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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Adam Solway, born Browning, Montana, orphaned at 8 yrs. and adopted by Blackfoot Reserve, Alta. Attended residential school and later became councillor and then chief on the reserve. One of the Indian representatives in negotiations with federal government on 1969 White Paper, Canadian Constitution and aboriginal rights.
- burial practices on Blackfoot Reserve
- description of life at Crowfoot Residential School
- smallpox epidemic (1860s)
- Blackfoot Reserve: management of, land surrender, CPR land agreement
- permit system
- comments on contemporary lifestyles, leadership

Tony: This is an interview with Adam Solway on January 29, 1983 on the Blackfoot Reserve.

Christine: Did you just finish your term as a councillor at this last election.

Adam: Okay, I guess we'll start in 1926. That was my year of wisdom, knowledge. In these particular years there was about somewhere around 600 or 700 Blackfoot Indians. And as the years went on they multiplied up to the present 3,000 or so Blackfoot Indians. And during these periods of time, I went -- I originated from the Browning, Montana tribe. In my early age of 4 and 5, my dad and mom migrated north.

Q:
When would that have been?

A:
1923, or 1920, somewhere around in there. And there was no such things as cars them days. Only the wealthy people would have a Model T or a Model A. And we was one of these people that used to cover a lot of country in team and horse, and an old milk cow leading behind the wagons. And we used to work -- my dad used to work on his travels, migrating north, for farmers on the way in order so that we could have grub on the table. So as we was moving north, he kept on working until he got to the place where he was. And then on our return back to the States, we winded up on the Blackfoot Crossing. My dad had relatives here. He had a distant relative by the name of High Eagle. And this old man invited him over to his house and we camped by his house there in 1926.

And that same fall, my dad was working for Indian Affairs, that was a stock man--feeding cattle, repairing fences. And they used to have a lot of open graves all over. And the chiefs at the time--they were life-time chiefs--hired him to dig holes and put the remains of these deceased people into these holes and bury them properly. And he done that for a living for a while. Finally I guess he got spooked out of there. There were some mean spooks so he quit the job and went back to the feed camp.

While at the feed camp in my early age of 8, my mother died. And that same fall, my father died. This was in 1927. From there the chief at the time was Duck Chief, and the rest of the life-time chiefs, they had pity on us. There was 8 in the family. There was 4 boys and 4 girls. And as of now, I'm the only one surviving, and my sister--that's the baby of the family--is in Peigan Reserve.

However, the old principal, Father Rio, came down and took us to the residential school, Crowfoot school, which was run by the Oblates at the time. Indian Affairs had nothing to do with it. It was an orphanage, a residential school. And my oldest brother went back to Browning, Montana. And as of today I never seen my brother. Maybe he's dead. That's the oldest boy. Anyways I grew up in the residential school which was a real strict institution. We had a lot of respect, even though the teachers would tell us--my wife is here to back me up--they used to tell us, "You teach us how to talk English". On the other hand, they forbid us to talk Blackfoot. They said, "You talk English," and they expected us to teach them to talk English where ourselves we can hardly talk English. So this went on.

Q:
What language did they speak, Adam?

A:
French. They all come from Quebec. There's some old geese

over here yet. Seventy, eighty year old geese in there, three or four of them. However, they taught us how to sew, how to darn your socks--girls and boys. They said if you're single, some day in the future you're going to utilize this. You'll know how to look after your clothing and wash them and iron them. Wash your sheets and shirts and you name it. All this was very good. And to save whatever we could save. We used to be dressed with the army clothing. And our Sunday suits would be army clothes again, only these were new army coats--them big long khaki coats. Go to church with them on cold days in the winter time. Boy, they were warm. Army boots and army socks, and the girls they had another uniform. It looked like to me that they sewed it all up or something like that. They made their own garments. But these were surplus clothes from the army I imagine from the 1918 war. The contributions came from the government I imagine. So anyways we utilized these things.

And we come home, and go back to school in September, with our personal belongings which we won't see until next June. And the girls were held in school them days. They don't let them go out for holidays. We used to call these 'vacations' - two months holidays. But the boys went, but they kept the girls back.

Q:

Why was that?

A:

Just not to get themselves into trouble, eh. They let the younger girls go but there was an age limit on that, Mom, eh. Fourteen?

Mrs. Solway:

It was too young.

A:

No no, the age limit was 14 was it?

Mrs. Solway:

I think so. Fifteen.

A:

Fifteen up to eighteen they held them at the school. There used to be a lot of doings: sundances, tobacco dances, ghost dances and you name it. The culture was really strong them days. And the old people that was walking around, some of them had these old blanket pants yet and the blanket over their shoulders. Some of them had coats but they usually use a blanket. And the old ladies had ankle-length dresses, moccasins. That's all they wore. And I'm the only one left of the tribe that's wearing moccasins. And there it is here--you can't deny that. And I just bought another moose hide here to supply me for the year. And everybody was tanning hides, making moccasins, beaded belts, you name it. Everybody was happy; there was no welfare, no nothin'. They were a self-supporting tribe. They had band funds, maybe \$6 million

in band funds.

Q:

And where did that come from?

A:

That's out of the sale of land in 1908-1910. And this was another item there that we were still arguing with the government to straighten that up because this was not a valid surrender. However, that was before my time, and we're left here to try to collect something from the government--take over from the old chiefs.

But while I'm still on the school system, they wake us up 6:00 in the morning or maybe us boys it would be 4:00 in the morning to go out milking cows. We used to milk 21 head of cows, make our own butter, and we got to do that before breakfast, every morning, and milk cows in the evening.

Mrs. Solway:

Girls go to mass.

A:

Yeah, you fellas go to mass but we don't. There is times there that we have to go to mass. And then these kids, the Sisters would wake these kids up about 5:00. "Let us bless the Lord," that's the first word they get. Everybody gets up. Kneel down, say the morning prayer. Go and wash up, get ready for service. An hour service--they prayed all during that time. They go down for breakfast; they say the grace again; they start eating. Then they say another grace after they finish eating, giving thanks to the Lord. Then they do the housework: dusting, shining floors, washing the floors. You gotta do that within the time limit before you go to school. Eight o'clock comes around, everything has gotta be spic-and-span.

