

LOOK AGAIN



Shirt Tales

IT'S NOT THAT THE ROM'S LEFT HAND DOESN'T KNOW WHAT its right hand is holding, it's just that the hands hold so much. One of the good things about this situation is that there is a wonderful surprise when associations can be made between presumably unrelated collections. Such was the case when Arni Brownstone of the Museum's Ethnology Department saw the Notman & Fraser costume ball photo in the portrait room of the new Sigmund Samuel Canadiana Gallery. He noticed that one of the guests was wearing a fringed shirt that is now in the Museum's Ethnology collections.

The shirt was presented by Sweet Grass, principal chief of the Plains Cree, to Lieutenant Governor Alexander

Morris at the signing of Treaty Number Six at Fort Pitt, Saskatchewan, in 1876. It is a large garment, obviously designed for the six-foot-tall Morris rather than for the diminutive chief, and is made from Hudson's Bay Company wool-trade cloth and decorated with beadwork and ermine-skin fringe. Ermine skin denotes the shirt's ceremonial status.

In 1913 Edmund Morris donated to the ROM the Indian material that his father, Alexander, had acquired while acting as the Crown's principal negotiator of Indian treaties. Included in the donation was the shirt. The identity of the man wearing the shirt in the photo is not certain. ♣

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIAN BOYLE