HIGHLIGHTS:

- General reminiscences about the past.
- Long, confused account of a dance, with no apparent meaning.

No, we did not have the powwow, pitcitciwin "Moving Dance" in the old days. It came from the Earth Lodge people about 50 years ago. The Sioux brought it up here when they had trouble with the Americans and moved up into this country. Where the men dance alone, that is the pwatcimuwin "Sioux Dance" also from the Sioux. When they first came up here, they would grab a man and make him dance it -- that is how they would make him a member. There is one dance the Sioux had when they came across the line that they didn't give to the Cree. Only two would dance and it was for to call the buffalo.

Note -- The powwow consists of clockwise circling around a large, double-faced drum held up by six or eight singers. The step is the regular one-step shuffle. At intervals a Sioux Dance song is sung. The men dance individually with the step a
tap-step right and tap-step left. The dancing is ad lib with occasional kneeling and firing etc. The left arm is sometimes carried on the hip and the trunk slightly inclined. In the powwow the men are in one line and the women in another around the drum. The men form one segment of the circle and the women the next.

Yes the Sioux came up here to steal horses. They were very brave and stopped at nothing -- even if the dogs barked. Many of them got killed. In my youth I remember how the buffalo got scarce and how the Sioux raided us. Once there was a camp in the States near a creek -- halfbreeds on the north side, Cree and Soto in the south. The Sioux stole all the breed horses and shot into the tents, and beat it. The Cree chased but never found the Sioux. We moved to Big Bear's camp on the Puya River and heard that two had been killed there by the Sioux -- one a Soto. Winter set in and the Sioux quit raiding. When we moved up to minahtoqak in the spring to get treaty, there was a small group travelling apart. The Sioux raided and killed a Cree. Later the Cree killed a Sioux.

After they got treaty in July, the Cree moved south again. A bunch started out to raid the Sioux. Among them, were Day Thunder and oho, Owl. When they got into the Sioux country they came across a number of Sioux looking for buffalo. They had plenty of horses and the Cree thought that there would be enough for them.

Early that night a young brother of Day Thunder went into the Sioux camp, but the dogs barked and the enemy picketed all their horses near their tipis. When the boy got back Day Thunder scolded him for being so careless and going into the camp too early. When the men went down to the Sioux camp, the boy said he would stay behind. Day Thunder knew that the Sioux would be on the lookout but he had scolded his brother -- that is why he went(?).

Day Thunder went to the first tipi on the west side and cut the neck saganapi of a grey horse and another one. He tried to lead them away but the Sioux in the tipi fired. Day Thunder fell with a wound clear through his abdomen. The Sioux jumped out of the tent. It was dark and he didn't see Day Thunder. But he saw Owl running away and chased him. Day Thunder still tried to lead the horses away but they were tied by still another saganapi. He let them go so sick was he in the stomach.

Day Thunder got back to his companion Owl. They went off slowly. But Owl fell into the hands of the police at mistikwatci "Wood Mountain." He had a broken leg and it was not taken care of. When the Sioux learned where Owl was they went to the police and asked for him for he had killed a Sioux chief and others. The police were afraid of the Sioux and promised to give Owl up. Then the interpreter gave Owl a knife with which to dig himself out and told him where there was a Soto camped.
Owl crawled for two days and nights until he came up to the camp and heard the voices of Soto. The Soto had heard of his imprisonment and was surprised to see him. He brought Owl up to a camp of Soto just south of Regina. The next summer he brought him all the way up west of here to Owl's relatives.

I happened to be in the camp when Owl was brought in. When Owl's wife had heard of where he was, she asked her brother for a horse to go to him. But her brother had refused for even men were afraid to go there. When this Sioux had chased Owl he was shot in the leg and got into a slough. The Sioux tracked him the next morning. He had a .44 rifle and killed 3 Sioux and wounded 2. The Sioux would not even come for their dead while he was there. He crawled along and suffered until some breed freighters came along and took him to the police barracks.

That is Owl's story. Not long ago I was at (?) and met Owl. The Sioux there told the same story.

Once we were out hunting and got a lot of meat. We had to camp coming back. I was told not to sleep against the meat for it would make a black target for the enemy to shoot at. We slept in the hollows dug by buffalo. We heard shooting during the night. The Sioux had taken horses and one Cree went after them. Two little boys were shot in the legs and were howling. Oskatash "Carrot" crawled around saying "mm" as though badly hurt. But he was only grazed on the back (laughter).

