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HIGHLIGHTS:

- This married couple from the Seekaskootch Reserve have raised several children. They both attended residential school in childhood.
- Life cycle. Pregnancy, childbirth, raising children, family relationships, care of the elderly, death.
- Spirits of the dead; warnings and omens.
- Traditional medicines.

Wilfred and Harriet Chocan at Onion Lake, June 7, 1973.

M: We were discussing the life cycle. Were there any medicines made especially for infertile women?

Harriet: Yes, there were some but I don't know any of them.

M: But you heard of other people who were taking them?

Harriet: Yes.

M: Were these medicines that people had dreamt up or were they passed down?

Harriet: I guess they were passed down.

M: Are there any people now who have children who used them?
Or was this just long ago?

Harriet: I can't think of anyone. Unless Gladys, maybe she used it, but it wouldn't have worked.

M: Gladys who?

Harriet: For her first one. She only has one.

M: So maybe she had some. What about contraceptive medicines?

Harriet: Oh yes, there were some.

M: Was there? Did they have any beliefs about who could take them or...?

Harriet: No.

M: Just anybody who wanted them?

Harriet: Yes.

M: Who would usually take them? Like, would somebody want some after they had so many children or would they have any other reasons?

Harriet: I guess some of them had too many and then...

M: And they would just.... Where would you have to go?
Could you get your own medicine or was there somebody who would fix it for you?

Harriet: Well, you have to go to someone that will fix it for you and then you could use your own that had been passed down.

M: Make it yourself?

Harriet: Yes.

M: When the women were pregnant, did they have any special advice for them? Like, were there any...?

Harriet: Oh yes, there were lots.

M: Like what things?

Harriet: Don't sleep too long; you don't always lie down; and be always on the go; and don't eat too much; and...

M: Was there any, like, did anybody look after pregnant women specially or they didn't do anything different than when they weren't pregnant?

Harriet: No.

M: Not even towards the end?

Harriet: No. You chop your own wood until the day you have your baby.

M: Is that right?

Harriet: Yes.

M: What about when they had the baby, did they have a rest time then or...?

Harriet: Oh, yes. Years ago they wouldn't let you walk for four days. You can't get up for four days and you were served tea, cleaned you up and then about ten days, then they will give you, what you call those, like Epsom salts but it had herbs in it to clean your body out.

M: So they just used that for pregnant women?

Harriet: No, for after.

M: After the woman had the baby then?

Harriet: Yes.

M: Did anybody else use that medicine for anything else?

Harriet: Well, for that Epsom salts, everybody used it but they got that out of the alkali lakes.

M: So, when a child was born then, was there any special ceremony that went on just after the child was born?

Harriet: No. Not right away.

M: What about when he was named? When would they name him? When would they name him, Wilfred?

Wilfred: I used to hear my grandmother say they had to wait four nights before they would get an elder to name the child.

M: One of the elders who...could it just be any of the elders or did it have to be somebody who was especially in charge of naming children?

Wilfred: Well, the elder had to be chosen by the parents, you know. There were several that could have named newborns.

M: But not all the old people?

Both: No, not all of them.

Wilfred: But if there were other old people, they would take it and share it and smoke the peace pipe together in the ceremony.

M: Well, like they would all get together but only one would name the child?

Wilfred: Yes. Right.

M: So how did those people get chosen? How could somebody name your...how was he given the power to name the child?

Harriet: That I wouldn't know. But we knew who had that power of giving that and a child names and...but I wouldn't know...

M: ...how they were given?

Harriet: Yes.

M: Yes, because I imagine they wouldn't be able to do that until they were older, eh? So somewhere along the line, somebody would have to give them the power to name them.

Harriet: Like Richard, his Cree name is Iron Bow.

M: Who named him that?

Harriet: An old, Sam Waskewitch. He is an uncle.

M: Is he still living?

Harriet: No.

M: Is there anybody now who can give the names?

Harriet: I guess Jim Kanipitetew and Albert Waskewitch. I think he does. Jimmy Chief.

M: But there is nobody after them?

Harriet: No. Maybe there will be. I don't know. But some don't use the powers that were given to them until they are older.

M: So how would he pick this name? Would he think of it right there or would he have it ready even before the child was born?

Harriet: Well, I guess they knew it before they were called. Sometimes they dreamt it.

Wilfred: My grandmother used to say they had to wait four nights before naming a newborn, while the chosen elder that is going to name the baby had all this time to think about the name he is going to give him.

M: Those four days?

Wilfred: Yes. And by dreaming again - that is how they used to get their powers, you know, in their dreams. And as she says, Richard was given regular...in religion, what you call patron

saints, you know. They would pick out something from the sky or on earth and certain animals. Like Richard's called Iron Bow. They used to have a ritual called kanniball that this old Albert Waskewitch Sr., he still puts on that. I mean just for a special ceremony, respected, you know. When they make a pledge...somebody is very sick in the family or somebody else, they promise they will put up this dance, the same as a Sundance you know. And the dancer at the end is called (Cree). I don't know what name I would give that in English, but he is the one that is way in the back. And that is how that old Sam Waskewitch gave Richard his name you know, on account of this.

M: What was his name?

Wilfred: To be his guardian, you know. And after that old man... We had had a hard time when Richard was a baby. He used to cry lots, and a lot of times he would almost pass out. So my dad says, "Well, you go and see your uncle." He was my uncle, my mother's brother. And so I took along some tobacco and, "Well," he says, "I will be there tonight. Be prepared." Sweetgrass, my dad had this all the time, a pipe. And he come along that night and started saying prayers after the grass was burned and the pipe filled. He said the ceremony and gave him his name. Well, after he gave him the name, he says, "Next spring, a certain time of the year, as soon as the snow melts, you make a little bow and arrow." You see, that is Richard's protector. It was a little bow and arrow. It doesn't have to be made real nice, you know, as long as it is a bow and arrow. He says, "You will make this with four arrows and you go and put that in the bush. I will show you, I will tell you what bush you are going to find a stone. Every year you got to do this till he is ten years old - ten times you know. And from there on he don't have to." And that is what he kept doing every year.

M: What would you do every year, make another bow?

Wilfred: Yeah, another bow and another four arrows and go and put them in this particular place.

M: Always in the same place? And they stayed there? He didn't keep the bow and arrow?

Wilfred: No.

Wilfred: I think you could still find most of them. I never bothered. Of course we were respected and...

M: You made it for the ten years, though.

Wilfred: Yes. And he says he will grow to be a man and raise his own family. That is the prayer he asked from God, you know.

M: And was he fine after that? Like from that night he came?

Wilfred: Yeah, we noticed the difference right away. We had a hard time. We had hardly ever slept for two months. Two or

three months, I guess, crying at night.

M: Was he your first son?

Wilfred: Yes, right.

M: Do all of your children have Cree names?

Harriet: No, only the first two, Richard and Rosalee. Rosalee's name was given by my grandfather and her name is (Cree), Lady with a Nice Voice.

M: Did you call them by their Cree names when they were small?

Harriet: Not Rosalee but Richard. He still goes by that.

M: Is that right?

Harriet: We just call him Muchabeechka, yes. We still call him that.

M: And was there anything special you would do for your first child? There was no special custom?

Harriet: No.

M: Do you remember any traditional methods for looking after the babies that they don't have anymore, you know, that they use now maybe that came from long ago? When the baby was just first born were there any special things you would do to look after him or... did you have Richard in a moss bag?

Harriet: Oh yes. With moss too.

M: With real moss?

Harriet: Yes.

