



OUT OF THE NORTH

A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH OF
THE BLACKFEET INDIAN TRIBE

BY

FRANK BIRD LINDERMAN

PUBLISHED AND COPYRIGHTED BY
GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY CO.
1947

AUTHORIZED DISTRIBUTORS
ST. PAUL BOOK & STATIONERY CO.
ST. PAUL, MINN.
FOR SALE AT LEADING BOOKSTORES



THE BLACKFEET INDIAN EDUCATIONAL PORTFOLIO

This unusual portfolio contains faithful, full-color reproductions of 24 famous Blackfeet Indian paintings by Winold Reiss, and an authentic account of the Blackfeet tribe written by the late Frank Bird Linderman.

Fortunately for those who are interested in the history of Plains Indians, the Blackfeet reservation adjoins Glacier National Park in Montana, and each summer members of this proud tribe encamp at Glacier Park Station. They are exceedingly gracious to visitors as well as to artists and writers who visit the park for the purpose of studying Indian life and customs.

In Browning, Montana, headquarters of the Blackfeet Indian Agency, is the Museum of the Plains Indian. The museum, only a few miles from Glacier Park Station, includes dioramas depicting the early life of the Blackfeet and other plains tribes. There also are interesting and educational exhibits of Indian costumes, war clubs, hunting paraphernalia, and craftwork. Part of the museum is devoted to encouragement and production of native craftwork by Indian women.

A great many inquiries are received both at the Park and the Blackfeet Agency for information and pictures. Art students, high school and college students, librarians, teachers . . . many, many people have said they would like to know the real story of the Blackfeet tribe. This portfolio was designed to meet these demands. The brochure by Mr. Linderman tells the true story of the Blackfeet, while the pictures by Mr. Reiss (printed on loose sheets, suitable for framing) offer an authentic record of how they looked and dressed.

When the buffalo disappeared from the plains, the Blackfeet tribe faced starvation. Then in 1887 the United States government bought a part of their mountain lands for \$1,500,000, payable in installments of \$150,000 per year for ten years. With part of this money the Indians bought cattle which they grazed on their prairie lands. In 1895-96 they sold more of their mountains to the United States government, and these serrated peaks became in 1910 Glacier National Park.

Meantime, the Blackfeet continued to live on their reservation to the East of Glacier Park. They now are ranchers and farmers who look West at sundown toward the Shining Mountains of their forebears. Most of them are educated and are citizens of the United States—but they take pride in keeping up the old customs of tribal councils, dances, and ceremonials.

The Great Northern Railway has collected and published this material and dedicates it to those who are interested in Glacier National Park and the neighboring Blackfeet Indians.

OUT OF THE NORTH

By FRANK BIRD LINDERMAN

BLACKFEET! No tribal name appears oftener in the history of the Northwestern plains; no other is so indelibly written into the meager records of the early fur-trade of the upper Missouri river, and none ever inspired more dread in white plainsmen. Hell-gate* was not so named because the water there was fiercely wild, or the mountain trail difficult, but because the way led from tranquillity to trouble, to the lands of the hostile Blackfeet.

The three tribes of the Blackfeet nation, the Pecunnies (Pieguns), Bloods, and Blackfeet, are one people. They speak a common language, and practice the same customs. Long ago, probably more than two hundred years, the Blackfeet were a timber people inhabiting the forests near Lesser Slave lake. Incessant war forced upon them by the powerful Chippewas (Ojibwas) pushed them steadily southward until they reached the wide plains bordering the Rocky mountains in what is now Montana. Here they found vast herds of fat buffalo, elk, and antelope, an exhaustless abundance they had never known; and here, after driving the Snakes, and probably the Flatheads, Kootenais, and Nez Perces, from the bountiful grass-lands to the narrow valleys west of the Rockies, the three tribes of Blackfeet settled down to become plainsmen. Nobody can tell their numbers when they came out of the north. Old Pecunnie warriors have told me that their tribe once counted 750 lodges, probably less than 4000 people; and we know that, of the three tribes of the Blackfeet nation, the Pecunnie was the most numerous.

