

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: SAMUEL BUFFALO 2
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PRINCE ALBERT, SASK.
INTERVIEW LOCATION: WAHPATON RESERVE
PRINCE ALBERT, SASK.
TRIBE/NATION: DAKOTA
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: SEPTEMBER 8, 1977
INTERVIEWER: SAMUEL BUFFALO
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD
SOURCE: SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD
TAPE NUMBER: IH-116
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 12
PAGES: 9
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Concise history of the Dakota Sioux and their movement to Canada.

COMMENTS: Mr. Buffalo makes a point to spell out all the names or words he speaks in the Dakota language. All the spellings come from his reference.
(Side A)

The time is 11:00 a.m., Thursday, the 8th day of September, 1977. I am Samuel Buffalo, a member of the Wahpaton Dakota Reserve, 94A. Birthdate is October 29, 1929. I lived most of my 47 years of life at Wahpaton located 10 miles northwest of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. During the third week and the fourth week of June, Mr. Robert Goodvoice, a councillor of the Wahpaton Band and also doing research work for the Saskatchewan Archives, interviewed me about recording some interesting accounts of Dakota history. I agreed to do that for him. But due to inconvenience, I couldn't get around to doing it for him until now. When I was hospitalized for twenty-one months, July 1974 until April 1976, the departments of occupational therapy and medical social services at the Victoria Union hospital in Prince Albert, had encouraged me to write these Dakota stories. Since then, I am practising in writing and verbal story telling on tape recorders. I have outlined several manuscripts for text books and Dakota language

courses. It is in this field that I am very interested to study. Ite Wapikida was my sponsor in my early childhood days, teaching me Dakota life development. Mr. James Black, known as Subba, now deceased, he was also a Candojuha Yuha, meaning a principal member of the holy dance religion. He taught me about Dakota religion and some accounts of Dakota history. In the fall of 1951, I used to visit him every evening and doing his chores. He will tell story after story until late at night. So here is one of the stories that I have outlined. I title it as Tioti Owihduhe.

In far off eastern lands, our ancestors journey westward. The Dakota people possess a small material, folded and preserved. At certain times it was unwrapped for their circle ceremony; this article placed open at the centre of four elders. It contained only a thin line of depicting a circle. That was the sacred object call Iwosu, meaning the seed of their purpose of life. The encircled elders spoke, pray, meditated, and refresh how to live. Then the circle ceremony closes with much excitement of joy. The Dakota informants claim it was the symbol of a promise by a mystery voice, a promise of a life beneath the sun descends. The life awaits with adorable homes, many arts to learn and pleasure for all. The Dakota people moved and seek for the new generation. A new formation was made a long time after the start of the path or the journey. The homes were placed side by side, forming a large circle. At the centre erect a big tipi called Tioti. It had two literal translations which were, "home and home" or

"life and life," usually described as home within home or life within life. The people protect the Tioti to exist. In turn, Tioti protect people to live. This was the beginning of their mutual relationship. The selected men conducting Tiyoti duties were called Tioti Yanka meaning Tioti residers. They made decisions for the people. Every day men of the Dakota movement visited Tioti to hear the latest decisions and plans to be carried out. This was their way of life for many, many years.

Again, many, many generations passed before another change was known. The Eyan, meaning the herald man, goes around the encampment informing the people, "We are the survivors of the Dakota minority movement. We are the descendants of the eastern generation and we will be the ancestors of the new generation. People be stern and be observant. You will live for the reward of the circle life with fourteen Niobe," meaning phases.

The newly developed life span was measured by one day and one night, one winter and one summer, four seasons, twelve moons, twenty-four times, forty times minimum and forty-eight times maximum, meaning complete. The spiritual aspect of the lifespan was measured by seven Caoehde, meaning stamps, translated as seven years. After thirteen Niobe, or ninety-one years, it was measured by Sagye Oehde, meaning Cane Mark. The total years was ninety-eight, or fourteen Niobe was the life span of circle life. The meaning of circle life was translated as birth child returns to age child. The Dakota Wicoti,

meaning encampment, now in modern term means community, modified a belief.