M: How would you make the bag? I have never seen one.

Harriet: Oh, Grace took her moss bag with her because I had her baby in a moss bag, too. I always make moss bags when the babies are born. They are easier to handle and...

M: How long do you use it?

Harriet: We used to use it about... at night it would be about 12 months old. But nowadays they use them for one or two months, that is all.

M: That is all? Why would that be?

Harriet: I don't know. I guess years ago you noticed that Indians were all straight and tall. That is on account of we set up a pillow at the bottom of the moss bag and it was always flat like that.

M: What was it made of?

Harriet: Either duck feathers or what do you call it, your fur.

M: And it was quite stiff, it would stay straight?

Harriet: Yeah. And for the children's feet, you had a certain way of putting their feet so they wouldn't have to, what do you call those...?

M: Bowlegged?

Harriet: Yeah, bowlegged and uh...

M: Pigeon-toed?

Harriet: Yeah.

M: And could their feet move when they were in the bag?

Harriet: Oh yes, they could move them.

M: But they wouldn't be apart. So with the moss, you didn't have to use a change of diapers all the time?

Harriet: No.

M: You changed the moss?

Harriet: Yes. Oh when the babies wet with the moss, that wet would be in one place. Then you just took the wet stuff.

M: And put new moss in?

Harriet: Yes.

M: Where did you get the moss?

Harriet: In the muskeg.

M: Is there lots near here?

Harriet: Oh yes. There is some at Baldwin's reserve and there is one... used to get some from the north end of Onion Lake there.

M: Can you use it just fresh or do you...?

Harriet: You have to dry it first.

M: Does it take long to dry?

Harriet: No, it doesn't. And you have to get certain moss too. There is some moss with a little bit of red in it. That gave the baby diaper rash. You would have to know which kind of moss it is.

M: So what would you get for winter? You would have to store a lot of moss.

Harriet: Oh, yes. We used to. And then if we ran out of it then we used to go down to the muskeg and just dig it through the snow and bring it inside and dry it.

M: So you would have to dig out the snow first?

Harriet: Yes. But usually there was old ladies used to put moss up in the muskeg, cut the tree and they would have the moss there. And any time during the winter you would go and get it. Just shake the snow off.

M: Before they lived in houses, what would they do? They camped in one place for the whole winter?

Harriet: I wouldn't know that either because...

M: Grandparents never talked about it?

Harriet: Yes.

M: Did you have any special lullabies for children? Songs to sing them?

Harriet: Oh yes.

M: Do you know any?

Harriet: Yes.

M: Would you care to sing one for us?

Harriet: Just a lullaby?

M: Yes.

Harriet: We always put them in the swing.

M: What kind of a swing?

Harriet: It is more like a - what you call those - hammocks, but we had two strings to support them and then in the middle we put a blanket there and a little pillow and then on top, them.

M: Just when they were going to sleep or you let them play there too?

Harriet: Oh we let them play there. For the babies, the newborns, they were there all the time up until just about now. We never used to let them sleep on that swing overnight.

M: Why is that?

Harriet: Well, old people used to say that, not to hang them up on a swing, to have them down on a bed or someplace where you are going to sleep because there is a lot of spirits going around at night. The same with baby clothes, we never used to hang them outside at night.

M: But you could during the day?

Harriet: Yes, we could during the day but towards just about now you would take them inside and hang them inside.

M: Would the swings be outside too? But at night you couldn't leave it inside on a swing? the baby?

Harriet: Well, the swing would be inside the house.

M: Why were the spirits believed to be up, or what difference would it make if the baby was down, or would you keep him with you to sleep?

Harriet: Yes.

M: It never slept alone?

Harriet: No, never slept alone.

M: So what would happen if you left it on the swing? What would the spirits do?

Harriet: Well, they said that the spirits would take the soul of the baby away - that's the belief - and the baby would die. Something like that.

M: So, the baby never slept alone?

Harriet: No, it never did.

M: Until how old?

Harriet: Until you have another baby.

M: Until then?

Harriet: Yes.

M: What if you didn't have anymore?

Harriet: Well, he could sleep with you.

M: Until he is quite big?

Harriet: Yes.

M: What about feeding? Oh, you were going to sing the lullaby for us. We could put Wilfred in a swing.

Harriet: Oh we used to put them on the moss bag and swing them like that and sing. (Harriet sings a lullaby.)

M: And there was one that you were singing or was that just a song?

Harriet: That was just a song, kind of a fairy tale. I don't know what it really is.

Wilfred: It is for the older ones you know.

Harriet: Yes, it is for the older ones. They sing to that and they go (sings the song).

M: Can you translate the song?

Harriet: No, it has got no meaning. That is the only thing that you can, the last part.

M: You mean the rest of it is not words?

Harriet: No, it is just...

M: Sounds?

Harriet: Yes.

M: Where did you learn it?

Harriet: My mother taught me when I was a little kid.

M: Did you teach your girls?

Harriet: Some of them, they know it yeah. (laughs) She knows it.

M: She never sings for me. Was there quite a few songs?

Harriet: Yes.

M: Were there any songs that had words to them or stories to them or were they all just sounds like that?

Harriet: There was one that...I don't know how you...It's a kind of a story, a legend, yeah. There was a proud Indian Princess and she went into the woods to have a b.m. and then after she finished, she looked back and the b.m. was sitting up like that, so she said that it was not made to be a man or something. And then that b.m. turned into a man. And it was after that girl went away that the b.m. turned into a man. And he started looking out for clothing, like to dress himself, and he got some cloth and said, "If I had pants like that and a shirt and hide for a coat..." Then as he said it he was dressed like that. So he went to the camp and he went to the tipi of that Indian Princess and then after awhile he took her away. And they went away for quite awhile and then...oh, I forget. Well, I remember now, he just left and that Indian Princess followed him. And that b.m., well, it was getting hot and he began taking his things off. And there would be some b.m. on his things and later on there was a big b.m. there. So that Indian Princess came home and, you could see, they used to call her the Proud Woman. She was so proud. I guess that is why that legend is told that way. And they could hear her singing from far off.

(Harriet sings) The b.m. that wanted to get a wife and turned back into b.m. And the old people in the camp were saying,

"Listen, listen what the proud girl is saying now." We used to hear those legends about being proud or something like that.

M: So it was really to teach a lesson.

Harriet: Yes.

M: Do you remember any others?

Harriet: Not offhand.

M: So, we are still talking about the babies, were there any special foods?

Harriet: No, but as you were eating, as the babies got bigger, you fed them from your mouth. You chewed the food and then you would pass it down to them.

M: So they could eat anything then?

Harriet: Yes, they could eat anything.

M: How long would they usually be breast fed?

Harriet: One to two years. Some of them even three or four.

M: Could be, depended on the people, eh?

Harriet: Yes.

M: And when did they start feeding them ordinary food?

Harriet: Oh, as soon as they can eat. That is how you fed them, from the mouth.

M: Who raised them? Like, who looked after them from the time they were born?

Harriet: The mothers did.

M: Just the mother by herself or the grandmother helped?

Harriet: Oh, the grandmother would help.

M: But they usually stayed with the mother.

Harriet: Yes.

M: What about the fathers, did they have much to do with the babies?

Harriet: Oh, yes.

M: Did they ever stay and babysit while the mothers were out?

Harriet: No, we always went with our children.

M: So the mothers were never without their children?

Harriet: No.

M: When would the child first go and play by himself?

Harriet: Well, he could go out and play while the mother was inside and she would be running in and out. Yeah, and we used to carry them on our backs too. If we went to do anything, if we went to go berry-picking, we had them on our backs too.

