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PEIGAN RESERVE
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PEIGAN RESERVE
PEIGAN
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INTERVIEWER: JOHNNY SMITH
INTERPRETER: JOHNNY SMITH
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Tom Yellowhorn, aged 72, describes the acceptance by the Peigans of Treaty #7, and its effects on their way of life.
- Compares U.S. and Canadian treaties and criticizes Canadian education of Indians.
- Describes some aspects of traditional ceremonies (briefly).
- tells story of two spirits gambling for control of lands adjacent to Rockies.

John Smith: I'm a researcher for T.A.R.R., my name is John W. Smith. I'll be interviewing an elderly gentleman here at Brocket, Alberta. The date is March the seventh. This interview will relate as to the time before the signing of the treaties. The purpose of the interview is to try and cover all possible areas where the leaders might have knowledge. It is possible that the questions that will be asked of the interviewee might not be able to give any information in answer to any of them. In fact in most cases interviewees will not be able to do so. This is expected and they should not feel that the interviewer is trying to make them look stupid or ignorant. The unfortunate fact is that most of this information has probably been lost from the oral tradition. It would be a shame, however, to lose any that might still be in someone's mind simply because no one ever asked the question. I will

start off by asking my grandfather his name, his age and where he was born. The date today is March the seventh, 1975. What is your name?

Tom: Tom Yellowhorn.

John: How old are you?

Tom: Well, I was seventy-two last birthday, November 24, 1974.

John: Where were you born?

Tom: Well, on the reserve.

John: On the Peigan reserve?

Tom: Yeah, Peigan reserve. And I think that's the old settlement we had across the river, which I still got myself today.

John: Have you always lived here?

Tom: Oh yes, I have been here all my life.

John: Could you tell me the story about the time there was buffalo around?

Tom: Well, I can tell you very little, Johnny, because on my life line I was brought up, my father was a halfbreed. My grandmother married a white man in the first place, so my dad was a halfbreed and my mother was a full-blooded Indian, her father's and her name was Fox Herd, and he was from this

Blackfoot tribe in Montana. That's where originally my grandfather was from. Then this white man grandfather of mine was, I think of many trades because he was up in North Battleford when the treaty was made up there, because he went there with my grandmother and then they brought three wagon loads of good, mixed goods. Oh, everything for a household you know, and he traded with the Indians up there. But on the other side, my mother's father, he was on this Yellowstone Park area in Montana and he was a great hunter too. He was one of the great parties that go out hunting buffalo for their livelihood and I guess he was one of those that were raiding the neighboring Indians in Missouri, further south, I guess Crows and Cheyennes, and so forth like that. So they lived quite entirely on buffalo, wild game, wildlife. They lived on that for their livelihood. And they lived along this eastern slopes of the Rockies all this time. And there was buffalo everywhere until...well I think that the buffalo went, disappeared, it seems to me disappeared before the first treaty was signed...because, according to what I hear they had a mass killing of buffalo in the States. And it was staged by the American government. And I hear about the same time the buffalo was killed off on the Canadian territory too. So I think the two governments must have made some kind of agreement to kill the buffalo off, because that was the Canadians' main

source of living of life, because they used the buffalo for everything. So when they made the treaties, well they told the Indians, chiefs where they're gonna stay, where they're going to live. But the treaty at Blackfoot Crossing, Cluny, well they asked Chief Crowfoot where he was going to live. So he chose Blackfoot Crossing and so this Blackfoot Crossing, I don't know how far it runs south and west, and the north and east, but they had a big piece of territory for their own and when Red Crow chose his, where he's going to stay, he chose the Belly Hills. Well the Belly Hills has got a river running on each, started from way up west, not too close to Waterton Lake, but from there the rivers they spread out, oh, I'd say about the place it must be about 25 miles wide. And it runs way to the east, to the north shores of the Old Man River and west of Lethbridge. And when all the chiefs, (because Bull Head died 1874) no 1875 he died somewhere around about first part of February, first few days of February. And he died of pneumonia. And it was after his death when Colonel Macleod finally went to see Chief Crowfoot to make treaty. Because Bull Head has turned him down when he came there in October 1874. He turned him down, he told him, when Colonel Macleod approached him and told him that the Queen wants to make treaty with him. And Bull Head turned him down and told him, "No, I'm not ready to make treaty with you." So he told Colonel Macleod, "You go back the way you came from, but don't take any fear that

