

Bíawacheeitchish



Bíawacheeitchish, or Woman Chief, holds a special place in Crow history. Born around 1806 in the Gros Ventres nation in Montana¹, she may be known as “Pine Leaf” as she was described in James Beckwourth’s autobiography¹. Her given name is not known because she was taken prisoner around the age of 10. Initially a Crow captive, the tribe accepted her into the kinship community because of her special buffalo hunting and butchering skills. She was allowed to wear men’s clothing and raised as a Crow warrior¹. She was two-spirit and engaged in primarily traditional male pursuits such as marksmanship and field dressing buffalo¹. She assumed leadership of her father’s lodge when he died¹. Her claim to fame developed when she fought off many attackers during a Blackfoot raid on Crow territory¹. She later raised her own band of warriors and raided Blackfoot settlements¹. Bíawacheeitchish rose to third rank in the Council of Chiefs¹. In her role, she negotiated with other tribes of the Upper Missouri and negotiated peace between Crow and Gros Ventres, serving as a cultural bridge to men and women, Crow and non-Crow, all the time extending trade and alliances.

Citations

1. *Bíawacheeitchish, in English - woman chief (1806 – 1858)*. Women’s Voices Media. (n.d.). Retrieved February 17, 2023, from <https://womensvoicesmedia.org/?p=508&more=1>