Therefore you get ready for school; you go to school, kneel down again. Pray before you start educating yourself, and then you get back to the books, and your teacher is right there. There was only 27 girls in my time and there was only 18 or 19 school boys. However, two small little classrooms. One was a junior classroom we call it and the other one was a senior classroom.

We got our education through these French Sisters...teachers. At lunch break, we pray. Go and eat, have lunch...we pray again before we eat. After you eat, you pray again. Go into school and get in the classroom...you pray again. Then after class, you pray again. Then 5:00 there's another service. You go and pray for half and hour.

Between the 2 hours that you got left before bed time, you can play ball or rugby or something like that. If it's hockey in the winter time--we play hockey in the old sloughs. There was no rinks or nothing. We gotta take a shovel and go and shovel the snow off the ice first and try to make the best of the ice anyways. And when we play hockey we used to use ordinary socks

with paper strips here, just like to mark--to identify your team mate in the hockey game. And an old paper shield in front of you. Well, that's C.S.--Crowfoot School. Okay, that's the hockey team. And we cut the legs off these army pants, just short, and put a strip, red strip there. And that's good black hockey pants. Something like the Chicago Black Hawks or something like that (chuckles). However, that was the team. We used to play Old Sun School. That was the other school up west at Gleichen and the town there, the community of Cluny and Gleichen. That's about all.

And these were open ice. Maybe these games would be played out in the slough, eh. We had no lights or nothing. And getting back on the reserve them days, we had no electric lights, no phones. Just the chief had electric light, and the policeman, and the interpreter, and the Indian agent. That's all there was.

In 1929 they started this economic development, I'd call it today--them days it was just agriculture. As you go politically then they start using these political words. But them days were just barnyard language, some of that. And when I say this lingo here, you can't express yourself in public, because we respect the people. And these fellas, these old guys I was talking about, they used to carry their whips--riding quirts and boy, they mean business. If you're criticizing them or laughing, making fun out of them, boy they'll just use that quirt and show you where they stand. And we respected them on these conditions. If anybody wants to be tougher than them, they mean life and death. "All right if you want to face me on these particular issues, we'll see who's tough." And they mean business. They'll kill each other. The best man lives eh, so to speak.

Q:
Did that happen very often?

A:
No, they respected each other. But there is some cases where a lot of deaths occurred. It wasn't strict. When a person dies, that person's gotta be underground or in the graveyard before dark, because they were scared of each other, eh. The spirit, the ghost of that dead person might interfere with you. So in

this regard, they'd just put him on a blanket and get an old wooden coffin, and a little gray felt in around there. Some of them was just a straight wooden box. Then go and put them in the graveyard. And if you haven't time to bury them, well just leave them there. Next day you go out and dig a hole, maybe 2,3 feet deep and put them in there.

But they were restricted from putting any more people in open graves. That's why my dad took the job to bury these people properly. Nobody wants to do it. They were superstitious amongst the Blackfeet. It took an outsider to do that. So I think we contributed towards the Blackfoot decency of living by doing so. And I can compliment my dad too on that. However, they used to take these people that's dying--sometimes there's

no wakes or nothing. If the person dies in his house, he dies in his house. Leave him there alone, and they'd take off. Next morning they come in and put him in a blanket, put him in a -- and then go bury him. Or if he dies 2, 3 hours before sunset and if there's a hole dug already, they'll just put him in the coffin and go bury him right away. And a lot of these old cemeteries where they're caved in--cattle tramping on these old graves--we used to look at these old skeletons. Some of them would face down. Maybe they came back to life and just--they were so scared you know, and they didn't give them a chance to die hard I guess, so to speak. They buried them so quick they didn't even have time to say "I'm dead, don't bury me". Regardless, they just buried him. But after years passed--well the poor bugger must have come alive eh, and suffocated. That's why the skeletons were face down.

Then again there's another restriction that these people that bury their dead bury them deeper than that. So they went down four feet. And as the years rolled by they went down six feet. They made sure that these ghosts stayed down there...they don't come back up and fool around.

(Mrs. Solway-inaudible)

A:

Yeah, they were kind of restricting anybody to dig a hole two, three feet, eh. You gotta have that four foot or six feet.

Q:

But before your dad came along and dug all those graves, before that people just left them out in the open, on the surface?

A:

Well, yes. The way it started, when these people...the survivors, the 500-600 people that survived, there's some old fellas here that were still alive but they're dead and gone now. Just, oh a matter of a few months back--you could see the old scars yet on them.

Q:

Just a second. When you said these 500 or 600 that survived, what are you talking about?

A:

That was the time when they had that smallpox.

Q:

When was that?

A:

This was in the 1800s, somewhere around in there. I couldn't elaborate the exact year on that.

Q:

Just before the turn of the century?

A:

Yeah. That's when they sent all these blankets from the old

country...diseased blankets. And try to kill off the Indian people. And this kind of got into the Indians...just gave blankets to the Indians and the germ was there. And they were dying like flies. According to what I was reading here the other day, there was an old fellow from Saskatchewan...John Tootoosis's book... he says the biggest population was the Blackfoot Reserve. And everybody was scared of them...they were fierce...in battles, internal battles. That's why these Cree Indians went and hid in the bush...and they're still out there. And the Blackfeet stayed out in the prairies, so when this disease spread out, boy it just spread out like flies. In a matter of an hour, 2 or 3 hours, 2 or 3 days, you're dead. And the only way to control it was to leave the dead person where he is and run away from that camp eh, running away from this disease. And when they controlled it, there was 500-600 Blackfoot Indians left. And there was only a thousand left in Cardston. There was only maybe 150 in Peigans, must be only 50 people, Sarcee. And Stoneys, they must be less than a thousand.

