HIGHLIGHTS:

- The document contains information concerning various aspects of the traditional lifestyle.

Another game is epimutigana-tuhk "Women's Arrow Shooting."

This game is played by women only. Two digging sticks, mu-nahigan atik are set up side by side. Players stand some yards away and throw sticks with an overhand whirl. Object of game to lay stick between the two others. When moving camp the young girls would often go along throwing these sticks at some agreed object to see who could come closest.

The stick was made out of a saskatoon berry stick or a chokecherry. It was about four to five feet long but every woman had one adjusted to her own height and convenience. A little knob was whittled at the top and the point was made like this. Sometimes there were two sides cut away but usually there were three. This was a very handy tool for all kinds of
purposes. (See original for diagrams.)

There was a similar stick cut as a peg post for horses, called sagahpitastigwa-gun -- Halter Shank Stick or kihtcitahas-skwa-n "Horse Stake." It was cut flat on top, with a bevel around. The horse was tied to this by the leg. The saganapi was tied onto the stake in a loose knot so that the horse could go all around.

The digging stick was used especially for digging up wild turnips. In the fall when the tubers are good to eat both men and women go out to dig. The man goes along to dig when his wife is tired.

When the ducks are moulting and cannot fly, the men borrow the sticks from the women, wade in the water and strike at the ducks. The women, also armed with digging sticks, stand around the water to get any ducks that come out. If a man could not borrow a digging stick, he might take a horse stake of his own. But since they were smaller and shorter, they were not as good. I have never seen a digging stick on a medicine bundle.

When there was danger of an enemy raid, the horses would be tied to a stake near the tipi door. The thong would be fastened above the knee with many loops and twists. Sometimes the horse stakes would be driven right in the tipi. The owner of the horse would wake from time to time and pull on the saganapi to see if the horse was still there.

When the horse was tied like that near the tipi, the thief would wait until it moved as far away from the door as it could. Then he would come up, throw a saganapi around its neck and, walking backwards, lead it away, constantly keeping the horse between him and the tipis as a shield.

When the horse was tied out on the prairie, the saganapi was tied above the fetlock. Horses were hobbled in the summer by the forelegs with saganapi. In winter if the enemy were near they would be hobbled by the hind legs so that they might paw with the fore. In winter the horses were turned loose. Only one fast horse was kept to go out and meet the buffalo herds. Dogs were used to carry in the meat. After this fast horse was brought in, a robe was tied at his neck and belly and he was allowed to cool off for a while. Then they would take the robe off, he would roll, shake and run away. But when there were no pounds, the horses would be used to get buffalo even in winter.

The way the horses were kept from straying in the winter was this. A water hole would be broken for them and some salt would be put around it. Once the horses tasted that they would never wander away from the water hole. The salt would be put around the hole whenever we noticed that the horses weren't drinking much, about every week or so.

Early in the winter we go to the salt lakes to get this stuff. Where the ice is frozen and there is no water only, we chop away the ice and scoop up the residual salt. The best place
for this is a little lake right between the two Jackfish Lakes. There is another one on the Poundmaker Reserve. My grandfather would go and get a lot of it and pack it away in grub bags for the winter. It is not used as a condiment but is a good medicine for men. My old woman has some now.

The Cree Indians here bought all their medicine from the mamihknaха-winiwuk, East Soto People. They taught us the use of the salt. They would make a big medicine tipi, Emite-wihk, or mitewikamik. I used to see them when they were making their medicine but I don’t know how they came to know that. The old Cree used to tell the younger ones that they got the power from the manito. All the other spirits from whom they learn things are called atayohkan -- Dream Talkers. Everybody is born with some of that in him. When someone comes and talks to you in a dream it is atayohkan. When he talks to you he is a man. When he turns away he is a bear or some other animal. No one could make an airplane out of his own head. An atayohkan appeared to the white man and told him how to do it. The white men are very powerful in their dreams. Even the little mosquitos are atayohkanuk and showed many good things to the people. Every green thing growing out of the ground is medicine of some kind. Meakihkik -- medicine.

Sometimes in the winter we would chase buffalo on snowshoes. We would chase them into the deep snow where they could not get about. The burden horses would come along behind on the hard, packed snowshoe trail. It was very hard to hunt in the wintertime. I have short fingers and black fingernails on my left hand because I froze it the year after Sitting Bull had his last fight. I was already settled up here but I was hunting far to the southeast near the Rapids People. It was southeast of where the Rocky Boy Reserve now is.

