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TIPI DESIGN 2 AND BLACK
SEIZERS PIPE
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CARDSTON, ALBERTA
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CARDSTON, ALBERTA
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INTERPRETER: DAVE MELTING TALLOW
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Describes various tipi designs amongst the Blood Indians.
- Describes how the Indians came to have tipis.
John: Now the tipi designs. There is one called the Bald Head Tipi design.
Diane: He says those tipis that have some drawing on, there is one with a Bald Eagle design.
Joe: Yes, that's the one.
Diane: Yes.
John: And there is the War Tipi design.
Diane: And the one with war.
Joe: That is called the War Tipi design. Warriors are drawn all around it.
John: How many War Tipi designs?
Diane: How many are there of the war?
Joe: The Eagle Tipi design?
Diane: Yes.

John: And there is All Yellow Otter Tipi design.

Diane: There is one with half. Half looks something like...
(Diane Hellson couldn't translate the name Otter, so John Hellson said it in Blackfoot.)

John: Amonisikokapx (Otter Tipi design).

Diane: Otter Tipi design.

Joe: The Half Yellow Otter Tipi design.

Diane: Yes.

John: And there is the Buffalo Head Tipi design.

Diane: A buffalo head.

Joe: Yes, the Buffalo Head Tipi design.

John: And there is the Yellow Buffalo Tipi design.

Diane: A Yellow Buffalo Tipi design.

Joe: The Yellow Buffalo Tipi design. That's the water man's tipi.

John: And there is the Sun design.

Diane: A Sun design, do you know that?

Joe: No. There is no Sun Tipi design.

Diane: There is no Sun Tipi.

Joe: There is one at Sarcee.

Diane: Sarcee, there is one at Sarcee.

John: There is a story he told us about skunk top.

Diane: Have you got... Oh, you told a story about a cap. That cap that your grandfather had. You told a story about it.

Joe: Oh, the skunk.

Diane: Yes, the skunk. Did he have a tipi design?

Joe: Yes, he had a tipi design. A Skunk Tipi design.

John: And there is the Yellow Star Tipi design, what's that one?

Diane: A yellow star.

Joe: Yellow Star Tipi design.

Diane: Yes.

John: How's that painted? Yellow and star and what?

Diane: How is it designed?

Joe: It's painted with ochre at the top all around and a man is drawn at the back. One side had yellow stars. It is called the Hailstone design. There is another tipi that is also called the Hailstone Tipi design.

Diane: And there is another one all around with stars on it.

John: So they are both called the same.

Diane: No. One has a different name.

John: What was the name again?

Diane: Star design.

John: What about the Otter Design Tipi? AMMONISI (Otter).

Diane: There is an Otter Tipi design.

Joe: There are a lot of those Otter Tipi designs. I'll talk about one. There's a lot of these Otter Tipi designs.

Diane: There are a lot.

John: Yes, that's it. They are all about the same. They're all colored about the same.

Diane: Are they all painted the same?

Joe: All various colors.

Diane: All different.

John: All different, and they're called Otter.

Diane: Are they all called the same?

Joe: They're all the same, but each has a different name.

Diane: Yes, each has a different name, but they're all the same.

John: A one name tipi for a separate tipi. I don't know how to say the word wolverine.

Diane: Do you know them? They are small in size. How big are they? You people are all scared of them. What do you call them? They're almost like bears.

Joe: Cougar. Cougar Tipi design. Yes, there is a Cougar Tipi Design.

John: That's a mean animal, very bad.

Diane: They're bad, they bite.

Joe: Yes, they kill people.

Diane: Yes, those are the ones.

Joe: Yes, that's the animal.

Diane: Yes, there is.

John: (Indistinct)

Diane: Willie Mills has one. He lives where the Centre People are (Stand Off). Do you know him? He has a Medicine Pipe.

Joe: He has a Medicine Pipe. I know him. His name is Running Crane (Willie Mills).

Diane: He's got one of those tipi flags. There is a tipi design of those animals.

Joe: I never saw anybody having a flag like that. They never had Cougar Tipi flags.

Diane: (Indistinct)

John: Now two other tipis. One called the Yellow Buffalo Tipi and the Black Buffalo Tipi.

Diane: There are two. Are there two of the Buffalo Tipi designs? One has a Black Buffalo design.

Joe: Black Buffalo Tipi design and the Yellow Buffalo Tipi design. There are two. They're both from the Ridge In The Water (Crowfoot Crossing). They are the water man's tipis.

Diane: (Indistinct)

John: And there is the Big Rock Tipi designs. You know that one.

Diane: There is a mountain.

Joe: Big Rock Tipi design. Yes, I know that. That was Three Sun's tipi.

Diane: Three Suns had that tipi.

John: The rattlesnake. John Red Crane had one.