M: In the moss bag?

Harriet: Yes. And a blanket and put them in your bag.

Wilfred: Kids were always close to the parents. They were never let out to go out alone, you know, different places, unless they were with their dads going out snaring rabbits. They would always be with an old person. They weren't left alone.

M: When would they start going out with their dads? Would just the boys go or...?

Harriet: Girls went out, too.

M: With the men?

Harriet: Well, when they went to snare rabbits or...they would just follow, or shoot ducks, they would follow them.

M: So when would the father start teaching the boy how to snare his own rabbits, or was there any special time they would start?

Harriet: No, as soon as they can I guess. I remember now, Rosalee was about three years old when she thought she caught her first rabbit. We had a garden and I plant some cabbage and the rabbits were coming in to eat our cabbage and I told them to use a snare on the rabbits. So she went and she took the barbed wire fence and she hung her snare about that high from it and then that night the rabbits come during the night. So he went and put one of those rabbits in Rosalee's snare. She killed a rabbit. (laughs)

M: Was there anything that was special time taken out to teach children anything in particular or they just learned everything by following along?

Harriet: Yes, they just learned everything by following around and helping.

M: Would the parents take time out and sit and talk to them?

Harriet: No. But as you were walking and doing this, you would show them how.

(End of Side A, Tape IH-034)

(Side B)

M: Did they celebrate any special days for the children like birthdays?

Harriet: No.

M: So there was no special time that was for the child, just that one?

Harriet: Years ago just by the moon, that is how they know the birthdays before the white man came. And a lot of our mothers weren't educated so...

M: They didn't keep track?

Harriet: No. They would tell you just when the berries are ripe and when we were digging potatoes or haying time. Things like that.

M: Did they count the years though, how long?

Harriet: Oh yes.

M: Do you remember any stories about when you were a child? Do you remember any of the things you did?

Harriet: Oh yes, lots of things. (Laughs) Now you talk. He can tell you when his mother died. He was only five years old, and I guess he was crying. His mother died and one of these cousins told him that, not to cry. "You will be a bad looking guy if you cry," and he believed it and he stopped. (laughed) He stopped crying for his mom.

M: That is why you are so good looking?

Harriet: Yeah.

(laughter)

M: When you were brought up, was it pretty well the same way that you brought your children up or were things different?

Harriet: Things are different. Because when we were getting older, girls weren't allowed to go anywhere by themselves.

M: Not ever?

Harriet: No. Even if we wanted to go to the bathroom when there was a dance on, we had to ask one of the old ladies to come with us.

M: So, until you were married then?

Harriet: Yeah.

M: Well, what about when they were teenagers, when they were just in their teens, were there any ways that they were

prepared for adult life?

Harriet: Oh yes, well they would get one of the old ladies to talk to them. To counsel you on family life and when you had your first periods, they would get an old lady and you had to set a little tipi outside and live with that old lady for four days and she would tell you everything.

M: Do you remember what the lady told you?

Harriet: I was in school.

M: Oh, you didn't have that happen?

Harriet: No.

M: Did your mother get taught like that?

Harriet: Oh yes.

M: Did she say what the old lady told her?

Harriet: Oh, it was just ways of... like you would tell a girl, like... and then she would show you how to make moccasins and how to do this and that.

M: And before that she wouldn't have done those things?

Harriet: No.

M: What about the men?

Wilfred: We had pretty strict lectures too when we were...like my dad says, "When you are prepared to have a woman for your own, well, you have to be prepared. Have something to live by, to go back to your woman. You have to be good you know. Try and do your best. There is always family problems and you have to overcome that because if you cause this, you know..." and all that. And all the old people used to tell the young ones, too.

They would believe them, you know. There's lots of different mothers would tell my sister that too. People were very strict. You have to get up early in the morning to look after your family. You have to hustle for a living and the mothers had to tell this to their daughters too. They would have to hustle once they were married. They said, "If you are lazy, your kids will always be poorly dressed, you know, poorly fed." There was so much old people, like elders.

M: I guess it would be, not just your parents, but other old people?

Wilfred: Yes. Right. Grandmothers, they had a lesson too. Grandfathers as well. Even now, some of them still do. We still do.

M: Were there people outside the family who would take the boys outside or aside and talk to them? Or was it always up to

the father or the grandfather?

Wilfred: No, there was one thing our parents taught us and that is, it is still, when there is a wedding here on the reserve, there is always an elder that would get up. He is chosen to tell the young couple about married life. The first thing they say is, this marriage was instituted by God himself. It has been, you know, even in the old days. When a boy and girl took each other as man and wife, they say they had ceremonies with a peace pipe which was the main thing in an Indian ceremony. And they used to marry the young people by touching the stem of the peace pipe, promising God that they are man and wife now and they should try and live peacefully as their parents want them to be, respecting to each other and to respect their parents on each side. Oh, there is lots yet, you know, that's being said. I think I'm right there. We're all here - Eddie Fox, Jim Kanipitetew - tell this young couple that they have to strive to keep alive. And if they are given children, well, they have to prepare everything so to look after their children if they are given any children in the future. A man has to work to keep his wife alive and anything a man earns, well, it is up to the woman to look after it. Food, you know, everything.

M: So, there were special duties for the men and special for the women.

Wilfred: Right.

Harriet: It was up to the women to have flour, have bannock ready, because nobody likes to live with a neighbor that is always borrowing bannock.

(laughter)

M: And you were saying they should respect their in-laws or each other's parents. Did they have special customs to show this respect? You were mentioning talking to your son-in-law.

Harriet: Yeah, you don't talk about him, say anything against your son-in-law or daughter-in-law. Well, I can talk to my daughter-in-law but he can't talk to his daughter-in-law.

M: Can you talk to your son-in-law?

Harriet: No, but I talk to my younger sons-in-law. They don't know anything. (laughs)

Wilfred: That is part of the white man's ways.

Harriet: Yes. But that custom is dying down now.

M: Did you ever talk to your father-in-law? Like to Wilfred's father, you never talked to him?

Harriet: No, but when there was nobody around, I would tell him if he wanted something, I will get him something. You know, if he wanted something, but not talk to them.

Wilfred: You can't help it sometimes but....

M: But you wouldn't just have an ordinary conversation?

Harriet: No. Or sit near them like this.

M: Is that right?

Harriet: Yes, you can't sit beside them. One time Anna's husband, she didn't know that he understand Cree. He understand Cree and she went up to him and shook hands and told Anna she got a nice looking man and my son-in-law started laughing. (laughs)

M: But you talk to Anna's husband?

Harriet: Oh yes, I talk to Anna's and Grace's and Laurie's husbands but the others, before that, I never talked to them.

M: Could you talk to your son-in-laws, your daughter-in-law, Richard's wife? You could talk to the women?

Harriet: Yes.

M: But Wilfred couldn't talk to the women?

Harriet: No, but he can talk to the men but he hardly ever talked to them.

M: So could you talk to Harriet's father but not to her mother?

Wilfred: Right.

M: So you never talked to her mother?

Wilfred: No.

M: So you never had in-law problems?

Harriet: No. That is one thing Indians never used to have, in-law problems.

Wilfred: We respected our in-laws very, very much you know. Talking about respect too, these old people used to teach their kids not to name an old person. You know, they used to teach their kids to talk to them by being related like uncle or aunt or cousin. If a person is real old, older than this person... Vernon there, our youngest boy, he would be going to Jimmy Chief... well they are related, you know. And in Cree, Vernon will call Jimmy (Cree), grandfather, where by rights I will tell them not to say, "Jimmy," I tell them to say (Cree) because of respect you see.