anything is going to happen. I'll see that nothing happens." So Colonel Macleod he gave him a uniform, the Queen's own guide uniform. So when he got this uniform from Colonel Macleod, Chief Bull Head, in turn, gave him his name Bull Head, that he himself is a great leader, great hunter, great warrior. And he had the big responsibility of his people to see they got a big area for their living where there's plenty of game and lots of water where you get a lot of fish and fowl. They look after this from Red Deer River, Red Deer right straight south to Yellowstone river. And up to the Rockies and east to the Cypress Hills. This was all under Chief Bull Head's, his people to live here. So he lives up to the mountains far west as the great divide, where the river, where the waters run each side, where the river runs east and where the river water runs west to the west coast. All anything that runs on this side of the divide is Bull Head's area, territory. So when he died Bull Head, Colonel Macleod, he camped, he was here for three years before he think that Crowfoot was the next successor of Bull Head. So he went to see, they went to see Crowfoot to sign treaty. And so that's where the buffalo ended up was before the treaty was signed. The two governments had agreed to try and kill off the buffalo and...because they found out it was the Indians' great, the most valuable food and get all their clothing from the buffalo because everything that comes from buffalo, it's used to the Indians.

John: Did the disappearance of the buffalo change their lives?

Tom: Oh yes. Well yes, it put the Indians on these reservations which I call concentration camps. Well the Indian can't do nothing, there's too many laws for him to respect.

You take this Indian Act, well the Indian people they respect it oh for years and years, until the last, just about 25 years, when the people got a little more smartened up in education. So they thought they should fight for their rights. And now today we found out that the Indian Act, it really means to protect the white man and to punish the Indian. That's what the Indian Act means for the whole people of Canada. So that's why they got so many bad deals because they didn't care what kind of a deal they made for the Indian as long as they knew they could get away with something. Because the white man they give up the sweet talk; in the long run this sweet talk turns sour and bitter. Then it's no good for the Indian when it runs sour.

John: How were the Indians able to survive after the buffalo disappeared?

Tom: Well they had a lot of uh, they still had a little bit of hunting to do when the buffalo disappeared. They still had the

moose and elk or the antelope on the short grass country or east on the Cypress and Medicine Hat area. All this eastern country, it's all short grass country, that's where the antelope run, but they're not so, they're not so, ...buffalo is the best hunting animals that the Indians, they live on. Mainly, and for fish, well, they get all kinds of fish, until white people clean out the rivers and lakes of the fish. They kill them off just for sport not to eat, but the Indians, they fish them to eat and to live on them for a living.

John: After the treaty was signed did it change the way the people lived much?

Tom: Yes. Well it's quite a...they had to go and live on these reserves and oh that's when they started to give them all kinds of instructions, before they know they were free, before, but well, after the treaty, well they tell them all kinds of instructions to do which was no good for the Indian people. And it really made them, ...well they tell them this is a good way to live but it's not true.

John: What did the people around here, the Peigans, the Bloods, the Blackfoot and the Sarcee, what did they think about those treaties that were being made down in the States before they signed their treaty here?

Tom: Well I'll tell you, for instance the United States government, they live up to their word on the education, because that was one of the first promises they gave to the Indians in the States to give them education, and they gave them education so the Indians in the States they're a hundred years ahead of us in their education. They were well educated a hundred years ago. While the people in Canada were educated and it only made them just another class of people. They went and lost their culture, traditions and their way of life and they're not qualified for the white society the way they were educated. Yeah, it just made them to, the way they were

educated, they were scared to talk, they don't know what they're really talking about. It's just the poor education they got from the government.

John: Do you think the signing of the treaty down in the States influenced the people to sign the treaty here?