Diane: And there is a Rattlesnake design.

Joe: Yes, I know. Also there are a lot of those Rattlesnake

Tipi designs. There was a man that went down into a lake. The man in the water told this Indian, "I'll give you my tipi." That's how it is designed.

Diane: (Indistinct)

John: What about this water monster. As he said it, the sea monster.

Diane: Those water people. Big birds. What do you call them, do you know? Terrible birds.

Joe: Yes, I know. There is a tipi that was given out from the water. It is the Big Zeal Tipi design. The other two are from the water too. That makes three tipis from the water and there is a tipi that had no designs on it. A man slept on the lake shore. The man in the lake told his son to go and tell that man to come. The child got to the man. The boy told the man, "My father wants you." As the man looked up at the boy he saw what we call a scaly mammal running away. This was the child that spoke to him. He followed it and it led him into the lake and into the tipi. The man in the water told him, "The reason why I sent for you, it is because I am poor. My wife is poor with clothing and also my poor son. Tell the people to give us something to wear." This was in the evening when he was in the tipi. "Tomorrow a herd of buffalo will come up to that hill and when they come to drink I will drown them all and I will scoop them all out on the shore by waves. That will be my payment to you people." The Indians were hungry; they didn't have very much to eat. The man went home and told the people, "We will donate to the man in the lake. The man, his wife and their son are very hard up for clothing. He'll pay us something to eat."

(The rest of the information is indistinct.)

Diane: (Indistinct)

John: The Thunder Tipi.

Diane: Is there a Thunder Tipi?

Joe: Yes there is one. Your late grandfather owned that tipi, Speaking in the Center (Iron). It was painted all over with purple paint and snake designs on both sides. That is the Thunder Tipi. There is also a drum, the thunder drum. It's designed all over with the thunder's lightning. These were transferred to him (Iron). He is the man that received the most transfers of this reservation.

Diane: (Indistinct)

John: Ask Joe how old he is.

Diane: How old are you?

Joe: Seventy-five.

Diane: Eighty-five, no seventy-five.

Joe: I was eighty-eight years old but the white men deducted my age down to seventy-five. That is how they had me registered. But in the Indian count, I am seventy-eight.

Diane: He said in the Indian way of counting he is seventy-nine.

John: When was he born?

Diane: Where were you born?

Joe: At the Belly Butte, along the river.

Diane: Down at the Belly Buttes, along there.

John: What was his father's name?

Diane: What is the name of your father?

Joe: This name that I have. Gambler is his name.

Diane: He said Gambler.

John: He is a Blood.

Diane: He is a many Chief (Blood).

Joe: Yes, he is.

John: And his mother's name?

Diane: What is your mother's name?

Joe: Her name is Elk Woman.

John: She is a Blood too?

Diane: Is she a Blood woman?

Joe: Yes. She is related to Day Sleeper.

Diane: She is related to Day Sleeping.

John: How many times did Joe join the Horns?

Diane: How many times did you join the Horns?

Joe: Seven times.

John: Did he ever own a Medicine Pipe?

Diane: Did you ever have a Medicine Pipe?

Joe: I owned a Water Pipe (Water Bundle).

Diane: He owned a Water Pipe.

Joe: I was offered two Medicine Pipes but got stingy with my horses, so I didn't take them. I should have accepted them. Wearing A Top Knot In the Centre (Day Rider) offered me his pipe and the other pipe that was offered to me was owned by Dog With a White Spot On The Back. That was the Black Seizer's Pipe. My face was painted but I didn't take it.

Diane: He was offered two pipes but he didn't want them. He didn't want to let his horses go.

John: How can you refuse the pipe if you are caught with it?

Diane: How can you refuse if you are told to take a pipe?

Joe: Just never say a word and you will not get it.

Diane: You just don't talk and not bother.

Joe: If we refuse a pipe our most favorite child will die. If your child doesn't die your best horse will die suddenly.

Diane: He says if you refuse, your favorite child will die suddenly or your best horse.

John: (Indistinct)

Diane: (Indistinct)

John: Does he think there are any more of those Black Seizer's Pipes?

Diane: Do you think there are a lot more of those Black Seizer's Pipes.

Joe: There are only two. That one is one of them.

Diane: He says there are only two, that one and another one.

Joe: There is another Seizer's Pipe and it was sold.

Diane: There's another one and it has been sold to another museum.

Joe: We went into a cafe in Montana; the waitresses were Indian women. They told me, "What are you after?" The women are my relatives. I told them, "This white man is buying Indian stuff." She said, "These Indians are stupid. They sell their Indian belongings just for five dollars and they are charging that white man pretty high. They will sell something and get paid and all they do is start drinking until they drink

up all the money. Now they are asking a lot for their stuff. There is a chance if I take out a bottle of white man's water (whiskey) and I'll tell you, 'Give me your holy stuff and I'll give you the bottle. You will take the bottle and you will give me your holy stuff.'" The woman told me there are people that are really poor. That's what they are. They sell anything for a bottle of whiskey.