We could tell what tribe had attacked by the different style of clothing they might leave behind.

That night there was one man missing. Chief Little Pine told a man to circle around the camp telling the people to search for the missing man in the morning. They found the man after 2 days and 2 nights. He was dead. His body was swollen and he had a big erection. His name was mistcigamus "Grown Fat." On top of a bank there was another dead man, a Sioux. Those that got there first scalped him. He had 3 wounds. Who killed him I don't know. The Sioux must have had a fight amongst themselves over a horse. A Soto got his white blanket coat.

No, they couldn't count coup with the scalp of that dead Sioux. They took it just because he was an enemy. They call that epahwatcigahagihk "Chopping Off," just like chopping the (?) off of an animal found dead. Later the hair is cut off the scalp and a man who has killed an enemy from horseback sews it on his leggings or ties it on his stirrups. I did this latter.

The scalp has holes punched around it through which it is sewn onto a willow hoop. The fat is scooped from the skin and the skin is painted with red and yellow earth. When they come home they give it to the women and the women dance with it. Sometimes the scalps are lousy and they throw them away. But when they are good they are fastened to stem of oskitci or sewn on clothing. The first person to cut the scalp gets only a
small piece. The other scalp cutters have more purchase. John
has two feathers and a bunch of hair tied on his tipi -- I let
him use that -- meaning 2 men killed and first scalp taken.

I have seen scalps tied onto the outside of war bundles of war
clothes -- not on medicine bundle. The scalp is tied there for
a long time and when a visitor sees it it is just like reading
a book, "This man took a scalp at one time or another."

Wihtcigokancimuwin "Wahtigo Dance" (Field Notebook VII starts
here)

It is only in there, and in there only the pipe, goes around
counterclockwise. But now when they make that dance the pipe
goes clockwise. It is an old old dance and I have been in a
few.

It is not put up for a wahtigo but for an atayokhan called
Manito ay siy nu "Manito Human." At that dance they don't dish
the food out to the dancers but throw it at them. I missed
mine three or four times. It was a bad sign. Later a horse
rolled on my back and broke some of my ribs.

We heard that wapayoh is going to make the dance. They put up
a wewahtahogan. There was a big crowd around. You may like to
be in the dance but you may not be chosen. The maker gets his
stuff ready. It is a strip of leather sewn around to make a
tubing and a stick is pushed through. Many deer hooves are
fastened on it. He takes that stuff and goes from tipi to tipi
choosing his dancers. When he shakes his staff over a man's
head that is the sign that he wants them to dance. When they
come into the wew, the maker has an old tipi cover out of whic
they cut out their hoods.

I wanted to be in the dance. Wapayoh came into the tipi I was
in but didn't choose me. So I slipped out and went around to
another tipi. When he came in there he saw me and said, "No, I
won't bother taking you" and he shook his staff over my head.
That's the way they talk. When they say no they mean yes. The
language goes opposite as does the pipe.

When the dancers go into the lodge to make their hoods they
don't use that language as yet. But the maker does. They
smoke there. The maker offers a pipe up, "I don't show you
this stem." When he puts the pipe down he says, "We will all
die." The dancers who haven't taken up that language yet joke
and say, "Let him die alone."

They have a meal in the proper way and then all dress up. They
borrow leggings from different people and wear one kind on one
leg and another kind on the other. They put the hoods on so
that people won't recognize them. One of them is tied up
almost doubled, with a hump on his back. He carries a little
bow and arrow. He is called Sapotcigan and is always last.

The maker goes out first and stands in front of the wew. The
dancers file out and stand around him and dance. The Sap.
dances in one place at the door of the lodge. All have whistles like those used at the Sundance. The maker sings and stamps his staff and the dancers go around him. Already there is a big crowd around them. When this first dance is over the maker breaks through the ring and goes to another place to dance. Thus they go around the camp until they get back to the dance lodge. The Sapotcigan is always behind -- he is tied up so that he can hardly walk. Whenever he hears the staff, he straightens up -- listens and dances in one place by himself.

After they dance around the camp they go back into the lodge. When the Sap. comes along he is sweating. They untie him.

Now the enacpatcigwehk "Opposite talking" starts in. They choose 4 dancers to go out and hunt with bow and arrow in the camp. The people know the custom and put food out. The hunters stalk it and shoot at it. If they miss, "That's a good omen. It hits every time. I'll just pick it up" and they leave it. The first one to shoot, if he hits a good fat piece of dried meat -- he falls back and runs off, "E... I missed." The second hunter takes the meat and hands it to a man that follows them collecting the stuff. In that way they get enough food to eat and go back to the lodge.

