DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT:	DUCK LAKE
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS:	
	SASKATCHEWAN
INTERVIEW LOCATION:	
	SASKATCHEWAN
TRIBE/NATION:	CREE
LANGUAGE:	ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW:	
INTERVIEWER:	
INTERPRETER:	
TRANSCRIBER:	HEATHER YAWORSKI
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TAPE NUMBER:	IH-DM.114
DISK:	TRANSCRIPT DISC #145
PAGES:	3
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NOTE: This document lists various Cree bands with brief historical notes.

Duck Lake

The bands listed under this agency are as follows:

Cumberland

#95 - One Arrow
#96 - Okenasis
#97 - Beardy
#98 - Che-Kas-Tay-Pa-Sin
#99 - John Smith
#100 - James Smith

The former history of these bands has not been determined, but numbers 99 and 100 are said to be Swampy Cree whereas 95 is designated as Plains. However, the most distinguished chief seems to have been Beardy who is first mentioned in 1876 as leader of the Willow Cree. This name is not to be confused with a similar name for Shoshonian band, but are mentioned by (?).

Beardy Band

Beardy seems to have one of the outstanding personalities among the Plains Cree. In 1877, he signed treaty #5 and was then at Grand Rapids on the Saskatchewan. The next year we are informed that he had previously expressed a desire to settle on the land at Duck Lake. In 1880, it is reported that this band is making some efforts to farm, but without conspicuous success. From this date on the bands seem to have been in the process of settling down to permanent residence at Duck Lake though for a time they were registered under the Prince Albert agency. In 1889 Chief Beardy died lamented by both Indians and whites. Early in reservation days band #96 seems to have regarded itself as under the direction of Chief Beardy though maintaining a separate identity for a long time. As in the case of other bands, cattle were issued at an early date, but it was found necessary to place the management of these cattle under a white official. In the meantime, the members of this band continued to hunt and trap as well as carry on such farming operations as their agent required.

Cumberland Band

The Cumberland band is vaguely mentioned in 1879, but not definitely reported on until 1888, at which time it is regarded as one of the most civilized and progressive. However, it is not clear whether this name designates a band of long standing or merely a locality in which a number of Cree congregated and whether they were eventually organized as a reserve. This is probably because in 1888, a band under Bighead seems to have combined with it. Whether the tendency is to link the

Cumberland band with #96 and 100, all three of these bands seem to have been conservative, preferring hunting to farming and generally unstable. Thus, in 1895, we are told that the James Smith and Cumberland bands have just begun farming whereas the John Smith band, which seems to have been in part mixed blood, was regarded as the most civilized. As the agent says, "This band shows the most civilized of any belonging to this agency and these Indians have been fortunate enough to harvest a good crop. It has been unnecessary to render much assistance in the way of food, where it has been given chiefly in case of

sickness. The women in general are clean and keep the children well dressed. Much interest is taken in making bread and butter and in raising poultry." Again in 1912, we are told that John Smith's band live like white men in that in James Smith's band sheep raising has developed.

One Arrow

No early mention of this band has been noted and the first specific statement we have is to designate them as Plains Cree. In 1897 we are told that they now remain on the reservation throughout the year implying that previous to this time they were in part nomadic. In common with other bands they seem to have derived considerable income from furs and snake root. These continued to be the leading industries for a long time. In fact, it is not until 1909 that they are reported as beginning farming and still without a day school. The report of 1897 was apparently too optimistic because in 1906 they were absent from the reserve most of the time digging snake root and hunting, and in 1907 as still living in mud roofed shanties in winter. However, the turning point seems to have come about 1912 when the log shanty is reported as a thing of the past. As may be expected most of the Indians were pagans.

Okenasis Band

We have spoken of this band in association with Chief Beardy and their history seems to have been similar to that of band #95. Even in 1900 they had no day school. Yet in the matter of housing they seem to have progressed more than band #95, several cabins having shingled roofs as early as 1906. However, in 1912, it is said that the older men do not farm, but hunt, trap, gather snake root and make hay.

Che-Kas-Tay-Pa-Sin Band

In 1896 this band seems to have joined that of James Smith band #100 and from that time on receive no separate mention in the reports.