

NOBODY HAS PITY ON ME—BLACKFEET INDIAN YOUTH

Glacier National Park in Montana

In the days when the buffalo roamed the Western plains in great herds, the Blackfeet Indian Nation was proud and powerful. It was then the custom, when confronted by continued adversity, for a brave to retire to some secluded and dangerous spot in the mountains, there to fast and pray to the Great Spirit for guidance. When exhaustion brought sleep and sometimes unconsciousness, a "medicine dream" often revealed the reason for the misfortune and provided a solution.

Lamenting the failure of several of his children to survive infancy, Louis Bear Child hearkened back to the religious beliefs and practices of his forebears. He went alone to the "Shining Mountains," the name by which Glacier National Park in the Montana Rockies is known to the Blackfeet, where he fasted and prayed to the gods of his fathers until he, too, slumbered from sheer exhaustion.

A bear, representing the Great Spirit, appeared to him in a "medicine dream," and told him that if he would pray again to the four great deities in which the Blackfeet believe—the Great Spirit, the Sun, the Moon and the Morning Star—thenceforth his children would survive. The bear supernatural further instructed Bear Child to name his youngest son, "Nobody Has Pity On Me."

Thereafter, two sons, both of whom survived, were born to Bear Child and his wife, Coyote

Woman. The younger, Burton Bear Child, was given the Indian name, "Nobody Has Pity On Me."

Burton Bear Child, now 18 years old, is a typical example of modern youth on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Northwestern Montana. He is a product of diverse streams of influence, some stemming from modern civilization, others persisting from the old native life of his people.

Like most Blackfeet youths, he is proficient at hunting, fishing and competitive sports. He has attended the public schools on the reservation and is a senior in Browning, Montana, high school. An excellent student, he has never missed a single day's attendance in high school. He is an active member of the Future Farmers of America, and in 1950 represented his Boy Scout Troop at the International Jamboree at Valley Forge.

Burton can trace descent from prominent members of the Blackfeet Nation in the 19th Century. Through his father, he is descended from famed warrior Big Snake, who was camp announcer during the first treaty council held in 1855 between the Blackfeet Nation and the United States Government. A great grandfather on his mother's side was Bell Mouth, a colorful chief of the Piegan Tribe.

Burton is an accomplished dancer and takes part in age old rites that still form a prominent part of reservation life. He is depicted on Great Northern's

calendar for 1952 by the celebrated artist Winold Reiss, wearing the costume of a "fancy dancer" in the Grass Dance, a ceremony borrowed from the Sioux. The outfit consists of a headdress of porcupine hair, a sweater bearing five eagle plumes, and a bustle and arm bands of eagle feathers. It was made by his father to be worn in the social dances which conclude the annual Sun Dance.

The Blackfeet Indian Reservation borders Glacier National Park in Montana, the nation's third largest and most spectacular national park—a million-acre wilderness paradise of soaring peaks, cool green valleys, jewel-like lakes, roaring streams and living glaciers. Glacier Park, on the main transcontinental line of the Great Northern Railway, is served by the streamlined Western Star daily during the summer vacation season, June 15 through September 10.

Information about vacations in Glacier National Park in Montana, the Pacific Northwest, and California via the Pacific Northwest, may be obtained by writing to the Passenger Traffic Manager, Great Northern Railway, Saint Paul 1, Minnesota.

A portfolio containing twenty-four full color reproductions of Winold Reiss' famous Blackfeet Indian portraits, and an authentic history of the tribe by Frank J. Linderman, is available from the Saint Paul Book and Stationery Company, Saint Paul 1, Minnesota, and at leading book stores in many cities.