The smallest circle in a home was Oceti. The fireplace was constructed of stones placed in a circle at the centre of the tipi. Next, was the tipi in round form. Then the Wicoti, a large circle visualized as one huge tipi protecting people and their sacred centre, Tioti. Following to this was Sintomni, meaning the area as far as you can see around you. The final biggest circle, was upward as far as you can see, was Wakan Tanka, meaning moves mystery, commonly translated as most holy. There was one other circle of knowledge called Wa available for any purpose. So there were seven circles in harmony one with another, was the power of Dakota minority movement. And this was believed that the only formation on the road to a new generation.

Individual Dakota had one Niobe or seven years to search for his identity. His services were in this order: Oceti, Tioti, Wicoti, and Sintomni, visual area. The experiences of his services in four areas will provide one personal interest. This will develop a personality and a name. In supporting his identity was Dakota and the knowledge called Wa. The term Wa

was only utilized in meditation and a four day fast. A man must follow the procedure as discussed. For a girl given the choice to follow or restrict herself to home and community, because identity difference between a boy and a girl as follows: the male intelligence was evaluated on how strong and steady the feet demonstrated themselves; a female intelligence was evaluated on how active and attractive the hands demonstrated themselves. Only a foolish person will be concerned for facial or posture appearances.

Now, what skills did a Tioti produce? It commenced with the oldest child of the family. Every oldest son were named Caske and usually were trained to help old-age people and handicapped. Every oldest daughter were named Winune. They had the same training. The Tioti Owihduhe had two types of poors called Wisis, meaning the old folks or orphans living with grandparents. The next one is Tiokiti meaning the physically handicapped persons, mostly blind. The Caske and Winune duties were gathering fuel, hauling water, packing their belongings when moving the camp. Caske will hunt for Wizi and Tiokiti dwellers. Winune gathers vegetables and does the sewing and things like this for them. In earlier times the Dakota people were vegetarians -- some say 148, others say 150 plants for vegetables. Many stories mention Wahuwapa or Wannaheza, both terms meaning corn. It seems corn was the staple food for the Dakota people.

The Tioti system developed a good understanding of mutual relationship. Kinship became so important that people found a method of keeping a record of family trees and was a skill of everyone's concern. Another skill that every young man was encouraged to learn about, Sintomni. They study land formation, seasonal changes and all its inhabitants. It was

believed that the knowledge of Sintomni will maintain, in harmony with Tioti, a recording method known as Canya, meaning wood counting. One of Tioti Yanka kept record of Wicoichge, meaning generation. Each Tioti Yanka recorded once in his life. Pictorial writing of songs and messages were preserved. This was the reason why Dakota language has the words Toktopawinge, meaning one thousand. The next word is Woyawatanka, meaning one million. The Dakota people extend their counting method to a million.

The Tioti system educated its people about skills in these following order: Wicoun, meaning the work and the relationship between home encampment and Tioti. This was including homecare practices. The next one was Wicozanni, meaning health preserving methods. This was the most important science in the Tioti system. And Wicohtani applied to everyday living and food gathering and performing a work that was part of

maintaining in harmony. Wicoimagaga, meaning the social activities. Dancing was considered to be important. Next to it was the games and the social meetings and visits and so on. I should also mention the term Ituyaohan, meaning voluntarily acted, abbreviated to Ituhan, translated as donate. The donating practice was developed in Tioti for the sake of the Wizi and Tiokiti dwellers.

In the Tioti system, the time called Tu was measured by twelve moons, especially by four seasons. Every season the Dakota moved to a certain region for a different purpose. For example, during the summer season the Dakota people had their Oyate Okiju, meaning people gathered together, in a sense of annual celebration to perform different dances and games for young and old folks. The main event was the holy dance religion ceremony. Within the body of the holy dance consisted four circles. It began with one circle of encampment and one Tioti. Later one circle had doubled and then tripled and a fourth one was constructed. So the Dakota encampment had reached the stage of four Tioti representing each direction, a circle and facing each other. Each had a circle encampment. Each circle extended...

