Discusses -

The Blackfeet often came and traded horses to the Cree. In return the Cree would give them Hudson's Bay blankets and clothing. The Blackfeet couldn't get store clothing themselves because there was no store in their country or because they didn't get furs, I am not sure which is the reason. Before the peace was made, however, there was never any trade between Blackfeet and Cree.

In the old days there were not very many Stonies. They lived further to the southeast and never came north. They had more horses than the Cree and the Cree would trade guns and clothing for horses. We traded with the Rapids people for everything. They, too, had more horses than the Cree. All the tribes had more horses than the Cree except the Soto. The Rapids people liked twist tobacco and tea very much. We traded these things
for store cloth from the States which our women made up into clothing.

In my father's days the Cree traded mostly with the Blackfeet and Sarcee. The trade was for Hudson's Bay blankets, cloth leggings and shirts. The Cree women used to tear up blankets to make leggings. The shirts were made of print. The Blackfeet also liked the Cree porcupine quill work. They never traded for kettles or other goods.

We never traded with the Sakawiyiniwuk. When I saw them they didn't have much of anything to trade. They were good fur trappers but we had furs too. They liked to eat fish and where they camped it smelled of fish. They had rabbit skin blankets for robes. We had these too.

We traded with the Chipewyan. We gave them dogs for moose and deer hides. We never traded dogs with the Blackfeet. Dogs were never stolen because it was too hard. They'd run right back home. But I heard that when a whole camp was killed, the enemy might take the dogs. We never traded with the Flat Head, they were too far away. Nor did we trade with the Mud House people although some of the East people may have done so. The Mud House people I saw were located near where Elk Creek joins the Missouri. This Elk Creek flows through the Crow Agency. Long ago there was a stone on the prairie which was in the shape of a buffalo or some beast stretched out on its back. There were no legs to it. The Indians would put offerings on it and find beads in return. Where the beads came from no one knew.

Of all the tribes I know, the Cree, Sotos, and halfbreeds were the best riders.

The halfbreeds, apihtaugucicanuk, would go fighting with the Cree almost every summer. I have seen that when the halfbreeds killed a man they would bury him. Then the Cree would come along, unearth the corpse and scalp it. Whenever there was any kind of a war the Cree and halfbreeds would go together. The Crees would pick out a smart halfbreed to set as headman. Their biggest chief was kapiem. He was Riel's headman at Duck Lake. Another one was takupen or kwaskwanoe, "Small Cloud." The halfbreeds were in a regular band who hunted up and down the river. They were buffalo hunters just like the Cree and stored up meat for the winter. There were about eighty tipis of them. They were not very numerous then and they lived in tipis. But later there were many and now you can't go anywhere but that you run into some halfbreeds.

Some cranes flew overhead going south. Fine Day said that it meant that there had been snow up north.

At his juncture, Fine Day began another of his exposes of Department of Indian Affairs injustice; he concluded, "And one of these days soon I am going to town and I will get a policeman and go to the Agent's office. There I want to look at the treaties and promises that they made to us." (Note the
police as an aid to the Indians.)

In my time there was no such thing as a divorce the way they have it now.

I heard one old woman tell that she had been jealous of her husband. She prepared food for the journey and sneaked off at night to another camp. She got there all right but her feet froze and she was crippled after that. She was so mad on account of this that she didn't even want to see her child. She said, "I never forgot my frozen feet. I had to ride all the time when spring came. When my husband brought my little girl to me I was lying down. I did not want to get up and see her or talk to him. He died that same summer. Then I cried. I was sorry at what I had done to my feet." She never married afterwards. She took the little girl and went off.

When the girl grew up she married and had one child. Her mother lived with her. Suddenly the young woman ran off in the night to another camp. We went after her. When we got there she already was lonesome and wanted to go back home. About daylight it was when we came in. After breakfast we started back. There was a little snow on the ground. She ran ahead of us, eager to get back. She didn't do the same as her mother did. She came back to stay with her husband.

That is the way it used to be. When a man and a woman couldn't get along one of them would leave. Another case of this I remember is kind of funny. A woman was married to an East Indian, mawihkiiyinu. He didn't like her because she was a regular whore. They didn't have any children and he left her. She got married right away to another fellow but she didn't get along very well with him -- he beat her all the time. But they didn't part.