Tom: No, it's got nothing to do with that but I'll tell you the treaties that were made in the States were altogether different. Because the Indians that fought for their rights oh long ago. They had been fighting because they had been

educated and they learned to use this claim, they knew how to work on it and they got a lot of land what they lost - they got it back, because they were educated. But here in Canada the Indians were not educated right, well for a long time they didn't know what. And this, the Indians in the States they got their voting rights, oh a long time ago too. So that's why they made their claims work out more for them than it did in Canada. But now with this we've got our voting rights, we seem to make another step into the daylight. We know where we stand because there are a lot of people who are willing to help the Indian people today instead of just the Indian Act. Oh there was a big, would say a big war between the white man and the Indian on the strength of the Indian Act.

John: The interpreter for Treaty 7, Jerry Potts...

Tom: No, Jerry Potts was just a guide.

John: He was just a guide?

Tom: Yeah, he was just a guide. Yeah, he was taking the Mounties where they wanted to go. But he was not the interpreter for the whole cause. The interpreter for the first treaty at the Blackfoot Crossing, Cluny; it was James Bird, and he was a halfbreed from the States. Well he talks the full Blackfoot language and well practically he was more Indian than a halfbreed and he was the one that was interpreter for the whole thing when the first treaty was signed at Blackfoot Crossing in Cluny. Because I visited his on, oh years after, fifty years after the treaty was signed, and that's what he told me, he said "My father was interpreter at the Blackfoot Crossing when they made the first treaty."

John: What part did Jerry Potts play in the signing of the treaty?

Tom: Well I couldn't say what, cause I don't hear anymore about his, about Jerry, except on occasional trips with the Mounties. That's all I know, that's all I heard about him, but he was not the interpreter, because Tom Bird he told me himself because he talks good English but he never went to school. But I guess his father must have went to school and he knows English well and he can talk Indian good, so he was the one that interpreted for the whole signing of the Treaty 7 at the

Blackfoot Crossing. Because I visited Tom Bird in 1924, on his own homestead, and just across the border his land adjacent to the Canadian and U.S. border. He lives on that creek there, I think they call it St. Mary's Creek or Swift Current,

something like Swift Current. That's it because St. Mary's River is on the other side. And this creek they call it Swift Current, fast running water in other words, you call it. And he lives right there.

John: Were there any treaties made before this treaty seven with the Blackfoot?

Tom Yellowhorn: No, I don't think, I never heard of it. I never heard. As far as I hear about the treaties. That was the only treaty signed, was treaty number seven.

John: What about the treaties you were saying that was an agreement between the two gods, Napi and the god from the east for a territory?

Tom: Yeah, oh yes I get you now. Well, Napi was the great leader and he was a prophet and he was telling a lot of things about what's going to happen in advance; and he was travelling, oh quite extensively right to the eastern slopes of the Rockies from Red Deer River to right down to Yellowstone River. And he met this guy, he was another man just like him, from across the mountains and the people from across the mountains, they call him Wolf. Because he was travelling all the time and he was travelling and they say he made his trips in a short time because he's got some kind of power to make a great distance, short distance. He's one day up at the coast, western coast, Pacific coast, next day he's way up north but every time Napi (or the old man) met this guy, this fellow was claiming the territory or the area that stands on the eastern slopes of the Rockies and Napi was telling him, "No, we've got to go by the great divide, where the water runs each way." So one day they met again and they started arguing about it. Napi told him, "Well we're going to settle the argument once and for all, we're going to play this ring game. And I'm going to throw in a bet, the eastern slopes of the Rockies to the Great Divide. If you beat me that's your area. But if I beat you I'm not going to be on the Great Divide, I'll stay on this side of the Great Divide." So they had this...with the Indians it's a great game, the ring game, where they played this, the landmark is still up at Livingstone, north of Lundbreck and that's where they played. So Napi won the game, so he claimed anything on this side of the Great Divide including the mountains, the forests, and all the game that you could find in there. So the years after that when the people from across the mountains they come out and they raid the buffalo on the plains, that's why they had so many fights with the Kootenays because they were not supposed to come out and raid the buffalo because

they've got their own game on their own side. But the people of

the plains, they never go beyond this Great Divide. They've got their own game on this side of the Great Divide.

John: Going back to the treaty, why did the Indians make the treaty, why did they sign the treaty?

Tom: Well it was the leader, Crowfoot, that surrendered his rights to the white people you know, to the Crown. So then if he had turned it down, well then the people could all automatically all stay with him. But when he gave up and was willing to make the treaty, the people, they had to follow because he's a great leader.

