Informant: Agipituz "Sits On Hard Ground" (Tom)

From Sakome Reserve. He is a Soto. Born near Beaver Hills, never heard of migration from east.

Some chiefs he can remember are:

Paskwa' - Thunder Bird (Chippewa)
Wacop' - Patty
Kakiiwistahau - Whirlwind
Kakiciwet - Loud Voice (Cree)
Paskitea maskwus - Black Bear (Cree)

In the old days the Indian who brought in most muskrat furs to the Hudson's Bay post was called "Chief."

Sakome was not a chief nor was there a chief before him, he merely happened to be the first one living on the site of the present reserve.

NOTE: From the evidence of the foregoing three informants, I
am inclined to believe that the Kauwises and Sakome bands were not true bands at all, but were merely aggregations of stragglers, halfbreeds, and recent immigrants into the plain who were lumped together for treaty making purposes.

Informant: Tcikukwanep "Sitting With Rustling Feathers"

At the time of the treaty making, kakiwistahau, "He Who Flies in a Circle" was chief. Before him his father kauauaxkawewikau, "Everlasting Voice," was chief(?). The kakiwistahau people were known as Wapucwayanuk, "Rabbit Skin people."

The Calling River people (Otcapawes) and Rabbit Skin people always roamed about together and so when the treaty was made they settled down close to each other.

Informant: Old Assiniboine

The Chief of the Rabbit Skin people before kakiwistahau was his father, to'kixkik', "Fluttering Wings" (as when a butterfly's wings gently open and close). The Rabbit Skin people in the old days lived in the bush just beyond the prairie where Kipling now is and northwest of there.

In those days the chiefs had many men under them. The population of all four reserves now is less than one-half of the number that were under Loud Voice who had the biggest band in this part of the country.

When Assiniboine was young (he is now about 85) they had very few horses and used dog travois mostly. There were then no Soto in the band but they did intermarry with Assiniboine. The Soto came from the east in his father's time.

Chieftainship was hereditary because a chief's son had to be brave in war. The old term for chief is ukimau -- since the treaty ukimaxkan is used. The bands were subdivided under ogihtcitau who carried out the chief's orders and were also the scouts.

Informant: Mr. Ostrander (Agent)

I met Mr. Ostrander in Mr. Ross's office. He started out by telling me that he was not a bit proud of the fact that on his Agency, where the Indians were supposed to have been converted to Christianity for fifty years, where they now have grandchildren of the first pupils and converts attending the Mission school, they still have the Rain Dance. He maintains that it interferes with their Christianity and their work. If he had his way he would stamp it out entirely, but the Indians had hired a lawyer who quotes the British North America Act (guaranteeing freedom of religion) and the best he can do is
limit the dance to one reserve. He limits the time by saying that he will not put in an appearance if they dance for two days only.

Furthermore, he said that there was only one Indian on the Kakiwistahau Reserve and not more than ten on the Octapowes who would come right out and say that they had not accepted Christianity. And yet, these few were able to get half the population of the reserve (300 on one and 160 on the other) to join with them in the Rain Dance.

Ostrander tried to shame the Indians out of it but they simply shrugged their shoulders. He said that the ordinary white loses interest in the Indian if he knows that the Indian has spent 10 hours on a binder instead of 10 hours jumping up and down behind a fence and blowing a whistle. There the Indian ceases to be an Indian and becomes a farmer. When he puts on beads and feathers instead of overalls, he immediately is a highly romantic figure.

Ostrander said that he is proud of the fact that if he asks his interpreter to go out with him, that interpreter runs in the house and puts on a clean shirt and collar, whereas eight years ago that same interpreter was living in a hovel in the side of a hill. At the present time there are 57,000 acres under cultivation.

Then the talk shifted to general matters. They mentioned the case of one Sandy, a boy who had a teaching certificate and had been accounted one of the best catches on the reserve. Mrs. Willie Smoker set out to get him for her daughter and so she hooked him by getting Sandy to live with them and seduce the daughter. When the news broke, Sandy came to Ostrander for advice, and Ostrander, knowing the Sandy had been hooked, advised him not to marry the girl and go away somewhere. But Sandy stuck to his handiwork and married the girl.

Afterwards Mrs. Smoker, the mother-in-law, made life hell for him. Just to get away from her he settled down with the White Bear Band and has been taken into the band by unanimous vote.

Another was the case of where a man had hailed a ride to town on a wagon. There were three men and a woman on the wagon, the woman being one his wife was jealous of. When the news that he had ridden to town with Mrs. Archie came around to his wife, she began to nag him. She kept it up in bed the next morning and he shoved her out of bed and told her to go about her business. Then her father, Oscar, came running up in high dudgeon (he was tenting outside the house) and so the man twisted Oscar's arm and shoved him downstairs too. Since Oscar has a tubercular elbow and gland, he was hurt. The news travelled around that Oscar had been knocked unconscious.

According to Ostrander, gossip is the favorite pastime of the Indians, especially of the women. If they see a man and woman
in the open prairie the news soon gets around that they were caught in a thick bush.

There is a great deal of marital difficulty among the Indians. One major source is parent-in-law trouble. The youngsters marry when they are sixteen to eighteen and go to live with their parents. It is usually the girl's parents but occasionally the boy's. Not being mature enough to stand on his own feet, the boy is bossed about by his parents-in-law with resulting disharmony and it is only when he gets to be 25 or so that he rakes up enough courage to leave his father-in-law's place.

Gossip and the eternal triangle are the other two great causes of disharmony in marriage.

Informant: Mr. and Mrs. Ross

Concerning funeral of Mrs. Walter Otcapowes. When Walter arrived just after his wife had died he sucked at her lips and tried to resuscitate her otherwise.

At the funeral there was a Christian service first and then Old Assiniboine made a speech telling her not to be afraid and not to look behind. In the happy hunting grounds her white horse would be waiting. He put a pipe across the casket which was a rough wooden box covered with a tent canvas. The coffin was taken out through the window. A parcel of food was tucked away in the clothes of the corpse.

Over graves small wooden structures are often erected and into these are put food, especially fresh fruit, from time to time. Mrs. Ross tells of coming across a grave which had a fire smoldering at the foot and three new quarters laid on it.

After Mrs. Walter's body had been brought out, three women wailers in succession came up and kissed Walter. Afterwards Walter did a lot of crying, did not comb his hair for a long time and covered it with down.

At a wedding Mrs. Ross attended 8 years ago, a man crawled under the table and stole the bride's right shoe. It had to be bought back by the groom's attendants who paid $30 for it. Someone was commissioned to go into town and to buy provisions with the money. The dance lasted as long as the provisions did.