The man soon got jealous because he thought she was having another man. But she wouldn't tell him who it was. Then he said, "I am going away for two nights." It was not very far to where he said he was going. They had only one horse and he went off on foot. He went over the hills and turned around and came back at night. He sneaked up to his tipi, slipped his hand under the cover and started to feel the woman. She grabbed his hand and said, "Come on in. There is nothing to be afraid of. We saw him going over the hills." He grabbed her, turned her over, and beat her rear.

In the morning when the man went out to look for his horse, she ran away. When he came back and found her gone he asked my grandmother where she was. "She ran away and took some saganapi with her." He saddled his horse and went after her. He came back without her and came into our tipi and ate. As she went over the crest of the hill he was close to her. On the other side of the hill it was just open prairie, no shelter of any kind. But when he got to the top of the hill he did not see her anywhere. And running off and looking back there was a wolf. He got scared and came back.
When this woman was old she used to tell the story to my wife and laugh about it. She was a doctor and when she doctored in the daytime (?) used to hear a wolf howl when she sang. That is why he was afraid of his wife.

When a man and a woman can't get along, one of them leaves the other. The one that remains gets the children, the tipi, and everything else. Later the one that ran away comes back to visit the children, but the couple do not stay or sleep together. If it is the man who left, he will come back and see his children occasionally and bring clothes for them. When a son grows up he has the choice of staying with his father or with his mother. But the girl must remain with the one she grew up with. I have seen this myself.

Both men and women would leave, whichever one had a bad temper. A woman would go to her parents, a man to his relatives. The parents or relatives will try to reunite the couple if there are children (else the burden of caring for the kids may fall on them). But if there are no children, nobody bothers.

There is no particular way of leaving. The one who leaves says nothing, simply goes off.

Our women have very bad tempers and once they leave, they don't very often come back. They are very jealous and that is the reason why they leave. I once heard a woman say, "If I go back I will kill my husband."

I never did it. But my old lady tried it once. I didn't like it because she took my children and went off on foot. I travelled all over looking for her. In the morning she came home. I was not mad when I found that she had gone, but when I saw how hungry the children were, I got mad. She hadn't told me why she left; I knew nothing about it but she was jealous of another woman. I told her, "Never do it again, I married you of my own will. I married you to stay with you as long as you live. You did the same. When you left me I travelled quite a bit. I don't like it." She answered, "If you had told me that you were going with the other woman I wouldn't have done it."

I told her that I didn't know anything about it. It turned out that this other woman had gone for water while I was out looking for my horse. I saw her and asked her if she had seen the horse. My sister-in-law came along and saw us standing together and told my wife.

Then my wife invited this woman in for a meal. She told her the whole story and said, "But I don't think of it now. We'll be friendly again." This woman looked at me and laughed. She said that she didn't know anything about it. "But I am glad that we are going to be friends." My wife gave her some clothes. As long as she lived they gave gifts to each other. I have lived with my woman for fifty-three years and that was the only time she left me.

The main reason for separating was jealousy. Another main reason was stinginess. If a man would be too stingy to give
things to his wife's relatives, she might leave him. I have seen myself when a man left a woman because she gave things only to her parents and not to her father-in-law.

Occasionally it would happen that a man would go off on a long journey to visit. Then he might part with his wife without either of them being mad. He might get a wife there and when he comes back with her he would be ashamed to go back to his old wife. Or he might go back with her too. I have seen this too.

A man could not send his wife back to her parents if she had been crippled. He must take care of her but he would send word to her father to come and help care for her. It was much easier to leave a woman when there were no children but she would get married again awful quick.

Many people adopted children. I have done it myself. There is a man on this reserve called nona-tcikeu. Many years ago his wife died in childbirth. The child lived and some women who were nursing their own children nursed her also. The Farm Instructor told nona-tcikeu to give the baby to me. I didn't think I could raise her but I was milking cows then and my wife was nursing so I took her. Then I first knew of nursing with a bottle. I bought one for the baby. At first I wasn't sure that she would live but she did well. Nona-tcikeu never came to see her. When she grew up she didn't know of her real father and mother.

