We have attempted to relate some of the legendary stories which have been handed down from generation to generation by our Blackfeet people. The Blackfeet Tribe is located in Montana, U.S.A., but other segments of our people are located in Alberta, Canada. These people are called the Blood Tribe, North Piegan, and Blackfoot. Relatives and friends continue to go back and forth across the U.S. and Canadian border to visit and share in tribal ceremonies and celebrations.

We especially thank elderly people like Laurie Plume, who have shared with us their great wisdom and knowledge about our Indian culture.
The skull story is about a skull which helped some Indian hunters get buffalo meat for their families several generations ago. The Indian elders who passed this story on say that it actually happened.

The people were camped and still living in tepees at the time that this story took place.

Two Bear arose at daybreak and went out to where his horse had been picketed for the night. He led his horse down to the creek to water him. There he met Running Crane and Black Crow.

The men walked back to Two Bear’s tepee where they sat down to talk about the buffalo hunt they were going on that day. Winter had just turned to early spring and food was very scarce in the encampment. The winter had been long and cold with very much snow. Shortly, Flying Eagle and Many Horses entered the tepee and joined the group.

After spending some time making a decision about heading north to hunt, the five men mounted their horses and rode off.
The hunters searched and searched but no buffalo were to be found. Finally, they came to Old Man River which is located southwest of Lethbridge, Alberta.

The water was very high and swift from the spring thaw in the Rocky Mountains which lie to the west. The men dismounted from their horses and stood talking and stretching after the long journey on horseback.

Two Bear said, "Look across the river. There are some buffalo on the north side of the river." "There are seven buffalo over there." said Many Horses. After much discussion the hunters decided that they could not get across the river because it was near flood stage from the spring thaw.
Black Crow, a person who loved to tell jokes, started kicking at a small dirt covered mound near some brush. He unearthed a human skull. He picked the skull up and started talking to the skull in the Blackfeet language. "Who are you? How did you get here? I'm going to paint this skull with my red paint." he told the other hunters. Running Crane said, "You should not bother the dead. Let them rest in peace." "I mean no harm." said Black Crow. "This is our religious and sacred ceremony to purify and cleanse. People who need help for any kind of problem are painted and prayed for to help them with whatever is troubling them."

After Black Crow had carefully painted the skull he laid it in the water. Instead of the skull floating down the river like the hunter thought it would, it floated straight across the river to the north bank. The hunters stared in amazement.
The skull reached the north bank of the river and traveled around the outside of the seven buffalo that were grazing. The buffalo entered the river in single file and swam across the river toward the hunters on the south bank.

The hunters started shooting at the buffalo as they emerged from the water. Six of the buffalo were killed.
The seventh buffalo was wounded but it jumped back into the river and started swimming across. The hunters let it go. Flying Eagle said, "We were helped in getting food for our families and friends. We cannot be selfish and greedy. Let the skull have the seventh buffalo for himself and for others who are hungry."
The hunters started the butchering of the animals by skinning the hides from the six buffalo. As Indian people butcher they usually eat the kidney or brisket of the animal while the parts are still very fresh. Flying Eagle cut a part of a kidney and brisket. He put them into the river. "We will share these parts with the skull spirit." he said.

The hunters finished the butchering of the animals and went back to camp still very much amazed by all that had happened that day. Two Bear said, "I believe the skull's spirit and other spirits that the skull called helped us get food for our people today." At their lodges they gave thanks again to the Creator for providing food and for meeting their other needs.