When they are ready to eat, the maker draws a ring on the ground and holds the staff in the centre of the ring with his left hand. With his right he tosses food to dancers -- first he (?) 3 times before the toss. If dancer misses he hands it to next man. I missed 3 times. The 4th time they handed it to me. They hand the food to the Sap. The maker keeps singing all the time. They eat these and talk opposite.

They sleep in the lodge that night. In the morning the maker flings the food in the same way and they go out and dance around again. Then they go out on a real hunt. A pack horse is always taken along. In case the camp is to be moved that day, some dancers stay behind to put up the wewahtahogan at the next camp. The hunters take their hoods along.

That day I killed a buffalo bull. In those days we used to set an animal on its belly to be butchered. While hunting we had taken our hoods off but when we were ready to butcher we put them on again. The maker circles around the carcass and (?) at the right shoulder -- then at right hindquarter -- then at left hindquarter -- then at left shoulder. They undress again.

The maker cuts a hand square piece of hide from the right shoulder and offers it to manitoagisigina asking that he have luck to kill an enemy. He tosses it to the north. Same at right hindquarter, tosses it to east at left hindquarter to south -- left shoulder, to west, always asking the blessing of "Manito man".

Then the meat is cut up and packed into the hide in small packets and slung over the horse. They usually cook a meal by
the carcass. Then they go home. Those that stay behind are on the lookout for the hunters -- another man will come to take the horse after the beef is taken off. Men go on horses around the camp in another direction. The dancers halt before they get to camp and each takes two or three parcels of meat. They even blow up the guts and attach them to their hoods like braids. They fix up the Sap. again and put the stomach fat over his hump -- that is his share. (laughter) When they get into camp two women come up. They each look over the parcel of beef, shake their heads and throw it to the women who grab for it. Sometimes they fill a gut with blood just to tease the women who might grab and burst it. They start to dance again. The Sap. is behind and the children grab at his fat. He defends it with his little bow and arrow but soon it is all gone. The maker carries the tongue -- he doesn't carry any other meat.

When they get back to the lodge, the maker takes his staff and feints at throwing it 3 times. With every feint the dancers blow their whistles. At the fourth try he throws his staff in through the smokehole. He does the same with the tongue, throwing it in through the smokehole. They all do the same with their meat. Some of them look the meat over and toss it to the women. If they miss the hole they don't pick it up. Any woman who has the nerve will run and pick it up.

They cook meal in the lodge -- maker tosses meat in same way. Late that evening they go out and dance around the camp again -- always dance in front of lodge first. They sleep in lodge that night. In the morning they make the same round again but don't go back to the lodge. They leave camp. Before they get out of sight they have another dance. The Sap. does not go with them on this last morning but they take his hood along. They go to the place where they are going to leave their hoods. They dance there. The maker prays for a blessing holding up his hood. Then he takes his cloak and lays it down and places his hood to the north of it. The headman's hood and Sap.'s are north of the maker's hood -- the others in a circle around. Then they all scatter to go home. That's the end.

They make the Sap. to represent an atay. called kohokwin "Broken Back." That is why they double him up. Yes, prints are thrown away, but by the maker only and are left in view. The last time I was in one was 16 years up here. The man made it differently. There were no prints in the lodge and the pipe went around in the right direction. He piled all the hoods together instead of placing them in a circle. His name was nai-coh. He died the next summer. Sometimes a person would go to visit these dancers. They would say, "Oh, don't feed him" and give him a lot of grub. It is usually made early in the summer. Yes, either before or after the Sundance, while the crowd is around.

This dance might be passed on to another by one who had dreamed of manitoagisiginu. Wapagoh got that dance from some other person. The songs used are the same as those in the
pihtwawikamik. Not used any other time.

This dance may be promised for sickness or to secure blessing for warpath. Once when I was out on the warpath I heard a Soto called na-toc, which is the Blackfoot word for sun, promise this dance for success. No, this is a Cree dance. The very first man to make it went by the name of manitoagisiginu.

This story I heard from "Short Stem." After manito-agisiginu made known that he was going to make this dance, the people didn't know what kind of a dream it was. M. told them that by that dance they would kill a Blackfoot. They put up the lodge and danced around the camp. M. told them again that they would kill a Blackfoot but warned them that they must obey his orders.