John: What did the Indians think was the reasoning for the signing of the treaty? Why was the treaty being made by the Queen?

Tom: Well, I guess they thought they were going to get very good treatment. They were going to be treated right but I don't know why they got so many bad deals out of it when the treaty was signed. But you take for the Peigan, head chief Sits Against the Eagle Tails, well he selected the Old Man River and this Crow Lodge which runs way up to Waterton lakes, that's where it started you know, and the Porcupines. Well after he came back here and settled down and round about 1880, a big cattle company came on the Peigan reserve and they asked the Indian Affairs, they want to run cattle...to lease the reserve for cattle grazing. And the Indian Affairs told them, "You could go and see the head chief, he'll tell you how far his land runs." So he leased the reserve to this big cattle outfit, WR is the brand. And there was another outfit that was living, was landing on the Crow Lodge, that's the south side of the reserve. Well for twenty years, WR leased the Peigan reserve and that runs way up to the mountains, because I think it was in 1881 or 1882 when they put up a fence from Monarch right towards Claresholm and straight to the eastern slopes of the Rockies. And they ran a four strand wire fence, barbed wire fence, to keep their cattle on this side of this, because there was a lot of people ranching on the north country. So that one winter there was a lot of cattle that strayed in and got mixed up with the WR cattle and gave the WR cow hands a lot of extra work looking for these strays and cutting them out for the owners. So they told the head chief, Chief Sitting Against the Eagle Tails to give them permission to put up this fence. So they got permission from him. So that's why they ran that fence and it stayed there for a long, long time. But we didn't take the wire after a long time but we found it was still there for, oh,

years after, until they were supplying beef for the reserves. That time they had what they called ration house. They were supplying from this herd to furnish the rations for the Indians and they had it for twenty years. It was right up to 1900. But the last year they sent some of their steers down to this slaughter house at the old Agency because all these people, all these men, like my dad, he was a young man at the time and they used to go to work for the WR in the spring, branding calves.

And the headquarters was straight north on Beaver Creek. That's where the headquarters of the cow camp was and that's where they put anything that they're going to sell, they move them in there. I don't know, they had a big herd.

John: Did the Indians think that they were going to still live the same way they were living before the signing of the treaty?

Tom: Well, I know a lot of them, they always think that they lost their rights at the signing of the treaty. Because they know they lost their life, the way they were living and they live on the reserves and they know they were sorry they made the treaty.

John: What did they think of how the white man was using the land before the signing of the treaty?

Tom: Well there was no farming before the signing of the treaty, the way I understood but there was a lot of this whiskey trading from the States.

John: Tell me a little bit about that whiskey trading.

Tom: Yeah, the whiskey trading was, there was posts, settlements that were different outfits, that were selling booze to the Indians and they were at different places. And also there was a heavy fur trading from the Hudson's Bay and well, individuals you know. There was a lot of fur trading too. You see when the Mounties came the whiskey traders, they were not doing too bad. Because they were not paying too much for the whiskey they got from those people that were selling whiskey, making whiskey. So when they had to leave the country they knew they were going to get picked up by the Mounties up there. Well they left the country because there were some that were being picked up and put in jail. But they never ever picked up the fur traders. The fur traders, they're the ones that got away with the country, right from the west to the south, to the east and from the border to the north. Look at all the furs, enterprise of the natives the fur. They never got nothing for them because the white people, they just claim

their own traplines and selling traplines to the new settlers. And all that fur that the Hudson's Bay they got from them. Look at the livelihood they bought from the Hudson's Bay. They hold a gun straight up, standing straight and the Indians have got to do all kinds of valuable furs, precious furs, everything until it stands even with the rifle. And that's a tremendous cost to the Indian you know. Well after they pay all that big price for the rifle, that good law, they put that law against the Indians not to carry a gun. This is where the Indians got beat you know. This is where they got a bad deal.

John: What did the Indians feel about the Mounted Police when they were coming?

Tom: Well the Indian is ready to have respect for anybody. If

anybody tries to treat them right, the Indian, they know respect. They know how to behave with people. They're not real hard, what you see in magazines and comic books, where the Indians, oh they tell you a lot of bad stories about the Indian. Because they had good respect for anybody. Yeah, the Indian people they know what respect means. Right in their own camps, they have a lot of respect for everything.