These were the days when I witnessed the 500-600 people. And these were the survivors. That's what I mean by survivors. The plague was there eh, smallpox. But I don't know the exact year. This was before the turn of the century. But the survivors of that disease were still alive, and I seen them. And that's the story that they told me. My dad used to tell us that, but I was too young to realize what was happening. It brings to my attention now that I guess this actually happened.

So that's the ghost story. And they just leave these people on hills all over...open graves. They just go and take another camp some other place. Somebody else die there they put them away and take off. Travelling through the reserve there's a lot of open graves yet that you could see. I'm sitting on one of them right here. This used to be a graveyard. Any hill that you see is graves...not dug graves, open graves. And down here by the monument, some of them used to bury them on the crutch of a tree...their tipi poles and they just put them on there, and dry up up there. So I seen these myself personally, but I didn't see the burial services of these things, but the remains are still in there. This was in the early '30s when I was old enough to travel alone in the bush out here. And I seen a lot of things in that bush. I seen a lot of skulls, open graves, material that the person owned, personal belongings, tipi poles and you name it, dishes and all their belongings. They didn't want to touch that. They just took off.

Well things changed since. When we learned how to milk a cow, seed a garden, potatoes, vegetables, harness a horse. Of course the old people taught us this too at home. Know how to harness a horse, water a horse, how to look after your horses, how to farm. All this...carpenter work... and the limit to education--grade 4. Some of them didn't even get to grade 4. They drop off when they're in grade 1 or something like that, or maybe the teacher would blast them out or something like that. They'd just take off.

Q:
How long did you stay in school?

A:
Grade 8. That was the limit them days. Indian Affairs didn't want us to go beyond grade 8. And I was 16 years old when I was in grade 8, and I was left the remainder of the two years that I had to put in my term at school in the field...working horses, milking cows, raise a garden.

Q:
At what age were you let out of school?

A:
Eighteen.

Q:
So you had to stay from 16 to 18 working for the school.

A:
Right.

Q:
Did you get anything for that?

A:
Nothing. So I left. Looked around the reserve, nothing to be done. Lot of work. Fellas were happy. There's work here and there. It's either cattle or fixing a fence, or repairing fences. Used to make roads with the team. Use your Fresno bucket, plows, you name it, scrapers. There's a lot of roads I could still point the finger exactly where I was working myself with the team--scrapers, Fresnos. Everything was horse powered. Threshing--the old steam engines...24 bundle racks. Coal was hauled in there to fire the old steam engine. Water had to be hauled in...water tank. And grain hauled into town with horses. Some of them 8, 10 string of horses pulling the big grain tank. I worked on these outfits, and I was pretty young when I was out working. I must have been about 18, 19.

Q:
Who were you working for?

A:
Working for people that takes the contract of threshing, eh.

Q:
Those would be people from the band?

A:
No no, these are white people. There was no such things as tractors on a reserve them days. It used to be just these old steel lugs and John Deeres. However, I was working there, hauling grain, or if it's not hauling grain it would be on the stook racks, binders, stooking some place else.

And the people were very generous and respected each other. They contributed their time on their portion. If I was to get threshed here, my neighbors in the surrounding area, they'd

come out and offer themselves with their wagons, horses or what have you, to get through with the harvest. And we go to the next field, we do the same thing, until we're through with this area. And this went on right through the reserve. We didn't stick out the palms of our hands and put a quarter or a dollar bill--you put that on there first before I help you. We helped each other. If a fella shoots a cow or a moose of his own, he shares it. He doesn't want nothin' out of it.

And I remembered a lot of times...the people used to have meat rations. There was somewhere around 7,000 head of cows on the reserve. This was after I left school. Now I'm starting to work eh, go on my own, because I got no dad, no mother, nobody to go to. I start riding horses, breaking horses...until I fell in love with my wife. And then her grandfather had about a thousand head of horses. Started breaking some horses... maybe that's when she started to like me. "There's a good cowboy; I'm gonna marry him."

Q:
Who was your father-in-law?

A:
Frank Medicine Shield. He died, oh about 20 years ago eh. And her mother died too about 7, 8 years after. But the old man I'm talking about is old Hind Bull...that's her grandfather. He's the guy with a lot of horses. And their horses used to run from the coal mine boundary line on the south side right to the other end of the boundary...the Bassano coal mines around the river edge. Sometimes both side, from Crowfoot down here down to Bassano, there'd be some in there. And there were cattle alongside of it. Not only old Hind Bull had these horses. There was a dozen or so, maybe more...hundred head of horses a piece, maybe 150,200 head, 300 head. Another old fella I remember, Three Suns, he's another guy that run horses...maybe a thousand head. It was in Shouldice-Arrowwood area. Old Boy Chief had a bunch of horses in Arrowwood. You name it--Jack Big Eyes' father, Jim Big Eye. Heavy Shield's up there. And Ayoungman. A lot of these old fellas had horses. So, there must have been somewhere around close to 5 or 6,000 head of horses plus your 7,000 head of cows. And the band used the herd for livelihood. As an individual owner, they didn't have enough pasture for themselves individually so they ran them as a community herd. And now they tell us--and I don't believe that because I know the reserve too good--there's shortage of grass. They're trying to eliminate the number that I own or you own or whoever has got cattle...25, 30 head. I think this is very poor propaganda.

Q:
Why are they doing that?