All this happened before the Blackfeet had horses. Dogs had always transported their goods. Now, to steal horses, their raiding parties ranged over the endless grass-lands far toward the south, old warriors say even into the Spanish possessions. Often these raiders were absent for two years; and nearly always they were successful. Their pony-bands grew until men measured their wealth in horses. Meat, their principal food, was easily obtained; and yet these people did not permit life to drag, or become stale. War and horse-stealing were their never-ending games; and besides furnishing necessary excitement and adventure they kept every man in constant training, since a successful raid was certain to bring attempts at reprisal. To be mentioned by his tribesmen as a great warrior, or a cunning horse-thief, was the highest ambition of a plains Indian; and the Blackfeet were master-hands at both these

*Near Missoula, Montana. Gateway through the Rockies to the plains.

hazardous hobbies. When finally they obtained fire-arms they became the scourge of the Northwestern plains, claiming all the country lying north of the Yellowstone river to the Saskatchewan. In stature they average taller than the men of neighboring tribes, having thin, shapely noses, and intelligent faces. Like the other tribesmen of the great grass-lands they were naturally a deeply religious people; and like all the plains Indians they were naturally jolly, loving jest and laughter when not in the presence of strangers.

Even though the Blackfeet may have brought their social customs from the northern forests, they did not differ greatly from those of the other plains people. Each of the three tribes was subdivided into clans, or gentes of blood kin in the male line, there being in the Blackfeet nation perhaps fifty such clans known as Black-Elks, Lone-Fighters, Fat-Roasters, White-Breasts, etc. A man was not permitted by tribal law to marry a woman who belonged to his own clan; and the children of any union belonged always to their mother's clan. Young women were closely guarded. There was little courting. Marriages were arranged by parents, with the consent of near relations. And yet, when possible, the desires of young people were given consideration. Nevertheless the father of a young woman finally decided the question of marriage for his daughter; and there were many things which a father must consider in making this decision. He must think of the young man's breeding, prestige, and his power to provide properly for a family. He must not forget that upon giving his daughter in marriage he automatically made all her younger sisters the potential wives of her husband, and that even though his son-in-law might never demand any of them they could not be otherwise disposed of without the son-in-law's consent. Moreover he must remember that if his son-in-law should die all his wives would become the potential wives of his son-in-law's oldest brother. These matters often led fathers to forbid their daughters marrying the young men of their choice; and then sometimes the unhappy young women hanged themselves. However, when an agreement was reached the young woman's mother outfitted her with pretty clothes, besides making a new buffalo-skin lodge for the young couple. During all these preparations, requiring weeks, accompanied by her mother or a girl friend, the bride-to-be, under the eyes of the village, each day carried prepared food to the lodge of her future husband. When at last the wedding-lodge had been pitched in the center of the encampment, the bride's mother accompanied her daughter to her new home, helped her arrange her household, and then left her there. Her father now tied a dower of several horses, all he could afford, to his daughter's lodge, sometimes, to show his respect for his future son-in-law, even adding his own war-shield and most prized weapons. The young man, seeing that all was in readiness, now entered the

wedding-lodge, seating himself at its "head." And from that minute he was forever forbidden to speak to his mother-in-law, or to her sisters; and he could not in propriety pronounce their names. By the same tribal law his mother-in-law and her sisters were forbidden to speak to *him*, or *of* him, by name. If a woman suddenly met her son-in-law in the village she either turned aside or in passing covered her face with her robe. This is the reason for the signs, *ashamed woman*, often made by old plains Indians in referring to a man's mother-in-law.

Blackfeet children were named *only as individuals*. Family, or sur-names, were not used, so that there was seldom anything in a person's name that even remotely suggested ancestry. Children were often named by their grandparents, or other aged relations, dreams usually suggesting the names chosen. Sometimes the one commissioned for the office named a baby for the first thing seen on the morning after receiving the commission, birds and animals supplying most of such names. However, a grown man might change his own name every time he *counted coup** in battle, or once each year if he desired. Oldtime Blackfeet would seldom speak their names aloud, believing that to do so might bring misfortune.

Beyond the gift of horses or goods to the woman's father there was no ceremony, and little formality, in a plural marriage. A man's first wife was known as *His-Sits-Beside-Him-Woman*. Her place was near the "head" of the lodge on her husband's right. She superintended the lodge, and the work of the other wives, who were often her sisters; and she possessed special privileges. She might, at times, take part in the conversation of her husband and his guests, and she might, during informal meetings, even smoke the pipe when it was passed in her lodge. The other wives sat near the door, which is always directly opposite the "head" of the lodge.