John: At the signing of the treaty, you were talking earlier about this pipe and the passing of this pipe.

Tom: Well that's the Indian custom, what we call a peace pipe. If they're two strange tribes, if they're not going to fight they have a peace smoke. They sit down and they pray over this little fire and make sacrifice and put the pipe over it and when it's already got tobacco, they may light it and they hold it over the fire and they smoke. They pray that they make friends. They don't just smoke it for nothing, they have to have this ceremony first before they smoke the peace pipe. Because once both parties smoke the peace pipe, well that means that there's no hard feelings between them. But I don't know if they had the peace pipe when they signed the treaty. I didn't hear about if they had a peace pipe.

John: Did you hear about who was the fellow who went around to the different chiefs, telling them there was going to be someone coming to make treaty?

Tom: No, the police were here at the time and they're the ones that went to see this uh, well it was Jerry Potts. Then where he got in, he was telling the people they want to sign treaty and well try and tell them to understand what kind. But up till the day they never, the Indians didn't really know on what terms they made the treaty, you know.

John: And when these people were going around telling the people that there are people coming around that are going to make the treaty, what did the people think about these people?

Tom: Well I guess I won't say anything about that because I don't know what, but it was the head chief was going around the camp and he was advising the people to think what they're going to do, what they think about it because he didn't really give up himself to sign the treaty. It was up to the people to make a decision. But I don't know who made the first signing to make treaty exactly you know.

John: At the time of the signing of the treaty did the Indian people know what the meaning of money was?

Tom: Well I don't think they knew too much about it. They didn't really understand too much about what was coming you know. Because there was nobody that could read and write or talk English. It was all through interpretation, that's what I heard you know.

John: Did you hear whether or not they were given a copy of

the treaty?

Tom: No, I don't know. I couldn't say that because I told you, nobody can read that time and nobody went to school and so what we say today, it's all, it's not justice the way they made the treaty.

John: What did the Indians think of what the government was going to get out of the treaty?

Tom: Well, they just heard that they were going to get money and they, a lot of the people, didn't know what the money was. They didn't now what the money was and oh many, many years after, it was when the Mormons first came into this country. The Mormons they showed them the true valuation of the money. Like five cents and twenty-five cents piece, and fifty cent piece. Because at the time of the treaty, somebody might go in the store, he might have a twenty dollar bill and he might want to buy just a box of matches, maybe he pays twenty dollars for a box of matches. Because they don't know what the money was.

John: Did the Indians understand what they were giving up in the treaty?

Tom: No, not too much, not too plainly. Until, years after, they started to realize what kind of a deal they got and they try to asking the government. Ah it's written in black and

white, it's going to go this way. So that's where the Indians were caught was they didn't know what all this black and white means.

John: Did they ask for anything that wasn't given in the treaty?

Tom: No, they didn't ask. I don't think so. They thought they're going to get the money but they're going to still own the - they'd still be free on the country. But this was after when they found out that they have to stay on these reserves. Many years after till they found out that they have to stay on the reserves.

John: Did they understand what they were going to give and what they were going to get in return for the treaty?

Tom: Well they were supposed to get things but they never got them.

John: What was their - what did they feel about the land?

Tom: Well, they do very little cultivating and planting. But tobacco and they plant potatoes in the early days. That's about the only thing that they cultivate so they can plant that, you know. But outside that they didn't know anything about wheat, oats and barley, all that sort of stuff, they didn't know it.

John: In the people's religion did they place any great importance on the land?

Tom: In their religion you mean?

John: Yeah.

Tom: Oh, their faith. Well the Indians, they know they got their berries in the summer time from the trees and they got all this food they get from the buffalo and the game they have. And the fish they got in the rivers and they do a lot of this hunting too. We hunt ducks and geese, all things they know that are eatable. They know that but they didn't know nothing about this agriculture or how to use it.

John: Well what did they believe in, what was their religious beliefs?

