

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: "MANY BIRDS"
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: SASKATCHEWAN
INTERVIEW LOCATION: SASKATCHEWAN
TRIBE/NATION: CREE
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: JULY 16, 1935
INTERVIEWER: DR. D.G. MANDELBAUM
INTERPRETER: POOYAK
TRANSCRIBER: HEATHER YAWORSKI
SOURCE: DR. D.G. MANDELBAUM
DEPT. OF ANTHROPOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
BERKELEY
TAPE NUMBER: IH-DM.76
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC #142
PAGES: 9
RESTRICTIONS: 1. THEY WILL BE MADE
AVAILABLE ONLY TO GRADUATE STUDENTS WHO HAVE SECURED PERMISSION
TO DO SO FROM THEIR FACULTY ADVISORS. OFFICERS OF THE LIBRARY
OR OF THE CENTER WILL JUDGE AS TO A POTENTIAL USER'S
QUALIFICATIONS. 2. THOSE WHO CONSULT THE NOTES SHOULD AGREE
TO MAKE PROPER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE USE OF THESE SOURCES IN
ANY PUBLICATIONS. IT WOULD ALSO BE A COURTESY TO INFORM ME OF
SUCH USE.

The mitewiwin was held in a sapchtawan which faced east. An oskapeus came around and gave a stick to each one who was invited to take part. Kinoskwanes "Song Man" was chief of the oskapeusuk. He was Wm. Favel's father, and came from the otcipwewuk. He tied a strip of otter skin on each arm and painted his body all red. He had a stick pakamaigun which had a knob at the end. It was an arm's length long and was flat and hard with all kinds of animals written on it.

Before entering the sap. they sing 4 songs outside. Those that are going to join each bring a dog. We all stand together holding our dogs with saganapi. Long Man feints at hitting the dogs with his stick and they drop. Then he hits them good and stuns them. The osk. takes one dog at a time by the head and tail -- holding it in front of him. He slowly takes it into the lodge -- the old men start to sing. As soon as he gets in we all say "wa was hi hi hi." The dogs are stretched out with legs out at sides, one behind the other in the sapohtowan.

We stand in file and sing 4 songs. Then the oskapeus takes each dog in the same way -- carries it around and throws it out to women outside who take them away to cook. As the osk. throws the dog we all say kanakehkana.

Then an old man goes around the camp with a rattle singing -- all those who have received the red painted sticks follow him. Before he enters the lodge he stands for quite a while praying. They go in and sit down. Each novice has a bundle of hay in his arms, and does not sit down. They circle once around the lodge following an old man who is singing. Then the old man and the osk. spread the hay, cover it with a blanket or flannel and the novice kneels on it. The novice must have a lot of things ready, guns -- clothing -- blankets -- no not horses. These things are hung from boughs planted inside.

In the centre is a wagayos -- bear hide which is stuffed. White moss is placed in his head and amulets are put in the paws. The whole is covered with a red flannel. A bowl of berries is placed in front of the snout and other bowls scattered about in front of it. That is feeding the bear. The novice kneels and all raise their arms and pray. There is always an old man sitting behind each novice -- holding his shoulders and showing him what to do. The others stand inside the door, holding all kinds of skins. These are called kaskipitaganuk "Tied Tight," because all kinds of medicines are tightly wrapped and put in these. They start to dance holding up their skins. The leader waves his skin several times and then throws it at the feet of the novice who falls to earth with his face down. They grab him saying "hi hi hi hi hi."

Then the novice comes to his mind. They raise him up. He staggers.

The women sit where the gifts are hung. The novice takes a gift and puts it in front of a member of the mitewiwin and puts his hands on their head begging them to show him their medicine. The reason why a person is put in the mitewuk is just like that of the Sundance -- a person is sick and is promised to the mitewiwinihk.