Smoking was a sacred ceremony. Old plains Indians sealed oaths and agreements with the pipe. In smoking, the host or master of ceremonies, filled and lighted the stone pipe, offering its stem first to the sun (the father) and then to the earth (the mother) before smoking, himself. Next he passed the pipe to the guest on his *left*, "as the sun travels." After smoking, usually taking three deep draughts, this guest handed the pipe to the man on *his* left, the pipe's stem being kept pointed at the lodge-wall in its movements. And the pipe must not be handed across the doorway. When the man nearest the door on the host's left hand had smoked, the pipe must go back to the "head" of the lodge where the host passed it to the guest on his *right*, the pipe going, unsmoked to the guest nearest the door on that side. When this guest had smoked he passed the pipe to the guest on his *left*, so that the pipe again began to move "as the sun travels." If the pipe needed refilling it was

* Note: The term *coup*, meaning a blow, is attributable to the early French voyageur.

handed back to the host who replenished it, the guests passing it along, unsmoked, to the man who had discovered its emptiness. Nobody might properly pass between smokers and the lodge-fire.

Hereditary leadership was unknown. Men became chiefs by their prowess in war; and because he must ever be generous, a chief was usually a poor man. With the Blackfeet, as with the other Indians of the Northwestern plains, a chieftainship had to be maintained by constant demonstration of personal ability. It might easily be lost in a single day, since these independent tribesmen were free to choose their leaders, and were quick to desert a weak or cowardly character. This independence was instilled in the children of the plains people. They were never whipped, or severely punished. The boys were constantly lectured by the old men of the tribes, exhorted to strive for renown as warriors, and to die honorably in battle before old age came to them. The names of tribal heroes were forever upon the tongues of these teachers; and everywhere cowardice was bitterly condemned. A coward was forbidden to marry, and he must at all times wear women's clothing.

The girls were taught by their mothers and grandmothers to look seriously upon life, to shun the frivolous, and to avoid giggling. With the Blackfeet, women "gave" the sun-dances, the most sacred of their religious ceremonies; and because the "givers" of these sun-dances must have lived exemplary lives to have dared offer dances to the sun, they were forever afterward highly honored by both the men and women of the tribe. "Look, my daughter," a woman would say, "there goes Two-Stars. She is *The-Sits-Beside-Him-Woman* of White-Wolf. Two summers ago she gave a sun-dance, and she yet lives. If you try to be like her you may some day give a sun-dance, yourself." Girls were warned by their mothers against infidelity to their husbands, since adultery cost a married woman her nose, or ears; for a second offense she was killed by her brothers, or first cousins, upon formal complaint by her husband. By tribal law murder was punished by death, or by stripping the murderer of all property for the benefit of the dead man's family, the latter choosing the penalty. Proven treachery, which amounted to treason, was also punished by death; and a thief was compelled to return the stolen goods to their rightful owner.

The lodges, or tepees, of the plains Indians were the most comfortable transportable shelters ever devised by man. They were made of grained, and partially dressed, buffalo cow skins, from fourteen to twenty-four skins being required for a lodge. Indian women could easily pitch or strike a lodge within a few minutes. In cold weather the lodges were made comfortable, besides being brightened interiorly, by handsomely decorated linings which reached well above the heads of seated occupants, thus protecting them from draughts. From fourteen to twenty-six slender

poles were required for each lodge, their length depending upon the height of the lodge. New sets of poles were usually cut each year, since dragging them over the plains in following the buffalo herds wore them out in a season. Lodges were often decorated with picture-stories of *medicine-dreams*, scalps, and buffalo-tails. In the village each clan, and each individual lodge, had its rightful position, the lodges of clan chieftains being pitched in a small circle within the village-circle, each always occupying its hereditary post.

Indians of the plains respect dignity and love formality. Conventional decorum, easy and masterful, was always evident in the lodges of old plains warriors. From the host's place at the "head" of a lodge his sons sat at his left, according to age; his wives, and their visiting women friends, on his right. A male guest, upon entering a lodge, turned to his right, around the lodge-fire, and was promptly assigned a seat on the host's left, according to his rank as a warrior. If a visitor had a message he stood while delivering it; and he was never interrupted for any reason until he had finished speaking, and had so declared. Once within a lodge even an enemy might speak as he chose without interference or heckling. After leaving the village he must look out for himself, however.