They had no horses in those days yet. They went out on the hunt and killed a buffalo. Some Blackfeet spied them. The Blackfeet already had horses then of their own. When the Cree killed the buffalo they made ready to dance around it. The Blackfeet on horseback charged them. The dancers talked opposite and M. said, "Don't dance and I won't sing. Run away and don't kill Blackfeet." They danced all the harder. The Blackfeet were taken aback. They had never seen it before. M., "Don't shoot." They killed one Blackfoot. The others fled and didn't come back for they couldn't make out what they were. They cut off the scalp and arms and feet to show they had killed an enemy. They came back with buffalo meat and Blackfoot meat too.

Yes, we would cut off the limbs of dead enemy in my day and bring them back to camp. The children would kick them around with their bare feet so they could get the feeling when the enemy is around. Once in the winter we shot a night raider. The young men tied a saganapi around his neck and dragged him home. He froze stiff and they slid on him as they would with a sled. At night they stuck him up near someone's tipi.

The mitewuh took the heart and eyes of a dead enemy for medicine. The heart is shred, dried, pulverized, mixed with other medicine. Then they make a hole in a bullet and put it in. If a bullet just scratches you, it is fatal. Called cicwacinan "Sprinkling Bullet." No, I never heard of it being put on an arrow. Sometimes a hunter will not be able to kill an animal. He will got to a man who has that medicine. A heart killed with a bullet like that swells up. I knew of a Blackfoot who was grazed by a bullet like that. It didn't get him right away for he fought it with his own medicine. But in time it got him.

I never heard of poisoning arrows. But we did fix the arrowhead so that when the shaft was pulled out, the head remained in the wound. This was used only for war -- not for hunting. No, I never heard of poisoning animals in the old days.

So it was with an eye taken from an enemy. It was powdered and
mixed with other medicines -- dissolved in water -- water sprinkled over body with buffalo tail so that the enemy might not see straight. Some scraped the skin off the dead enemy's sole and mixed it in water. Sprinkled in one's tracks so that pursuer will get cramp. That is called cecokatan "Sprinkled on the Legs." The eye and the skin medicine go together. When the medicine takes effect it is called epicockamat "Stumbling." This medicine really belongs to the Soto. They still have it.

They also have medicine to poison men. They make a feast and the osk. puts the poison in the man's food. This was tried on me by a Cree. Mine was the only tea the osk. sugared. It must have been the sugar. I got cramps and I felt as though there were a cord pulling down in my stomach. My mother went to mitce wayic who saved me. He mixed some medicine in a mussel shell -- sang mitow soup. He walked once around me -- I came to my senses. He gave me the drink he mixed; the cramps left but I still felt the contraction. My father-in-law was a kihtcimitew. He came right over with a beaver hide stuffed with packages of all kinds of medicines. He showed me all of them -- some of them were bad to hurt a person -- others used to cure that same sickness. "If you never use them for evil, it will protect you." I still have them. He also gave me some medicine to rub on my hands and face and to swallow at a feast to prevent poisoning. He also gave me a drum wihipiahiganuk "Hollowed Log" in which water was put. It had a notch all around for the head to be fastened on.

No, I never saw a shamanistic contest. But my wife's in-law, a kinoskwanes "Tall Man" were oskapeus in mitowikamik. They got medicine and wanted to test it. They had clubs tied with feathers with which to kill the dogs that the people brought to the (?). They each sprinkled medicine on their clubs. They sang (?) songs. Inside the lodge, the man who gave them this medicine helped them sing. They only feinted at hitting the dog -- saying "we ho ho ho" and the dog dropped dead. Both of them did that.

My grandfather never found the (?) but he must have bought medicine from other people. Once he had his medicine spread out. A visitor wapitcagawagun "Streaked Back" was there. He must have been after the medicine. My grandfather took a snow shovel and made a black ring on it and propped it up against the tipi pole. He sprinkled medicine on Streaked Back's hand and on a piece of charcoal which he put in Streaked Back's hand. He said "yahahahaha" and tapped the coal. It flew across the tipi and hit the black circle. There was a frog sticking halfway out of the snow shovel. When Streaked Back went to take it -- it was a charcoal again.

Magay h tc hagun "Snow Scoop"

This word is now obsolete. A tree was cut and split. A snow scoop was carved out of each half. 4' long 6" wide. The edge was tapered.
The only means of felling trees was by pulling them down. Yes, not so long ago it was that we would build a fire at the base of trees near the Peigan River. Sometimes it would take 2 days to burn through. The women did that. The men were no good in camp. The women worked. On the warpath we would break wood for fires between two sticks.