M: He is not his real grandfather or is he, this Jimmy? But you would call the older people grandfather?

Wilfred: Not directly by name, you know. Even his grandfather -

especially his grandfather if he was living, I wouldn't allow him to call him J.D., but I would teach him to call him (Cree). See, that is how we kind of teach our children. Like they call her auntie. And my son Vernon, most of them, they say Mary and I would tell them, "Don't say Mary. She is your auntie. Say Auntie," you know, in Cree. And I guess they are getting a little accustomed to it because that is one respect that our people had taught us.

M: Is that just when you are talking to that person or even when you are talking about him? Like, if he came back and wanted to tell you something that Mary said, it would be all right for him to say Mary then?

Harriet: No.

M: He would still say auntie? What if he had lots of aunties he would have....

Harriet: Well, we would say which one now.

Wilfred: Which auntie, which uncle. They would have to name them then.

M: Then they could name them.

Harriet: Years ago, like, my brothers, John, George, and Ivan, well, I always call them John, George, and Ivan, but years ago we couldn't name them (brothers). Out of respect say, "My brothers."

Wilfred: Whenever I go to my sister, her name is Josephine, I don't go and say, "Here, Josephine, where is my brother-in-law? I need this," you know. I say, "Minis," sister. I don't... There is so much things to explain where this came in but a lot of people would say that is superstition. I don't know. Probably. That is how come we lost so much of our culture is that word superstition. We are scared to follow our old people's customs or our old customs the way we should. We are scared of that word superstition, you know. And there is so much truth about everything. There might be a little exaggerations at times. Like, some of it, but it is mostly true.

M: Do you think things would have been different if, long ago when the kids went to school, they came home at night instead of, you know, most of them went and they stayed the whole year. So they couldn't...when would they learn the old ways?

Wilfred: I think things would have been different. But as I say, these schools, the way they used to tell us. Kind of killed a lot of our...you know, which is coming back now. I don't think it is too late to go back to the old traits because it proves now that there is more truth than just superstition or false stories.

M: Well, do you think the respect is still there but they just don't show it the same way (like the children probably still

respect the elders but they might call them by their name) or have they lost the respect too?

Harriet: Some of them have lost the respect because you can't say anything to some of them, but some you can lecture them and it doesn't amount to anything. But years ago, a girl wasn't boss of herself until her parents were dead.

M: Is that right?

Harriet: Yes. Even if you were sixteen, you were under your parents.

M: What if you already had your own family?

Harriet: You are still under your parents.

Wilfred: Parents were always looking after you, that their daughters were doing the right way even if they were married. Same with the boys. The dads would look after their sons.

Harriet: And they told them what they didn't do right and they still lectured them.

M: What would they do? Like, there must have been cases when people didn't listen. So, like, if you hadn't listened to your mother, how would she punish you or would she?

Harriet: Take a stick and beat me. Sure, that is what they used to do until about... well, I took a stick and beat Anna when she was sixteen, going to high school and she come home the day she was supposed to come from Lebret.

M: So she got...

Harriet: And she still thanks me for that.

M: Well, do parents do that anymore? Do they still punish the children? A lot of them say that the kids don't listen anymore. Maybe if they spanked them once in a while it would make a difference or...?

Harriet: Yes, I think so. It would make a difference because that is what the old people - they used to. They didn't believe in not spanking anybody.

Wilfred: (Inaudible)

M: They got it when they needed it, not more than that.

Wilfred: And most of the time, the first whipping they get, well, that would keep them in line for the rest of their life pretty well.

M: Yeah, so they wouldn't need any more after the first time?

Harriet: Yeah. Like a few years ago, I found a box of snuff under Jack's bed, so he got it. We just took his snuff, and he

was fifteen then. We never did anything. We just took it. And I told him not to ever bring snuff until he can earn it himself. So he chews snuff now and I can't do anything now. He is earning it. (laughs) Children hardly ever fought back when they were being punished by their parents. They had respect for their parents.

M: What about little children. Like, when would they first start spanking children? When they were quite small?

Harriet: Oh, yes.

Wilfred: And if they did wrong again, they were promised they would get it again so they were discouraged.

M: So then they would behave?

Wilfred: Not enough to hurt them physically, you know, just enough to feel it.

Harriet: And old people used to say that they hit them on the head with a switch and spank them, not with your hand because your hand could hurt them, but a piece of a branch wouldn't hurt them.

M: So that is what they usually used?

Harriet: Yeah.

M: What about when they were old enough to get married, was there any special age when they were considered ready to get married?

Harriet: I don't know about that because you know, we were in school until we were 18 and 16 in age.

M: The people who didn't go to school, how old would they usually be when they got married?

Harriet: Oh, 14 or 15.

M: How were the weddings arranged? Did the young people have any say in who they wanted to marry?

Harriet: No.

M: So how would they arrange it?

Harriet: Well, the parents arranged it.

Wilfred: When they saw a young man that was working for himself...in the old days, they were mostly hunters, you know. And the parents of the girl, they would look at this young person and they would think that he would make a good son-in-law because he would be a good provider, a good hunter, you know, always something for a living, helping, looking

after his parents. Well, the parents of this girl, they admire this young man. So they go and see the parents of the young man and made arrangements. Most of the time the boy would agree that he would marry the girl.

M: What if he didn't want to?

Wilfred: Well, you couldn't force him. But a lot of times the parents of the girl would force them into getting married.

M: Is that right?

Wilfred: Yeah. And there was times that maybe a young man, very seldom, would go to his parents and say, "Well, I admire that girl. She is a good girl, you know. Everybody knows she is a good girl, she is a good worker." Most of them were good workers you know. So the boy would ask his parents to go to the parents of the girl and ask the parents that. This man would say, "My son admires your daughter. He would like to marry her if you agree and if she agrees." Most of the time no trouble, you know, because the daughters, the sons, have great respect for their parents, so there was no problems.

M: Could the son's parents pick a girl for him, like if they saw a girl they wanted their son to marry?

Wilfred: Yes.

M: And then was there any kind of a dowry? Like, if you were going to ask somebody to marry your son, would you bring something for the girl's family?

Wilfred: Well, when the boy, like, he bought the girl, like give them a horse sometimes. That is for respect. Like, more of a present, not really buy her. They would give something away for appreciation. That is on the boy's side. The girls wouldn't have to do that.

M: Did the girls bring anything to the marriage?

Harriet: Their blankets and their tools, what they use for making hides.

M: Then when they got married, did they live by themselves or - they had their own separate tipi?

Harriet: Yes.

Wilfred: No honeymoon. (laughter)

M: What if three boys wanted to marry this girl?

Harriet: The best one gets her. (laughs)

M: Who would decide that, the father?

Wilfred: Yes, the parents of the girl would decide. If there was three asking for her, you know, they would look at them. It must have been a hard decision, but still they selected.

M: They selected. What kind of a wedding ceremony was there before the churches? Did you ever hear about weddings?

Harriet: Just a peace pipe and that is all.

M: It wasn't special then?

Harriet: No.

M: They had the peace pipe.

Wilfred: No special meals or, you know....

M: Would people get together to see this...?

Harriet: No.

M: They could just go up and there was no fuss made about it or...

Harriet: A lot of times, you know, you hear stories of the parents of the girl bringing a horse with her belongings and taking her across the camp and taking her to the boy's tipi or making a tipi for her...

Wilfred: Setting it up for her too.

Harriet: Yeah.