Basketry and the making of pottery were unknown to the Blackfeet. Their weapons, clothing, and robes received most of their artistic attention, the three-pronged design representing the three tribes of the nation being commonly used. Most of their bows were made of ash, or the wood of the chokecherry, their arrows being made of the shoots of service-berry bushes. Their shields were of rawhide taken from the necks of old buffalo-bulls. They would turn an arrow, and are said to have often turned bullets fired from old-fashioned rifles. The oldtime pipes of the Blackfeet were made of black, or greenish, stone, "straight" pipes sometimes being used in ceremonials.

The men wore shirts, breech-clouts, leggings, and moccasins, the latter soled with rawhide. In summer they wore no head-gear unless attending a ceremonial. In winter the men often wore caps made from the skins of animals or water-fowl. Eagle feathers were often worn by the men, beautiful war-bonnets being made with them. The women wore gowns of dressed deer, antelope, or mountain-sheep, skins that reached nearly to their ankles; and they also wore leggings, moccasins, and decorated belts carrying knives in painted scabbards.

The men were thorough sportsmen, loving horse-racing, foot-racing, and gambling. They were graceful winners, and good losers in games of chance. And they were firm believers in luck, and in the *medicine* conferred in dreams. Men often starved, and even tortured themselves, in preparation for desired *medicine-dreams*. Then, weak-

ened both physically and mentally by enervating sweat-baths and fatigue, they slipped away alone to some dangerous spot, usually a high mountain-peak, a sheer cliff, or a well-worn buffalo-trail that might be traveled at any hour by a vast herd of buffalo; and here, without food, or water, they spent four days and nights (if necessary) trying to dream, appealing to invisible "helpers," crying aloud to the winds until utter exhaustion brought them sleep, or unconsciousness—and perhaps a *medicine-dream*. If lucky, some animal or bird appeared to the dreamer, offering counsel and help, nearly always prescribing rules which if followed would lead the dreamer to success in war. Thereafter the bird or animal appearing in the *medicine-dream* was the dreamer's *medicine*. He believed that all the power, the cunning, and the instinctive wisdom, possessed by the appearing bird or animal would forever afterward be his own in time of need. And always thereafter the dreamer carried with him some part of such bird or animal. It was his lucky-piece, a talisman, and he would undertake nothing without it upon his person.

In each of the three tribes of Blackfeet there were several societies, some of them being secret organizations. Most of them were military in character, some of them originally having police power over villages; and at least one of them was composed of boys who were not yet old enough to go to war. The Horn society of the Bloods, and the Kit-Foxes of the Pecunnies, seem to have been much the same society; and it may have been the most honorable and exclusive. The women of the Pecunnie also had a society which is said to have been secret. It was evidently not unlike the Horns in standing, since none but women of middle-age whose lives were known to have been upright were eligible to membership. This society selected its members, electing them before solicitation, one dissenting vote excluding a proposed woman.

Like all Indians of the plains, the Blackfeet formerly placed deep faith in the *medicine-men*, the "wise-ones" of their tribes; and even though these men resorted to intricate ceremonies which fascinated patients and onlookers there is no doubt that they often healed the sick and wounded through this faith alone. They did, however, possess considerable knowledge of the medicinal properties of herbs and roots, and often prescribed them. There was little sickness, since the daily lives of the plains Indians kept them in perfect physical condition. Sunrise saw most of the men and boys in the icy streams, winter and summer alike.

Burial of the dead was usually on platforms lashed to the limbs of trees beyond the reach of wolves. Securely wrapped in buffalo robes, firmly bound with rawhide thongs, the bodies were safe from ravens, crows, and magpies. Weapons and pipes were buried with warriors, root-diggers and cooking utensils with the women. Often a number of horses were killed at the burial of a warrior, so that his spirit might ride in

The Sand Hills, the Heaven of the Blackfeet. In mourning for a son, or other male relative, both men and women scarified themselves, and cut off their hair, the women wailing piteously, sometimes for long periods. The mourning for women was of shorter duration, and not so wild.

