

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: FILE HILLS AGENCY #4
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: FILE HILLS AGENCY

INTERVIEW LOCATION: FILE HILLS AGENCY

TRIBE/NATION: CREE
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: July 4, 1934
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BERKELEY

TAPE NUMBER: IH-DM.11
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC #134
PAGES: 6
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- General account of traditional lifestyle.
Informant - ask hkapimuxta da "Walking Earth".

This informant is one of the Okauis band because of his
marriage to the daughter of okauis.

Okauis "Rose Berry" was made chief at the time of the treaty.
His other name was cioxkho-wataxk, "Imperative (Voice)." His
father was ukimau out where Winnipeg now is. His name was
Maxkiesis, "Fox". Fox roamed this western country too, but he
grew up in the east. Fox's father was not a chief (?) but had
a following among the Wapuiwayauuk, Rabbit Skins, because he
was a brave man. He became an ogihtcitau ukimau. His name was
mextieto-kih wup, "Many Sitting Eagles." He also roamed from
Touchwood to Pelly to Winnipeg. He was the only ukimau of the
Rabbit Skins but his sons kakiwistahau and maxkiesis each had a
band of Rabbit Skins.

Fox and Many Sitting Eagles used to go back to Winnipeg because that was the only trading post. Later these posts were built in the following order: Ellice, Pelly, Touchwood, Qu'Appelle and Long Lake. But even after these were built they would trade at Winnipeg because it was cheaper to buy there since the goods were freighted in on boats.

In the old days they did not have ukimau, only oghihtcitau ukimau and pas-gua ukimau. The qualifications necessary for these offices were ability in battle and in stealing horses, the former being more important than the latter. After the treaty the emphasis for chieftanship shifted to ability to work and the children who were the grandchildren of the old ukimau were appointed in their places.

Informant - kagis kahwepimaxteuh "Day Walker".

Day Walker's great-grandfather was called ushiapwat (Cree-Sioux) or opwasimu (Assiniboine) because he was half Cree and half Sioux. He lived near the Missouri River. Day Walker's grandfather lived there too and got his treaty money there first. He was a chief of the Assiniboine called wawas-kawis, "Moving." His people were the Pimiska-wiyuiwuk, "Paddling Men."

When Day Walker was young his widowed mother married a man from the Nutimiwiuiwuk and moved up among those people. Then I asked Day Walker how he happens to be among the Rabbit Skins. He said that was easy. He has relatives among the Rabbit Skins, Calling River people, and Assiniboine. For instance, his mother and Walking Earth's mother were sisters, he and Walking Earth are close relatives and that is why he is here.

Day Walker then told me the story of the first whites among the Cree which happened in the days of his great-grandfather.

The first man who found them they called "The Old French Man." It was in the early part of the day. Near noon they were found by the "Big Knives," the Americans. When these first came, the Indians were dressed in a kind of moss. The whites gave them something to wear. Their knives were made of the rib bones of animals. Their arrows had heads of bone. For water vessels they had hard dried clay. After the white man gave them clothing, he also gave them firearms, knives, awls, drinking vessels, and showed them how to make clothing. The gun he gave them was a muzzleloader, fired with a flintlock. After he had given it to them, he set up a target and showed them how to fire it. When the Indians first fired the gun and heard the report, they threw it down and ran away.

He also gave them tobacco and a flint and steel. The Indians had had a stone pipe before that but had only smoked leaves and kiuikiuik. (I was given sample of leaves.)

Now the Long Knife came on. He also unloaded on the shores and

gave them different presents. From there on I don't know when the English came on but it was at a later time of the day -- about four o'clock. All these whites brought lances out with them which were used for war and for hunting. There were two kinds of knives, a large curved kind with one edge used by the women to cut up meat and bones. The other was double-edged and came to a point.

When the Indians got these things they came back inland with them. When the whites started to survey (explore?) the Cree killed them but a few got away. These survivors reported the affairs and from then on there were some changes in who was to handle the Indians. First it was the Americans and then the English took it away.

This was Blackfoot country originally but they were driven back.

Day Walker in answer to a question as to the yearly round of life replied: In the spring we leave the place where we camp for the winter. We generally move to where we hear there is buffalo. Usually scouts were sent out to locate the buffalo. When we come up to a herd, we give them chase. The camp remains for some time curing meat and preparing the hides. Then we move to another place. Warm weather sets in, the leaves begin to come out. We move towards the open country. That lasts all summer. We use buffalo chips for fuel. By that time the summer is pretty well on and all at once there is a

moving to one centre, to make a big camp. Someone has sent out a message that he is going to have a worship. This man usually picks a spot where there is good timber for the lodge and all come to him. Before they start they get a big supply of fresh beef. Now there is work for the ogihtcitau. They keep charge of the camp, watching especially that no one goes out hunting by himself.

Now they build the lodge. Everyone is in camp and the dance goes on. After the ceremonies are over they go off a way and everyone is allowed to hunt as he pleases. All go back to the general region where they came from. There is a general roaming around, with the main occupation to get food stuffs.