Wawaske ciwcinwun "Elk Dance"

I once danced in a dance called the Moose Dance which was given by a woman. But in it they mentioned the elk instead of the moose. When the dancers were called the people said that she was making an Elk Dance so I think that the two are almost the same.

The woman had asked to be lent some young people to make the dance. 8 of us went. She put up sapohtowan. There were some old people singing to whom she must have taught her songs. The dancers were all young boys and girls dressed as fancy as possible. She painted the boys with a white mark over the right eye, the girls with a yellow mark over the left eye. She herself had a white mark over the right eye just like the boys.

She had two poles with leaves on top planted outside the sapohtowan. We went out and sat in a double file in front of the lodge. Boys and girls of the same age were paired. When the song started the boys danced toward the trees and rubbed on them as an elk does. That is what she told us to do. When she finished instructing us she went up to one tree -- she was naked to the waist and painted with mud -- held her hands up. "My father, this is your law. It must have been your doing that your child, the at. taught me this. I pray that all the young that share in this dance may grow up to an old age."

Then she took her rattle -- sat and sang. The young people got up and danced. The fellows with beaded coats put blankets over themselves so as not to rub the beads off. We circled four times before she quit singing. The girls, on each boy's left, danced around. Her song was:

Come piapitehkwek (Thundering Earth)
White Elk I will make you dance.

Thundering earth means that the dancers' step resembled the noise made by a big heard of elk.

When she quit we sat in two groups. The singers smoked. Then she prayed again. "White Moose, I saw you thundering toward me in a dance. I am making this so that the young people may grow to an old age."

The next dance we danced all mixed up, back and forth, between the two trees. The young men made horns of willow and strapped them to their head just like 2 year old elk with 2 horns. She sang, "2 year old elk, I will make you dance." You can hear elk and moose calls. It was a very long dance. I would no longer stop to rest than the singing would begin again. We danced all day and ate right there. She wouldn't let us go
away for a meal. When the dance was over she said, "You will all grow old." The eight young people that were from our tipi, they all lived to be old. That woman was of the East people. She had a lot of prints. I heard that a Stony woman put up this dance almost every year. But she didn't put a mark of her own on the dancers. Yet another Stony woman, who was married to a Cree, made it. I never heard of any man to make this dance.

We ate and dressed in the sapohtowan. The last one I knew of was held the summer before they paid treaty at Qu'Appelle.

Yes, a man might promise a Sundance or any other dance while on the warpath to get luck.

Pahpahagwan -- shield

They used to put on it a picture of whatever atay. told them to make it. Heat fresh rawhide -- it shrivels up and becomes thick. Sprinkle blood on and it becomes bowl-shaped. I saw an old man make one from the neck. He covered the fire with it -- hair side down. Mixed blood and gall to make it oval-shaped. He made two drums, a bear on one end and a picture of Thunder on the other -- a human body with the head and beak of an eagle. This shield had 8 bullets embedded in it. Then one went right where the heart of the Thunder was. They say that was a sign for the wearer of the shield to quit using the shield or that he was going to die. He did get hit in a fight and the Blackfeet captured the shield.

The Bear Shield had 3 bullets in it but none hit the picture of the Bear. They are worn slung over the shoulder so they could let go and the shield would hang over the shoulder. During heavy firing they just let them go and they always have them for a shelter.

Yes, I have heard of people telling the future by blood, badger blood. The badger is killed -- cut open -- insides taken out -- blood left in overnight. I have seen it done 5 times. People look and see their own picture. You have to look quite a while before you see it. My cousin looked -- he saw an old man with a wound in his breast. He was wounded later but lived and is still living in the east. Some see their pictures as they are but they soon die. When I looked, I saw the picture of an old man with long teats, the right eye was gone and left eye was white. If that's the picture I saw, I'll have no eye soon. I thought it funny and told my friends. They said, "That will be you." The people of old used that to know if they were going to be killed in the next fight. There were a lot who didn't dare look. People tried it yet in my time. No animal but badger would do.

Poplar told how Fine Day's son was fatally sick with T.B. Once the old man took him up to the loft of the house and made a bed for him there. "If you see anything at night don't be scared. Don't yell." He put a rattle at his head. During the night he told George that he saw a white bear coming toward him. He was
scared and cried out. The bear vanished. George's comment, "I often wonder if the bear would have doctored and saved him had he not cried out."

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