Tom: Well, the faith they have is the Great Spirit. And this Great Spirit is very holy. You have to pray and they call him

Creator too, Creator. Because they use the word Creator when they're having their big mass, their holy ceremonies, you know. Well that's all the word they use is the Creator. They know that somebody gave them this country, somebody gave them the light of the sun and the light of the moon. They know all that.

John Smith: When the Indians say the land Nixsistona, Our Mother, what do they mean by that?

Tom: Well that's where they get all their food, from the land. That's where all the food grows from. All the fruit and all the game they get, they get their food from the land, grass and water. So then that's why they call it mother.

John: And was there any father?

Tom: The Great Spirit is the father.

John: The Great Spirit. Did they know anything about selling and buying of land before the signing of the treaty?

Tom: No, no. They just know, well they know this claim. They know how much land, how much area of land they owned. Because they know the claim, oh a long time. That's what Napi used, it was the claim. He claimed all this area, eastern slopes of the Rockies or east from the Great Divide. Well we know what the claim means. It's the place where you want to stay.

John: And that smallpox epidemic, were there a lot of people that died?

Tom: Oh yes, that's what I heard and that smallpox epidemic came, oh way before the first treaty. And sure there was a lot of people that died in it. Like some place in one lodge the

whole family died of it. And when there's so many died, and they can't do nothing with them, well the whole camps, they move to another part and leave the dead where they died in the camp. That was hard you know, that smallpox epidemic. There was a lot of people died of it. And it seems this, what they call black locust plague, it seems it came about a few years after when the black locust went right across the country, eating off everything; grass and anything in their way. And they didn't know what to do, where they came from. I couldn't tell you the years of that but I know. This is what I heard, because this black locust, they're the ones that came across the country first. Oh, they cleaned up everything just like fire you know. There's nothing left behind them. Grass and

leaves and anything that's in green. They just eat it up and they used to jump on the flies. And it just like darkens the sun when fly. They're so thick and many. Well it was after this smallpox epidemic came. And it killed, sometimes a whole family was wiped out with this smallpox.

John: Who brought this disease?

Tom: I don't know where the disease came from. I don't know if it's an import from the old country or, I don't know.

John: What do you know about the medicine bundles?

Tom: Medicine bundle. I can't tell you too much of that, because I know there's a medicine - well what kind of bundle are you talking about - this medicine bundle or sun dance or...

John: The medicine pipe bundle.

Tom: Medicine pipe bundle, well I really can't tell you anything about that because I never was, I never studied that, where it came from.

John: How many of these religious bundles were there?

Tom: Well I used to know there was quite a few of them were here but I know some have been sold, oh back in 1921. There was a lady came out from New York, she was buying all this old stuff like that. Seems like a lot of people sold their bundles to this old lady, she put them in a museum in New York. Because I heard that is where she came from. And I think she bought one medicine pipe bundle. And that was quite a while ago. But these other bundles that I know were sold. One was sold in museum in Browning at the Plains Indians Museum in Browning and oh, I think they've got about two. But in this Glenbow Foundation they took some bundles. But I'm not sure what they call Long Time Pipe Medicine Bundle. I think the Bloods took it back, were going to buy it back. They sold it to the Glenbow Foundation. But then I think they're taking it back. They want to keep it. They thought they'd made a mistake in selling the whole thing you know. Because there's a lot of people involved in that.

John: What part did the medicine man play in the tribe? What did he do for the bands of Indians?

Tom: Well in this like on medicine pipe. They used to have it in the spring somewheres around there about. They have it

early, they used to have it when the first time they hear the thunder if it's going to storm. They hear the thunder any time early in the spring. Well they used to have a medicine pipe dance almost the same day they heard the thunder. That's the time they have a big night's prayer you know. A prayer for the coming of the summer and of spring and summer and all they ask is to have a good summer and pray for all that you know.

John: Were these the medicine men?

Tom: Yes. Well the man who owns the pipe, he's the one that leads. The people that own the pipe before, they all come back and join in. It's not just the owner that's holding the pipe, it's the people that used to own it too, they have medicine and they all come back and they pray together. I don't find the Indian's way of faith, I don't see or find any evil. Because when I was Catholic, also I never was a holy man myself but the way I got to church... I've been in Catholic church and I've heard Salvation Army playing on the streets and I've heard this Full Gospel and I'm an Anglican all my life myself. It's the same words what the preacher or the minister, when they pray in the church or someplaces, they say if you believe in the truth, well they hear you, they know what you're talking about, they give you an answer, you're going to see the answer too. Because I don't find it evil the way Indians believe in their faith.

