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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Brief description of the significance of various ceremonial clothing.
 - Lists various dances.
- Informant: Muskwa

I went back to talk with the old man for another day, this time with a fairly good interpreter, a lad who had been to school at Prince Albert and is about to enter the University at Saskatoon.

Muskwa was under Little Pine, apictciminahigo-sis, at the treaty. This chief's band were River people and some Assiniboine. Muskwa himself is not at all Assiniboine. The River people were always right around the North Saskatchewan on the north side(?). The Prairie people were right south of the bush but later they went south after the buffalo.

The Between people, tastauwiuiuwuk, used to be around Sweet Grass and Jackfish Lake, most of them are now at Saddle Lake.

Farther west were the Beaver people, named after Beaver Hills, amiskwatci-wiyi-niwuk. These hills were just on this side of Edmonton. The chief there was cis-kima-t, "Frightens Them By Making A Noise."

Right south of here there were two tribes who lived around minaxtagak (Cypress Hills?). One was Soto under chief kanwizes. The other nehio-pwatuk, half Assiniboine, under chief pai-pwat. These latter people came up here just before the treaty and mixed with the River people.

Another Cree band was the wasa-hawi-nisuk, "People who live in a Bend" (as nearly as I can understand it means people living between three other bands). They lived just this side of Jackfish Lake. Their chief was piscu-ahgawi-tcegut, "Goes Around With Thunder."

Muskwa did not know of the Calling River people except that he had heard the name.

Muskwa had been in four battles with the Sioux and with the Crow. He never fought against the Blackfeet, in fact he once went on a raid with some Blackfeet. That was sixty-two years ago after the peace had been made between the Cree and the Blackfeet.

He wears one feather upright in his hair, showing that he had killed one enemy. A feather lying flat on the hair meant one horse stolen. If the upright feather is stripped bare except for a tuft at the top, it meant that they had wrestled with an enemy and killed him. If a man had been seriously wounded,

they would paint a red spot on his coat just over the wound, as if blood were dripping down.

The ogihtcitau were men who had killed their enemies. They did not have any special dress or insignia but were generally known. Tipis were not painted with war deeds among the Cree. If any Indian broke the law of the band, the ogihtcitau would persecute him. They destroyed all his property. But if he showed no signs of anger, he was paid back more than he had lost by the ogihtcitau. There was a dance and feast for the choosing of these ogihtcitau.

The old men who once had been ogihtcitau but who were "retired" gave the newly chosen members their rank. The names of the young men would be announced and they were taken into a tipi and sat down on fine robes and beadwork. The old men would talk to them, giving them advice and warning, and then they would be asked if they accept. Then gifts would be presented to them (donated by all the band evidently) or given to poor old people.

NOTE: This giving to the poor is a regular pattern. There was no special name for the dance. It was something like the Prairie Chicken Dance -- only men took part.

Sometimes when a man was crazy or a fool he would be called ogihtcitau -- that was just a name. Muskwa never had heard of an ogihtcitau ukimau.

The Big Dog Dance was given two or three times a year when somebody was sick. You were not supposed to fool around during this dance. It was ordered by manitou and was not given by anyone for nothing. They danced with short, decorated sticks.

The Buffalo Dance was not a dance by itself but was performed at other dances. It could only be danced by men who owned the heads. Anybody could own a head but they could be made only by those who had the power and right to do it. Up to a short time ago only two old men had these heads and when they died the heads were buried with them.

The Pipe Stem Dance, koskitci-cimuwin, has not been danced for a long time. For it they need certain long, decorated pipe stems.

The Bear Dance, masko-cimuwin, was danced with with bear robes fixed up with legs so that the dancers looked like bears and would do what the bears do in the dance.

The Horse Dance, misutimo-cimuwin, is a dance where you ride horses around a big tipi and at certain times you jump off and dance. This is still given.

The Cannibal Dance is still given -- witcigoka-ncimuwin.

The Give Away Dance is also given yet -- mahtai-tc-cimuwin. Gifts are given to a central pole in this dance.

The mitou-cimuwin (meaning?) was done where a new medicine was given to the people. A long tipi was put up and men danced around drums inside it.

The Caribou Dance -- wawaskesu-cimuwin -- was danced only by the women, the old men sang.

Another dance is the Rattle Dance -- ci-cigwusuk. Also the One Leg Dance -- napategatuk.

NOTE: I thought that some of these dances might give the clue to some age grade society set up, but this informant disavowed such a system. This may be due to ignorance or lapse of memory.

The Ghost Dance -- tcipai-cimuwin -- was one of the easiest to do but it was more like a feast than a dance.

About the hardest dance is the Sundance. Not everybody has the power to point the peace pipe and that is what makes it hard. When a person is sick, his relations make a vow to do a dance. They can choose any dance they think they can accomplish.