A:
There's not enough grass they say. Why lease out these grazing leases to white outside ranchers and getting fat on Indian grass? That's why these pastures are all over-grazed. The white man is grazing them all--even though we've got 500 head

of band herd. There's not enough grass they say. It's poor management to me. If there used to have been 7,000 head plus the horses I mentioned, and these pastures are the same, excepting this big lease over here--that used to have been all pasture land. But we had a referendum on that whether to break it or leave it as is. Through prejudice of some bands--you see today we're living a prejudiced life...hatred, selfishness. These three items here is killing the people. Prejudice outvoted the people that want to leave that grass as is because it's not qualified agricultural land. It's just grazing land. However, they started breaking it up and say, "You'll have more rations." We used to have cash rations...ration money we used to call it...lease money. They said, "If we lease it out, it will give you that much more dollars in your pocket." Prior to this cash deal, the cattle I've been mentioning, what I called in them days...my lingo was that it's a wet pasture. That's cow and calf operation on this side. Across the reserve there would be about close to 5,000 steers, consisting of yearlings, two year olds and three year olds. Now these are individual owned but they're in a community herd. And in Arrowwood there would be somewhere around 3 to 4,000 head--old cows, dry cows and yearling heifers. That's what we used to call a dry pasture. Keep them away from the bull...we don't want to breed these because the old cows we're gonna kill them off, the dry cows we're gonna kill them off.

All the cows I mentioned in the dry pasture were rationed out. We used to kill 5 or 6 or 7 head for the east end, and maybe 9 for the west end, because according to the population eh. The west end has got more people and the east end's got less people. So naturally they'll take less, and maybe more for the west. Every Thursday, rain or shine, you gotta get your rations...10 pounds apiece. If you're 10 in a family you got a hundred pounds of beef. You got your flour...7 pounds of flour...one scoop. That's for one person. You got your siksikimi ...what you gave me here. That's tea eh. This is a smaller scoop for that...1 scoop for each individual. If you're 10 in there, you're doing pretty good.

Q:
Did you have to go somewhere to get this?

A:
Yes, there was a ration house, a slaughter house we call it.

Q:
Where was that?

A:
That was over here by the old monument...Crowfoot monument here. It was on the flats. And there was another one up west, a North Camp they call it. Maybe what I could recall from the old times, the South Camp is for the east end, eh. And the North Camp is for the west end. All right, the terms that they use is very important. According to our treaties, to what I could gather from way back. Now I might be jumping here and there, but when I come to these questions--why, where--I gotta

try and put something in there to fill in. Why they call it North Camp, the reserve at the time of the treaty extended as far as Red Deer, right down to Maple Creek into Saskatchewan. And right to the border of Little Bull. That's by Carmangay there some place.

So the railroad came in. Made a deal with old Crowfoot. Okay, "the south side track", the rail itself--when I say a track, that's the rails--"would belong to you. And the north side one will belong to me." That's what CPR said. And the ties, they're wood--you see you got the prairie here--you can go a long ways to get firewood. "We replace these ties every year. We'll throw them on the south side so that you can have free access to them ties. You can have them to burn." This was the agreement. "And whenever you're travelling from coast to coast on this rail, on the train, you'll have half fare. We pay half for your fare and you pay half for your fare." Amen.

Q:
Would that work just for Crowfoot or for everybody that got that?

A:
Well, for the Indian.

Q:
Everybody.

A:
So he says when you get as far as Bassano, "No, I don't want that track to come through my reserve"--that's Crowfoot. "No, you're gonna kill our horses, our people." "No, you'll get compensated. It's just for the duration. Give us enough time to build this other track around. But you'll have all these privileges. You'll get the wood burning, you'll pay half fare. It'll be closer for you guys to get your groceries,"--because they'll be hauling groceries to Crowfoot, Cluny, Gleichen and drop them off there. Then it's closer there than going way around. Calgary was the only shopping market. Well this was the time of Crowfoot, eh, and these were some of the things I heard on these agreements. "We're gonna fence the right-of-ways on each side of that track. Anything that's killed is gonna be compensated--reimbursed whatever losses he's got--by the CPR." And today the CPR is ignoring these things. They kill a lot of people, kill a lot of animals. We're lucky sometimes to get anything out of them. And no insurance coverage on a live person. They just kill them like a dog. Nothing come out of it. However, that's beside the point. That ends it there. These were the agreements.

Getting back to the rations...and then it came so that the band thought it cost them too much to winter their cattle. The individual thought it was too much...\$15 a head, eh. If you got a hundred head or 50 head, there's a lot of money involved. Yet, you sell wheat them days at 45 cents a bushel. Ten cents a bushel for threshing it, eh. So you got 35 cents to the good. After the sale of that land across there in 1908, 1910, they never mentioned the royalties. The surface was the only

thing that was sold and surrendered, but not the royalties or the minerals. And I got documents here that says, "royalties, minerals". Silent. And that's what we're fighting today, trying to get them back. There's about 7, 8, 9 wells in one corner. Running right around that streak of surrendered land, there's about another dozen up that way. Inside the reserve there's nothing. They're trying to siphon off all that oil from the reserve. However, I didn't live in that era of surrender but I could read the documents after I got into politics in 1957.

I made a living by punching cattle, working for outside white people in the winter time. I worked for the band herd for 15 years. And I lived in the log house for 20 years until I established myself here--and that's my little two-room shack across there. Just a little house over here that I helped the carpenters them days build it. That's why I'm remodelling my house today. I learned something from them old fellas. I'm renovating my own place here. The band doesn't have to spend nothin'. I do it myself...outside of plumbing and heating. Well that's their expense. And that little shack that you come in...that little porch...I built that myself. So you can't say I never learned anything...I'm stupid or anything...I learned something. But through the boarding school also...learned how to harness a horse, work a horse, feed a horse, water a horse. Chickens...I used to have chickens here but the minks got the best of it...weasels. It's right out in the open. This was all virgin land here.

I broke all this up myself. Mother here, she had all these little youngsters...3 or 4 of them dragging on her apron strings. And then she was pregnant...and this is some of the rocks I got out. You see that old rock? It looks like an Indian sitting down with a blanket over him. Just take a good look at it. I just brought it out this fall here right in the heart of the field. And that's some of the size of the rocks that were all in this field here. And they're all right around. And I barricaded this field here with them rocks. Over the years the erosion of the soil covered them up. You can't see any of them today but you dig in and there they are. That's the proof.

Mother was there...she was pregnant...pushing rocks, you know. Done the best. Them little chicks...it reminds me of an old hen, you know, just scratching around. These little chicks know... would rush in there and trying to grab the first seed or something. That's how she used to work. Had a stone boat and horses, hauling these rocks out. So I started developing this place.

