

Assiniboine Narratives from Fort Belknap, Montana

George Shields, Sr.

Part 2. English Translations

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The narratives by George Shields in this collection were recorded by Douglas R. Parks and Raymond J. DeMallie at Fort Belknap, Montana, from April to July, 1985. Narratives 1, 3, 4, and 5 were transcribed by DeMallie from the sound recordings with the assistance of Juanita Tucker, at Fort Belknap, in 1985. Those narratives were reelicited and the transcriptions revised and glossed in English by Linda A. Cumberland, working with Bertha O'Watch and her son Dean M. O'Watch at Carry The Kettle Reserve, in 2006. The remaining narratives were transcribed from the sound recordings and glossed by Cumberland with the assistance of Selena Ditmar, Geraldine Earthboy, Tuffy Helegson, and Tom Shawl, all of Fort Belknap, in 2010. Cumberland prepared all the free translations.

This preliminary web edition of Assiniboine texts is intended for the use of linguists and others who want access to Assiniboine language data. A preliminary dictionary is also published on this web site (<http://zia.aisri.indiana.edu/~dictsearch/>, then choose "Assiniboine" and search selecting either "Indian" or "English").

The preservation of these narratives from the last fluent speakers of the Assiniboine language who were knowledgeable from firsthand experience about traditional tribal culture has been made possible by the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

1. The Man with Hawk Power

(1) This is an *owóknake*.¹

(2) There was a young man – what tribe they say he was from I didn’t hear, but he was from an important family, it is said.²

(3) So then, this young man’s tribe fought with a western tribe. (4) So then, they took a woman prisoner. (5) The war leader took this woman, it is said. (6) The woman was very beautiful, it is said. (7) Her face was beautiful, her figure was beautiful. (8) She wasn’t very, old it is said.³

(9) Then, that young man from an important family saw her and he liked her, it is said. (10) So then he told his father,⁴ “I like this woman very much. (11) If I ask the leader for her, I wonder if he would give her to me?” he said, it is said.⁵

(12) So then they⁶ went there and they told [asked] him. (13) “Yes, he shall have her. (14) He is a young man. (15) I, myself, am an old man,” he said, it is said. (16) So then that woman stayed with him [the young man].⁷

(17) While she lived there, ah! she was always happy, it is said. (18) She lived with this eastern tribe a number of years, so long that she learned to speak their language well enough that she even chatted

¹The narrator is stating the type of story he is about to tell, namely, an historical story, or legend, as opposed to *ohúkaka*, ‘fables’, which include trickster tales.

²Tom Shawl has heard this story told among the Blackfeet and believes it to be a Blackfeet story, in part because of the Crazy Dog/Gray Dog Society referenced later, which was found among the Blackfeet.

³*náǵáǎǎ jí‘áǵe* ‘recently grown’

⁴This could refer to his biological father or a father’s brother (all of whom are called *até*) but it is made clear in a later passage (when he goes to his mother’s tipi) that his biological father is meant in this case. (See n.#)

⁵Apparently, protocol required that a father make the request on the son’s behalf, which is why the young man confides his wish to his father. Tom Shawl notes that marriage was an alliance of families, negotiated parent-to-parent.

⁶There is a conflict of number agreement here, *né* ‘this one’ vs. *ípi* ‘they arrived there.’ Such disagreement between demonstratives and plural verbs is not uncommon, since *né* only becomes *nená* when a speaker wishes to stress plurality. In this case, however, the dialogue suggests that only the father went to the chief’s tent, supporting the hypothesized cultural requirement that the father make the request on behalf of his son. The chief’s reply is in the third person, “Yes, he shall have her,” indicating that he is speaking to the father and not to the young man. It seems unlikely that he would do so if the young man were present. This suggests that the appropriate reading of this sentence would be, “So he went there,” meaning the father. The plural verb *ípi* would be an error in this case.

⁷From *kic’í* ‘with one other person’ and *ǵí* ‘to stay, to live, to dwell.’ To say that she stayed with him, combined with the fact that the young man has followed protocol, implies a sanctioned marriage. There was no formal marriage ceremony; couples simply moved in together. The general term for ‘spouse’ is *kic’í ǵí*, pronounced as one word (with a single primary stress), a nominalization of the verb phrase that the narrator uses here .

and laughed with the women when they conversed every day, it is said.⁸

(19) Time went on and this young woman was clever, hard-working, it is said. (20) She knew how to do everything.⁹ (21) Time went on and she was never sad or lonesome, it is said. (22) Her husband, too, was a good hunter and brought home meat, which the woman made into dried meat, also. (23) So they lived well, it is said. (24) The inside of the tent was also very beautifully kept, it is said.¹⁰ (25) Time went on and this young man, having gone hunting once again, returned home as usual, and here sat this young woman with her head bowed, saying nothing at all. (26) Right away he thought something wasn't right. (27) He said, "Why is it that you were always happy and now you are very sad?" he asked her, it is said.

(28) Then, "Yes, today all at once I thought of my relatives, then I got very sad and lonely," she said, it is said.¹¹ (29) "Ever since I have been here you have taken very good care of me. (30) You have been good to me. (31) You have never made me cry. (32) You have never broken my heart. (33) Your people, too, have treated me well," she said, it is said. (34) She continued,¹² "Perhaps in time I will get over this, so don't think anything about it," she said, it is said.

(35) So this young man considered this. (36) Then, "This one, she is a but a woman, staying over here with a different tribe, whereas I, myself, am a man. (37) I will take her back to her home," he thought, it is said. (38) So then he told her, "Tomorrow, that soon, I will take you back home," he told her, it is said. (39) "You are a woman, but you live over here with a different tribe. (40) I, myself, am a man. (41) Men don't live forever. (42) Even if they kill me it doesn't matter. (43) When you're a man, you get killed," he said, it is said.