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

...Akipaptapi era, meaning when the Dakota nation was reduced to people at encampment level. The problems they experienced were relating to their motto, "we share and we live in harmony." The largest circle of home and the next to it were made up of strong, capable men and women in providing survival needs. The third inner circle was employed in preparing material needs, storing and preserving food. The fourth smallest circle were Wizi and Tiokiti homes. This formation, which identified the Dakota nation, came to an end. It was separated in four equal parts according to four holy dance religion practises. They were Caske Posin, the second one, Wahpe Atonwanna, the third band was Taode, and the fourth group

were known as Apehota. These were the four bands separated after the Dakota nation reached its height. Since then, when an encampment grows too large, they will separate in equal parts. It was the way to avoid problems among themselves and externally. Everything to be shared was hard to do, as a nation living all together struggling with famine. The problem progressed to religion group practices. Each group competing in miracle developing lead to threatening methods with Kicicunza,

meaning cursing one another, and finally Kicihmunga, meaning killing in secret way. The external problem can be described as the nation was too big to remain at one region for a full season. To maintain in harmony with nature was hard to do. But Wicoti, meaning community approach, was easier to do without much hardships. So the process of dividing continued on. The sub-names of Dakota were developed according to a region or their costumes. One Dakota encampment received its name -- a traveller came upon a Wicoti, an encampment, it was erected on a flat land without a pond or lake or river in sight. The visitor, curious, searched for water provision, made him ask a question. "Where is your water hole or do you people lick the morning dew?" he asked the crowd. Since then the people of the encampment were known as Cusdipa Oyate, meaning people of dew lickers. The Dakota also had second name as Isan Atonwanna, meaning knife dwellers. The Dakota language was recognized by the suffix 'da' and 'dan'. The tribe that identified the Dakota as Isan Atonwanna, to date is abbreviated as Santee, had never been known. Some say the name 'knife dwellers' developed by Dakota people finding the material suitable for a cutting tool. Others say the eastern Dakota contacted the white traders at the Gulf of the Mississippi and obtained knives from them. The term Sioux was recently developed. Under the name Sioux are three main divisions as Dakota, Nakota, and Lakota, to date commonly called as Santee, Youngton, and Tayton.

However, the subdividing process among the Dakota did not extinct the annual gathering called Oyate Okiju. Each summer season, the Okiju were held at many locations by Dakota Ospaye, usually translated 'band'. The annual Under the Big Top Celebration held on many Dakota reserves today is an old Dakota idea. It will trace back to the Oyate Okiju based on one earlier discussed activity known as Ituhan. Still today, Ituhan is active as ever in the sense with pride but the original meaning is lost.

The conclusion of Tioti came into the first phase. It began with territorial clashes among the Indians. The eastern and the southeastern country were inhabited by settlers. Different tribes started moving closely together as the U.S. developed westward. The natives fighting each other can be observed as clashes, not wars. The Dakota term Ozuye illustrated itself as an attack process to strike the target and returned without a stop. The Ozuye tactics were carried out as described. The next was the territorial losses. The settlers, army posts, missionaries, traders, and gold diggers

were claiming lands. The treaties were violated by illegal traders. Soon Dakota people were forced to take a stand for their limited land called reservations.

It only happened once to the Dakota people in Minnesota when a small party of Dakotas were involved. They fought with white settlers now known as the Minnesota Massacre. Soon after, the U.S. army retaliated against the whole Dakota nation. Many sub-bands had no knowledge of the fight that took place in Minnesota but the U.S. army attacked any native encampment as long as they were Dakota. By that time, many Dakota bands were settled on reservations in Minnesota and North Dakota. They dwell in log and brick houses pursuing farm and stock raising occupations. Even they were included in some of the raids by the United States army. What was left of once the Tioti Owihduhe? The Dakota people were disorganized and language was silenced in confusion -- the proud words that used to be, "We are the survivors of the Dakota minority movement. We are the descendants of the eastern generation. We will be the ancestors of the new generation." But now, the Dakota people were scattered and fled, fleeing to survive. The Dakota who are now residing in Canada won this right in the Seven Fire treaty with the British government in 1812. And this is why there was no hesitation for some of the Dakota people to enter into Canada.