M: Then he would come over?

Harriet: Yeah.

M: Then who would smoke the peace pipe, just the couple?

Harriet: No, and the parents.

M: Both parents?

Harriet: Yeah.

Wilfred: The young couple would just hold the stem, rub the stem. That is all.

M: Would they have any special prayers or anything?

Harriet: Oh, there was always prayers for everything.

M: Everybody would say the prayers or was there a special...?

Harriet: No, an elder.

M: So they did always have an elder come?

Harriet: Yes.

M: Do you know of any incidences where a man could have more than one wife?

Harriet: I guess in the olden days. I don't know. (laughs)

M: I don't imagine. There was a couple who said there were some quite a while ago. You don't know of any?

Harriet: Oh yeah, I know of a woman who has two husbands.

M: Is that right?

Harriet: Leave her husband, he is crippled. Joe Piecemeal.

M: So she has another one?

Harriet: Yes.

Wilfred: Pretty seldom I guess in the old days too, eh? To have more than one wife. Not now, otherwise it would be overcrowded in this country. There would be too many.

M: Once they got married, did the rules change? This would have been way back if you heard any stories about it but when they went to live on their own, did anything change like the customs like where they would meet with the rest of the people? I suppose it was before your time too that leaders would be chosen and everybody would have a special...well, even now, we were talking about people, men who have the power to name children. How were these people all chosen? What kinds of jobs or whatever? Like, was each person expected to contribute something different to the whole community or what was expected of them as an adult?

Harriet: Well, the men did all the hunting and the women looked after all the meat and the wood, carrying your own wood and making the hides.

M: Just for their own family or did they do it as a whole group?

Harriet: No, they...everything was shared. Not for themselves.

M: So everybody would be doing the same job or did each person have a different job to do for the whole group?

Harriet: No.

M: Were there different kinds of...the women's would all be the same but what about the men? Everybody hunted?

Harriet: Yes. You would be the laughing stock if you stayed home and sat with your girl. (laughs)

M: You talk about having older people come to, you know, like, talk to the young girl. Would it be something like teachers?

How would these people come to have these responsibilities?

Harriet: Well, anybody could come. And all the elders, they know how to talk to young people.

M: So it could be just anybody?

Harriet: Yes.

Wilfred: One thing I forgot there, I was going to mention about the old people teaching their kids one thing. And that is what we were talking about here at weddings. In the old days, our parents used to say... well tobacco don't cost much you know, a package of tobacco, and that is what most of the old people cherished most, this tobacco. And they used to say, well, for the boy, "Go and see that old man and give him this package of tobacco and ask him to lecture you, to tell you what you should do in the future. How you could look after your woman whenever you are married." The same with the girls. They say, well, maybe give them a few cents to buy tobacco, "Go

and see that old lady, certain old lady, and ask her for everything. How you would look after yourself while you are growing now or how you should behave and all that so you won't get in trouble. And when you are married, ask her what you should do then, when you are married too, you know." You still hear the lectures from these elders at the wedding. And even myself, I tell them. Not only me but there is still parents, but I don't think they ever do it. Very few might do it yet. Like these people here, they are good lecturers, Edward Fox, Jim Kanipitetew. They would tell it all straight.

(End of Side B, Tape Ih-034)

(End of Tape)

(Side A, Tape IH-035)

M: Were there certain old people who would have a reputation for giving good advice or did most of them usually have different people come to them?

Harriet: Yes. I think so.

M: Like, how would you choose the person if you were going to send your daughter to somebody? If you were going to send her to somebody for advice, like Wilfred was saying, if you take the tobacco to somebody, were they usually special people to go to?

Harriet: Well, you hear of ladies, you know, that can give good advice to girls. We women, we tell each other. And we send the girls out - or take them over, not send them over.

M: What about when the people used to get together and tell stories? Were there special people who were assigned to tell

stories or would anybody?

Harriet: Just anybody would.

M: But some of them would get a reputation for being better storytellers?

Harriet: Oh yes.

M: And was that the same with singers and dancers or how were those chosen?

Harriet: Well, you see how they perform themselves.

M: So anybody could be what they wanted to be?

Harriet: Yes.

M: There was never anybody telling them what they should be?

Harriet: No.

M: And the people who were medicine men, how did they become medicine men?

Harriet: The medicines were handed down from their forefathers and you knew that they were always leaving the medicines and trying to get better medicine from the other people.

M: The medicine would go to their own children. Like a medicine man would teach his son. Would he teach somebody else if they wanted to learn?

Harriet: Yes, if they wanted to learn and if they paid for them.

M: How would you pay for it?

Harriet: Clothing and tobacco. And some used to give horses.

M: Are there lots of people who still know the old medicines? Do they usually know all of them or do you go to different people for different medicines?

Harriet: Different people for different medicines. One has the best medicine for this and that.

M: When people got really old and couldn't look after themselves, how were they looked after?

Harriet: Well, their children are supposed to look after them, I hope. (laughs)

Wilfred: You know, my parents used to go to Frog Lake many years ago. There was an old couple there, an old uncle of mine. He was called John Horse (oh he died years ago) and a certain part of the year, that was after New Years in midwinter they used to call it, my parents used to know the time where

the old people used to put the date, not the month generally, when they are going to make this medicine. And there was a hundred kinds of medicine. They were making it out of herbs and roots. It is hard to believe but that is the truth. I remember one time, we were on our way to visit and my parents say, "We are ready to go now." My mother came from McKewen you know, in Alberta, and we went out there for a visit. And on the way they said, "We will be there when old John will be making this medicine." And we stopped, we camped there with my uncle. And that night, he sat in the middle of the floor with his pipe and the sweetgrass. And the people knew when he was going to make this medicine that particular night. There was so many, that house was packed full. People sitting around. He had a big house. Two room building, you know, but that one place was strictly for this. The floor had been washed, cleaned up for that purpose. And each person, even the kids were given each, kind of a herb. It was wrapped up in a cloth and every person and child had to pound this into powder. There was a big dish where the old man was sitting, a great big dish. And every herb that was finished was poured, the old man poured this. Then he would take another kind. And it took a long time before everything was finished. These hundred different kinds of herbs were pounded into powder. And he was there with his pipe. He would say a prayer now and then, and then everybody would be smoking that pipe around certain times. Especially after everything was finished, he made a long prayer. So this was mixed, he mixed everything all together, he mixed it up. And every person that helped make that medicine, they got so much. They had jars, we carried jars, you know, and they would pour so much for every person. That didn't cost anything because we helped. But what remained, he put in a bag. It used to be a buckskin kind of a buckskin hide bag. And he would store this in there. So after that medicine was in that bag, anybody came there, he had to pay so much in clothing or tobacco. While you were in there, even just being in there, you got a little bit.

M: What was it used for? What did you use it for?

Wilfred: It was for everything. It was mostly for kids, sick children, sick babies. It was for anybody. You boiled water and poured it in a cup and used so much.

Harriet: You just didn't put it in any way, you know. You put it in each side first and go as the sun goes. And then in four different places and then in the center you had to stir four times and put that medicine in.

M: While it was boiling?

Harriet: Yes.

Wilfred: And that was one of the best medicines. Really, the best medicine I think.

M: Were there any prayers or anything you would say while you were putting this in?

Harriet: You thought of what you wanted the medicine to do for you. Like making a whistle or something like that.

M: You would say it out loud while you were doing it, or just think about it?

Harriet: No, think about it.

Wilfred: (Inaudible)..first though.

M: The four stops you make, it would always be like for the four directions?

Harriet: Yes.