John: Referring to tipis, there are seven stones, I.NIS.KIM (Buffalo Stones), seven of them.

Diane: There are seven buffalo stones. Do they belong to tipis?

Joe: Yes, they belong to some tipis. There are some tipis that have Buffalo Stone designs. There are buffalo stones in every tipi.

Diane: Yes, there is one in every tipi.

John: And what about the seven stars on a tipi. On one side are seven, what do they mean?

Diane: What do those seven stars mean that are on a tipi, on the ears?

Joe: The seven stars. The reason why they are called the seven stars, seven little boys were playing. One of the boys told the other boy, "Have you got a robe?" The boy answered, "No, I haven't got a robe yet." In those days little boys wore calf robes. The seven boys all had no robes. Their father's didn't make them robes. One of the boys said, "Let us run away from home because our fathers didn't make them robes. We will go up into the heavens so in the future people will always see us. They will say, 'Those are the boys that ran away from their homes'." One of the boys told the others to close their

eyes. They all closed their eyes. "I will tell you when to open your eyes. Now open your eyes." When they looked they were up in the heavens. So you see seven stars on one ear of a tipi. Those are the boys that went up into the heavens.

Diane: Those are the seven. The Big Dipper.

John: And on the other side there is five.

Diane: And on the other side of the ear.

Joe: Those are the group stars.

Diane: There is five.

Joe: There are six of them. They are on the tipi as five. They are the same as the seven stars.

Joe: There are some other stars that are up in the heavens.

The human arm. Maybe you don't see that. A man killed a buffalo and started butchering. Another man told him, "Give me some of the kidneys to eat," but he didn't pay any attention to him. The other man got off from his horse and cut out a kidney and started eating it. He told him, "Can't you wait? I was going to give you some." He grabs the man's arm and cut it off and threw it up into the air. The arm flew right into the heavens. There it is. It's still up in the heavens.

Diane: There is an arm. They are stars. I don't know if you've seen it.

John: And a cross. There are quite a few crosses. On a lot of them it represents the butterfly.

Diane: On the side?

John: No. Maybe it's on the back of the tipi.

Diane: There is something that is shaped like a cross. There is something that flies around. I don't know what you call them. They are at the top of a tipi at the back. What are they?

Joe: These are at the back of a tipi. They are drawn crosswise.

Diane: Yes.

Joe: That's the star that comes up in the east just before dawn. The morning star, you know it. There are two of them. One doesn't shine so bright as the other one. That star is

drawn two ways. If you want it like a cross or in a different way. So that's the morning star.

Diane: That's the morning star.

Joe: It is strange. The morning star is always drawn in every holy ceremony. It will be drawn crossways and all the people that are in the ceremony will not tell any lies on this star.

Diane: Why is it drawn like a cross?

Joe: Because you swear on it, you cannot lie on it.

Diane: Why is it drawn like that?

Joe: The reason why it is drawn like a cross is because if you tell a lie on it you will not walk the earth very long. Death will come to you suddenly. This star is also drawn on the Holy Women Society robe.

(The rest of the information is indistinct.)

John: (Indistinct)

Diane: (Indistinct)

Joe: The staff. In the earlier times when an Indian army charged, before taking off for the enemy they would open their holy bundles and they would take out something from their holy bundle, something to wear for a decoration and also for protection. He will tie a tail feather to his staff and when they charge he will add more feathers to his staff to the number of Crees that he hit with his staff. Nobody will claim or say that he killed these Crees, just he alone will be made a chief for what he did with his staff in the battle. That's what the staff is.

Diane: (Indistinct)

John: And that beaded thing, do they tie it on the head?

Diane: There is a round thing. It's beaded. It's tied on the back of the head.

Joe: Yes. It's tied on the head. It's beaded around except in the centre. It's also worn by a Horn Society member, the one that rides a black horse. He ties it in the back of his head. It's holy. It's a holy headpiece.

Diane: The Horns use it.

Joe: It was in the fall. A war party was on a raid. They were all on foot. They were attacked by enemy riders. One of the men started unwrapping that headpiece I am talking about. He told the others to cover it quickly with clay and they covered it with clay. Then he picked it up and shook it and a fog came from nowhere and they were safe.

John: And how the pipes got SAW.KA.SIM (power root).

Diane: He says there is a power root tied to the pipe.

Joe: That's where they made a mistake. I know that they are not supposed to be there. That power root was put there recently. The little bag is new; it looks new.

Diane: So they're not supposed to be tied to the pipe.

Joe: No, they're not to be attached to the pipe.