Now, about the major Wosice meeting occurs. Tangible aspects were the United States army, famine, and diseases. The three created only a shadow of death on the Dakota people. My great-grandfather, known as Chief White Cap, and his band story as follows. The region they occupied was the western part of the Dakota plains along the Missouri River and northeastern Montana. The messages that were brought to his Wicoti (encampment) were hard to believe. But he continued roaming his territory, grazing his herds of horses. At that time they were engaged in horse trading with other tribes. Their Dakota Wookiya, meaning peace-making, extended to other tribes. In the meantime, a message reached them that drew their attention. A journey, a short distance away, the Isan Tanka, meaning big knife, referring to the army, approached and destroyed a Dakota encampment. The army was known as Pehin Hanska, meaning long haired, referring to General Custer. So Chief White Cap sent his scout out to investigate but was turned back by the army. So without delay, the encampment dispersed in different directions. That was the final end of the White Cap Wicote in the sense of the Tioti system. They neglected their property including the herd of horses. They came straight and fast to Canada. They roamed around in the area of Cypress Hills, Saskatchewan, to Fort Garry, Manitoba. Finally the Canadian government granted him a reserve near Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

The hardships of diseases, famine, and the United States army were experienced by Chief White Cap without doing anything wrong to the United States government. The Dakota people in Canada made themselves a good reputation of willing to work and learn. For this reason they had no problem with the Canadian government to settle on the reserves.

The Dakota bands reside on seven small reserves in the provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. They are Wahpaton, located ten miles northwest of Prince Albert, White Cap Reserve near Saskatoon, Standing Buffalo near Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, Bird Tail Reserve near Birdle, Manitoba, Sioux Valley, Griswold, Manitoba, Pipestone Reserve, Pipestone, Manitoba, and Long Plain Dakota Reserve near Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. The mentioned seven reserves did not rebuild the Tioti formation, but had employed many ideas from the Tioti Owihduhe. But the Santee, commonly called the Sioux camp, located two miles north of Little Red River park at Prince Albert, were known to be last with Tioti Owihduhe. At this location, one section of land was given to them for a reserve. But later, one section was reduced to one quarter for some unknown reason. The Dakota people were numbered about 100. The elders appointed Mr. Willie Gun, better known as Hupehan, to be a Tioti Yanka. His leadership ended about 1920. They select a small suitable area for residence along the Little Red River. Their little log cabins were built closely together forming an oblong circle. Near the north end, a hollow was erected for social events. They reside there only in the winter seasons. Spring season, about the end of March, they move to south of Prince Albert. The spring trapping muskrats, farm hands, planting gardens and odd jobs in Prince Albert were done by the Dakotas. Summer season they continue with casual labor and picking berries for income. One or two days of dance will bring them together at the little opening area called Tinta near their reserve. Then one day of Prince Albert fair in July welcome the Dakota people living nearby to provide one of the main attractions of dancing performance. In August, the ones that owned horses will go to their hay meadows winter feed. Work was performed in group management. After completing their hay-making they will return to work as farm hands and harvesting work. The autumn season promotes Tioti Yanka. Mr. Gun calls a meeting for all able men. They will discuss the home preparation for the oncoming winter. Usually before the first snow storm all homes were prepared for the winter. The wood fuel was gathered and distributed to the

homes. Their old folks and widows with children were given extra care. Meanwhile, several boys will go hunting big game. On their return, they will distribute the meat to every home. All the activities were measured by the seasons. This new adjustment with Tioti principles was good while it existed.

The flu epidemic in 1919 corrupted the last working Tioti. About a dozen families survived and were moved to the Wahpaton Reserve 94A about 1921. Their reserve consisting of one quarter of land was transferred to, as Wahpaton 94B.

Let's review the discussed topics now. The Tioti Owihduhe progressed from a small circle sketched on a material as a symbol. Then developed a Wicote formation with a mutual relationship. The Dakota belief was that the Tioti was inspired by circle powers in harmony. An individual Dakota felt secure to understand the circle powers. His acquired

knowledge will be identified in Tioti Owihduhe. Whatever skill that a Dakota chose to do, it will be based on "we-share" diligence. All accomplishments were evaluated on Tioti's approval because Tioti had a custom of praising a person known as Iwakci. All the daily work was reported to Tioti. The ones approved by Tioti members, an elderly man who will sing including the doer's name with the wordings of the song, then he will announce what that person had done. This was the way an individual recognized pride in developing a skill. Without Iwakci, there was no pride. Every person was educated to be Wicote Akikta meaning encampment wise because Wicote functioned on health, home, hunting, and pleasure. These areas need an exchange of constant attention and advice. If neglected the Wicote problems will prevent living appreciation. The last surviving Tioti Yanka, Mr. Willie Gun, better known as Hupehan, he purchased five acres of land to make his permanent home at Cloverdale District. He became a faithful taxpayer for over twenty years. In October, 1944, he died at the Wahpaton Reserve 94A.

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