

DO YOU KNOW?

Indians Asked for Religion Before It Was Brought Them

By MAXINE C. GWYN

Do you know that representatives from Indian tribes in the Oregon country, went east in 1831, looking for someone to tell them about "The Book of Heaven"?

Contrary to popular belief, the White Man did not offer his teachings of Christianity to the Red Man in the Northwest before the Indians asked to learn about it.

Wandering missionary groups from the Ironsides spread news about the teachings of the "Black Robes" or Catholic religion.

So to St. Louis went members of the Flathead and Nez Perces tribes who wanted to be shown the Light of the Great Power.

It was the Catholic faith they were seeking—but the Methodist, Jason Lee, came first in 1834. But the Catholic services appealed more to the Indian who had an eye for colorful worshiping rites.

Catholic missionaries, understanding the Red Man's love for showy rituals with noise, singing and dancing, encouraged the Indian in his own style to celebrate such occasions as Easter, with "boughs, bells, yells, plums and drums."

Indians had a way of idolizing objects which might be associated with the supernatural, and that might turn out to be most anything. For in one tribe was found a "sacred" white robe, and calico shirt for which the Indians had traded a small band of their best horses. It was believed these objects would keep away the dreaded smallpox and bring heavy enough snow to drive the buffalo down out of the mountains. For many moons, the robe and shirt were taken to the ritual grounds where the Indians would stage dramatic ceremonies. Medicine pipes were hauled out and smoked, and offerings were made to the "sun, water, and earth."

When a priest and six nuns successfully crossed the rough, rolling Columbia River bar during a raging storm, the Indians held them in high esteem thereafter, for they figured the Catholics could never have made it if they had not been bringing special magical powers.

Then there was the case of the blue nightgown. It seems Red Hawk, a young Indian, disliked because of his conceit and pompous manner, was getting right up the line on his way to becoming a chief. For he had acquired several wives and horses, many blankets, and his wigwam was decked out the fancies of all in the village.

One day, when passing a white settler's cabin, he spotted the blue nightgown hanging on a clothesline. Frills and lace ran around the neck and sleeves, and it was bluer than any bead Red Hawk had ever seen. It struck him as something rather mystical in its elegance, and he took such a shine to it that he traded five of his best horses and two blankets for it.

He kept the whole transaction a secret from the tribe. Then when Easter time rolled around, and the Indians were dancing to the loud beat of drums, and waving colored feathers and other skins, out comes Red Hawk wearing the blue, frilly nightgown!

The music, dancing, singing, everything stopped, and all gathered about Red Hawk to inspect his garment in curious awe.

Red Hawk stood there, proud and full of self esteem. Yellow and green feathers were braided into his hair. Bright beads hung around his neck. And the blue nightgown was tucked in at his waist by a leather beaded belt. Inquisitive Indians reached out to touch the frothy lace at the bottom and throat of the gown.

"Me Big Shot," figured Red Hawk.

"Make me Prove it!"

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Court of Honor And Banquet for Scout Troop 41

Scout Troop 41, and Explorer Post 41 had their annual banquet and court of honor recently with approximately 100 guests present in the basement of the Keizer Community Church.

Several Scouts that received their Tenderfoot and second class awards, Ted Snook and Frank Valereaux received their assistant Scoutmaster badge. Frank Valereaux and Stephen Crouche received assistant advisor badges. Receiving the highest of all awards was Ted Snook who got Eagle award. Scout Executive James Kern made the presentation. Ted is the second

Scientist Explains We Must Learn Way That Wheat Grows

GORMAN HOGAN
PORTLAND, Feb. 19.—"In the future, we must learn not so much how to grow wheat but how wheat grows." This in a little more than a dozen words is the way K. S. Quisenberry, crops research expert for the U. S. Department of Agriculture, sums up the nation's wheat growers' problems.

The goal ahead, he said here recently, is a cooperative effort to produce a wheat variety that will fit a known market need and will

not have to find its place by chance. Continuing progress has been made in such fields as wheat diseases and insect control, he told the National Assn. of Wheat Growers, yet much work remains to be done in these and other fields, including soil and water, conservation and quality.

Quisenberry said the present wheat surplus does not reduce the need for research. "Indeed," he said, "it points up the need for more research if we are to meet our stated goals of stabilized production, dependability of varieties and superior quality."

Discussing the continuing fight against wheat disease, Quisenberry reported the development in six years of four durum wheat varieties resistant to stem rust. This he called "a truly remarkable accomplishment, probably unmatched in plant breeding."

This particular type of stem rust, designated as 15-B, struck in 1930. Agricultural researchers rushed into the fight against it. Cooperative nurseries were set up in several Latin American countries. Seed was planted from the 13,500 wheats in the USDA world collection. Seed came, too, from promising varieties and breeding stocks in this country's

farmlands. Today, 120,000 bushels are ready for release to growers under the names of Langdon, Ramsey, Towne and Yuma. These varieties, Quisenberry said, "are not the final answer to the 15-B problem and they're far from ideal." But they should provide a stop-gap while breeders continue their efforts to develop varieties that will be better all-around.

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