Wilfred: Mrs. Cross, she would make that medicine yet, I guess. She was given down by her parents that she could make this medicine but I don't know if she bothers. Mind you, we never hear anything. We would sure go if she ever gets ready to make that medicine. Even if you are not sick, the old man used to say, well take it for a beverage, you know. Keeps you up in good health even though you are not sick.

M: Did you ever use it for a sick child and you got better from it?

Harriet: Oh yes. That is what we used to use.

Wilfred: A child would not get too sick you know. As soon as you know a child has a little ailment, that is the time you give him that medicine and it will get her better right away.

M: Do you remember any kinds of sickness your children had when you used it?

Harriet: We had, well Denise is... she's about 32, she had meningitis when she was small. And we just used herbs. We took her to the doctor after she got better and then the doctor told us that she had meningitis but it was over.

M: Is that right?

Harriet: She used to... I told the doctor the nature of her sickness. She had pains at the back of her head and she would scream or she would be playing and she would be screaming that the hurt in the back of her head. So I got one of the old ladies - she wasn't so old - I got her to doctor her and she used to boil herbs and as soon as they cooled off a little, then put them on the back of her head. And finally the sickness went down to her legs, she couldn't walk. She was running around when it started. She couldn't walk. That is when we took her to the doctor. She finally started walking.

M: Did you use any other medicine from the doctor too?

Harriet: She was better, but the doctor said that she will gradually know how to use her legs.

Wilfred: We had already give her sweat baths. That was the time we didn't go to the hospital. That is when we had to get special notes from the doctor, Dr. Hill. And most of the time he would think he was making them better, you know. That is how come a lot of children were lost. He didn't like the way, the way it is now. We wouldn't take anybody to the hospital unless he is sick.

M: This doctor lived right here?

Both: Yes.

Harriet: He never used any of those - what you call those - what they freeze now. Like he had a tumor here and he just cut it open, twice.

Wilfred: Kept coming back you know.

Harriet: Just with a knife.

M: Did they freeze it first or he didn't have anything like that?

Harriet: No.

Wilfred: Just I lie there, and the third time I asked him and he said, "You better go to Lloydminster." And that thing was so hard. It was opened two time before, and it was quite thick here. And the doctor that took it out, he says, "That is pretty tough." It took a long time for him to sew it up.

Harriet: He used to pull teeth without giving anything to the people. Just pull them like that.

M: Where was the nearest hospital?

Harriet: Lloydminster. We had no cars then. We had to go by team. It took us a day and a half.

Wilfred: Nobody could go anyway unless the doctor said to take the sick person. A lot of times it was too late in kids, you know.

Harriet: We lost one boy. He was about six months old and he would have been - how old is Roger now? He had broncho-pneumonia. And then we took him to the nurse here and they wouldn't come when he went for the nurse because the baby was very sick all night. And towards about five o'clock, she came and she knew that baby was sick. And they sent for a doctor in Lloyd and he came the next day.

Wilfred: The same evening.

Harriet: And he said, "He is too far gone. I can't take him." He had bronchopneumonia. He only lived for a little while, two nights.

M: Were you giving him any old medicines or Indian medicines?

Harriet: No.

M: There wasn't anybody around who had something for that?

Harriet: No. Your folks then, where were they?

Wilfred: They were home then.

Harriet: They weren't home. It was just us the first night. The next day they came.

Wilfred: My mother gave him, you know, medicine, but it was too late.

Harriet: (Inaudible)...and I was helping care so I had a nervous breakdown.

M: Right after that happened?

Harriet: At the same time because it was suffering and we couldn't give him anything and his time was up.

M: So then did you end up in the hospital too?

Harriet: No.

M: You stayed home the whole time?

Harriet: Yes.

M: Did they have nothing for the nerves or anything that would calm people down? Any kind of medicines?

Harriet: Oh yes. They used to give me herb tea and make a stock and I used to take that. And they would give you something for your heart. I have never taken, except of being in the hospital, I have never taken any white man's medicine for the heart. I always use the herbs. I have had three heart attacks.

M: Is that right? So when you have the attack, you end up in the hospital and then you come back?

Harriet: Yes, and when I come back I use herbs.

M: Where do you get - do you make them yourself?

Harriet: Well, I can make them myself.

M: Where did you learn to make them?

Harriet: From one of the ladies. I bought it.

M: Did she make it up especially for you or was it one she knew?

Harriet: One she knew. One that...when that old lady died last fall, she dreamt of a person that had died long ago. And she

dreamt that she gave her that herb and that medicine and told her to give it to people that have heart trouble.

M: And that is the one you use?

Harriet: Yes.

M: What do you make it out of?

Harriet: Flowers.

M: Different kinds or...?

Harriet: No, just one kind.

M: So can you make up a batch and keep it for a long time or...?

Harriet: Yes.

M: So how often...?

Harriet: Just once a year I take it and she has got some too. And that is handed down by our grandfather. And that's the one that we wanted to go to ? Lake to get. We got an auntie there. She knows the medicine and we are trying to go there and let her show us how it is done and what herbs to use. Because I have used that now. It works good so I used it when our daughter died and I nearly had a heart attack and I didn't have to go to the hospital.

M: This medicine, you just make it up and then drink it like a tea?

Harriet: Yes, or the one that I keep, I just could eat it like that. I haven't got anything wrong with me. The only thing I have with me is muskrat root.

M: Muskrat root?

Harriet: Yes, you want some of it?

M: Yeah. What is it for?

Harriet: Colds.

M: Is that the name of a plant or...?

Harriet: Yes. Here it is.

M: You just use this when you are getting a cold?

Harriet: Or if you have a stomach ache.

M: And you just eat it?

Harriet: Yes. Or you can boil water and scrape some of it off and put it in there.

M: Just like tea, the same way you make tea?

Harriet: Yes.

M: Where did you learn this one from?

Harriet: Grandmothers handed it down.

M: Where do you find the plant?

Harriet: Up north.

M: So you just cut a piece off?

Harriet: Yes, a little piece because you wouldn't (laughs)...

M: I'll let you cut it. How much do you take at one time?

Harriet: Just a little. This is the first time you are going to use this. For me, I use quite a bit.

M: Is it strong?

Harriet: Oh yes, taste it.

M: It is strong. I can't think of what it tastes like.

Harriet: It is strong.

M: You would have to be sick to want to take it. Tastes something like horseradish. When you take something like this, you put some tobacco back in the ground?

Harriet: Yes. This you find in the water.

M: How do you get it, in deep water or just at the edge?

Harriet: The edge.

M: It burns my tongue.

So, we got as far as the old people. What about people after they die? Were there any beliefs about the dead people?

Harriet: Oh, that they go to the Happy Hunting Ground.

M: Did they have anything like a hell? Did they believe there was anything like that?

Harriet: No.

M: Everybody went to the Happy Hunting Ground?

Harriet: Yes.

M: Was that supposed to be on earth, or did anybody know where the Happy Hunting Ground is?

Harriet: No, do you know where it is?

Wilfred: Nobody knows - up north or where no man has been.

M: All the people would get together again?

Harriet: Yes.

Wilfred: Sure. The only thing, the old people used to say anybody that did, well, you know, we heard about Indians stealing horses from each other. That was a great wrong thing and maybe killing each other at times when they were having those battles. They knew that it was a big wrong, you know. But they had to do it sometimes. Not all the time. There was a person that died, he would get up from his Hunting Grounds...that kind of person that did wrong, he would have a hard time getting to the Happy Hunting Grounds.

M: But he would still get there eventually?

