Before I could get him going this morning, Day Walker told me the reports they all had heard last winter of a wonderful child being born among the Sioux. This child could speak any language at birth, it could even talk to the whites. He marvelled that I had not heard of it. He said that it had been in all the newspapers, that a white man from south of here had gone down and had seen the child, and even a priest had verified the rumor. Finally he said that even if the child was Sioux, the whites (my people) would take it away from the Indians.

He went on to say that we thought we were pretty poor in the old days when we had to carry a burning brand from camp to camp and nurse it carefully. But then we had provisions stacked up on each side of the door. Today we have to pay two dollars for a little piece of meat. We are living among rich people and sometimes we almost starve.
I finally switched him over to the topic of food in the old times. He said that fish formed a great part of the food supply. It was dried and cured just as meat was. Fish pemmican was made. They did not grow anything at all.

He said that the Blackfeet planted tobacco and had a big ceremony at that time. His father had seen the ceremony. This led to a tale concerning his father's contact with the Blackfeet.

In those days we knocked around pretty far west into the Blackfoot country. In fact one Blackfoot took my father as brother and my father's sister married a Blackfoot. Despite this my father was in more fights with the Blackfeet than most Cree.

He went there on a visit, his purpose being to come in a friendly manner to buy horses. He was taking chances in doing this. It so happened that a Blackfoot whose brother had just died saw him and my father looked like this dead man. The Blackfoot took my father as a brother. He stayed with him for a whole summer and a whole winter and even when he did leave, he returned whenever he could.

Being taken as a brother by one of their number, many Blackfeet took up my father and consequently he received many horses as gifts. The Blackfeet were very well fixed for horses, it being common for an ukimau to have a hundred head. My father had taken furs and beaded costumes to trade with. One costume would be equal to a good running horse to chase buffalo. One otter skin or twenty weasel skins were equal to one horse.

We Down Stream people were very poor in horses. Our women would be busy for some time making costumes so that when we met our friends the Nutim-wyiuwuk, "Up Stream people", we were very glad. Often upon shaking hands we would present them with a suit of clothes and in return we might get two horses.

Usually one gives gifts to one's relatives. When friends meet that is also customary to give gifts. When a man would return from a successful horse raid he would naturally think of his parents or of any of his relatives who were not so well off and would present them with some of the horses.

On marriage, gifts would be given by the parents-in-law to the groom. But in turn the man would give gifts to the woman's folks or to one of her brothers.

Pimatat's wife was the daughter of an ukimau and so many gifts came with her.

The old folks did not forget the young couple and whenever they would meet the young ones would get something they could use. And the young man in turn would give the old folks a horse.

We still do it today. For instance, last winter I had only one
horse and it was very awkward for me. The story got around to my brother-in-law at Touchwood. He sent a message asking me to visit him. He presented my wife with a horse. I visit him occasionally and he always buys an animal for me to kill. It happens today as it did years ago. I go to the Up Stream country and bring back horses.

The man who had many horses was accounted a rich man. His camp was better furnished and he was better fixed to get furs and to trade. But often there were odd men who were wealthier than the ukimau. That occurred because the ukimau had to take care of his poor. If an ukimau had a lot of twist tobacco and tea, every once in a while he would ration it out to the old infirm fellows in his band. The old men would be so pleased that they would go through the camp singing songs in honor of the ukimau. That would go to make his name bigger.

The ukimau was respected while a man who was wealthy might not be. The ukimau's word was like a command. Whenever camp was moved, he would lead. When he would stop, everybody would stop. Those who did not obey the word of the ukimau often came to grief.

The chieftainship descended from father to son if the son had the right qualities. If the son was not capable, a poor man might become chief. The successor was determined by the deeds of the man. These were tacitly rated since they knew each other so well.

There were often men in camp who were better off than the ogihtcitau. These were the stingy fellows. It is the same everywhere. If a man is good-hearted, he will not be wealthy.

Under the command of the ogihtcitau, there were the ogihtcitaumah.

The ogihtcitau took charge of the trading in this way. Sometimes a number of ukimau would bring to a trader a load of pemmican and dried meat. The trader would set aside goods which the ukimau brought back to camp. These goods were always more in value than the foodstuffs which had been brought in. The ogihtcitau took charge of dividing the goods among all the band. After that each one was free to trade as he pleased.

Day Walker knew of only one man who had acted as a middleman. It was Otter Skin's adopted father, a Soto. The ukimau would not want their own men to buy from them.

Day Walker then took up the story of the yearly pound where he had left off.

This pound was used pretty well all winter for it was no trouble to keep meat in the winter and it would be dried in the tipis.

If often happened that the pound was so filled with refuse that
a new corral was built as an addition to the first. By the time this addition was filled up it was getting near spring. The pounds attracted many wolves and wolverines. Traps were laid near-by, of the deadfall type. Then the pound was also a means of getting furs.