Q:

When would that have been when you first came to this land?

A:

Thirty-five years, eh? Adrian, how old is Adrian? Adrian was just a wee baby when I moved in here, and he's my third oldest boy.

(Mrs. Solway inaudible)

Well he's around that--(Mrs. Solway inaudible) --29. But I was farming before that. Maybe about 7 years before we moved out here. So I'd say around 40 years.

And the area that I got around this quarter section, it's the original style that the farmers them days had. The farmer used to have 4 head of horses given to him by the band, a set of new harness, a wagon, and a farm. The machinery belonged to the band. The wife of the farmer gets pans, tubs, washboards, blankets, dishes. What else did you get? --stove, beds. That's what the woman had. That came out of band funds. Each married couple would get that to start them off. And today this is the only couple survive. And I'm not afraid to say that, because there's nobody else on the reserve that done that. I'm the only one that's surviving, and I've still got my landmarks of the old quarter section. This area here where I'm living, this used to be an overnight holding pasture for the horses that I used to farm this land. The chief and council authorized that. Each individual had his own quarter section right down the line that was fenced exactly how I'm fencing here. And this is the only one that's still got that landmark. The rest of it, there's no fence down there...right across the reserve. Some might have a few little fences, but these are new. But they're not the original farmers. But I can say this much, this is the only place that's still got the landmark of the old system. Over the years--there's 194 acres in this square, in this little quarter section.

(End of Side A) Adam: Permanent development, as far as I'm concerned, that's

my history of my location here. Now, getting back to the rations, when I mentioned 10 pounds a piece, 7 pounds of flour, and maybe a pound of tea, half a pound of tea or something like that, it was a pound anyways, it was quite a bit of tea because the Blackfeet are well known for tea. However, we used to get this ration every Thursday. That's why we called Thursday in Blackfoot "Tsin-a-qui-tsook". That is an Indian word that says "ration day". That's Thursday. That's what the old people used to get drunk on, when the tea was introduced, they would have a big party and drink strong tea, as strong as they could because it was something new to them and some of them would pretend to get drunk or I don't know if they got drunk or nearly got poisoned, anyway I would see them pass out. It is pretty comical when you start relating these things of the poor old Indian in those days. They were smarter than us. Getting back to the ration question, 10 pounds, 7 pounds of tea, the old people used to have some grey blankets for winter and maybe some clothes and bacon, jam, maybe some other, something besides their 10 pounds of meat, ham or something like that. So they were well taken care of, it is some sort of an easement of their livelihood and their share of the band fund because we recognized the elders just as much as we realize today that we recognize our senior citizens. They have their pension and whatnot today but them days you had to treat them with a lot of respect to get their share of the

band funds. Without them, I don't think the reserve would have existed. They were the ones that built it up to what we are. So that is the reason why they had these extras.

So when we got back to the religion, the sisters used to tell us, "Don't go to that guy, he's coming around to flirt with the girls, trying to make eyes at them," but there was a separation there. The girls couldn't even wear the short sleeve tops, they say it is a big sin and to show their bare leg, they say it is a sin. You go to confession, to see the priest. There is nothing that will show any signs of sin there. But this was their belief, this was how they brought us up to respect themselves. However, they used to forbid us to go to these rituals, Sundances and Pow-Wows and even to sing a song, they said you were a devil, don't sing that. They wanted us to join them with their religion. What they were trying to do there was trying to eliminate, take the Indian culture away. They want us to be one of them, on their side of the religious educational service. So a lot of these young fellows, they got brainwashed, as if to say you are a good chief, you are a good Indian.

A lot of the children don't come back to school in June. They miss their exams and whatnot due to the Sundances. The Sundances used to come out the middle of May and go on into June. So a lot of kids would miss school on account of that. They want to go to that Sundance so they put a stop to it. In which it's against the religious leaders but yet they overpowered them because they know how to say yes or no. But the old fellow doesn't even know how to say yes or no so he loses out on the arguments. They say we are running the religious ceremonies, you shouldn't have a say on it. Well that is what the priest and nuns say and the kids are losing too much school. Could you extend that to another month? No, what the old people said that was it. So finally they started branching away. Through memberships which makes the services go, Brave Dog Society, Chicken Society, the Old Lady Society, some were married to these old ladies that were members of the Old Lady Society, then they kind of got the best of what was left of the membership. So everybody got losing the interest of these religious services.

The Sundance commemorates once in a blue moon, once a year. You got to give thanks to that Great Spirit that is up there, that gave you the seed, that gave you the produce of that seed, for you to survive. The birds that lay eggs and hatch their eggs during the summer, you give thanks to the Great Spirit for that. The births of animals, wild animals that produces more for the population of your tribe. You give thanks to the Great Spirit for that. The grass that grows that feeds your animals, it feeds your horses or cows or deer or what have you, you give thanks to the Great Spirit for that. You give thanks to the Great Spirit that puts the berries on the trees and shrubs, cherries, saskatoons, gooseberries, maybe bull berries, all what's edible, you give thanks to the Great Spirit once a year for all of these things. You give thanks to him because you survived that one full year up to the next Sundance. So that

is where the Blackfeet people gather once a year, to put these Sundances on, they pray, to give thanks to God. They sacrifice, put up sacrifices in respect to the gratitude that they have for the Great Spirit that gave them this fish, you name it. That is the reason why they put up these Sundances.

And as the years went by, you are educated, we were inclined to believe the sisters, the priests, so we kind of branched off and today the same old sisters that's still alive when I was in school and when my wife was in school, was saying you are devils, don't go to those services. Today I am a member of the prayer group of the Indian Culture. And that same nun that was saying that you are a devil, don't join those other services, they are coming around and smoking our pipe of peace and they are praying with us. They are saying we inherited our religion from the Indian people. Now he starts relating from way back. Now the present way of living they say we are inheriting that, they are trying to combine the Indian religion and the Catholic people's religion or any other people's religion along with the Indian religion.

