletin 30, Part 2, Bureau of American Ethnology, at P. 570, an article entitled Sikaike by James Mooney; The word Blackfoot is used, and also Blackfoot.


Usage among Authorities on the Indian Sign language:


Usage among Authorities who are not Professional Anthropologists:

Blackfoot Lodge Tales by George Bird Grinnell. Uses use of both Blackfoot and Blackfoot.


Old North Trail by Walter McClintock. Uses Blackfoot.

7. 1842. Old Indian Trails by Walter McClintock. Use the word Blackfoot.


IV. Usage among Historians.


4. 1828. The Conquest of the Great Northwest by Agnes C. Leut. P. 365. Describes meeting of Anthony Hendry with Blackfoot in October, 1794. Use word Blackfoot. Hendry was first white man known to contact the Blackfoot. (A copy of Hendry's journal is in the Canadian Archives).


V. Usage among Early Explorers and Adventurers.

1. 1772. Journal of Anthony Hendry not available.

2. 1784. Footnote, p. 354. The Conquest of the Great Northwest by Agnes C. Leut, as follows: (ynathen Cooking's Journal) "Dec. 1, 1772. They are four tribes or nations which are all Equestrian Indians, viz: (1) Kithen Atinginuck, or Bloody Indians. (2) Kocktan Waschaituck, or Black Footed Indians. (3) Pugom, or Muddy Water Indians. (4) Samseuck, or Woody Country Indians."

3. 1776. Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories between the years 1760 and 1778 by Alexander Henry, Esq. (Henry, the elder). As follows: "(A.D. 1776.) On the east, near the mountains, were the Sache Indians and Black-foot, troublesome neighbours, by whose hands many of his warriors fell."


15. 1845. Forty Years a Fur Trader on the Upper Missouri by Charles Larpenteur, Edited by Elliott Coues, p. 350, refers to Blackfoot.


VI. Usage in Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.


3. 1884. Report of Isaac J. Stevens, Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs, September 15, refers to Blackfoot.


5. 1884. Report of Commissioner Cushing and Stevens of August 20, refers to "the several tribes of the Blackfoot nation."


7. 1884. Report of Indian Agent Hatch of July 12, refers to Blackfoot. Also Blackfoot nation.

8. 1884. Report of Indian Agent Vaughan of September 10, refers to Blackfoot. Also to Blackfoot nation.


10. 1884. Report of Agent for Blackfoot from Blackfoot Farm refers to Blackfoot population as totaling 1,500.


14. 1884. Report of Commissioner of Indian Affairs of October 31, refers to "tribes of bands of Blackfoot Indians."


17. 1886. Report of Indian Agent Wright of August 30, 1886, refers to Blackfoot tribes.


19. 1886. Report of Indian Agent Wright of July 1, refers to "the Blood and Blackfoot tribes."


1879. Report of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs of the Montana Superintendency of September 29, refers to "The Blackfoot, Blood, North and South Piagans."

1879. Report of Indian Agent Peace of September 12, refers to Blackfeet.

1879. Report of Agent Armitage of the Blackfoot Agency of September 1, in part, says: "The Blackfoot nation of Indians comprises the Blackfeet, Blood, and Piagan tribes; of these, the Blackfeet are the most numerous." He refers thereafter to the Blackfeet.

1879. Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs of November 1, refers to "The Blackfeet, Bloods, and Piagans."

1874. Report of Indian Agent Dry of September 10, refers to the Blackfeet.

1874. Report of Indian Agent Shaly of the Flathead of September 13, refers to Blackfeet.

1875. Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs of November 1, refers to "The Siksikin Nation," which "is composed of three tribes - the Kanesans, or Bloods, the Shakesas, or Blackfeet, and Piagans."

1875. Report of Indian Agent Wood of September 25, refers to Blackfeet.

1872. Report of Indian Agent Young of July 19, says: "The tribes under the supervision of this agency, the Blackfeet, Bloods, and Piagans, are really one people, having the same origin, language and habits."

1880. Report of Indian agent Young of August 8, says: "The tribes belonging to this agency are the Blackfeet, Bloods, and Piagans, now generally known as Piagans."