(44) So then she was happy, it is said. (45) Starting right then she made lots of moccasins and also made provisions, it is said. (46) She prepared pemmican of pounded dried meat for provisions, it is said. (47) She put them in a rawhide container.

(48) The young man had two fast horses, it is said. (49) He saddled both of them and before they left, the young man went to his mother's¹³ tipi and told his father about it. (50) "Father, this woman was

⁸*ǵpa hǵta* 'whenever it was day', i.e., 'every day' or 'daily'. See also Pronghorn (47).

⁹*ec'ǵipi wayúpi* lit. 'she did it skillfully', but both Mrs. Tucker and Mrs. O'Watch interpret this to mean 'she knew how to do it well', even though *snokyá* 'know' is not present.

¹⁰*wašté yakápi* The words are literally 'good' and 'they sat/were'. The subject of the sentence is ambiguous; it could either be the couple (keeping the lodge) or the lodge (being kept) but only a woman would keep house so it is more likely that 'lodge' is the subject, giving a passive reading to the verb.

¹¹*Omáhpaya* 'I am/was sad', *ǵc'ówamni* 'I am/was lonely'. There is no morphological difference between declarative and inchoative, the distinction being inferred from context. Mrs. O'Watch gives the inchoative. Another example of this may be seen in *Pronghorn*, where both Mrs. Tucker and Mrs. O'Watch give *yazá* 'be sick' as 'he got sick' and *yazápi* 'they are sick' as 'they got sick'.

¹²*eyá k'ó* 'she also said'

¹³A tipi and its contents belonged to the woman. Consequently, the young man is said to go to his mother's tipi, not his parents' tipi, in order to speak to his father.

always happy but all at once she is very sad. (51) I'm going to take her back home. (52) She is but a woman, staying here with a different tribe. (53) I, myself, am a man. (54) Even if they kill me there, it won't matter," he said, it is said.

(55) Then his father, "Yes, my son, you are right. (56) It is not likely you will survive.¹⁴ (57) It's possible you won't come back; it's possible they will kill you," he said, it is said.

(58) "Yes, men go to war and get killed. (59) I won't live forever," he said, it is said.

(60) So then they were on their way back to her home. (61) So when they went to bed, they didn't have a camping tent so they slept outdoors, wherever there was a sheltered place. (62) They traveled and traveled; for many days they traveled.

(63) All at once there was a high ridge so they climbed it and then from here they saw a mountain a long way off. (64) Then the young woman said this, it is said. (65) "That mountain you see over there is where they always camp in the summertime. (66) The reason is there are lots of saskatoons (June berries), lots of those *c'gwáskiyá*¹⁵ (67) It's their berry-picking camp. (68) When all the berries are dried, they move camp again. (69) Then they go back where they came from," she said, it is said. (70) "This is the time when they'll be there. (71) They always camp at the one place where there are lots of berries. (72) That's where they will have their camp," she said, it is said.

(73) So that evening they went there and slept in a grove, it is said. (74) "Early tomorrow morning we will go. (75) I will take you back to your people's camp," he told her, it is said.

(76) So when it was day, he said to her, "Now, today, put on the best dress and clothes that you have. (77) Comb and braid your hair and paint yourself, also," he said, it is said. (78) Then as he had told her to do, he also got himself ready, braided his hair and painted himself, it is said. (79) Then he took out all his good clothing and he untied his medicine bundle, his sacred medicine bundle. (80) So he had what is called a hawk feather. (81) This was a sacred thing. (82) He took it and prayed and tied it in his hair. (83) Then he had yellow paint for this purpose and he painted himself everywhere he could reach, it is said. (84) He had his wife paint his battle scars, it is said.¹⁶ (85) When he finished and when it had dried, he put on his best clothes. (86) "Now we will go there."

(87) Then they left but the mountain was steep and there was no place they could get over, so they had to zigzag every which way to reach the bottom. (88) Beyond there they saw a path where people went back and forth for water. (89) They found the path and climbed up through there and got to the top, it is said.

(90) So they went into the camp and the people of this camp knew they were strangers, it is said.

¹⁴"It is not likely..." These words supply the implication of *ítúh*, which indicates that something has not or will not occur according to expectation or hope. A literal translation, "Contrary to hope or expectation, you will not survive," suggests a prophecy, which it is not. See also n.16.

¹⁵Mrs. O'Watch doesn't know what kind of berry this is.

¹⁶The English version says he had his wife paint the areas he couldn't reach and he, himself, painted his scars.

(91) So then people came running from all around and looked at them as they went walking along. (92) The young woman said this, it is said. (93) “Hurry up! Walk fast! (94) We will go to my older brother’s tent over there. (95) He is chief, so maybe he will save you. (96) The people do whatever he says.”

(97) So then they quickened their step and arrived at the tipi. (98) So the chief was already sitting in the honor place, it is said. (99) When they went in, he raised his head and looked at his younger sister and recognized her but he didn’t say a word, it is said. (100) He didn’t say something like, “Ah, It’s good you have returned.” (101) He lowered his head again and sat there.¹⁷

(102) So now this woman knew something was going wrong, it is said. (103) She said, “I think something is going wrong. (104) My older brother isn’t saying anything. (105) He doesn’t even take notice of me,” she said, it is said. (106) “Just sit down beside him,” she said, therefore. (107) That young man sat down beside him, it is said. (108) Then the young woman also sat down beside her husband. (109) So now the people from all around watched them with their eyes glued to them, it is said. (110) All the tent walls were rolled up¹⁸ and the people who had come from all around all stood there looking at them.

(111) Then all at once the chief said, “Ah, call for the Crazy Dog society,” he said, it is said.¹⁹ (112) So a messenger went to the Crazy Dog society and told them about it.