After they finish asking, they give the things away. Now the old man takes the novice and taps him on the back, holding his hand in front of the novice's mouth. A mitewininuk mite Bead drops out (a cowrie shell). The old man holds it in his open palm and shows it around to all. The novice sits down

now, he is finished. Sometimes there were 3 or 4 novices. They don't eat or drink all day. Dogs cooked by them -- brought in very hot in pails. Osk. rubs his arm with medicine, pulls out meat from hot soup with his bare hands. That's just to show how his medicine works. After the dog meat is served around there is always one head man who stands up and prays. All say kanakehkana before they eat. No one except members are allowed inside. All the soup and meat must be eaten. Then the osk. goes around and collects the bones.

All those who took part in the mitewiwin had these skins. There were all kinds of them, beaded and trimmed with red flannel. Just as in the S.d. each had his face painted differently, according to the way it was given him. Two men sit on each side who had no special names but had to eat the head, breast, and paws of the dog. Those are the men who danced. An osk. takes a drum and circles around sunwise. He gives the drum to the first of the men on the north side who then stands up and prays. The 4 osk. holding rattles stand behind him. He dances, they follow, once around slowly, then around fast. They bend down when they dance, circling around the lodge 4 times. Then they stand near the bear and sing a song.

Then the osk. give a drum stick to the next one of those men to the north, and he does the same. The drum was made of a good-sized piece of log, hollowed out -- half filled with water -- tightly covered with antelope skin -- covered with all kinds of animals and these animals painted red. The osk. dance all the time. The men on each side of the drum are the ones who dance first, those on the north and then on the south. There are always quite a big bunch. (Field notebook #4 - handwritten)

After the 4 men dance, there are a lot of wee dishes filled with soup and berries -- two or three mouthfuls. Each

(novice?) will invite an old man who knows medicine to eat with him -- "asking for medicine." The old man is called nihkan. After they have that feast everybody has got to stand up and they throw something at each other -- ehpmutchk "Throwing something at each other." They throw (with) their skins and a cowrie shell goes through the person. Some will be knocked down and the beads must be taken out of them. Sometimes they can't take the shell out. Some jealous men would throw their beads and the victims would vomit blood. Those who do it just want to show what good medicine they have. They give medicine to the victim. Then they untie the hide and take the medicine out of the legs. Take a small cup of water -- say wahihihi 4 times and set it on the ground. Take medicine in a wooden spoon, circle it above cup 4 times and drop it in water -- give it to vomiter of blood.

After they finish this all stand up again and dance. Then go out one by one. As each person goes out they say kanakehkana (see diagram). Each one who has received a gift later makes a feast. Then they have the right to wear what is given to them.

The red flannel was put over the bear hide as a blanket goes to him -- 1 drum and 3 rattles.

Gifts were hung on the ridge poles and tied with saganapi. The lodge was larger than a sapohtowan but built the same way. In front of the east fire there was a stone and dirt was piled up around the fire. The stone was full of white moss. On top is wicinaw -- a certain part of the beaver testicle. Sometimes after eating someone would feel like vomiting -- not being used to dog meat or overeating. They burn this -- he smells it and vomits.

No, no sweetgrass is used inside, but pipes are smoked. The collected bones are thrown in an animal hole. The dance step is like walking.

Yes, the Crees built the nute. but don't have it now because no one knows how to build it.

Now men have S.d. This is a different way altogether.

Before they make it they must have 4 feasts. A wewuhtahogan is made -- gifts put on the west side -- part of food taken in -- songs sung all night.

I took the place of my mother who died before she could join as was promised. I was 4 years old. In the mite. the men and women sit mixed together.

After our husbands killed a buffalo, if they didn't go too far, we would go for the animal with a travois. After we skin it -- we take the liver -- a piece of fat -- kidney -- leg bone -- marrow -- for our dinner uncooked. The first job is to cut the beef into thin strips and hang it up to dry. After that is finished we stretch the hide and scrape it right away. We always bring the tripe home -- that's one of the best parts to eat -- we scrape and dry it.

About the time the saskatoon berries ripen -- the buffalo eat wild onions and the beef doesn't taste good. We try to prepare enough to last us over this time. After all the work is done we go to Carlton to trade pimihkum and hides for goods. We packed the meat in rawhide bags made like flour sacks. Long strips of dried meat were bundled with rawhide like baled hay.

In the summer we didn't eat the buffalo lungs but in winter they were very good. We used all of the buffalo there is.