When she was a young lady a young fellow came and asked to marry her. He sat with me and said, "If you are willing and if your daughter is willing, I would like to marry her." I answered, "Go and sit in the other house for a while." I started to think about it. I thought of his grandfather who was a very good man and of his father and mother who were good people. The young man must be pretty good too. Then I told him that I would give my consent. Then I asked the girl if she was willing. She said, "If you are, I am." I said to the young man, "You hear what she says." He said to me, "We won't be married right away, I've got to prepare first."

He got ready and sent for a minister, a halfbreed called MacDonald. He married them and that was the first time I ever was at a wedding. For two nights we had a good time feasting and dancing. We called people from all directions. Even white people came. Then I got ready myself. I gave him four horses, one cow, thirty chickens, an almost new democrat, a set of harness, a new tent, a bottle and cups, all her clothes and bedding -- everything she could use. I said, "Now my daughter, the things that I give you don't boss them. Let my son-in-law boss them for women don't know how to manage them. Don't come back here unless my son-in-law wants to come and visit. If you get mad and come back her I will send you back to him. If you do get mad it won't amount to anything."

They had three children. He had been a soldier (cisa-gunis),
and he went back and stayed in the army. Sometimes he came and worked. When he was at home they all came to see me. One Sunday they came to visit. When he went back he spit blood and died.

Three months later I heard that my daughter was going to marry another opwisimu. They had called it out in church three times and that is how I knew about it. I saddled my horse and rode up to the church to try to break the wedding. The priest can talk Cree. He said, "If there is anybody here who has a good reason to stop the wedding let him speak." I spoke right away and told the priest, "It doesn't look right for my daughter to get married right away. The opwisimu she is going to marry is sickly. It takes a lot of work to provide for four people and that may make him worse." But the priest stood up and said that if they are still willing they can get married. I said, "If you marry them and they can't get along, you will have to stand for them, not me." He said nothing. I stopped the wedding for a while anyway.

After they were married they came to me for some things that I had been keeping for her. I said to my son-in-law, "Here are your things, a horse, a wagon. Take them." They went away. It was then that nona-tcikeu's wife told her who her real father was. She didn't like it and went off crying. She came to us. I said, "Don't mind anything about that. You'll be my daughter as long as you live." She said, "I'll never think that nona-tcikeu is my father." That is how I adopted that girl. I have two grandchildren among the opwisimu.

Children who had no parents were adopted. Sometimes an orphaned child's relatives would be away and other people would adopt it. Later the relatives might come and claim the child but they would not give it up. I have heard about that.

This is an old story. Once there was a camp and all died off except one little boy, napookis. The relatives of the dead people came to get their horses but the boy's relatives did not come. He was big enough to make fire and cook his own meals.

At another camp there was a kihtco-ckinigiu who sent his son to see if any of their relatives were still alive. When he got there he found two old people still living but they were pretty sick. He made a fire for the two and prepared to go back and tell his father. Then he saw the boy. "How is it you are here?" The boy said, "My parents and relatives died before the others and I came here." The young fellow took pity on the lad and brought him back, riding double.

When the young fellow came up to his father he said, "This is the only one left besides the two old people and I am going to take him for my brother." This young man had no brothers. The kihtco-ckinigiu said, "You have done a good thing." Then they hitched a horse to a travois and went out to get the old people. They did and even while they were travelling the two old people felt better. The young fellow saved their lives.
Others went for their relatives but they were all dead.

Adultery

My uncle caught a man with his wife once. He gave his wife to the other fellow. He told us later, "That is the only way I can get over it. It was a hard thing to do. I didn't sleep for four nights. But if I hadn't done it, I might have made up my mind to kill the other fellow. I loved my wife. She didn't love me or she wouldn't have done such a thing. Afterwards I got over it and I never think about it any more." That is what he told us so that we wouldn't kill each other.

The ayahtaiyimiwuk kill each other. About twenty years ago when an ayahtaiyimiwuk caught his wife he would give her the choice of cutting off her nose or losing her life. The ayahtaiyimiwuk women were awful afraid of their husbands. The Mounties put a stop to this but they still are very jealous. The ayahtaiyimiwuk had a kind of police and when someone did wrong they had to get him. The Cree didn't have this.