I just think in my mind those fellows are crazy. They even change the services, wording of the gospel, my old belief was how they brought me up and all of a sudden they change the services. Now I says, "By golly what's going on?" So I kept away from church for quite a while. I didn't know who to believe. Not only me, I am using myself as an example. There are a whole lot of people today, Indians, whiteman, Chinamen, you name it. All denominations are changed. They don't know who they belong to. All these ministers that you have that are ministering their religion, they don't seem to know what is going on and it is their popes or bishops or whoever, the heads of their church got into this problem. That is the reason why we are not going to church and there are a few dollars left here and we are going broke in our church. That's the reason why the people don't want to go to church. Now they want to bring us back again, along with our religion. So that's how it stands today.

Then the question came up, "Let's eliminate this meat ration, it is costing too much." And then the individual owner of the cow thought it was too much to feed and winter their cattle. They came to council, we threw it around, and finally the council agreed, "Okay, if you don't want to pay for the wintering of your cattle, you look after them yourselves." Okay, okay, by golly everybody grabbed ahold of their own herd. This was in 1957 or 1952. The early part of the fifties. There was a vote whether you keep them as a community herd or take your own cattle. So the individual got ahold of his cows and due to the excessiveness of drinking, in 1960 when they opened up the liquor, all of these cattle disappeared. Buying booze, bailing themselves out, court cases, sold and everybody was travelling around in teams of horses and they start selling their teams, their wagons, you name it. Until there was nothing left on the reserve, there wasn't a cow and I was the only one that still got cows. I had three or four of them left. And in order to establish myself here, boy that is how I got rid of my cows too but I still had two or three left. And

I always did say, that is my belief, you hang on to the cows long enough, they will get you someplace. Because that is your bank out there. That is my bank out there. I still have cows down here and they are on hoof and I haven't got a penny in my pocket but that is my bank. When I retire I am going to sell the whole bunch and then I am finished. Whoever gets my money if there is anything left when I go, he's lucky.

So, anyways that is how they destroyed the cattle herd, the band community herd. Then they said, "Okay, what do we do about rations? Oh, we'll have cash." So there was a referendum. Either continue buying beef or give them a cash per capita. So everybody was after cash. They were selling their meat anyways. That ten pounds you get, you go to town and sell it to one of the fellows across the track. So, this was happening and it came before council. The council decided, "All right, we'll give you cash. We are not going to buy no more meat, if you want cash to buy extras, we'll give you the cash." So there was a referendum and they got cash. That was it. The cash came and they paid and they paid and they paid and finally they are down to the last dollar then so there is no more, no more money for distribution.

When I got on, when I campaigned, when I seen the prairies wide open, no electricity, no phones, I campaigned on it. This is where my contribution came in. If they were good enough to adopt me in my childhood to the band, I am good enough now as an adult today to give my contribution. As of today I am still fighting for the cause of their rights. Treaty rights, aboriginal rights, you name it. 1956, that was my first campaign year when I got on. I was the youngest of the council members. The very first thing I hit was the power. I had one heck of a time getting through Indian Affairs because we had money, band funds, and we got the power line going right across the reserve. Why just watch these guys utilizing that power further up and down and us, it is on our reserve and we are not even using it. However, the council with the assistance of the chief in council at the time, approved of that and it came through. I quit buying kerosene, fuel, and I still got my lamps up there. I still use them when the power goes off, I just light them up.

Then the question came up again, phones, no communication whatsoever. Anything goes down up here, somebody running around trying to rustle, there is no way we can contact the police or Indian Affairs or band members. If there is a sickness down here, there is no way that we could go through them unless we saddle up or hook up a team of horses and go to town, then from there get these communications going. Finally the government, the provincial government, came down, the AGT, negotiated if they could come in and string a cable right across the reserve. They were getting modern now. I thought they were going to plant posts right across the reserve in order to get the wires on but they surprised us. They had these cables, they start digging all over and no charge to the band. The only charge we got is the rental of the phone and your phone bill. So this went through and I felt proud. And

somebody else that was campaigning for a chief got all the credit and I didn't have no credit for it. I'm not sorry because I know I did it. Let the poor guy campaign on what I've done.

Then the cattle question come up. Somebody told me in council, "When are you going to bring them cattle in?" and I said, "Right away." In 1966, no 1959, we started talking about it and I went pretty hard on it, I hit the government hard with it and the band didn't want to go all the way so I says, "Okay, I'll make another route." So we formed the Co-op in 1966. This Co-op still stands yet, recognized today under a different heading, Blackfoot Co-op. But this one here was under a different name. In order to qualify, we had to franchise to be an entity in the

society's act, to be recognized, we had to be incorporated which was wrong. As the years went by in politics, I found out it was wrong for an Indian to incorporate because the provincial government could come in and say, "Okay you're making money on that, I'm going to levy a tax on that." You have no say according to the law. But they are not that bad. I appreciate the fact that they just closed their eyes on this, anyways we got away with it. That is the reason why that Co-op brand is bar 66 in 1966 we purchased the first 200 head of cows. And through poor management today, I am sorry to say this, I don't like to criticize, but I know myself how to expand the herd and I have been with cattle all of my life and I am still with cattle, I have got my own herd. If there was better management, the Blackfoot people would be sitting pretty right today. You just say 200 head in 1966 up to the present year. Cattle multiply pretty quick. If there was good management, we'd be all right. They just got only 500 head today. I don't want to criticize them as long as there is cattle there but if they could get good management to start them off, expand, that would be another way of getting revenue.

That was my campaign, we brought the cattle back, the horses the same thing. There was not a horse. Kept a whole bunch of horses here myself. Give a horse here a name, and then finally see little herds here and there. Boy that felt good. See a boy riding around, I saw two kids riding around before you came, they went down the road. I got my horses here and I got my stallion here, registered stallion. I got my cows down there too. So I feel good when I see this. And see somebody else doing the same thing. I feel pretty good. At least they got something. Not just the grass on the prairie and doing nothing with it. Then, when we had these animals back on the reserve, I thought well I had contributed quite a bit already. Then the crisis faced us.