John: What is the purpose of the Sundance?

Tom: The purpose of the Sundance? Oh it's, well I can't tell you too much about it, Johnny, but I'd like you to go and see someone that went through it, you know. They're the ones that will give you the true answer. But me, I can't give you the answer on that. But I know they do a lot of praying. Like some people today they go on this hunger strike, you see that a lot of times in the paper, a certain group is going on a hunger strike to get something. But in the Sundance when they're praying, sometimes they go on that fast, you know. Maybe for a day or two before they start their prayers. I can't tell you that much. But people from other places that you see in the papers there, oh some go on a hunger strike for months. They don't want to eat.

John: What are some of the people who are still alive now, you know your ancestors that took part in the signing of the treaty?

Tom: Oh there's a few here. Not too many. There are a few that, they never really understand what they signed you know. I heard a lot of them talk about it and the promise from the government men that took part in the signing of the treaties. The promises that they heard from them that is the thing that they talk about that never came true.

John: Why do the Indian people always refer to the Queen as Niksistinan (Our mother)?

Tom: Well that's what the Colonel Macleod explained to the Indians at the time and it was our Great Mother, our Great White Mother. Just like Bull Head, when he told Colonel Macleod, "My children, they are living in peace the way they are today. So I don't want anything from you. We are contented the way we are living." So he told Colonel Macleod, "My children" and that's the way Colonel Macleod tried to explain to him the Great White Mother. And tried to make him believe that she's going to treat them good, but it was not. They put up this Indian Act to punish the Indian people, punish the Indian people and protect the white man.

John: Do the Indians know how much money they got at the signing of the treaty?

Tom: Well it was years and years after when they talked about it you know. When they said \$12.00 in the first payment. So when they understand the money, the value of money, they tried to claim that \$12.00 but the government says, "You've got your money now all you get is \$5.00 now."

John: And about those people who were putting more kids in. What's that about?

Tom: Well, when they give that paper money out, some people come home with just a few papers for them and they saw somebody else with maybe five or six kids with them and maybe a whole lot and they told them, "I got all this from them." Somebody with two kids they ask, "Lend me your kids, I'll go up so I could get more money." When they knew a little bit about money they knew what was a little bit you know, that's what they did.

John: What do you think of what the government has done with what was agreed to at the treaties?

Tom: Well what it means?

John: Well do you think they've gone on their word?

Tom: Well, I'd say it's just a five cent deal in every way. You see the way they educated the Indian people. Oh they, oh I went to school myself and kids brought in there, little kids the size of your little girl there, they brought them in these residential schools. Oh and they stay there twelve, thirteen, and fourteen years. When they come back home on the reserve they've lost the ways of their people. They don't understand their people...they've lost everything and they're not

qualified for the white society. They were scared to talk to the white people and afraid to talk and oh they met a lot of criticism from their own folks.

John: When the government first put out the reserves, they used to make you stay on the reserves?

Tom: Yeah, if I want to go to the Blood reserve, I've got to get a pass. And that pass it's got to go on a certain date. If I ask for a week, I've got to stay over there and be back on the same day of the week I'm supposed to, I'm not supposed to stay over.

John: What happens if you stay over?

Tom: Well you're trespassing over on the other reserve. They're not supposed to carry a gun in all the time. When I paid \$50,000 worth of fur for my gun, I can't carry it to the next reserve. On the reserve too, you're prosecuted. You go down and maybe serve a month. But that's why these breeds that come onto the reserve, they recognize that they're the ones that are supposed to get a better deal but the Indian is the one, he's the underdog all the way.

John: After the treaty was made you were saying the Indians finally realized what they had signed away? What did they feel about after?

Tom: Well, they feel sorry. Yeah it made a lot of them sorry when they know the kind of...well I would say the kind of an answer they got from the treaty. You see in the long run they got the understanding that the answer they got from what they understand, they feel sorry they made it. They should never have made treaty. Good-night.

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