The Blackfeet were meat eaters. Meat constituted fully 90% of their daily fare. It was either boiled or roasted, "meat-holes," which operated as fireless-cookers, being sometimes used. Roots and bulbs were also cooked in the ground; and the eggs of water-fowl were often steamed. Berries were eaten fresh; and they were dried for winter use, the latter being used in making the best pemmican, a mixture of dried, lean meat thoroughly pulverized and seasoned with the berries and bone-marrow. Ordinary pemmican was made with dried meat and melted tallow, no berries being used. The Blackfeet did not have salt, and like all the plains tribes dried their meat in the sun, unsalted, packing it away for winter use, the pemmican in buffalo-skin bags.

In the days before the white man came to the plains the Blackfeet were a happy people. An abundance of material for their food, clothing, and sheltering lodges was constantly in sight on every hand. Beyond these necessities their needs were few, so that with a firm belief in the exhaustless bounty of their loved grass-lands these practical folks lived each day for itself. And they knew how to live. Their pride in themselves forbade too much ease, even in their land of plenty. No successful hunter, no tribesman who, with crude weapons, plentifully fed a family, could have been a lazy man, no perfect horseman a weakling. The arms and wrists of men who could send arrows down to their feathers into the bodies of huge buffalo bulls were as powerful as spring steel; and men who loved war for its excitement could not have been weak-hearted. The power of endurance of the plains Indians has always been beyond comprehension by white men. These tribesmen hunted, feasted, gambled, and eagerly made war, young men often faring forth alone over the unmarked plains to *count coup*, so that they might marry the young women of their choice, and be numbered among the tribe's warriors. Killing and scalping an enemy did not entitle them to *count coup*. They must strike an armed enemy with their hands, or with something held in their hands, without otherwise injuring the enemy; or they must capture an enemy's weapons, or be first to strike an enemy who had fallen in battle, etc., the rules for *coup-counting* differing somewhat among the plains tribes. And this *coup-counting* was expected of young men. For centuries, during the long, winter nights on these northern plains, red patriarchs feelingly extolled bravery and fortitude, reciting hero-tales, some of which may have had origin in far lands.* They were a changeless people, a romantically happy people, until the white man came to the plains.

* I once found one of them in a translation from the Sanskrit.

The Blackfeet instinctively opposed the coming of white trappers and traders. Nevertheless the fur companies built forts on the upper Missouri in the heart of the Pecunnie country; and nowhere has the white man stooped so low for gain as in the fur trade of the Northwest; nowhere has he been so reprehensible as in his treatment of the plains Indian. Besides his trade-whisky he brought infectious maladies to a people whose blood was clean. Nobody will ever know half the crimes that were committed by these avaricious traders. The enforced inoculation of a large band of visiting Indians with the virus of smallpox taken from the pustules on the body of a stricken white *engagee* at Fort Union, whose blood was known to be otherwise unclean, is revolting enough, especially when one knows that the step was taken wholly in the interest of the traders who hoped to have the scourge over with before the fall trading began. It is even more revolting when one learns that all the vaccinated Indians perished; and yet this deed is no more fiendish in character than the discharge of a cannon loaded with ounce trade-balls into a crowd of unsuspecting Pecunnies who were visiting at Fort McKenzie, a little below Fort Benton, in the year 1843.

The American Fur Company's steamboat, Trapper, brought smallpox up the river in 1837. This devastating scourge swept through the tribes of the Northwestern plains like a poisoned gale. Nobody knows how many Indians perished, estimates ranging from 60,000 to 200,000 men, women, and children. Perhaps the least of these figures is high. Nevertheless the Mandans alone lost 6000 members, so that when the plague had spent itself the tribe had but 32 warriors left alive. Reaching Fort McKenzie the disease first attacked the inmates, deaths occurring so rapidly that burial was impossible. The dead bodies were thrown into the Missouri river. Within the fort there were 29 deaths, 26 of them being Pecunnie women who had been attached to the fort's *engagees*. Upon the arrival of the disease-laden boat there had been 500 lodges of Blackfeet camped at Fort McKenzie. Now they were gone. During all the time that the smallpox had scourged the fort's company not an Indian appeared on the plains.

