

repeatedly that the name referred to a period when the prairie was burned, leaving the ground black and dry. As the Indians travelled over the prairie their moccasins became black and they were named by the tribes adjacent Blackfeet. Jerry Potts, Government guide and interpreter, who is a reliable authority on questions of this nature, says that there is another account of the origin of the name, and he is strongly inclined to give it the preference. This tribe lived for some time in the northern part of the country, where the mud was soft and of a dark colour, and at that time, and from that cause, their moccasins became dark, and consequently they received the name of Blackfeet, which now they bear. This name has also been applied to the Confederacy by some as a distinctive name.

Many years ago the Blackfeet, Crees, Sarcees and Gros Ventres were one people, and lived peaceably together in the Red River country. Together these tribes travelled westward and settled near a large lake surrounded by woods in the country of the Saskatchewan. The present Provisional District of Alberta was at that time peopled by the Flatheads, Shoshonees, Crows, and other Indian tribes. The first white men whom the Indians met were the traders, who came to barter goods for furs and hides. From these traders the members of the Blackfoot Confederacy received guns, and they drove the Flatheads and Shoshonees across the mountains and the Crow Indians into the region of the Yellowstone. The Blackfeet do not now know the exact location of the lake where they settled many years ago in the north. During the period when the Crees and Blackfeet were one people they were travelling southward when a quarrel arose about a dog. Dogs were very scarce at that time, and hence the quarrel became an important one, involving the tribes. So serious did the affray become, and the hostility manifested so very great, that the Crees and Blackfeet separated and have remained independent until the present day. A long period before the advent of any white settlers the Blackfeet travelled as far southward as Salt Lake, hunting wild horses and buffalo, and they went eastward for trading purposes to a trading post at Qu'Appelle, in the provisional district of Assiniboia.

The three tribes, Blackfeet, Blood and Piegan, which constitute the Blackfoot Confederacy, are three distinct tribes, having no common council, or bond of unity, except the ties of a common parentage, language, customs, traditions and interests. I have never learned that any common council consisting of delegates from each of the tribes has ever been held since they separated. Whenever any important matter was under consideration which affected the Confederacy, a young man,