Wilfred: Oh yeah, eventually, after suffering so much getting there. Like they said it just about get on top, the soul of a person, and he would slide off back to where he started from. And then it started all over again and that might happen several times but eventually he would make it. He had suffered enough for all he did on earth.

M: Oh.

Wilfred: That is the only thing, the punishment he got before he got there, you know.

Harriet: Like, there is a story that is of a guy, a man that took the - what do you call those things, those mounts that the white men have, he took one and threw it away. He didn't steal it. And when he died, you used to hear by where his body was, he would say, "Where shall I put it?" So a young guy was walking by and you could hear him shouting, "Where shall I put it?" So he said, "Tell him to shut up and put it where he got it from." And the voice from the grave, he said, thanked him for it.

M: Good advice. Were there any signs that would tell you when somebody was going to die? Did anybody know ahead of time when somebody was going to die?

Harriet: Well, you know, there would be some...like when there was nobody home and somebody would see a light in the house, they used to say, "Something is going to happen to this family," or a lot of things. Like just before we lost another boy, overnight the mouse had a nest inside my cookstove.

M: And that was a sign?

Harriet: Yes.

Wilfred: We were scared then.

Harriet: I was scared because there was a nest there overnight and we cooked them when we made the fire.

M: Did you know what it meant?

Harriet: No, I didn't know but we knew after the baby died.

M: Was this a sign the people had heard about before, a mouse nest in the stove, or was that a special sign for you?

Harriet: I guess so.

Wilfred: Usually get a warning you know.

Harriet: Just kind of a warning.

Wilfred: It might have been a warning but we didn't realize. After it happened, then we knew it was a warning but we didn't know. Life, no matter how careful you are sometimes, a person just falls down no matter how careful you are.

And there is another sign which usually proved as a warning, it still does, when a person dreams about fire or black smoke somewhere. Like this Thunderchild here. This little boy got killed here just last winter, three weeks ago. Well, the grandfather of that child dreamed that he seen black smoke around their...where their relations lived. And he kept on telling these young people, he says, "Leave this liquor alone you know, it is a very bad thing." I guess these young people were drinking quite a bit. He says, "You better slow down because I dreamed that our area here is just black with smoke." And it happened that his grandchild got killed there and his brother's son got shot in Cochin. Just like that. And people realized you know, these warnings came true. But they wouldn't take heed of it, they wouldn't listen.

M: Well, if somebody had a dream and you did listen, could you stop the death?

Wilfred: Yes, I think so. It would be prevented if the people listened in line with what the advice is.

M: So this old man's advice was to stop drinking. So, were they drunk when they got killed?

Wilfred: Yes. If they had prayed once instead of... thinking about God, you know. You better go back and put God first and leave this thing alone because it is going to cause some

trouble. He just walked right through, he died here. Last week the funeral was, I think. She, too, made a prediction, you know. The same thing. She had seen black smoke in one area where this man killed his common-law wife last week. Well, she predicted that this was coming because she saw smoke where there is a family living in a group. She said there is black smoke in there. And she predicted too that the liquor is going to cause something. You are going to be surprised. Somebody is going to be hurt in that family. Sure enough, this come true.

M: So had they followed her advice, they could have prevented it?

Wilfred: Yeah. If they didn't drink, you know, this might not happen. But they kept drinking and drinking until this happened. I think Mary would go by that, you know. There are a lot of good warnings, you know, fire and smoke....

(End of Side A, Tape IH-035)

(Side B)

Harriet: In the fall, when we found this stuff in the stove, I wonder how come they got through. It couldn't be from the chimney. It was on the heat tray where we burn the coals. (Inaudible) ...to open that stove, we fired that flue up and then in spring, his little girl died.

M: Did he know when the [] was in there?

Harriet: Oh, I suppose.

M: So, it could be always a different warning but fire was one that for everybody was the same?

Wilfred: Well, a lot of this too could be prevented. The old people used to say you take these predictions is something unbelievable happening. By praying or cook a meal like we did, and have a ceremony said and ask for better luck so this bad luck won't come... a lot of times it could have been prevented too. But most of the time the people don't go by anything like that. They just have a lot of bad luck, you know. But now, praying is the main thing.

Harriet: Like we heard that somebody crying; that is one a year ago. And we all listened to somebody crying on the west side of our place and we didn't know what it was and then we lost our girl last fall.

M: So that would have been a warning too?

Harriet: Yes. And my youngest daughter, she heard somebody crying outside our house so she ran around the house and there was nobody around. It was just a warning that something is going to happen to our family.

M: So when you heard the cry, you didn't start saying any prayers or doing anything to prevent any bad luck?

Wilfred: Yeah, we did but it's the cooking. I promised...I told certain people about it - that we would get some food, you know - and she would cook it and we would have a ceremony and pray all together, but we never did. I was beat all together doing it. I don't know how come I didn't. But it surely gave me the creeps, you know, when we heard that crying. We looked over there. There was nobody around there.

M: Did it sound like a child crying or...?

Wilfred: Like a woman, a full-grown-up person. And it was loud, you know, and I didn't know what... My daughter was so scared.

Harriet: And the time that the car horn...

Wilfred: Yeah. There was children and the car was outside and the horn just started and nobody was around.

M: Just by itself?

Harriet: Yes, just by itself.

Wilfred: That happened quite a few times. I seen it too. And one time there was an old car sitting by this old place here - he used to live south - and this horn started sounding. This was an old car, no battery in it. This was just a few days after his grandchildren died, you know. Jean's first kids, I think. She is married in Calgary now. We looked over here and checked if there was a battery and there was nothing.

M: Did he know it was a warning then?

Wilfred: He doesn't believe in that.

M: Oh, he doesn't. Well how would he explain it?

Harriet: Well, then you don't pay attention to it. If you...in the olden days the people used to believe in it, and now you don't want to believe in it and you think that it don't happen, and they laugh.

M: So you just ignore it. Do you know of any stories like of your parents or grandparents who would have followed these signs?

Harriet: How?

M: Just like the way you are saying now that you had these warnings, but did they ever talk about warnings that they had where they stopped the bad luck?

Harriet: Oh, they used to make pledges like make a Ghost Dance or something like that.

Wilfred: They would take part in a Sundance so no bad luck come, you know. Stop this coming bad luck.

M: Were there any stories where they knew that bad luck was coming or they knew what was going to happen and they stopped it?

Harriet: No.

M: So you never really know if you stopped it or not, you just hope?

Harriet: Yes.

Wilfred: Like I say, we prayed and cooking and asking God Almighty and the other people that pass on, you know, the souls of them to ask the Lord to help, them too, that we do it right. And I think it prevented it sometimes.

M: So you, when you pray, you can pray to the people who are dead already and they can help the people who are living?

Both: Yes.

Harriet: Have you ever heard of anybody interpret the prayers of an Indian?

M: No, I haven't.

Harriet: Boy, that is something to listen to. You should get somebody to interpret for you.

M: Well, Joe Belly said one prayer and they were given an idea of what he was saying but that was just a short one.

Harriet: Yeah, they pray to every root of the living things on earth and every blade of the grass, every leaf of a tree, to help them you know.

M: So they believe that the spirit or God's spirit is in all these things?

Harriet: Yes, because he made them so they pray to everything. I never used to listen hardly more. I cheered them but I never used to listen to what they mean but now I listen to them and it is... I think, I can understand them.

M: Are there special prayers they have or do they make up the prayers as they go along?

Harriet: Oh, they make up the prayers. They were taught by the elders the way they point the peace pipe and that. Different ways where they point and ...