(113) Right away two of them got themselves ready, it is said. (114) They painted their bodies with ordinary dirt, it is said. (115) Then they also painted their lips red. (116) They had knives and were ready to go there to take (whomever) outside and kill them behind the tent. (117) That is the kind of men they were.²⁰ (118) As they were coming, stopping just to one side of the doorway, the people parted to

¹⁷Native audiences recognize from this passage that the chief does not follow the accepted protocol of plains Indians. He is dishonorable because he doesn’t protect the guests in his lodge, nor does he protect his brother-in-law. There were strict protocols regarding in-laws and guests, even if they were from an enemy tribe. A chief behaving appropriately would take more umbrage at offense against a guest even than against a (non-enemy) relative. There would also have been a chief’s pipe, which should be offered to the brother-in-law in the circumstances described here, but it is not.

¹⁸A tipi cover could be rolled up from the bottom, exposing the poles and the interior of the tent.. This was often done in the summer for ventilation, but could also be done, as in this case, to allow people to view proceedings inside the tent when they were too numerous to fit inside or when they had no role in the proceedings. It is implied that the chief, whose tent it is, does not object.

¹⁹The presence of a Crazy Dog society suggests that these are either Blackfoot or Sioux (see, e.g., Denig (2000:40). Two other details lead to the conclusion that the woman’s people are the Blackfoot: first, the Assiniboine were historically to the east of the Blackfoot and to the west of the Sioux. In (18) the Assiniboine are said to be to the east of the woman’s tribe. Second, the woman’s learning the language (18-19) is viewed as an accomplishment; it would not have been particularly noteworthy for her to have learned Assiniboine if her native language were the closely related Sioux.

²⁰i.e., this is the purpose of the Crazy Dog Society.

make room for them as these two were crossing back and forth as they came, it is said.²¹

(119) The young woman knew something was happening. (120) She said, “Those are called ‘Crazy Dogs.’ (121) They are going to take you outside and kill you. (122) Be on your guard,” she said, it is said. (123) Then [she? he?] sat down.²² (124) Then the young woman said, “Sit in my brother’s lap and make him put his arms around you,” she said, it is said.²³ (125) So the young man did it.

(126) By then the Crazy Dogs were already at the door. (127) Seeing the chief holding the young man, they turned and went back a little ways but as they looked back, he dropped his arms, it is said. (128) So then they started to come again. (129) So then they did this three times, it is said. (130) After the third time the young man got up out of the chief’s lap and sat beside him. (131) He took off his clothes, his quilled shirt, his quilled leggings, all his things.²⁴ (132) All he was wearing were his moccasins and his breech cloth, it is said, underneath which his body was completely yellow. (133) That hawk feather was in his hair. (134) He also had his knife in his belt. (135) Then he began yelling and pounding his body, it is said. (136) He also struck both his shoulders. [unintelligible sentence]²⁵

(137) Right away, on the fourth time, they were going to take him. (138) They had already come inside and had taken about two steps. (139) So then he jumped up and grabbed the chief by the hair and stabbed him in the heart, it is said. (140) Then he pushed him over. (141) So , then the people all cried out in alarm and fled, it is said. (142) Then he went to the Crazy Dogs and he stabbed both of them and shoved them down, knocking them over. (143) Finally he ran and here the people were running in a pack and he ran around among them, stabbing them as he was running among them, it is said. (144) He killed many of them.

(145) Right away those with guns would have shot at him but they couldn’t²⁶ because he was

²¹They were crisscrossing each other’s path in large Xs as they strode toward the tent. Mrs. O’Watch says this was a form of showing off, like strutting. It expresses the ferociousness of the society members and forces the crowd to give them a wide berth.

²²It is unclear who sits down. This sentence might be a mistake by the narrator, anticipating the next sentence, in which the young woman tells her husband to sit in her brother’s lap. As stated in (108-109), both she and her husband are already sitting.

²³Mrs. O’Watch is not familiar with this action. If it had ever been a recognized action whose meaning was understood, she is unaware of it. It strikes her as bizarre. Yet from the narrative it seems that all participants and observers, including the Crazy Dogs, accept this as indicating acceptance or protection of the young man by the chief.

²⁴“all his things”: This is a provisional translation of *oŕ’áwa žená*, which Mrs. O’Watch does not recognize, but she accepts the provisional translation as plausible.

²⁵This sentence is unintelligible. Mrs. Tucker interprets it to be *žéc’en eyáš ngkáhg*, literally ‘then next now’ but which she glosses “and then again.” To my ear, it sounds more like *éc’áš ngká y*, which is essentially nonsense (?“twitching all the while”) but might suggest he is trembling with rage. In any case, it is not a complete sentence. Mrs. O’Watch cannot make out the exact words, nor suggest any meaning for the phrase.

²⁶“but they couldn’t”: These words, not literally present in the text, supply the implication of *jtúli*, which indicates that something cannot occur according to hope or expectation. See also notes 13 and 26.

among their own people, so they ran alongside. (146) When he broke away and was alone, then they started shooting at him. (147) He ran toward the steep cliff, forgetting it was there, it is said. (148) When he got there, there was nothing he could do so then he jumped off. (149) When they got there his knife was lying there, it is said. (150) So then as they watched there was a hawk flapping rapidly as it flew down the face of the cliff. (151) It went across to the steep cliff on the other side and when it landed, there was a man hitting the ground running,²⁷ it is said. (152) He was yelling and running back and forth and went out of sight, it is said.

(153) So then those who were chasing him said, “It’s not likely we’ll ever catch him.”²⁸ (154) He would probably just fly again. (155) Now that he’s out of sight, he’s probably already flying back. (156) There is no use in fooling with him,” they said, so they let him go, it is said. (157) After they got home, many that he had stabbed who were still alive died anyway. (158) He killed many of them, it is said. (159) So then he was heading home in a pitiful condition, it is said. (160) He had no clothes. (161) He had worn out his moccasins long ago, so he wrapped pine bark around his feet. (162) So then those were what he used instead as he went back on foot. (163) He had nothing to eat but fledglings.