In midsummer, as the wild fruits come on, they are gathered and this takes a lot of time. Fruit gathering goes on all summer. The chokecherry was not picked as it is today. The whole stem was picked and the fruit was flailed off and then winnowed in the wind. These are pounded with stones and then dried so that they will keep. Most of the fruit that they wanted to keep was sun-dried and put into parchment (?) bags.

We also gathered wild turnip. When this is boiled the skin is easily taken off. It is cut into strips and dried. Some of it is powdered until it looks just like flour.

It is now getting on toward fall. There is another gathering of old people. They make a lodge called the Smoking Tipi. A

lot of food stuff is used for the ceremony. In this ceremony most of the prayer is to ask that they be successful and kept well. They now go to where they are going to winter.

A place is chosen where the buffalo are numerous. Now they make a great corral. While the preparations are going on no one is allowed to go out and hunt alone.

This corral is built so that the buffalo have to jump down to get into it. When they are all in a tipi cover is placed over the entrance to prevent their escape. However, if the corral is too full some buffalo are let out. As the buffalo are circling the corral, they are shot with bows and arrows. If one should try to escape, he is dispatched with a rifle.

When all are killed, the people gather around to butcher. There is a small opening in the back of the corral through which the meat is taken. Dogs are used to carry away the meat.

Walking Earth only saw a pound made twice. After that it was all chasing. He accounted for it in this way.

In the days when the pounds were being built we were fighting with each other and it was dangerous to travel alone or in small parties. And so the buffalo were at peace. In fact, there were times when they came close up to the camps. They were at peace because we couldn't roam and hunt them in small groups. When the white men came along and made peace and when guns became plentiful the great herds were split up and scattered. That is why the pounds would not work.

In the States, the buffalo lasted longer than they did here because the Sioux were warlike and so the buffalo were more at peace.

As the rifles became more plentiful here, the Blackfeet were pushed further west.

In battle the Sotos were brave. Somehow or other the Soto were charmed men and seldom were hit. If anyone was wounded it fell to the Soto in the group to pull the man through and in almost all cases the Soto handled the medicine successfully. They had some kind of medicine which they put in bullets. If one was only grazed by that bullet, he would die.

Informant - askikawitapihtaxk "Sitting with the Earth" -- pimatat's "Walking Earth's" wife

Then pimatat (Walking Earth's usual name) brought out some tools for tanning and preparing hides. His wife askikawitapihtaxk, "Sitting with the Earth", explained how she used them.

First of all I stretch the hide. I make little holes along the side and peg it down to the ground in the form of a square. This makes it nice and flat. Then I take this tool and take the inside flesh off. This tool used to be made of the leg

bone of an animal, not of iron as this one is. (The flesher was a heavy bar of metal, " in diameter, 10" in length, with a serrated filed business edge. It was socketed in canoes with a wrist loop. It compared exactly to the aboriginal bone and hide tool described by Skinner.)

After the hide is dry, I take this tool to scrape the hide fine and if it is to be used for clothing to take the hair off. (This scraper was a heavy crook of hard wood, 2" in diameter, 24" in length with a short adze-like blade lashed on to the crook.)

Fat is rubbed on and the hide is heated so that the grease soaks in. Then a mixture of pounded liver and brains is rubbed on and dried into the hide.

After this it is soaked. Then the water is squeezed out as much as possible. In order to dry it thoroughly we have a special kind of stone with which we rub the hide. Then the hide is softened by rubbing it over a sinew rope. The hide is smoked before and after the grease is put on.

In making moccasins the leather is smoked on a rod over a slow fire. She showed me some beaded moccasins of the high top sole seam type. These are a new type. The old kind had the seam around on top or else a seam down the middle of the instep, with a top seam round the toe. They also had a low top.

In the old days there were no flower designs in decorative work. This style was introduced by the halfbreeds and Sotos. The coats too were decorated with straight lines only.

I was shown a small drawstring bag made with two side pieces and a connecting round piece. All provision bags were made in that way formerly. Buffalo horn spoons and wooden bowls were used. Men's leggings came up to the groin and the breechclout hung down only in front. She brought out an unfinished coat of jumping deer hide. It was as yet with the sleeves unattached. Women's dress used to have the separate yoke. Men's costume always had the sleeves sewn in.

I was shown an agwau piece of beadwork on cloth with a simple 12 box design. These were women's spats.

Metal work was formerly done, especially for cuffs. Now it is not done and cuffs are made of beadwork.

Otter Skin was chaffed because he adopted white man's clothing at an early age. When his hide leggings would get too tight, said pimatat, he would have to jump in the lake and soak them. Pimatat and Day Walker have a free and easy manner between them. When Day Walker rose to go out of the tipi at one time, pimatat said that he needn't go out since there was a pail handy.

When pikats looked my car over, his remark was, "What a fine thing with which to run off with a woman."

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