In October Alexander Culbertson, the American Fur Company's manager at McKenzie, set out to learn what might have happened to his patrons. He did not have to travel far before reaching a village of 60 Pecunnie lodges standing among the dead bodies of hundreds of men, women and children, and even of horses and dogs. Here, in these horrid surroundings Culbertson found two old women, too feeble to travel, chanting their *death-songs* among the putrid dead. And here, having seen enough, Alexander Culbertson, the trader, turned back to his fort.

In November straggling groups of Blackfeet came to Fort McKenzie to tell their awful story. The disease had not made its appearance among them until the tenth day after leaving the post. Then its ravaging became so terrible that in the ensuing

panic young warriors who fell ill stabbed themselves to death rather than have their fine bodies wasted and scarred by the loathsome disease. More than 6000 Blackfeet had perished, they said, more than half their nation. Many other tribes suffered as severely, the Assiniboina losing more than three-quarters of their warriors.

Nevertheless the trade in buffalo robes was that fall and winter greater than ever before at Forts McKenzie and Union, since dead Indians needed no robes. Stripped by thousands from their bodies by surviving tribesmen these death-robes were traded in at the Company's forts; and then, without the least attempt at disinfection, they were shipped to "the states" where, providentially, no epidemic of smallpox ensued. But the weakened tribes never again regained their numbers. Ever since 1837 these Indians have been failing physically. This is not only because their best blood perished in the plague of that year, but because whole clans having been wiped out, inter-breeding ensued.

During all this time the heavy toll upon the immense herds of buffalo in the Northwest was scarcely noticeable; and now there was an exodus of traders. Having stripped the section of its beaver and land-fur, these avaricious white men began to abandon their trading-posts on the river, and to leave the country to the Indians and hungry wolves.

The Blackfeet, weakened in numbers, and tortured with bitter recollections, had scarcely settled down to their old life when the Seventies brought the professional skin-hunters to the plains. And now, for from 50 cents to \$1.50 per head, these white men shot down the buffalo for their robes alone, leaving countless thousands of tons of fat meat to rot where it fell. By the middle Eighties the skin-hunters had finished. The buffalo were gone forever. The wide grass-lands, which for centuries had been so bountiful, were bleak, inhospitable, and bare. Even the elk and antelope had been wiped away. The Blackfeet, and all the Indians of the plains, were hungry now; and even while the Pecunnies searched in vain for the vanished herds, which the old warriors believed had hidden away, more than one-quarter of the tribe starved to death.

Dazed, unable to comprehend the terrible calamity which had overtaken them, clinging doggedly to their belief that the buffalo had hidden, and would soon return to their loved grass-lands, the Pecunnies were slow to rally. If the tardy Government of the United States had not acted the Pecunnies would have perished to a man.

But the Government did act at last; and the work of making wild hunters into gentle farmers in a single generation began. And this work is succeeding. The Pecunnies, and all the Blackfeet, are rapidly becoming self-supporting by raising cattle and crops on the old buffalo range.

WINOLD REISS

For a decade or more Winold Reiss has dedicated his talents to creating a pictorial epic of the North American Indian which shall preserve the distinctive characteristics of these fast vanishing tribes. The Indians of the Northwest have been his favorite subject for research and the large number of portraits and figure compositions in color and in line which he has made of the Blackfeet Indians constitutes a veritable saga of the tribe.

Mr. Reiss has brought to his task an unusual and paradoxical combination of talents. . . his interest in racial type and character and his unfailing eye for the decorative aspects of his subjects. Indianologists commend Mr. Reiss' studies of the aborigines for their ethnological accuracy and the knowledge of custom and folklore which they display; and those in search of decorative art which shall also have an authentic American note are very apt to commission Mr. Reiss for the carrying out of their ideas.

It is perhaps another paradox that a painter of German birth should have been a pathfinder in discovering the decorative possibilities of the North American Indian. Mr. Reiss was born in the Black Forest and received his training as an artist with his father, Fritz Reiss, well known genre painter specializing in the peasant types of the Black Forest, and with Franz von Stuck at the Royal Academy in Munich.