(164) This is still the story.²⁹ (165) So he was going home in a pitiful condition, it is said. (166) So then he had nothing to eat but fledglings that he found and killed. (167) He spread them out on a rock and when they were dry he ate them as he went. (168) So he traveled and traveled and returned home looking pitiful, it is said. (169) He was very thin from having no food to eat.

(170) So when he arrived home he told what had happened but nobody at all believed him, it is said. (171) “No, we think he is not telling the truth,” they said, it is said. (172) When he couldn’t overhear, they said, “We think some enemies attacked them and after they killed his wife somehow he got away,” they said, it is said. (173) So they didn’t believe any of what he told them had happened, it is said. (174) It went on that way and all at once the United States government made the Indian peoples all around make peace treaties. (175) So those in the west also signed a peace treaty, it is said.³⁰ (176) They signed saying they would never make war again. (177) So then knowing that all Indian peoples had done the same, and wanting to make friends and relatives [with former enemies], they traveled east, camping along the way, it is said.³¹

(178) Coincidentally, they arrived at the camp circle of those among whom the young man lived

²⁷*ká?áktaka* “hit the ground running”: Mrs. O’Watch says the word suggests the way a bird lands, its momentum causing it to run a few steps when it touches the ground. She says this could also be applied to a parachute landing.

²⁸This is another instance of *jtíhí*. See notes 13 and 24.

²⁹The recording session was interrupted just prior to this, after (164), producing a couple of redundancies in the following sentences, as the narrator re-orientates the listeners.

³⁰The implication is that this refers to the young woman’s tribe.

³¹“traveled . . . camping along the way”: a translation of *ýknaka*. The term indicates that they were just traveling around, not establishing their camp circle in the east. As will become evident, they set up a temporary camp near the eastern tribe they are visiting, having kept their more permanent camp circle in the west. Note, however, that there are instances in Pronghorn in which this term refers to the seasonal relocation of an entire camp circle.

and camped a little ways from there. (179) When it was day, they visited the chiefs. (180) Ah! they told many stories and they made friends, it is said. (181) The friendship was reciprocated and they exchanged gifts including fine clothes and other things, it is said.

(182) As this went on, all at once, those who came from the west told a story and said this, it is said. (183) "Several years back a young man from this tribe took his wife, who had been taken prisoner [from us], back over there but the woman's brother didn't want him to live so the Crazy Dogs were going to kill them, but he killed them first. (184) After that he killed many people with his knife," they said, it is said. (185) "The young man was good looking. (186) The young man had great spiritual power and was very brave," they said, it is said. (187) So then, "As they were chasing him, there was a steep cliff and he jumped off it and there was a hawk flying to the other side and when it landed, it was a man," they said.

(188) Then [his own people said], "That's the way he told it." (189) Then they believed him, it is said.

(190) "Ah," they [the visitors] said, "that young man from over here is [right] here. (191) Even when he told the story, nobody believed him; they thought he was just saying that," they said, it is said. (192) So this young man lived here. (193) So those who had come from elsewhere said this, "Call him over here so we can make friends; we'll smoke together," they said.

(194) So then a messenger³² went there and [said], "The people who have come have invited you. (195) They invite you to smoke with them so they can be friends with you." (196) But he said nothing, it is said. (197) Three times they did this. (198) The fourth time he said this, it is said. (199) "Yes, I will come. (200) Tell them I will come," he said, it is said. (201) "Go on, go back and tell them." (202) So he went back and told them, "He said he would come." (203) So then they were glad. (204) They filled a pipe and when it was ready they put it aside, it is said.

(205) So then he came in and sat by the door, it is said. (206) They made room for him in the honor place.³³ (207) They made room where the chiefs sit. (208) "Sit over here," they told him. (209) "No, I will only come this far," he said, it is said. (210) This young man sat beside the door and said this, it is said. (211) "Why have you come? (212) You all look like you are human but you are dogs," he said, it is said. (213) "All of you have wronged me greatly. (214) I loved that woman but I wanted to live, yet you wanted to kill me, so what I did was your fault. (215) It is your fault that I suffered great difficulties all summer coming home," he said, it is said. (216) So then (i.e., continuing), "You have no right to come over here. (217) You have no business here," he told them, it is said. (218) "You have come today. (219) Today I will kill all of you who have come," he told them. (220) He really scared them to death, it is said. (221) At last, this enemy tribe offered him the pipe they had filled but he knocked it away with a knife, it is said. (222) Then they were really scared and thought they were going to die. (223) So then, well! they changed their tone and spoke very pitifully but he didn't say anything and he stood up, it is said. (224) Then [unintelligible] and he left, it is said. (225) He didn't say anything. (226) He didn't do anything to them.

³²*košká wǫǫži* 'a young man'. When Mr. Shields tells this story in English, he uses the word "messenger" in this and similar situations.

³³The honor place (*c'atku*) is located at the far side of a tipi, directly opposite the door. When it is said that the young man sits "over here," it is understood by contrast that he remains by the door.

(227) Then this enemy tribe said this, “We have brought the young woman. (228) We will bring her to him. (229) That woman is pitiful. (230) She keeps crying on and off. (231) She’s lonely, so we will bring her to him,” they said, it is said.

(232) So they left to go back to their camp. (233) Then they put the young woman on her horse and put all her things on a travois and brought her that way, and at once they got up and left, it is said. (234) So when they got back to their camp, they broke camp and all of them left for the west, it is said. (235) Then this young woman was very happy, it is said. (236) Then she smiled and hugged her husband around the neck, kissing him. (237) “It’s good to be back, husband. (238) We will be together as long as I live,” she said. (239) They went in together, it is said. (240) So they must have lived happily from then on.³⁴

(241) That is all.