In the old days the Prairie Chicken Dance was most popular, next to the Sundance. Also the Pipe Stem Dance which was the nicest to look at. One of these old stems is still kept by Old Johnnie on this reserve. There is another at Poundmaker Reserve which belonged to old Poundmaker.

The Give Away Dance was held only once a year, in the fall. It might be given in fulfillment of a vow or as carrying out a command given in a dream.

At all these dances there was something to eat.

The dance given most often nowadays is the pi-tcitciwin -- Round Dance, or Powwow. It was not given at all in the old days but came from the Assiniboine and Sioux about thirty years ago. It is just a social dance and not for worship at all. In the old days there were no purely social dances. All the dances were called nimihtow-ukimau(?).

There is another kind of worship called koca-pahtcigau (?) where a man goes into a hut (booth) by himself and shakes it. They also used to take a sick person into the booth and cure him there.

Then Muskwa, as have so many informants, began talking about the buffalo pound. It is worth noting that paramount in the memory of practically every old man is the recollection of the buffalo pound. Why this is psychologically so would be worth investigating.

In the fall and winter all the Cree, River, House and Savannah people would come together in a great camp at the buffalo pounds. There were two of these corrals just southwest of Carruthers. They were made right out on the prairie. The same corral would be used all winter, when it was full an addition would be built onto it.

Just beside the pound there was a big tipi. Two men would stay in there all night to pray and smoke. Then a man (not one of the two) would go out to lead in the buffalo. He would call, "he-a, he-a" and the buffalo would follow him in like sheep.

The tongues and hearts of the buffalo would be put in the praying tipi and given to the old women for carrying in wood.

Buffalo were also killed by stalking. We used to crawl on our hands and knees in the snow to get them. We wore long buffalo mitts reaching over the elbow to protect our arms from the snow.

In the spring the Cree all scattered to their usual places. In the summer the buffalo were hunted on horse because it was no use in killing them wholesale since they wouldn't keep. Before they scattered, they would hold a council to decide when and where to have the dances.

At the Sundance they all would come together again. The

headman in these encampments would be the man who was giving the dance. Not many horses were given away at a Sundance. Horses were very scarce long ago. About twenty years ago it is true that horses would be given away at a Sundance.

This summer I attended two Sundances, one at Red Pheasant and another at Hobbema. The only horses that were given away were to poor people. I didn't get any for there were many poorer than myself. I myself have given two Sundances. Fine Day at Sweet Grass has given eight. He is older than I am and knows much about the dances, but I know more.

I have fasted for two nights on two different occasions. I was seventeen when I fasted first and again at the age of nineteen. To do this a man had to be a virgin. Ever since I was very small I had been told that there was a manitou but I didn't believe it. But after I fasted I had the idea that there was a God.

The first time I went out and fasted until noon of the second day. They spent most of my time crying and while they are asleep the spirits came and told me what to do. I saw something dressed in white and it asked me what was the matter. I couldn't see it clearly because I was crying. I said, "I ask for life." The vision said, "It shall be granted because you are poor." I think I have gained what I wanted for I have many grandchildren and I have been to many religious dances. I was not thinking only of myself when I fasted but also of other people. I was given power to heal and I have done much good.

I fasted a second time because my children were sick and I had to go up there. The same vision came to me and I was told that I would know if a person would live or die if I were looking after him. I can cure any trouble that has to do with the internal organs.

Not every young man fasted in the old days. Much cloth had to be given to the gods. Nowadays nobody does it. At the first Sundance I gave, I fasted for four days and nights and I wasn't a bit thirsty.

When a man dies, the spirit goes down south where the land is always fine and the grass is always green, no evil is there. There is a road leading to that place and it doesn't take them long to get there. As far as I know there is nothing in the way.

I talked with Muskwa in his shack which is a two-room, sawn timber, clay and straw plastered affair. He had a pipe of a grey-green stone, the first of its kind that I have seen. Hanging on a steer horn rack was an unfinished bonnet which Muskwa's son was making. It was made of the feathers of the "Black Eagle." Each feather was split at the quill, mounted on a wooden peg, and tied with sinew. I noticed that the pegs had been numbered with a pencil, presumably to grade the feathers according to length from the front of the bonnet to the back. The feathers were mounted on an old black felt hat which had

the crown cut off. They were held together or braced at the top by a red string. All around the bonnet, near the base of the black feathers, were fluffy white feathers taken from a chicken. A beadwork headband and pendant weasel skins had yet to be put on. It is to be used at the powwow during Christmas.

In the old days men made these bonnets and other kinds of headdress. Some were of weasel skin, some had horns on. A man had to have a special power to make them then.

I took Muskwa from his shack to his tent where he showed me his dance costume. The leggings were of red flannel with a simple geometric arrow design beaded near the foot. The shirt was of thin black linen with shoulder and arm bands beaded on. He said that a hide costume was too heavy and warm for him to wear. He had a feather bonnet.

The reason he was at his shack, said a young woman, was that he was still mourning for his old wife who died a month ago.

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