Fur-bearing animals and buffalo were hunted all winter. The buffalo pelts were harder to handle.

The trade was made a lot easier by the traders sending out halfbreeds whom we called "Hairy Chests" to bring merchandise right to the camps. They always had great barrels of whiskey with them. We weren't afraid of police then. When we wanted to, we could take a drink.

The pounds were not used by any one band. It often happened that several bands used the same corral. After the slaughtering had taken place, everybody would be at the corral looking on. The man who was next to the one who owned the corral (?), the Crier, katepwemageu, would jump in equipped with a bundle of sticks. He would place one on each buffalo carcass saying, "This is your buffalo," and announcing someone's name. The sticks later would be piled up for future use.

The corral was regarded as a sacred thing and the man who built it had to have a special blessing from heaven. Such a man need not be the ukimau. He got no special reward except that the fattest carcass was picked out for him. He had no share in the distribution as the Crier did all of that. The buffalo then were twice as large as a beef of today.

We used snowshoes occasionally, dog travois and toboggans often. The dogs were strong and much used for carrying. One often saw dogs with sore backs. A dog could drag a buffalo side. It was common to see one old woman tending ten dog travois. The dogs then were not like these we have now. Their ears were pointed, they stood higher and were stumperier.

Each family owned their own dogs. A man might be accounted wealthy in dogs and if you yourself had few you might often have to borrow dogs from such a man. They were bought and sold and traded. Dogs had special harness and the traders sometimes hitched ten on a string. Dogs were (and still are?) eaten at certain ceremonies.

The tipi where this material was taken is pimatat's. It has a fireplace and the usual beds made of quilts and pillows. Lashed across at a height of 8 ft. was a beam possibly for drying. It was lashed with rawhide. The tipi was a painted one. At one side were several hides, one dog, one colt, one jumping deer. They had the hair on and were not yet finished.

Informant - opinawewimostus - "Buffalo Shedding Hide" known as "Crooked Nose"
This old fellow is a noted medicine man and learned in the old lore. But he is blind and very deaf so that not much could be done with him. He lives in a tent of the usual peaked type about 8' X 14'. A stove near the door and a stove pipe. Pillow and quilt bed; harness; wooden chest. He wore a jacket and pants. He had shell earrings. His wife had two earrings in her 4" ears, one at the lobe and one at the helix.

I am going to tell you a story about an old man, my mother's father. There were times when it was difficult to get food and this old man used to call the people to him. He would have a ceremony at which there would be four dishes of different fruits. He would sing and pray and said that he was calling the buffalo to him. After the ceremony he would get the people to build a strong fence. By that time it always happened that there would be a large herd of buffalo around.

He would send one of his sons to call the buffalo and bring them into the corral. When they would all be inside, the opening would be closed. For this occasion he had a special pipe which he would light and smoke amongst the buffalo as his thank offering. Then the slaughtering would begin with bows and arrows.

This old man could appear in different forms, sometimes as a wolf or an eagle or a buffalo. He used to give the Rain Dance. The only clothing then was a buffalo robe thrown around. We used wooden snow shovels.

Jack Fisher - atcaxkosaka otagoxpit, "Has Stars for a Blanket" (same as old chief)

Jack's father had three wives. He came from the Battleford region. For some reason Jack's mother was discarded and she came back here to live with her people. Jack has relatives in the States among the Asiniwinu, "Stone Men" -- Rocky Bay band. Jack's paternal grandfather was called "Bee House," he was of the Nutimwiyiu, and married a Blackfoot woman.

Jack said that he did not have the same experience in chasing buffalo as did Day Walker because his family did not own a horse fast enough for the chase. Once his uncle let him take a shot at a buffalo with a rifle. He hit it but since they didn't investigate, he doesn't know if it was dead.

Jack was taken to see his father several times when he was a boy. He would be given a new outfit of clothes and sent back. I got kinship system from Jack (see diagram).

A man would not speak to his mother-in-law or to his father-in-law. He would be free and easy (joking relationship) with Nictcas or Nictau and with Kiniha-kisiminau.
It was usual, in taking more than one wife, to marry sisters. It was not compulsory to marry one's deceased brother's wife. But if she were a good woman, the dying man would make the request that his brother take her. For instance, Jack's brother, when he was dying, left his possessions to his father, his cousin and to Jack. Jack was to have his woman and little son. But the woman took to another man.

It sometimes, but seldom happened that when a woman died her husband took her sister.

The young couple went to live with the man's people first. After a while they would go to the woman's folks.

A man would not marry his close relatives -- sister -- utawamau or uisigus.

Jack has heard of totems among the Chippewa and Muskego -- never among the Cree.

I noted a brand new clock in Jack's tipi before (or was it Red Dog's tipi). At any rate, both times Jack asked me for the time and then wound the clock and set it. Evidently it is more for ornament than use when strangers are not present.