³⁴This “happily ever after” ending is not typical of traditional Assiniboine narratives and is probably influenced by Western narrative conventions.

2. Origin of the Crow Belt Society

(1) Today, on this spring day, I'm going to tell an *owóknake*.³⁵ (2) I'm going to tell how the Crow Belt Society came to be, the way it was told to me. (3) This white man asked me to do it while he tapes it, so I will do that.

(4) In the beginning, the crow belt originated among the Sioux, it is said.³⁶ (5) A young man from an important family got married (and) they had a child, a son. (6) So then all at once he had a vision, as it is called. (7) A holy being came to him and told him a story.³⁷ (8) He told him about the crow belt dance. (9) He taught him all the songs that go with it. (10) Then he [the young man] understood all the proper ways he meant it to be done.

(11) Now, again the next summer, about the same time he had come – it must have been mid-summer – this holy being spoke to him again. (12) He did that four times, it is said, this holy being coming to see this young man. (13) On the fourth time, the holy being told the young man this, it is said. (14) “You, you are a good man. (15) You take good care of yourself. (16) Your thoughts are good so now all the spirits care for you.³⁸ (17) It is you they have chosen and that is why I came here to tell you all this, but you never gave me a reply,” he said, it is said. (18) “This is the fourth time.” (19) Then, “You have a child (and) you want to raise him well. (20) “So that is why they chose you, because they pitied you.³⁹ (21) That is why I am telling you this,” this spirit said, it is said.

(22) So now that this spirit mentioned his son, the little boy, the young man got scared, it is said. (23) Because he loved his son and because he thought about his son a lot, he said this, it is said. (24) “Yes, this story you're telling me, that which you have taught me, I will do. (25) You have pitied me and that which you asked me to do will be so. (26) Now I pray to you,” he said, it is said.

(27) That spirit said this, it is said. (28) “Yes, it will happen for you (that) by using this you will raise your boy. (29) Your household will get along well. (30) Your tribe, too, they will have a good life. (31) They will have good luck with food,” he said, it is said. (32) Then he left to go back (where he came from).

³⁵The narrator is stating the type of story he is about to tell, namely, an *owóknake*, which is an historical story or legend, supposed to have occurred within human history but so far back in time that there is no living memory of the event. This is in contrast to the *ohjikaka*, ‘fables’, which include trickster tales.

³⁶Mr. Shields uses the word *míknáka* for ‘raven belt’, which is called “crow belt” in English. Mrs. O'Watch knows this as *amíknaka*, although she doesn't believe the presence or absence of an initial *a* alters the meaning, although Mr. Shields himself uses both forms in s. (188). She recalls that her father used to dance the crow belt dance but she never talks of it since, as she says, “there is no one to tell”; there seems to be no interest in it among the younger generations at Carry The Kettle. She believes it is still danced in North Dakota.

³⁷*táku wak'á* ‘something holy, a holy being, a spirit’

³⁸*úšina* ‘to care about, to care for, to pity’: This is an important word, but hard to correlate to any single English word. The most common translation is ‘to pity’ but several native speakers have told me they prefer ‘to care for, care about’ in some instances, saying that it can entail affection. For example, this would be the word used to describe the feeling a mother has for her baby. However, it is also the word used to characterize what is sought from spirits in the Sun Dance by means of self-mortification, and is used in prayers when people are having a hard time and call on the spirits to pity them. My choice of translations is influenced by Mrs. O'Watch's intuitions.

³⁹Another instance of *úšina*. See note 4.

(33) The next day his wife cooked. (34) He said, "I will invite four wise elder men," he said, it is said. (35) "The reason is so that I can tell them about the spirit that came to see me." (36) So when his wife finished cooking, a messenger invited four holy men. (37) Then they all came.

(38) Back then it was the Indian custom that when someone invited men, first they ate. (39) So this young man's wife cooked all the best food that they had saved and fed them.

(40) When they had finished eating, the young man said this, it is said. (41) "The reason I invited you is that for four winters a spirit has come to me and told me about this. (42) Now this was the last time and so he said my son's name and told something about him and so he scared me. (43) I love my son. (44) I want to raise him. (45) I also love my wife. (46) I want my household to remain good, so I said I would do it," he said, it is said. (47) "You will help me think [how] I will do it so you will advise me. (48) That is why I invited you," he said, it is said.

(49) The four wise men said, "This thing you've told us, it is a very good story you told. (50) We believe it is the truth. (51) We don't think the spirit fooled you. (52) Do it; you do it the way he told you. (53) Do it following what he told you and we will help you. (54) We will help you with prayers," they told him, it is said. (55) So then, "Yes, I will do it," he said.

(56) The next day they moved the lodge to a different place and took all their things, including things with spiritual power, out of the tipi and put them outside. (57) Again, he invited the four men again and they came. (58) "What do you think of this?" (59) "Yes, we think that is the way you should do it," they said, it is said.

(60) Well, so then a young man went to the woods by the river where they camped. (61) He pulled up a lot of tall *písihu*⁴⁰ and brought it back, it is said. (62) Again, he brought back a lot of sage. (63) Then he spread the sage at the back of the tipi and, having put it there, he put the grass on top of it. (64) Having done that, he told them how they would do everything. (65) He told them how they should tie them up, how to tie up the tails [i.e., the bushy ends of the grass]. (66) Then they finished all of it, it is said, with the grass and the *písihu*.

(67) So when they had finished he said, "There is one more thing I want. (68) I want a buffalo robe that no one has used," he said.