The Cree would never cut the nose off an adulterous woman. They just beat them. Some would kill their wives out of jealousy but more often wives killed their husbands for this reason. I have never heard of a man taking another's horse when he suspects him of flirting with his wife. We often would do this for a joke however. We would take a young man's horse and tie it to a tipi where there was a girl. Often my horse would be taken by a bunch of young fellows and tied some place where there were some girls. I would try to get it away so that the girls wouldn't notice.

Often young men would make trysts with girls and sneak into the tipi and sleep with them. This was dangerous because often the old man would be watching out for the enemy. If the young fellow ran a little way and stopped the old man would know that it was not an enemy, else he would have run off.

Virginity does not seem to have made a lot of difference in marriage. But if a girl was found not to be a virgin on the marriage bed, the man might leave her. He would tell the reason why. My cousin did this.

Sometimes it happened that a man would ask for a girl and get her. But she wouldn't like him and he would tell her parents. They would say to the girl, "We didn't marry you to this man because of his looks but because he is a good worker and can provide for you." If she still didn't like him he would return her to her father. He would not take back the horses he had given the old man.

I have seen wives exchanged in my day. Many times an adulterous wife would be given to the man who would get the other wife in return.

When one kihtco-ckinigiw was stuck on the wife of another he might make love to her and get to sleep with her. She will be
afraid of her husband and will tell him about it. Then the husband will call the other man in and give him a meal. He will tell him to and sleep with his wife for the night. Then this man would be ashamed and in return he would tell the other to go and tell his wife that he sent him to sleep with her. In the morning they would go back to their own tipis and would tell their wives to befriend each other. The two women would be friendly and would call each other da-yin. This was repeated as often as they liked, whenever they felt like changing wives for a night. But it happened very seldom. Only kihtco-ckinigiu could do this in rivalry to see whose heart was strongest.

Sometimes a kihtco-ckinigiu would go off on a war trip and leave his wife in the care of another kihtco-ckinigiu, to sleep with her if he likes. But this kihtco-ckinigiu wouldn't do it to show that his heart too, was brave.

Long ago there was no kissing. The only kissing I saw was when a man came back from war. His parents and his sister would go out and kiss him. We never kissed women.

Sometimes if a man doesn't trust his wife good, his wife's father will take the girl away. But this generally makes trouble. This is going on now. Old Coming Day's wife took her daughter away from her son-in-law. The young man didn't like it and he killed his wife and then killed himself.

Music

I know twenty different songs:
Nipagwe-cinawin -- Thirst Dance
Pwaticiwin -- Sioux Dance
Pitcitciwin -- Round Dance
Pihyou-cinawin -- Prairie Chicken Dance
Mistahetimciwin -- Dog Dance
Mustuaciwin -- Buffalo Dance
Teipehka-naimawin --
Kicini-ciwwuk -- Cold Dance
Ciaigwai euk -- Rattle Dance
Kama-tciusimawin -- Happy Dance (Scalp Dance)
Maxtctiwin -- Give Away Dance
Kickwa-pexhaucinawin -- The Drinking Dance (?)
Munkwacin-uwin -- Bear Dance

Wihtigakucinawin -- Cannibal Dance
Micatimu-cinawin -- Horse Dance
Wawackeaus-cinawin -- Elk Dance
Hanipau-kamu-wikamik -- Bundle Tipi (?)
Mito-waunikauwiui -- Gambling Songs
- four others -

When we have no drum, we clap hands to keep time. Do not clap when there is a drum. When singers stand they stamp with heel to keep time. At the Happy Dance and sometimes at the Buffalo Dance the singers stand. Whenever a dance gets lively and the singers feel pretty good they stand up and beat with their
feet.

Rawhide beaten at Sundance only. It is laid flat on ground. Sometimes when we have no drums we put poles on the ground and beat them. Bells are tied at the ankle and at the belt. These bells were bought from the Hudson's Bay Company.

In the Big Dog Dance, tin bugle rattles were attached to the stick. Shells (cowrie) were sometimes strung to clothing or rattles. These were bought at the Hudson's Bay Company.

Beaver claws and antelope hoofs were tied together and sewn to the shoulder of buckskin shirts. Sleigh bells were also tied to ankle.

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