

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Primary Source Document Collection

MISSION 3: "A Cheyenne Odyssey"

Saukamappee's Recollections, Part I (1730s)

In 1787, David Thompson, a Welsh employee of the Hudson Bay Company, visited a Piegan Village on the Canadian Plains. He recorded stories recounted by a 75 year old Cree warrior who had been adopted into Piegan society. Saukamappee's account of Plains Indian life provides insights into the impact of guns and the arrival of horses on hunting and warfare.

There were a few guns amongst us, but very little ammunition, and they were left to hunt for the families; Our weapons was a Lance, mostly pointed with iron, some few of stone, A Bow and a quiver of Arrows; the Bows were of Larch, the length came to the chin; the quiver had about fifty arrows, of which ten had iron points, the others were headed with stone. . . Our spies had been out and had seen a large camp of the Snake Indians on the Plains of the Eagle Hill, and we had to cross the River in canoes, and on rafts, which we carefully secured for our retreat. . . . By this time the affairs of both parties had much changed; we had more guns and iron headed arrows than before; but our enemies the Snake Indians and their allies had Misstution (Big Dogs, that is Horses) on which they rode, swift as the Deer, on which they dashed at the Peeagans, and with their stone Pukamoggan knocked them on the head, and they had thus lost several of their best men. This news we did not well comprehend and it alarmed us, for we had no idea of Horses and could not make out what they were.

Source: David Thompson's Narrative of his Explorations in Western America, 1784-1812 (pp.328-332). <http://segonku.unl.edu/~ahodge/saukamappee01.html>