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CARDSTON, ALBERTA
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Briefly mentions the games children play in the winter.
This is the same story. I was telling about how they got ready for the winter. Now this is where they have settled. They started taking the soft bark. In their tipis where they put the dried skins, like the linings, they put these barks in between that. Some use their feet to clear the snow to the grass. Some get the water weeds from back waters. They clear the snow and gather the weeds. They have something to carry them in. These some use between the linings. This is called their nesting. They have made a nest. It is warm then. Now let's say the coyotes or whatever, they use them as floor mats when they had made their nest there. I think, I am just guessing, they might spend about two months there. They will stay there as long as they want. Now this is where they burn down trees. What will they use to work on a big tree? There is no axe. They break off what they can and use that for fire.

A man, his wife made him mitts; they are high and have strings. The back part of the buffalo where it is thick and is round, that is what they cut. They cannot work them soft into

buckskin because they are round. So they are cut on and just sewn together there. They are called the hard part, it is those, they are worked a little. Because they are round they cut slits in them until they are real round. Around the edge a buckskin is sewn and then turned inside out. The fur part is inside. That is the hard part hats. Women, because they get wood out in the cold, they wore these hats too. Children wore hard part hats. The children had leggings and mitts.

The children will go to the back water, make a large clearing on the ice. There are usually many of them. These trees that give off a smelly scent are white and the berries are white too. Today they use them to make necklaces. They

are called white berries. Those they peel the bark and use to tie at the end of the sticks. The handles of these are short. They are where there is no snow and the spoiled ones... the mother sometimes... the sticks before winter.

Those are users or taps. There are these hard racks which are very scarce, they are called studs. At this clearing, these boys all have their own racks. They do not use just any kind of rack. There are those. I'll just say taps. They turn them, whipping them softly; finally they start whipping them hard. They knock them around in a spin. They have wars with them. They make them knock the others. Some get broken and fall apart. But this stud is real hard, can't be beaten. That's how children played war with them. These children take these other kind of rocks to chip the ice to eat. Some eat the snow. Finally they make a hole in the ice and that's where they drink from, these children. In the evening they put their taps and whips in a pile. There are some children that do not make their whips good and there are some that do. They stand hand in hand in a circle and sing swinging the arms. "When I get hit in the shins only then I will die." They sing this because of those things they play war with. Another, they all held hands again and sang, "The first to get home." They sing this four times. The fourth time they all run home. Because all the tipis are among the trees they scatter home. They tell their mother, "I have come for my supper." They do not eat at home. Some mothers have to cook and others, when they know it is nearing the time for the child to come home, she starts cooking. There is nothing else to eat but meat, dry meat or pemmican. As they got their food they ran back to where they were skating. They just stood around as they got back. The first to get there sang, "The last to get home." The last to

get back will have to give out all his food, but they always gave him something back to eat. Then they hold hands again and went into the woods. They just ran in and out of the trees singing until they come to this nice sheltered place with a bonfire. The spoiled children's fathers made that fire. Maybe there was very few men that made that fire -- it usually was the women that made the fire. There they all sit and the food they got they share and eat. That is called having the goodies.

A rotten log is burned down. There they go back the same way holding hands and singing. They go back to their skating place. It was dark now. There they all came. They start knocking the taps again. They knock them all the way down the ice. We just hear the whipping sound of the sticks. Late at night, the women come looking for their children, telling them they should go home now. Some really enjoy their game of whipping taps and are sweating. They wet their moccasins in that water hole they make and then stand in the snow to make them freeze. Those they used to skate. They even played who would skate the farthest. These are stories told.

The rest of the people are all still up. They invite each other not to make them sleepy. They tell the women to cook some meat so they can eat. The woman does right away and serves them. The children, the girls slid. They use ribs and a piece of skin is used as the seat. They make tails for their sliders. They really make the sliding place slippery. While the boys are knocking their taps the girls go home to get food, too. But theirs is harder -- they do not make a fire, they just wait until everyone is back and then they all eat. There are some girls that are twenty or over. They are afraid of men and don't want to get married. Those are the ones that

go sliding. Some have their own homes and work just like the other women but are not married. They do not smoke, drink, or dance, they just live like that. During the night the boys play the taps and the girls slide. They are waiting for the night. They have no clocks. Those seven at night fall, they say that the rear end is up high. Finally it is right side up. When they know that the seven has turned right side up, only then the children all go home because they know the night will not be long then. They will sleep.

These big logs they put in the fire before turning in to keep the place warm all night, but it is not always like that. It gets cold during that night. It is the same what food they got. The women looked after it like cutting them for dry meat. The children, when playing in the trees or bush, they pick these berries off rose bushes and eat them. They call them tomatoes.