In common with many other German boys whose imagination had been stirred by Fenimore Cooper's novels, Mr. Reiss had a romantic interest in the North American aborigines. He wanted above all else to paint them. But his romantic imaginings were tempered by an artistic training which demanded accurate observation of character. And so he decided to come to America in 1913 for the express purpose of studying the North American Indian in his native habitat and also to introduce modern decorative art, which, although a flourishing and accepted style in Munich and Vienna, where it had its origin, was practically unknown in the United States. The Crillon Restaurant, which Mr. Reiss decorated in 1920, was the first demonstration of the decorative possibilities of the new style. Since that time Mr. Reiss has been one of the outstanding pioneers in introducing a modern decor which should harmonize with American architecture and express American taste.

It is true, of course, that American artists had painted the American Indian before Mr. Reiss dedicated his talents to interpreting their racial characteristics and customs. But in the majority of cases the point of view had been either purely ethnological or sentimentally inaccurate. Mr. Reiss was the first painter who saw the Indian abstractly as subject for art, who recognized classic monumentality in the manner in which he folded his blanket about him and in the proud carriage of his head.

Mr. Reiss' first Blackfeet portraits were executed in the winter of 1919, at which time he was inducted into the tribe and given the name Beaver Child. He frequently has returned to the reservation, or to Glacier National Park, during the summer, for additional portraits, which now number in the hundreds.

During the summer of 1943, Mr. Reiss again returned to the Blackfeet reservation, and in three months completed nearly 75 new portraits.

The Reiss Blackfeet portraits have become universally known and acclaimed through the medium of calendars published by the Great Northern Railway. Blackfeet portraits have appeared on the railway's annual calendars since 1928.

FRANK BIRD LINDERMAN

Love of the wilderness was in the blood of the late Frank Bird Linderman. The first Linderman to land in America came in 1690. Lindermans pioneered in New York State, in Pennsylvania and Ohio. When as a boy, Frank Linderman reached the shores of Flathead Lake, he was seeking not the "Wild West" of cow towns and mining camps, but the wilderness. There he learned Indian ways and lived as they did. To know them better he mastered the sign language—an accomplishment which caused him to be known among them as *Sign-talker*, sometimes *Great Sign-talker*.

The first Indian he ever talked to was Red-Horn, a renowned Flathead. Linderman's account of their meeting, the inception of a lifelong friendship, is moving and beautiful. The boy didn't know a Flathead from a Kootenai, nor whether Indians were friendly or hostile, and of course the sign language was Greek to him; but he recalled long afterward that Red-Horn had been at great pains to impress him with the fact that he was a Flathead, not a Kootenai—who were hostile—telling him this in sign language over and over.

"No greater tenderfoot ever entered the wilderness than I," Linderman said, "and I am sure none ever took to the life more surely or more happily." Indians always had been his friends, though he did have some trouble with the Kootenais in the eighties, and a breathless narrative the story of that trouble is.

Linderman's Blackfeet name was Iron-tooth. The Crows called him *Sign-talker*. The old Kootenais named him *Bird-singer* and the early Crees and Chippewas called him *Sings-like-a-bird*. His name is one to conjure with among the Crees and Chippewas. They call themselves Linderman Indians, because—wrung by their pitiable homelessness—he was instrumental in wresting from a dilatory and indifferent Government the Rocky Boy (Stone Child's) reservation near Havre, Montana.

Twenty years ago Linderman went back to the shores of Flathead lake. At Goose Bay, where he had trapped with the Indians, he built a spacious lodge for his family. He then retired from business to devote his time to writing—that he might record the Indian way of life that had passed; a culture no white man could ever again have opportunity to observe. His INDIAN WHY STORIES, AMERICAN, RED MOTHER, MORNING LIGHT—twelve books carry that record. Linderman knew the plains Indian as few men have capacity for knowing him. He knew the Indian too well to assume that he, or any man, could wholly grasp the mystic and spiritual significance of Indian culture. He had a fury of scorn for the superficial and faked "knowledge" that distorted and misrepresented and cheapened the story.

His lodge reflected the varied interests of his life. There one found Indian artifacts, never to be duplicated, gifts from the great of their tribes; mementoes of the time when by sheer determination to know he made himself assayer of the old Curlew mine, and ended as chief assayer and chemist for the Butte and Boston smelter; cartoons of his unpriized political life, when he sat in the State Legislature, or served as Deputy and Acting Secretary of State; and his manuscripts which were his being. Above all, his home reflected the happiness of his domestic life, and the memory of enduring friendships.