M: Are there any stories of people who have died and their spirits coming back and communicating with people who are living?

Harriet: In the dream sometimes they will.

M: It would only be in a dream?

Harriet: Yes.

M: Do you know of any people who have had some of their relatives come back to talk to them?

Harriet: Well, they would dream of them. Like, my daughter, she dreamt that she saw her sister and that she was happy and looked real nice, the one that died last fall.

M: So would that have any special meaning? What would that be a sign of that she dreamt?

Harriet: It is a sign that she is well and gone where she was supposed to be.

M: So she would have gone up to the Happy Hunting Ground or whatever you want to call it.

Harriet: Yes. Or sometimes they would dream that they saw the one person that was dead dressed in black or his eyes are out here. That is a sign that you mourn for him too much. And with the black, the parents or the family of the deceased is wearing black.

M: What about if the person who died would say they were still suffering and hadn't got to heaven, would your prayers help them?

Harriet: Yes.

M: They could come back and ask you to pray for them in a dream?

Harriet: Oh yes.

M: Do you know of people who have done that?

Harriet: I have heard of them but I just can't remember them because sometimes a person would dream of somebody who is hungry and they want to eat this and then we make those feasts that we have every so often. We had one at the graveyards on Sunday and we are having one on Sunday at the R.C. graveyards, cemetery.

M: And you make their foods if they want it there?

Harriet: Yes.

M: Can anybody come to these feasts or just...?

Harriet: Oh yes.

Wilfred: There is prayers said and if there is anything hindering this person, the deceased, ask the Lord to save them and take them into heaven, accept them. There is a lot of praying or rituals about it, you know. Always, no matter if a person died years ago, we still pray for them. And pray to them too. Our hope is that they are up there and it is up to them to ask for us too. So that is what the elders, you'll hear them say.

M: So, when does the soul leave the body then? As soon as the person dies?

Harriet: Well, in the old Indian custom, it is four days after. Like, four nights after, that is when we have the

feast, after a person dies.

M: That is when you bury them?

Harriet: No.

Wilfred: Start at four.

M: When would you bury them then?

Wilfred: Oh, it depends. Most of the time they keep them two nights, three nights.

M: Does somebody stay up with them all the time?

Harriet: Oh yes. The whole family and relatives and friends come to a wake.

M: The wake is the feast that you have?

Harriet: No.

M: No, the feast is after they are buried.

Harriet: Yes.

M: So what do they do at the wake?

Harriet: Oh, we just sit around and talk and tell stories. The men tell stories.

M: Any special kind of stories or...?

Harriet: Not swearing anyway.

M: Just stories about anything else?

Harriet: Yes.

M: Do they talk a lot about the person who died?

Harriet: No.

Wilfred: The only thing, they talk to the bereaved, you know.

Harriet: Yes.

Wilfred: Certain people get up at certain times and talk to the bereaved. Console them.

M: And then four days after he died, you have the feast at the graveyard?

Harriet: No.

M: Where would you have it?

Harriet: At home, we generally have it at the home.

M: This is after the person is buried. Why is it always a four?

Harriet: Four days after?

M: Yes.

Harriet: I don't know.

Wilfred: Well, that is the time that the soul really left for the place where it is called from.

M: On the fourth day?

Wilfred: Yeah.

Harriet: That is the last time you have your meal with them.

M: But there seems to be something special about the number four. You don't know where it started?

Harriet: No.

Wilfred: It has been that way for years. Ever since the people have been on this continent they did it.

M: And what about the person's belongings, did they bury anything with him?

Harriet: No, not now.

M: Did they used to?

Harriet: Yes, years ago I guess. That is what I read in the histories.

M: Nothing that you remember from your grandparents talking or anything?

Harriet: No, just their personal... like a pipe... or you buried them with their clothes on.

M: Did they believe anything about the body, like, the soul would go to heaven but would the body ever come back to the soul?

Harriet: No, I never heard that. (Inaudible, speaks almost in a whisper) ...we had to make moccasins for the dead.

M: Would that be to help them find their way to the...?

Harriet: Yes.

M: And at the time when they were buried, was there any special ceremony? Who would have the ceremony?

Wilfred: The elders, before the body is...before the cover is put on for the last time. There was always somebody

that would say a prayer, and ask the soul of the deceased and ask the good Lord that we get up there too and wish us good health, good luck. Ask for us, you know, all these things. And after the funeral is over, that is one of our customs. Go around, all the people go around as the sun goes around the grave, and bid farewell and there would be somebody talking there too. There is so much. It is pretty hard to translate everything.

M: Well, they didn't always bury them in the ground. Do you remember any stories about the old Indian graveyards where they have the bodies up on the...?

Harriet: I don't know.

Wilfred: Not in our time. Not even our people, our parents, maybe. I don't think too. That was long ago, you know. They didn't bury it.

Harriet: Little graves like, there is one graveyard near our place there.

Wilfred: It must have been long, long ago. They used to put them up in the trees. They would put them on a platform in the trees. That must have happened years ago. I think it really happened though.

M: Yeah. I imagine it was before the white church came in.

Harriet: Oh yes.

M: Was there any difference in the funeral for a small child compared to an adult's.

Harriet: No.

M: Well, we still have some time on the tape. You were talking about some sayings. I forgot what it was already. Oh, about if a man couldn't hear...

Harriet: (laughs) We used to tell many. Joke each other. If a man was hard of hearing, we would tell him he made love to his grandmother. (laughs)

M: Do you know of any others? Well, do you know of any things you could do that would give you good luck or bad luck?

Harriet: No, try and live a good life. I guess that is all.

M: There was nothing like the superstitions we have now, like, things like...?

Harriet: No.

M: Was there ever any things that people could carry with them that would bring them good luck?

Harriet: I don't know. I don't believe in it so I don't know.
(laughs) A rabbit's foot like the white men do. We have too many rabbits here.

M: You don't remember any stories that, you know, from way back, things that happened in cold weather or snow or blizzards? Or how people used to survive?

Wilfred: Trapping.

M: What about predicting weather, did you learn any old ways of telling what the weather was going to be like?

Wilfred: Yeah, a little. I say those old signs don't work anymore. I don't know why. You see, especially on a new moon. There was a certain way that a new moon came out. The old people used to look at it and say it is going to storm or it is going to be good weather. For certain, they had this for the first quarter. And then on and on. And it used to work on account of that. But now, we go according to that, especially in the winter time. Most of the time I don't tell right anymore. Hardly, you know. Sometimes it does. You will see this circle around the sun in the daytime or you are sure there is a storm coming. I think that is one of the real signs that a storm is coming. When you see it. It is a real big circle or it might be two or three nights after. A small circle would mean the next day it will storm. It will be storming the next day. And when the sun sets, too, if you see red skies that means it is going to be windy. But if you see that real bright red sky for a long time, it is going to be warm for the next week. That is the old signs.

M: What about from the animals? Could you tell the weather from watching them?

Wilfred: Not very much. Muskrats in the fall, that is the only thing I can tell. It is going to be a hard winter when they build big houses in the middle of the lake in deeper water. Because they knew that the shallow places are going to freeze up, so they build where there is lots of water with old trees. That is the only thing I know of.

Harriet: Dogs, if they run around, you are going to have a storm.

Wilfred: If they are chasing each other around, you know, then there is a storm coming too.

M: That would be in summer or winter?

Wilfred: Anytime. It is going to rain in the summer, well they start by chasing each other around, and in the winter it is the same thing.

(End of Side B, Tape IH-035)

(End of Tape and Interview)

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