The 1969 White Paper, I was a chief then. I was the one that fought right to the end. I got papers here that was taken in the House of Commons when we were right straight across the table facing the ministers on one side and the chiefs on the other side. I had the opportunity of giving Chretien back his White Paper. There is your proposed Indian Government Bill. Take it back. The other friend of mine gave Trudeau the Red

Paper. He says, "This is what we want. We don't want other nations--we are a nation of this land--we don't want other nations, foreign nations coming in and telling us what to do, how to run ourselves, we want our own government." But we still say that they went on irregardless of what we told them. They undermined that White Paper right along and now it popped up again in the new constitution. There it is again, I just came back from Saskatoon the other day and looks pretty comical. We were in the Alberta Room, Alberta Saskatchewan Room. In between them rooms Indian Affairs, they were selling their policy, Indian Government Policy. Next room was Manitoba and Ontario and I told these leaders, these political leaders, I says, "If the minister is coming in tomorrow, don't mention anything here. Take him right in there to his members. We are saying something for ourselves and they are saying the opposite in the next room." They were implementing before we could make a decision over here. By golly, old Munro came in the next morning and we gave him a surprise visit when we took him in there while the session was going. Boy, he was blushed. I don't know what he had done, I took off upstairs and had a coffee. So getting back to your question.

Now, getting back to the permit system, you can't leave the reserve, I was a victim of it, trying to visit some relations in Cardston, the Indian Agent gave me one week leave with the permit. You have to come back within that day that they say. It is marked on the permit. If it is seven days, the seventh day you have to report back to the office. Even if it is for a Calgary trip, they'll give you a permit to travel to Calgary. Maybe just selling some hay, Section 32 spells that out in the Indian Act, you have to have a permit to accompany your sale, your transactions. Cows the same thing, horses the same thing, pigs, even your dog. Trees, gravel, dirt, coal, anything that you remove from the reserve you got to have a permit. It still exists today. Maybe it is not operational right down to the letter according to the Indian Act today, but it still exists, it is law, it is still law. Trespassing, it still exists, but we violate that. Due to the fact of the non-Indian leases that is going on on the reserve. There are farmers coming in here leasing land every day so what is good for them to go through this road is good for my neighbor here to come through. So it is kind of discriminatory there. So I guess the council overlooks these and our tribal police haven't got the powers due to the fact that there is no bylaws whatsoever that are approved by parliament. The only thing that they have in the bylaw is the dog bylaw. Keep your dog at your house and keep one dog. So dogs multiply pretty fast here. This fellow's dogs come here, wander off, my neighbor, he comes looking for it. I don't know, he was last seen with your dog. However, that is how the permit book runs.

Christine: When did they stop giving you permits to travel? If you wanted to visit or you wanted to go to Calgary, when did they stop making you get a permit for that?

Adam: There was no announcement of such nature. As far as I

am concerned, it still exists. If they come right down to the letter on the Indian Act you still have to have a permit to travel. A lot of these things through my travels. I went to visit the aborigines in Australia and they are on that old system yet. They have to have a permit to go to town.

However, this permit system exists yet. I never heard any other chief or council saying the permit is eliminated because the section is still in the Indian Act. Anybody who wants to do away with Section 32 has got to go and present himself and apply through council to be exempted. My brother did that before he died. He got exempted. He can sell anything like cows or hay but, however the idea came about, is that if you owe anything in the office, out of the band funds, you have to make that right. If you don't, the permit, you have to operate on that permit for one simple reason, because they have the control of the money that you are going to make so that they could deduct that and pay your bill. That is why the permit system was there. Then to identify you from one band to another, I shouldn't use the word band. When I was really in politics I told the minister in Ottawa, "Do away with the term that you use 'Band', I feel like a part of the brass monkey band or a mustang band or pig band or something. I don't feel like a person when you say your 'band'. Maybe it is a brass band, maybe it is monkey band." He says, "What term would you want to use on that?" and I says, "I'd rather use tribe." I think that is an individual description of a tribe, if it is Blackfoot tribe it is that tribe, just use the Blood Tribe, it is a Blood Indian Tribe. Anyways, they legislated on it and they are supposed to use tribe. That is why there is Tribal Administrations. The senator himself was there, Gladstone, when I presented this suggestion and all of the ministers agreed and they legislated and they said it would be tribes. And I am still trying to correct that today. When I go to these meetings and hear the ministers say bands, bands, even our own people, band, our band, I just about ask them, I says, "What band, band of monkeys that you belong to or what?" You see, that is the only way to correct them. Any wording in politics concerning the definition of tribes or bands, scratch that word out, use tribe wherever band enters in the picture. That is how I like to see things. That is all there is on the permit system. That is in the Indian Act. The Tribal Administrator gives that permit system. Did you get a permit? Tony: No, not this time. We did the first time we came here and now a lot of people know us so they don't really bother, you know.

Adam: Irregardless how you look at it, if you know your friend across, you still have to carry a permit. You see, looking at it right, I don't care if you come in here. However, that is how we are practising it now. Irregardless, I can sell my cattle without a permit and nobody can say anything because I register my brands with the provincial brand registry. The tribe has nothing to do with it. Even my wife has nothing to do with it because my registry of the brand is my personal belonging. That is my identification of my animal. So I can sell my animals irregardless of the tribal bylaw. So that is

how it operates today.

Then the present situation is this, in my experience through politics, I have been a councillor for 26 years and I thought this was the end of the rope for me. I have contributed a lot of my time in politics for the band, tribes, and I said to myself last year, I am not going to run because I am going to retire. These politicians in Edmonton, they want me to get back into politics and I says no way. No, we want to make a senator out of you, so that we could relate a lot of things, what you know and your experience in governments and Indian way of living. We want them kind of people, today we haven't got them.