(69) Then the camp crier went all around the camp and then he found one. (70) A woman had just finished it. (71) Now the woman said, "Yes you can take this. (72) I respect that man; he is a good man. (73) The people should do whatever a man like that says," she said, it is said. (74) Then taking the robe, the buffalo robe, back home, he covered (the grasses) with it, it is said.

(75) Then these, uh, that kind of drum, four small ones, they brought them. (76) He taught them the songs, it is said. (77) He taught them the order in which to sing the songs and how everything would be and they learned it well. (78) Then he said this it, is said. (79) "We will sing for four nights and four days," he said, it is said. (80) Now again they sang (and) on the fourth day he said this, it is said. (81) Soon it will be day," he said, it is said. (82) Then, "Each one must smudge one after another; also each one must pray one after another," he said, it is said. (83) So then they did it.

⁴⁰Mrs. O'Watch says this is a kind of grass that grows along the edge of a slough.

(84) Now the sun was about to rise (and) before that, well, again they sang hard, it is said. (85) One after another, again they each smudged themselves, it is said.

(86) Now, just as the sun had barely come up, now, “That is the end,” he said. (87) “One of you uncover it. (88) Whatever might have happened will show,” he said, it is said.

(89) Then one prayed and they uncovered that which had been covered and there was this feathered crow belt, as they call it – they [the grasses] had all turned into feathers. (90) There were four like that lying there, it is said. (91) Well! then they were very thankful, it is said. (92) They gave thanks. (93) (So, that song that they used to sing I already sang. (94) I won’t sing it again.)⁴¹

(95) It went on like that for a long time. (96) There are rules that go with it (the ceremony) and also things for which it should be used, all of which he taught them, it is said. (97) If a man gets angry or threatening, invite him to the society and talk to him and feed him. (98) His thoughts will calm down in the end because this (ceremony) is so powerful,” he said, it is said. (99) “If somebody else is broken hearted because their children died, them, too, you invite them, feed them and talk to them, comfort them and they will feel relieved. (100) The mourners will stop,” he said, it is said, “because this (ceremony) is so powerful, he said, it is said. (101) Again, furthermore, the buffalo will always live near because of this and the people will eat well,” he said, it is said. (102) It all happened the way he said.

(103) While it was going on, all at once the president of this land made all the Indian peoples make peace by making treaties, it is said.⁴² (104) So then, those who had the crow belt ceremony, the Sioux, said, “Well, now we have made peace throughout Indian country, we (will) go to the west and then wherever Indian people live we will make friends over there,” they said. (105) So then they came, it is said.

(106) By that time the Nakoda were north of the border, living at Cypress Hills, it is said. (107) The Nakoda (were in) the region of the Cypress Hills. (108) Then at that time some young men were out scouting from there, it is said. (109) But now the warring was over so what they wanted to see, what they were scouting was where the buffalo were. (110) When they saw some, they returned to camp and told where the buffalo were. (111) When he said it, they went chasing the buffalo where they were, it is said. (112) So having seen that kind, someone was out looking at everything in the east. (113) All at once he saw a big camp on the move. (114) Then he went back and returned to his own tipi and he told his younger brothers about it.

(115) So the chiefs said this, “Well, there is no use being in a hurry. (116) Don’t be scared. (117) Maybe the Sioux want to make friends with the Nakoda so maybe that’s why they are coming,” they said, it is said. (118) Then, “Don’t worry about it.” (119) They were camped close by, to the east of the Nakoda camp, it is said. (120) So now the Sioux came to visit the Nakoda camp to make friends. (121) They accepted them as friends and the Nakoda did the same. (122) So both of them gave each other gifts, it is said. (123) They gave each other whatever they had, horses and guns, too, it is said. (124) Then it was over.

⁴¹A translation of the Crow Belt song that Mr. Shields recorded is on the last page of this story.

⁴²*ngpé kic’tyùza wjé’ákiyapi*: ‘made them shake hands’. There is no Assiniboine word for ‘treaty’ but this phrase is consistently used when treaties are made and so I translate it as ‘treaty’.

(125) Then the Sioux, who had the dance, went to the Nakoda camp and said this, it is said. (126) Tomorrow we will do a dance. (127) You will watch it. (128) You will really like it. (129) It looks good they way they do the dance,” they said, it is said. (130) Then, “Yes, we are pleased,” the Nakoda said, it is said.

(131) The next day there were four poles set up in the center of the Sioux camp and there they hung the crow belt and then they put out the drums and then they danced. (132) The Nakoda having been invited, they all went to look on. (133) It was a large group of people watching, it is said. (134) It was that way and then it was over. (135) The Sioux danced four times, it is said. (136) They finished, then the Sioux said this, “Now we have done what we came west to do. (137) We are friends. (138) You have also seen that we have good ways.” (139) Then, “Now we will leave,” they said.

(140) Then the Nakoda said this, “Yes, we are pleased. (141) We are friends. (142) As long as we live we will be friends,” they said, it is said. (143) Then the Sioux went back to the east, while the Nakoda themselves just stayed in the same place, it is said. (144) Then the chiefs said this, “This dance that we saw was really nice, enjoyable, good to look at. (145) If we buy it I wonder if they will give it to us,” they said. (146) “We won’t just ask for it ; we will buy it. (147) So a young man (will) go and tell them what we said.”

(148) So a messenger followed them and after camping one night he got to the camp of those they had made friends with. (149) He told them the reason he had come. (150) Then the chiefs, the Sioux chiefs, said this, it is said. (151) “Yes, we already knew they would do this. (152) All of it was done very well. (153) The dance was beautiful (and) it does helpful things. (154) But now, this holy thing that we have, whenever we go someplace, we never turn back but we go straight in one direction, so we are staying here in this one place. (155) If they themselves come, then we will teach it to them.”