Yes, the women would get together to help each other when putting up a tipi. When one woman would have a lot of hides to tan we would help her. No -- we wouldn't pay her for it. The best part of the buffalo was the hump and the tongue.

Our chiefs were mistawasis and atahkekup. Sweet Grass was to the west. Now and then we saw Bush children. They lived on fish. We the House People never went north to hunt but sold

buffalo hides mostly.

My husband and I (BH) were trapping and we got a lot of furs. A Stony got jealous and his stag sent his shell(?). It hit me in the knee -- I fell down. I told my husband. He took medicine, chewed it, rubbed it on. The bead moved down to my ankle. He killed it but it is still there -- you can see it. It was a pihtciticigun.

As a rule, the chiefs were supposed to have a supply of ammunition. If anyone ran out of it, he goes to the chief to get some.

In the old days now and then there would be a man who got very jealous about his wife. When any person knows of it he will go to the chief and tell him. The chief will take one of his horses and give it to the jealous man. "This must be stopped. I am giving you this horse so that all will be fine." Then everything will be all right. I have seen that happen quite a few times. When an Indian got mad he was bound to kill somebody. There was no law then. Sometimes a jealous man would run off with the best horse of the man he was jealous of. Those two chiefs feared nothing. That's why everybody was afraid of them.

Cradle boards are called tehkinaguk (see model). We would carry them with the band across our shoulders. We bought them from the H.B. Company, and lined them with red flannel. We also would hang it from a tipi pole and rock the baby to sleep. When he fell asleep we would prop the cradle up with a stick so that he lay more nearly level. Before being put in the board the baby was put in a "moss bag". Moss was brought from the north but in the old days we used mostly buffalo chips chopped fine and mixed with bulrushes.

Wild rhubarb is called pigonahdigok "growing wild." They were cut up fine and added to soup.

No, there are no ceremonies when there are women only taking part.

When a person gets very mad and won't listen to anything, they unwrap the stem oskitci and give it to him to smoke. He has got to say yes. He can't go beyond the stem. Sometimes when the Blackfeet come to make peace, they sit in a row near the tipi. All who have oskitci come up and give them a smoke. That's the sign that there was to be no more fighting.

Meanwhile they make a wewahahogu in the middle. When they go into wew. they are given another smoke. Then each man takes one of the Blackfeet into his tent and gives him a smoke. That is called nigwemecitcik "my namesake." It is the same as niwitcewagun my partner.

Women dance with the men when warriors come home, kamatciwcinuwin. Another dance is wawashecincimuwin Elk Dance and muskwacimuwin Bear Dance.

In the Elk Dance, the men stand on one side, the women on the other. The women dance toward the men. When the song is over the women go back to their places. This dance is kept up a whole day.

No, there is nothing in any dance which may be done by virgins only.

In childbirth -- two poles are set upright and a cross piece laid over them. Pregnant woman leans her chest on it. The child is pulled out from behind. The navel is cut with a knife, a stick is placed under as a block. The moss bag is ready and the child is put right in.

At the Bear Dance -- all those who had dreamed of a bear were invited into the wewahtahogan. The man painted black over

their eyes and chin -- hair tied up like bear ears. When we came out of wew. the men stand around outside and sing. We dance all around the place. When we see anyone with one eye we beat it back into the wew. Only berries are eaten then.

Yes, we made many birch bark boxes. The water we got from them did not have the same taste as when carried in paunch. No, they didn't break when we moved for we were very careful of them. Waskweyiwa gon "Birch Plates." Sometimes we sewed them at the top with quills.

No, we don't remember leather dresses. But we made them out of cloth. They had a yoke (see model and diagram). No under drawers worn. Womens' leggings -- no fringe -- knee height. Women fixed hair as they do now. Men sometimes would save horse hair -- braid it and add it to braids. No braiding or plaiting.

In the winter when the hide is frozen we thaw it and stretch it on 4 poles. Scrape and flesh it. When it is white -- put grease on -- soak it in water -- twist it on 2 sticks -- rub over sinew plaited.