Some of our leaders today, they have been placed in homes, in non-Indian homes by social services. Naturally these people are living like the white man outside until such age when they reach 21 years then they will have a say. Because they never had no say while from birth up to 21. And that is the age limit they allow, when they are 21 years old make up your mind, you want to go back to your tribe or be franchised. Naturally, a lot of them go back to their tribes. And the poor old stupid Indian comes around, "Oh look at that guy, he is educated. Look at the English he is using, look at all of the big words. He must be educated." And he is the guy that was brought up outside, never had any insight of his own people, how they were living from day to day, how they went about their religious doctrines, how they went by with their Indian government, no idea whatsoever with their education as an Indian student. Poor Indian says, "Okay I'll elect or nominate this guy that was brought up outside." And the poor bugger he gets elected and he gets himself into a bind. He wants to brainwash the rest of his tribe to live the way he was brought up. In which it is a real, real hard thing to do. You can't change a Chinaman into an Indian. Sure, he might know the slang or the language that they use but you can't, by the nature of things, that is your problem. You can remain an Indian, you were born an Indian, he'll die as an Indian. But how in the heck are you going to get that brown stain off of your skin? That is what they are trying to do, that is why they are integrating. So, what we do here, we respect these things, sure he is educated, but there is limitations on his knowledge. There is limitations in his religious belief.

If I would start pounding my drum here, maybe my boy will come home and say, "Hey Dad, you turning wild again? What the heck are you doing?" Why do these darn hippy guys pound the hell out of their drums and they have seven, eight drums all over, and here we got that all in one single beat. You dance to the rhythm of that drum just like the hippie that is in that record player or TV or wherever, they try to shake the guts out of themselves. Same as these chicken dancers, they are doing the same thing. What difference is it. That is the Indian culture and that is the white man's culture. So leave it as is. I do my thing, you do your thing. What is good for you on the outside, that is good for you. What is good for me here, that is good for me. If I wore my moccasins, you have nothing to do

with it. That is my moccasins, I have been in these moccasins ever since I was born and I still got moccasins. Now he turns into these high heeled boots or whatever, he cripples his ankles on. Here I am flat on the ground. I am walking miles and miles on my moccasins and I never cripple myself. However, that is beside the point. That is criticizing my boy's way of life and my life. What is good for me is good for him. As a parent I try to bring him back to where I stand because if he goes out, in a lot of cases--my daughter is married to a non-Indian and I told her, I said, "My girl, you got special status, you got a treaty right, aboriginal right, and you got your rights of culture. If you do franchise and marry this guy by law, you are franchised automatically. You are no more Indian. You have no more benefits for education, health, or economic development." "Oh," she says, "I am going to marry a guy that is rich. He has a store, he has an elevator, he has a bus, and he is a big farmer." "Oh by gosh, by all means, if he is that rich, go ahead, but I still say you are richer than him. If he fails in these operations, where does he go? You go down to welfare or skid row." Exactly what I told them. This fellow couldn't run that elevator, he couldn't run the store, couldn't run the bus, fired here and there. Where is she? She is trying to make a U-turn, come back on the reserve. And that is the biggest problem we have in politics today. The rights, women's rights, we had a big battle, and you have seen this in the paper a lot of times, women's rights. And we are still fighting for it and we say you stay out. You went out, the reserve is no good for you. That is the way you wanted to live, get out! Leave us alone on the reserve. If we bring you back in here with those five or six kids you have, or ten kids, we'll have to find more space for your kids. I am just using this one person. There is hundreds and thousands across Canada, it is the same thing. We start accepting that, that is what is going to happen. There will be no reserve big enough to accommodate all of these franchised women. What we say on there, is each tribe make their own discretion. Whether they accept them back or not, leave it up to them. If they have enough land to accommodate their people, fine. That is the way it is. It is bouncing up and down all of the time. This is the rule, that is what we are sticking on. Each tribe, make his own discretion. And the government decided, we have to back up our law, our legislation, rights, human rights, everybody has to have his rights, they have that right. So, they are trying to tell the Indians, Section 12B, you have to throw that out quit discriminating people. And they are the ones that put this darn legislation on. Why didn't they think about it? We are the ones that put them in there.

Getting back to the youngsters, they haven't got the knowledge to think ahead. They are thinking of the present. They haven't got the knowledge to look back at my grandpa. My dad, used to say that. I live according to what they lived through. A lot of them say no, it is a different generation today. I am going to smoke that grass, watch that TV, drink that whiskey, and have a good time. But they don't know the future, what it is going to bring. It is nice to say that, have a good time,

have a good time, Kuy-aye up and down, bearing in mind, if they had that in their stupid brains, you are going to commit suicide, you are going to shoot somebody else's brains out, run over somebody with your vehicle or kill yourself, maybe kill your dad, your mother. Oh, that is nothing, I'll do it. Because they know that they are not going to be hung. They will just do life. Some of them are doing a year, two years for murder. They are back on the reserve again. They think it is something big. Oh, I am a bigshot, I can kill a man, I took him by the arm and threw him in the river. Do that and nothing happened to me, I'll do that again. They get smart, then that is where there is no respect for the elders or to their teachers, their ministers, there is a negligence of respect. They are the bosses today. Once they can start walking, the

age, they are down the road boy, they are the boss. We'll tell them, "Don't go down that road, somebody is going to run over you," or "You are going to wind up in jail or someplace," and they say, "Aw, none of your business," and they just walk away. At the age of 12 or 13 they start developing themselves that way. Send our girls away to get educated, instead of getting a diploma, they fall by the wayside, they bring home a parcel, crying in their arms. If they were concerned about education, they would go right through and neglect all of these happy-go-lucky times. Go through the education that you are supposed to go through. The same with the boys. Send a boy out to University and instead of coming back with a diploma or something like that, he comes home with his bride. "I am a daddy now." Well that is no good. Why don't you go through education first before you think the other way. Because right away you are putting yourself in a responsibility, keeping a family alive, and you have to look for a job to survive, to feed your wife, your children, and today it is pretty hard to get a job without education.

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