FRANK BIRD LINDERMANN

1869 - 1938

"Sign-Talker with a Straight Tongue"

FRANK BIRD LINDERMANN (1869-1938) carved a notable niche in Plains literature by recording faithfully Plains Indian oral traditions, legends, and stories. And in the end, he succeeded in a writer because "he was ever before he was a Talker."

LINDERMANN WAS BORN on September 25, 1869 in Cleveland, Ohio, but moved to Montana’s Paradise Valley when he was only 10. After enjoying a variety of careers -- including logger, cowboy, wrestler, newspaper editor and proprietor -- Lindermann, with his wife and three children, established the Mandan News on the Upper Missouri in 1917. There he devoted all attention to writing. Following his death in 1938, he published a book titled "Footsteps Through the Indian Reservations," a volume of poetry, a juvenile nature book, and numerous periodical pieces.

LINDERMANN HAS BEEN a friend of Montana’s Native American peoples since the earliest days of the newspaper business and to the establishment of the Blackfoot Reservation in the Chihuahua and Cusin in 1936. In his writing about these people, Lindermann proved he understood them. He dignity and respect to their culture, and people trusted him to provide an honest view of the Indian way of life. His contributions included a wealth of wisdom, dignity, and humanity, an absolutely trustworthy observer and recorder, a "great Indian." He

"I am glad I have told you these things. Sign-Talker. You have felt my heart, and I have felt yours."

The "SIGN-TALKER WITH A STRAIGHT TONGUE" was adopted by the Blackfoot, the Cree, and the Crow tribes. His biography of the great Crow Chief Plenty Coups, published in 1932, remains classic that reveals the confidence placed in Lindermann by Montana’s Indians. Plenty Coups contributed.

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