(156) Then the messenger went back and told them, “Yes.” (157) Then they camped over there and in four days they learned it all, and the songs, too. (158) So then they easily learned it all.

(159) So now they had it. (160) So now, “ This, uh, we have this very one, this sacred thing, this very sacred thing is ours. (161) As long as we live, we will keep this just this way, now that we have it.”

(162) “Do it the way you saw it. (163) It is up to you to do it the way you saw it. (164) You can make four (belts) for yourselves. (165) You should use crow feathers,” he said, it is said. (166) Then, “Yes,” they said. (167) Then they went home.

(168) It went on that way and then all at once United States government men settled the Indian peoples everywhere on small cut-up, measured out pieces of land, each one settled on one of these small pieces, all the different tribes. (169) The Nakoda, too, were settled here. (170) At first the Nakoda people were supposed to be at a place to the south of Chinook (Montana). (171) But now they moved them again to this vacant place. (172) While they were staying at Chinook, the four men who had the crow belts, when they died all of their belongings were covered with earth so everything is lying under the ground there. (173) It is Indian tradition that when a man dies, all his treasured things are buried with him in the ground.

(174) So then everything was left there so when the Nakoda came here they had nothing, no dance. (175) At that time there were still chiefs and there were still medicine men. (176) So they told about it. (177) “We had this good dance but we lost it. (178) We should revive it,” they said, it is said.

(179) “Yes, we are going to do it. (180) This tradition they gave us, we will do it again,” they said, so they collected some feathers and they made it again, it is said.

(181) They did this about the white man year – I don’t know exactly when – 1888 or 7, in English., about that time, that’s when it happened.

(182) So then, they finished making them. (183) Then they chose four (men), it is said.

(184) Then my father-in-law, the father of the woman I married – his name was *T’ašyike Kneknéga* (His Pinto Horse), he was called; my father-in-law’s wife, too, *Ožika* (Fair, Light-Complexioned) she was called, my mother-in-law. (185) Now Indians, uh, Indians follow whiteman ways, because I wasn’t supposed to say the names but I said them.

(186) So then, my father-in-law’s wife got sick and died. (187) So now they had a son but he wanted to stay with his daughter, so he stayed there. (188) Then not even one year later, he too, got sick and so then he was very sick.

(189) So he said one day, “My son-in-law, now, a crow belt – you know I have a crow belt. (190) It happens that I will not get well, I’m going to die,” he said. (191) “When I die, go over to our house and take it down from where it hangs. (192) I know you don’t join the dance but I want you to have it,” he said. (193) Then I said nothing but, “Yes,” I said. (194) Then shortly thereafter, he died. (195) So I didn’t remember anything he said. (196) So the following week, around then, all at once, uh, my brother-in-law came here and said this. (197) He called me by my English name, “George,” he said, “I didn’t hear all that my father said but here, I brought it to you, you’re supposed to take it; do it for him with respect. (198) I brought it, take it,” he said. (198) “Yes, you’re right. (199) I didn’t remember, either,” I said. (200) So then I took it and kept it.

(201) Well it looked really pitiful because the crow belt was very old. (202) It was so old that most of the feathers were broken and very pitiful, but then it was from when the Nakoda people first had it. (203) So now the Gros Ventres that we live with here on this reservation, they, too, wanted it so this same tradition was given to them, and they, too, danced it but they stopped doing it, also, so these customs, uh, “chase the pot”, as it’s called, all of those are gone.⁴³ (204) I still have the songs on the tape recorder they brought me one, so I have it.

(205) So then my son, who grew up to be an artist, respects Indian ways, he enjoys them very

⁴³*e’elīkūwapi* ‘chase the pot’. The narrator’s point is that all the old traditional dances are gone, just as the crow dance is gone and it seems that he will list several others but he only mentions this one. Mrs. O’Watch says this is similar to the dance she knows as *’apát’akpēyapi* ‘run and stab’. The arrangement for both dances includes a pot of cooking meat, a single dancer, and four men seated facing the pot. For ‘chase the pot’, the pot of meat in the crotch of a long forked stick with a feather tied to each point of the forked stick. The dancer dances to a normal drum beat but when he moves toward the pot the drum beats faster. The dancer feints toward the pot three times and on the fourth time he stabs a piece of meat and pulls it out and gives it to one of the men. In ‘run and stab’ the pot of meat sits in the center of the dance area and a single dancer holds a forked stick. The dancer dances for a while to a normal drum beat but when he begins to dance toward the pot to stab at the meat, the drum beat speeds up. The fourth time the dancer stabs at the meat he extracts a piece of meat and gives it to one of the men. In each version, there are four rounds so that each man receives a piece of meat. This dance was once part of the Crow Belt ceremony. There is a nice illustration of chase-the-pot in Valerie Robertson’s *Reclaiming History: Ledger Drawings by the Assiniboine Artist Hongeeyesa* [*Hugéyes’a* ‘Camp Crier’] (Glenbow: Calgary, Alberta, Canada. 1993).

much so I gave it to him and he has it. (206) So then they wrote down on paper for me all that about how the dance first developed and so I gave it to my son. (207) These days my son lives with the Piegan Blackfeet.⁴⁴ (208) His wife is from there so he decided to live over there, but not forever. (209) His wife's father and mother live there, too, and she wanted to be with them, so he stays over there.

(210) That's all I can remember.

(211) So today the Indian people have lost all the respected ways, the respected sacred ways; they have all gone cold.⁴⁵ (212) There is nothing. (213) Now we all only pray white man prayers. (214) But those white man prayers are good, too, and the stories written in books that people use for teaching, they're all good, they're all the truth. (215) We Indians didn't use a book to pray, rather, we just used words.

(216) I can't tell everything I know so I'll stop here. (217) So that's all.