1881. Report of Colonel Ruger, commanding the Districts of Montana, of September 1, refers to the Blackfeet.

1882. Report of Indian Agent Young of August 12, refers to the Blackfeet.


1883. Report of Agent Young of August 9, refers to Blackfeet.

1884. Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs refers to "an agreement" concluded with "the Blackfoot Indians."

The above citations were taken from the briefs of the plaintiffs and defendants in Blackfeet et al. Indians v. United States, U.S. Court of Claims No. 5 - 407. These citations had reference to issues raised in the case, and not to proper usage of the name Blackfeet or Blackfoot.
VII. Usage in Private Documents of the Senate and Bureau of Indian Affairs.


2. 1899. Senate Executive Documents - Confidential - 40th Congress, 3d Session. Executive Session of February 11, 1899, Treaties and accompanying Documents submitted by the President of the United States, and marked Executive FF, 28, III and II. The correspondence submitted by the President in regard to Treaty III, makes reference to the "Blackfoot nation," the "Blackfoot," and the "Blackfoot."


1. 1851. In a treaty concluded at Fort Larue, September 17, (IV Kappler, 1880-1887), article 5 of the treaty refers to the "Blackfoot Nation."

2. 1855. In a treaty concluded near the mouth of the Judith River on October 17, (11 Stat. 1297), one of the parties to the treaty was named "The Blackfoot Nation of Indians, consisting of the Plains, Blood, Blackfoot, and Gros Ventre tribes of Indians." A proviso of Article 4 of the treaty refers to "Blackfoot."

3. 1859. In an unratified treaty concluded at Fort Benton, Montana Territory, September 19, (IV Kappler, 1135), Article III of the treaty describes the "Blackfoot Nation of Indians, consisting of the Plains, Blood, Blackfoot, and Gros Ventre tribes."

4. 1869. In an unratified treaty concluded at Fort Haysley, Montana Territory with the Gros Ventre Indians, July 19, (III Kappler, 706), Article III of the treaty contains reference to the "Blackfoot nation."

5. 1869. In an unratified treaty concluded at Fort Benton, Montana Territory with the Blackfoot and Blackfoot, September 1, the words "Blackfoot nation" and "Blackfoot nation" appear.

6. 1873. An Executive Order dated July 5, 1873, (1 Kappler, 225), refers to the "Blackfoot."

7. 1874. An Act of Congress, approved April 19, 1874, (18 Stat. 129), refers to "Blackfoot -- and such other Indians."

8. 1874. An Executive Order dated August 19, 1874, (1 Kappler, 228), refers to the "Blackfoot."

9. 1875. An Executive Order dated April 13, 1875, (1 Kappler, 226), refers to the Blackfoot.
10. An Executive Order dated July 13, 1880, (I. Cappler, 666), refers to the "Blackfoot reservation" and the "Blackfoot."


13. An act of Congress approved March 13, 1936, (43 Stat. L. 371), gave jurisdiction to the United States Court of Claims to hear and determine, and to render judgment on the claims of the "Blackfoot, Blood, Piogan and Gros Ventre Nations or Tribes of Indians, residing upon the Blackfoot and Fort Belknap Indian reservations in the State of Montana."


15. In a decision rendered by the Court of Claims April 5, 1935, in the case of the "Blackfoot" and other Indians against the United States, the term "Blackfoot" is used throughout.

X. CONCLUSION.

1. Among present day Anthropologists the proper term is Blackfoot, Blackfoot Indians, Blackfoot Indian, and Blackfoot tribe. They call themselves Pikanka, or Blackfoot.

2. In referring to the Indians on the Blackfoot Reservation in Montana, the correct term is Pikun, or its corrupted form, used by white men, Piegan. They are not Blackfoot Indians. The Blackfoot tribe live in Canada.

3. There is a considerable weight of authority from general usage, over a long period of time, for the employment of the term Blackfoot when describing a number of individual Blackfoot Indians, and for the use of Blackfoot in referring to the tribe. Usage and not correctness makes language.

John G. Carter.