When we boil beef we mix it with blood and saskatoon berries. We fed infants this soup and the hide scrapings boiled.

Tipi poles not used for travois frame but tied on each side of travois is yigihtawotapanac "2 pointed Drag." The story of how I (Birds) was married. In the first place, a Blackfoot was killed. As a rule we had a dance then. During the night my father told my mother to take me to the dance to see if I could do it all right. My mother took me. When we came back my mother told my father that I was a good dancer.

The next morning I danced up fine -- wore a feather bonnet -- painted my face. The women stood on one side, the drummers on another -- the men sat watching. We dance and go back to our places. While I was dancing, I saw my father lead a horse to the crowd to give away because I was dancing. There was an old

man in the crowd who came from the east. He had no horse -- had nothing at all. My father gave him the horse. The old man start to cry because he was so thankful.

The man who had killed the Blackfoot was ocpwagun "Pipe." Every once in a while they would mention my father's name and mine. They quit before sundown. You can hear the old man who got the horse singing, "We both are good looking, I and the girl" as though he were as good looking as I was.

That was where that young man kingwanas got stuck on me. But nobody knew he likes me. At the beginning of the winter he went off to buy some horses at Victoria (near Edmonton). When he got back he gave those two horses to my father. But my father refused them because he didn't want me to leave with that man. He lived too far off.

We went east and the young man brought the horses again. At last my father consented to let me go. We didn't live together very long before he went off on a war party. As we are moving along, we hear that nearly all those who left were killed. You can hear a lot of crying. As we move east we hear guns firing. "Those are the warriors returning." Only 2 were killed. Another outfit was just preparing to go to revenge them. My father went out to meet the warriors and brought my man back. Then we live together. He was a pretty brave man.

The reason why my father didn't want to give me to him first was because he lived too far away. He told me he had had another woman in the west but he put her away.

The story of my (BH) marriage. Before the time of the treaty I was with a man but I didn't like him. He was a middle-aged man. But my father had no one to chase buffalo for him, that is why I was given to him. When the treaty had been paid 3 times I was grown into womanhood. As a rule when gives his daughter away this was done. My mother gave me the best foods to carry to him. But I used to empty the dish before I got to him for I didn't like him. Every time I did it my mother found out and she would give me a good licking. I would crawl out of the tipi and sleep under the Red River Cart.

My man knew I didn't like him and left us. When he came back he gave me a little piece of pemmican to eat. I guess there was some love medicine on it for my love for him started from then. After that whenever he goes I just follow him. We lived together for quite a while and raised a number of children. Then he died.

My father had a lot of horses to look after and had no sons. There was too much work for him to do that is why he married me to my husband.

(Birds): Yes, my father gave that horse away for my sale. I was good looking and behaved myself and he thought a lot of me.

BH: It seems to me not long ago that Red Pheasant was surveyed. The men were plowing. I had nothing to eat. I decided to hunt gophers with my sister. We each had a baby. We lead a dog hitched to a travois. The babies fell asleep. We stop and

fall asleep too. Someone wakes us, "My grandchildren what are you doing here?" It was an old mushego who used to wander around. We told him that we were starving. He was then trapping muskrats. "It's an easy thing for me to find something for you." He gave us bannock and grease and told us to go back home.

Some odd bits of information are these:

Adam Sakawew: The give away dance is still held at Little Pine in the winter. It is secretly held lest the Department get wind of it.

Pooyak: Maya at Moosomin sings the same songs in the Sundance as does Bones. They must have received them from the same one. Maya used to make the Sundance but he doesn't do it any more. He claims that it brings him bad luck.

Allen Waters: When Lone Singer fell out with his wife, she refused to let him work with the horses which belonged to her. Whitecalf's wife did the same.

INDEX

INDEX TERM	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
CEREMONIALISM				
-paraphernalia	IH-DM.76	MANY BIRDS	142	2,3,4
DOGS				
-uses of	IH-DM.76	MANY BIRDS	142	2,3
MARRIAGE				
-by barter	IH-DM.76	MANY BIRDS	142	7,8
PREGNANCY AND CHILDBIRTH				
	IH-DM.76	MANY BIRDS	142	6