Diane: He said it was put there recently. You're not supposed to have those.

Joe: The pipes that have SAW.KA.SIM (power root) are different from this pipe. When I saw the pipe I saw that it's exposed. It's not supposed to be tied on the outside. They are on the inside of the bundle, not on the outside. They are not to be seen by other people.

Diane: Can anybody attach a power root to a Medicine Pipe if you want to?

Joe: The one that tied that power root on the pipe did it with his own idea.

Diane: He said that SAW.KA.SIM (power root) was tied on the outside.

John: (Indistinct)

Diane: He said that it wasn't on the outside.

Joe: It was on the outside, it could be seen. There is a small buffalo stone that is attached to it. I saw that too.

Diane: He says it's up to the person who owns it if he wants to.

John: He shouldn't lie to me. There are two things there from the crib.

Diane: Do they attach those things?

Joe: That buffalo stone was just added to the pipe recently.

Diane: The buffalo stone is just added too.

John: So we might just as well let it go at that. We'll all have a break.

Joe: There are three kinds of animals to it. One of these will take a man under water. The otter is smaller in size but they are dangerous. The muskrats are mean but they are not dangerous. There are a lot of animals in the waters. There are the fish, frogs and lizards. There are a lot of water animals.

John: How many poles do the Blackfoot Indians use for their tipis?

Diane: How many poles do the Blackfoot use?

Joe: Six poles on each side besides the four support poles. Three at the back and the poles at the front, that makes twenty-two poles.

Diane: Twenty-eight.

Joe: If they want to put four poles on each side or three poles on each side, the important ones are the four support poles, two doorway poles and three at the back. The four support poles and twelve poles are sixteen poles. The two front poles, the three back poles and the two spreaders for the ears. There are twenty-three poles. Or if they want to use more poles, that's the number of poles that I know they use. Some use more tipi poles.

Diane: Twenty-eight. Sometimes more.

Diane: You will be paid twenty-five cents for your work.
(Joke)

Joe: Twenty-five cents. Yes, I understood him when he started to talk. I can understand some words. That is if a person doesn't talk too fast.

Diane: He said, "What do you think?"

Joe: That is fine. He will give me the money and a cup of coffee. (Joke)

Diane: Twenty-five cents and a cup of coffee. He says he can understand if a white man speaks slow but if he talks fast he won't get what he is saying.

Diane: (Indistinct)

John: (Indistinct)

Diane: (Indistinct)

Joe: I had a home down the river. I had a team of horses that I bought. They disappeared. I started hunting for them. I couldn't find them. I thought I would go down and look for them at a place called Dipping Place. When I got there a rain storm was coming; the rain looked awful. As I looked at it the lightning was double. One was going one way and the other one the other way. They were in separate ways. I was thinking what is coming is strange. I was praying so that the storm may not come my way too much. The rain did come but not too much. As I was going a lightning flashed right behind me, a yellow flash. When I looked back the lightning disappeared and as I looked ahead of me I heard someone speak. The voice said, "Nothing will happen to you. The one that is walking in front is Double Lightning. The one that is coming is Double Lightning. Nothing will happen to you. Do not fear him. Behind him is Coming Lightning. He is a very generous man. Nothing will happen to you. There is a hailstorm behind you, a big hailstorm. You will not get hit with the hail." The hail came; it dropped here and there. The hail was the size of a rock. Where I was walking I never got hit with a hailstone. That's why I gave my brother the name of Double Lightning, and that's why I also gave the name of Coming Lightning to that child. He will live for the future. When he grows up he will be successful. He will get all the good jobs. He did a strange thing to me. I was on horseback when a man spoke to me from above. That is how a strange thing happened to me where I walked.

I don't give names, I don't give names to people. I got a relative. I gave his child a name. So this is the third time I gave names. My relative's child was an infant when I gave it a name. He told me, "Please give a name to my child so that it may grow up." So I gave it a name and now she is married. She

is a store clerk at the Stand Off Grocery Store.

Diane: Is that all?

Joe: Yes. But I am not going to tell you the story of how a strange thing happened to me. So that is how the story is. Can he start the machine so that I can hear it?

Diane: He wants to listen to the tape recorder.

John: (Indistinct)

Diane: (Indistinct)

Joe: We burn the hole through.

Diane: You burn the hole through.

Joe: Yes.

Diane: How do you burn them through?

Joe: You will straighten out a wire and heat it in the fire and when it is red hot you will burn the hole through the stem.

Diane: You will have to have a piece of iron and have it red hot and stick it through.

John: What sort of wood do they use?

Diane: What kind of wood do you use?

Joe: We use a wood that we call hard wood.

Diane: Where are they from?

Joe: We get them at the Crow Reserve.

Diane: From the Crows.

(End of Interview)

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