There are these trees with white bark. They are called Egeenu. We eat those bark, the trees are different. The horses eat those. They do not sleep long at nights because they say they do not want to sleep forever because they can easily freeze to death in bed. That is why they say they do not want to sleep forever. Then all the children sleep in during the morning. The day is quiet. The man go hunting then. Let's say he killed an antelope. He cut a slit on the legs of the skin and at the tummy then interlocked them. In that he carried the meat and other things that he got from the animal. He will make sure that he drags them with the rein of the hair on the hide. That is known as taking home round. Then tie the rope to the hide with the meat and stuff and put it around one shoulder and drags them home like that. They said once they start pulling they just slide along. They do

the same with the buffalo. They are heavy but once they get them sliding they are not heavy. That how they brought home their killing.

There is never a day for the man to sit idle. He is out all the time. If he didn't get one that day, at night instead he will go to the deep part of snow; make a hole or a cave. When he has made it big enough he will go in and closes it from the inside. They always take a twig with which they make a hole at the top where they lay their heads. If they do not do that the cave will drip but if he did his breath will go out through that hole. There he will sleep. His clothes are all buckskin and they are warm.

They said, I am First Rider. I know. If a piece of meat is put in the snow, the next day when you go back and check on it, it is spoiled because of the heat in the snow. That is how the people are, that's why they sleep any place. Some just tramp the snow down and that is where they curl up and get covered with snow and sleep. Myself, I also slept in the snow like that. It was warm. Nothing happened to me.

Now this is Cardston, this road leading to Macleod, is a man that lives along that road. His name is Good Charger. He had a car which had water and no antifreeze. As he drove home he ran into the ditch into a snow bank. The car was still running, but he couldn't do anything so he went home knowing that it would crack when the water freezes. The next day he couldn't get out because of the storm. The next day he went to his car. When he saw them they were partly covered with snow. He had to shovel the snow from the door and when he got in, there was snow in the inside too. It started with no trouble, he waited a while to see if it would stop again but they never

did. So he back them out. He got help from a team of horses and a sled to pull them out. Then he drove home, his house was not too far. When he checked over the car and the water there was nothing wrong with them. That's why I know that snow is really warm.

Those children playing with taps and those girls sliding, they eat ice. The old people would say, "The snow melt us." None of the Indians know when a person is nearly froze to try to get some cold water and make him drink it. He melts and nothing happens to him. My father and mother showed me if I had a frost-bitten face or frost-bitten hands to stick them in snow. Nothing will happen to them. Once I had a frost-bitten nose; I just used snow on it and it thawed. I am not the only one that knows this. Now us, the Indians, as soon as we get cold we put our hands in the snow and rub our face with snow.

The people in those days chased the herd of buffalo. How will he wear mitts if he has to shoot with his bow and arrow? Maybe he will get two and the old people would say, "My fingers stiffened." Pull the horse to a stop and jumped off, stuck his hands into the snow. After he had them in the snow a while he

put them under the pit of the horses front legs. When their hands are warm enough they start to butcher the buffalo he killed. He will not get cold on his finger again. Now the white man hit himself by sewing them. The people in those times, when he got cold he made a clearing in the snow and then sat down taking his shoes off and rubbed his feet with the snow. When he knows his feet are warm again he will put his moccasins back on. Nothing will happen. That's why the people in those days did not freeze.

The Blackfoot and Bloods do not have "Awhoms", they belong to the Cree. A Blackfoot or a Blood, if he has one of those,

they have a habit of running, but he will not be able to run with these "Awhoms". When they meet a Cree they are given these but usually they throw them away because they can't run with them. They have no use for them. That is why the people at that time hardly slept. They do not give up with the bad weather. He knows the winter months are severe. He knows he'll see the big snow. He will say "the long time rain." He will say "wolf hat." This wolf hat is this new saying of eagle's month. It is the priest that called it eagle's month and duck month. It was not the Indian way of calling the months. He knows all the bad weather. This wolf hat, when it is coming, the spring month on the eighth day it comes. Now he knows it is coming near. The man will come out and tell the people not to go out tomorrow, that if the wolf hat doesn't come during the night it will come tomorrow. When it is coming it usually is very nice in the morning. All the people know when it will come. He will not even go for firewood because they were scared of it. It will not be seen ahead because it blows low even if there is not snow. The storm just comes. I got caught in it once. We will not see anything in that storm. The people in those days wore coyote on their heads. That is how it got its name, wolf hat.

A person, we will say a lazy one, his wives can't help themselves because he is supposed to tell them what to do. These lazy men are the ones that go around to the camp to keep warm. But a hard worker always had everything ready. The people would say the day has gone back. He took the day as one night. He will go out that day and come back home at night. That is the day coming home. They make many moccasins for the winter because they are not able to work the hides in winter. This is why there are old people. They counsel the men. That was their way of life and the young just go by what was shown to them. I got it too.

In the fall I see a lot of people going to Belly River Flats with flat wagons and they start getting firewood. When they get them home they put them standing up -- this way they do not get covered with snow. Some go to the mountains for firewood. There is nobody that doesn't have a stack of hay. They didn't have grain. They sold their hay for two dollars or three dollars a load. With this money they got food, winter coats and shoes. If I was to tell all about those times...

Today it is very poor what liquor has done. That is why we know to get ready for the winter. That is why white people save their money in banks, to live on. That is why we have dried meat for the winter. So they will not get stuck. That's where I end my story. That's all.

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