HIGHLIGHTS:

- Brief account of the role of the Cree in the Riel Rebellion. The Blackfoot knew only their own language. Only an old Stony or G.V. would speak Cree. Of course most of them speak Cree now. No one in the old days could speak the Snake language. I now know of two who can, a Soto and a Breed.

47 years ago I went to Montreal muniahk. That was when I first saw wheatfields.

Rebellion: (Abridged from original notes) A rumor started that Louis Riel, Anigen, took the stores in Winnipeg. Again we heard that he had run away and there was no fight.

He showed up a few years after he fled, on the Peigan River. At a big camp he talked to us. He did not speak Cree himself, "I did not run away. I warn you not to sell your lands. The
Breeds are all with me. On which side are you?"

Big Bear got up after he spoke. "I am getting on in years and it is up to the young men to answer." Little Poplar, Naniw, I and a few others said we would side with Anigen. The chiefs, Big Bear and Little [Poplar] said they would follow the young men.

We thought he had the States Indians with him and perhaps the Americans but when a few years passed and we didn't hear anything, we began to doubt his words. Once when the instructor sent me up Jackfish Lake to trade flour and bacon for fish, I heard that Riel had arrived at Duck Lake.

That winter I bought shells for my .44. In spring one night we were invited to Poundmaker. We were told that the rebellion would soon begin. Later two halfbreeds told us that a battle had taken place. We joined Poundmaker's band and went to town. Everyone had fled to the barracks. The young men had raided the stores. All I got was a part of a can of tea.

The Stonies and Poundmaker and us camped at Little Sweet Grass. Poundmaker asked me to go and protect Jefferson who was married to P.'s sister-in-law. I went in. "Fine Day, have you come to kill me?" "No, I have come to protect you."

Breeds joined us. We had a big camp. They held a meeting and I was put in charge of the children warriors.

We scout near town. We are ambushed and one of us is hit. We capture a policeman. He warned me, "The Indians can't win, take care of yourselves."

We move camp to Cut Knife Hill. The battle (?) of the three of us entrenched together. I had the only rifle. The others had muzzleloaders only. The police go back. We could have wiped them out but Poundmaker restrained us.

We move toward Duck Lake. Capture a freight caravan. (Note that they captured, did not kill at sight.) Then we got word that Riel had been taken. We young men still wanted to fight but Poundmaker told us to make peace. "I am the chief and I am pretty sure to get caught. But you young people will live for a long time yet. I love you and I want you to live."

They got Jefferson to write a note to the chief of police asking for peace. He and cipiskwesikan delivered it. We moved to town. The police searched us and told us that anyone with a knife would get shot. Then everyone wanted to defecate and many knives were buried.

We went to our reserves. Every little while police would come and arrest someone else. Then everyone began to beat it to the States. The police took all our horses.

There were five in my family. We got nine hard biscuits and
half a small corned beef a day for rations.

When Poundmaker was taken to Regina for trial they told him to cut his hair. "Rather than lose my hair, would I have a rope around my neck?" 8 were hanged.

We lived by snaring rabbits. Those 8 men didn't run away because they didn't know the law. They thought it would be the same as among the tribes here. They would have peace for a while and nothing would be said about the past.

When Poundmaker got out of jail he was well dressed, with a cane and a watch chain. He was a bigger chief than before. The police gave him tobacco and sugar which he distributed among the people. He died while visiting the Blackfoot.

Matciminahtik, "Hunting stick", was an old, old man who must have been alive when I was very young but I didn't know him. He prophesied that the wemicigosisuk "Wood boat men" would overrun the country. He predicted the rebellion. The great war, "Finally there will be a great war here in the States and in Canada. So terrible that there will be only a few white men left and those that are left will go back to their country and leave the Indian here to boss their lands. But not for long." We don't know what that last means, the end of the world perhaps?

No, I never heard of M.'s virgin birth.

Yes, I heard of one Cree who was far north. He married a Bush woman. He came out when he was an old man. He told of bone-headed arrows, no guns. How one must stop in one place else the people will send their power after you.

In a dance if a man did not want to join in the dancing he might tell a deed. But if someone told a bigger deed he would have to dance.

They gave away more for their children than for themselves (though they do the latter too). If they have two or three who join the dance, they give something for each one. But when a man gives stuff for his children he gets a name (for himself) just the same. It's the man who gives the stuff who gets the name. But his children are allowed to dance from then on. That's why he gives the thing.

Gifts given away thus are like wepinacon. The poor people who get the things in return pray for the young for whom the things were given.

A visitor might be present and even though he is well off he gets something just because he is a visitor. That is the custom. In the old days, it was in the Sundance that most gifts were given.
Dance Steps:

S.d. coup counter: Jump forward, feet together, or sidewise hop. Round Dance: One step, left foot advanced short distance, right brought up.
Happy Dance: Women hop, feet together. Walk step for another song.
S.d.: Bend both knees.
Powwow: One step, sideways.
Big Dogs: Walk with rhythmic hurry.
Ghost Dance (of Sitting Bull): unknown.
"Porcupine" headdress from Sioux not used in old days.
Wepagosuk, swing tail (grey antelope?)

I know just two kinds of pakanuk huts. The kind that grow here on the banks and those on little prairie bushes.

Sweat lodge: Some make hole for stones, that is the right way. Others just scrape away the grass. If your grandfather had liked them you can ask him when you put one up, to refresh you as he had been refreshed by the sweat lodge when he was on earth.

No, wep. are not given to dead grandfathers. If he had told you anything about his pawagorea before he had died, you can give a wep. to his pawakana but not directly to the old man.

Avoidance:

Man avoids wife's father and mother.

A woman would talk to her mother-in-law but not to her father-in-law.

A man avoids his sister or half-sister (one parent in common). Not practised today.

Joking relation: Nimuawce -- nohkuw
nictcac
nictciwam
nictaw -- even more than others with
nikimus, a little. Women joke with nimusum, nohkin, nikimus (even throw eggs at him).

Fine Day, as we said goodbye, asked a parting favor of me, that I send him a picture of my mother and father.

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