Here I tried to get the Cree names for the various rivers.

Piganocipi -- Peigan River, the Missouri.

Apistcicicipis -- Little Creek Milk River.

Wawaskeucipi -- Elk River, Red Deer, and South Saskatchewan.

This has puzzled me before. I am fairly sure this is right.

Onotintc-cipi -- Fighting River, Battle River.

Kihtcici -- Real Big River, North Saskatchewan.

Note: The prefix kihtci is more often translated "True" or "Real" or "Actual" than "Big" by Solomon.

Some of the things we used to dig with the digging stick were wahkitcana -- roots -- a plant with a bell-like flower. The roots are not very deep and have a bulb.

Atcimwa-pitca-piton -- Little Dog Teeth. Dug in spring or late
in fall. Make soup. Smell like medicine in summer.

Askiwahgonak -- Earth Peel. A ground hugging plant that grows in the Sand Hills. This was put (the whole plant?) in water in which meat had been boiled. It made a thick paste.

Wapaskumina-na -- White Bush Berries. Grow on buffalo willow. Ripe only very late in the fall and they are used all winter until they fall off in the spring. Put in a robe and crushed by hand. Hard kernels fall out. Soft white shell put in soup.

Mistiko-ska-task -- Wood Carrot. Good to eat late in fall and in spring. Are not stored for winter but eaten right away. Dig all around them and pull them up.

Mistas-kucimina -- Grass Berry. This is a root called Indian Turnip. These were strung on a sinew, peeled or unpeeled, and hung up in sun or in the tipi to dry. Then packed away in grub bag. Another way is to peel and dry them and place them on a rawhide and pound with a stone pounder. The fibers from the centre are picked out and the whole is dried and packed away. Usually take two days to dry.

There were two kinds of bags for food. A drawstring soft bag of hide, mitcimiwat, and an oblong bag sewed all around for long storage and transportation of pemmican.

Lean meat was dried and then roasted a bit over the fire. It was pounded until it was as soft as a rotten log and then packed in rawhide. If grease was available it was spilled over the meat before packing. Dried saskatoon berries and chokecherries were also mixed in and the whole kept all winter.

Oskan-pimi -- Bone Grease. Made from joints, vertebrae, and large bones of buffalo. They are split open with axe and then crushed with stone pounder. Boiled in water and fat is skimmed off with shell spoon.

In the days of my grandfather's father they used to be able to make fire by rotating a sharp stick between the palms on a piece of touchwood. I have tried to do this but since I never saw how it was done I never succeeded.

After that they took the inner bark of black poplar and placed it on a piece of flint. On this they hit a red stone. I have done this but it takes a long time to get fire.

After the Hudson's Bay Company came they would dissolve powder in water and soak touchwood in this. After the touchwood dried they would wrap some in a bit of cloth and strike it with a rock. They also get steel from the kihtca-tawe-kamik owiyinu -- Head of the Big Store (Hudson's Bay Company) -- and make fire with flint and steel.

My mother would tend to the fire. At night she would put chokecherry sticks onto the fire and they would keep embers all night. When the fire went out my father would make it again
but I don't remember how he did it. Making fire is a man's work for the men have the necessary outfit. My father and all the men carried a steel bar with him always in a pouch on his belt, "kota-wagun" Fire Maker.

Names of various people:

Oce-kipatcwan -- Braided Men -- Chinese.
Wemistigooiwuk -- Frenchmen.
Kihteimo-kuma-nak -- Big Knives -- Americans.
Kaskitowayas -- Black Flesh -- Negroes.
Akayaciu -- English Speakers.
Munias -- a new word for whites.

The snowshoe 'as am' was made of three types:

Wakahwewasamuk -- Bent Snowshoe. These were of the blunt type. The frame was one piece. They were made of chokecherry -- also of willow and used when snow was hard. This was because the netting on this type is tied around the frame and affords a purchase on hard slippery snow.

The other type is called simply 'as am' and is pointed at both ends, the tip being curled up. This was the fastest and most popular type. Holes were drilled in the frame of this type and the thongs laced through these. Basil Favel still has a pair of snowshoes like this. The ends were curled up by tying two snowshoes together and wedging ends apart. Stick put in to keep them in place.

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