



Naming Committee

Honouring People and Places in Our City

THE CITY OF
Edmonton

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Payipwat

(1816-1908)

Payipwat signed Treaty Number Four in 1875. He argued for land that was promised to him, and it is said that many of his requests were written into Treaty Number Six in 1876.

Payipwat, given the name of Kisikawasan at birth, was a Plains Cree born around the southwestern Manitoba or eastern Saskatchewan area in about 1816. As a boy, he and his grandmother were taken prisoner by the Sioux. He grew into manhood with the Sioux people and learned their medicine until he was rescued by the Cree in the 1830s and returned to his people.

Upon his return, he was given the name “Payipwat”, often referred to as Piapot or “Hole in the Sioux”. His name translated as “One Who Knows the Secrets of the Sioux”.

Payipwat became a highly respected leader among his people and surrounding bands, and in 1875, he signed Treaty Number Four. The treaty was to be a preliminary negotiation, as Payipwat insisted that the treaty must contain a number of additional provisions, but the provisions were never written in.

While on the allotted reserve in 1883, there was a disappearance of the bison. That year became a year of sickness and starvation among the people, and this convinced Payipwat to argue for the establishment of a large Indian territory among Cypress Hills. During this time, the federal government began to withhold rations, forcing the Plains Cree to forfeit their resistance and settle into their small reserves. Though the large piece of land was never received, Payipwat managed to negotiate a better location in the Qu’Appelle Valley in 1884. The following year, during the North-West rebellion, Payipwat ensured the protection of his people by declaring loyalty to the government.

Once settled into the new land, Payipwat continued to press the government to live up to the treaty promises. The restrictions among Indians became even more controversial when the





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government began to impose regulations prohibiting ceremonial practices, but Payipwat resisted these regulations and challenged the government. Despite the government infringing on Cree sovereignty, a federal order to depose Payipwat as chief of his band.

The day the federal order was issued was the day that Payipwat died. He passed away in late April of 1908 on the Piapot Reserve in Saskatchewan, resisting assimilation and upholding Cree customs and beliefs.

*Written by: Danielle Ferchoff
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CITATION ON FILE

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