Song of the Crow Belt

Friend, this crow belt is sacred,
Friend, this crow belt is sacred,
Friend, join in this ceremony!

⁴⁴Reference is to the narrator's only son, George Shields, Jr., the artist who painted the Pronghorn mural pictured in this book, and who has also illustrated a number of collections of Assiniboine stories published by the Fort Belknap Indian Community Council.

⁴⁵*sni* : as an intransitive verb, this means 'to burn out, be extinguished, as a fire'; as a stative verb it means 'to be cold.'

3. The Fort Belknap Assiniboine Revive the Crow Belt Ceremony

(1) I will tell about the [dance] known as “Crow Belt” again.

(2) The so-called Crow Belt [dance] was originated by the Sioux. (3) When the Assiniboine were camped in the Badlands, the Sioux came and performed the ceremony and gave it to them so that’s how the Assiniboine got it.⁴⁶ (4) The US government laws had put the Assiniboine at Chinook.⁴⁷ (5) Back then, when those who had the crow belt died, they buried everything associated with [the ceremony] along with them in the ground, I think. (6) So when they settled here [near Harlem], they didn’t have anything because they had quit doing the dance and everything associated with it was in the ground over at Chinook, I think. (7) So then when they settle here, they looked for elder, the many buffalo chasers. (8) Som of them were wise men; they were holy men. (9) They talked about it among themselves saying, “We had a good dance. (10) We wonder what would happen if we re-create it for future generations of our people,” they said.

(11) Now all at once they were anxious to get started so they sent two young men to gather things: feathers, cloth, trade, cloth, all those things [that had to do with the dance]. (12) So when they had gathered everything they made four crow belts and then they finished. (13) Then they spread sage around and put them on it. (14) Then at that time there were black eagles and spotted eagles and they used those kinds of feathers to make them. (15) So then when they had finished, there were holy men and they said, “Now we will do it. (16) Now they finished, but we will say one thing. (17) We won’t carry it on [as before]. (18) The rules are very strict. (19) Some of the young men to day are crazy. (20) If we were to try to follow the rules this way, and if those young men were to break them, very bad luck could come our way. (21) You will pray so that such bad things do not come along as part of it,” they told this one man. (22) It was Eyes In The Water they said it to. (23) So they gave him tobacco and they gave him cloth offerings, but nothing more than that.

(24) So then he prayed. (25) “From this generation forward we will carry on the spirit and the customs but the rules will not be a part of it.” (26) That’s the way he prayed. (27) “Instead, we will just do this dance for them to enjoy themselves from this day on. (28) The rules for this [dance] will not be a part of it. (29) That way you will have pity on us,” he said, praying.

(30) Do it this way. (31) Now whenever they do it, they just enjoy it . (32) None of the rules are part of it.

(33) But there is still one thing they do for themselves. (34) If a man experiences something bad, [as] when one of his relative dies and they are mourning him, he invites the dance society. (35) When they come, he feeds them good food. (36) The leader names one of the members as the speaker. (37) [He says,] “When you experience something bad, you will put it behind you. (38) We have a hard life. (39) Whenever Indians gather together for something, we want you to come back into the circle,” the speaker

⁴⁶*hóškit’gaka* ‘badlands’ -this probably doesn’t refer to the area formally named “Badlands.” There were several areas referred to descriptively as *hóškit’gaka*, so Mr. Shields may just be using the term this way , or he may simply have misspoken himself. The encounter in which the Assiniboine acquired the crow belt ceremony from the Sioux is placed by the great majority of accounts at a site near the Cypress Hills in Saskatchewan. In the preceding story Mr. Shield himself places the encounter at the Cypress Hills (*wazíñe*).

⁴⁷Fort Belknap Indian Reservation was originally located near Chinook, Montana and was moved to its present location near Harlem, Montana in 1884.

told them. (40) “Give them robes or clothes and feed them.”⁴⁸ (41) This way, mourners will stop their mourning and come back to the community for the dance. (42) That is the custom today.

(43) That’s the end.

⁴⁸There is an indistinct word that sounds like it might be *wóyute* ‘food’ in the list of things to give the mourner but that would be redundant so, in the circumstances, it has been omitted from the English translation.

4. The Story of Pronghorn

(1) Today it is the year 1985. (2) On this spring day they want me to tell a story. (3) What I'm about to tell is about my grandfather. (4) My grandfather was of the Nakota people. (5) He also knew the Gros Ventre people that we live with now, the way they used to live back then.⁴⁹ (6) So he was a very well respected man.

(7) The one I'm referring to was named *T'at'óka Hényupa* (Pronghorn). (8) He was also called *C'amhína* (Beaver Teeth). (9) I will tell how this man grew up. (10) They didn't tell me what year⁵⁰ this was, but it was back when there were still lots of buffalo.

(11) There was a bad epidemic and all the Indian peoples caught it. (12) It was called smallpox.⁵¹ (13) At that time my grandfather's people were north of here. (14) They used to go back and forth to both sides [of the border]. (15) They never stayed in one place. (16) So my grandfather's people were staying across the border (i.e., in Canada), over there close to Battle River.⁵² (17) Then there was a big epidemic and they all got it and the people⁵³ were wiped out, it is said.

⁴⁹On the surface, this statement (repeated in (633)) is puzzling, since, due to the narrator's emphasis on Pronghorn's fame among many tribes, one expects the reverse, namely, 'the Gros Ventres knew him'. However, anecdotal accounts note that Mr. Shields cared deeply about fostering and preserving harmonious relationships between the Assiniboine and the Gros Ventres, once hostile to one another but since 1888 (after Pronghorn's death) sharing a reservation at Fort Belknap. Members of Mr. Shields's family and Tom Shawl interpret (5) to mean, 'He took the trouble to know the Gros Ventres', something that would have been counter to prevailing attitudes in pre-reservation times, thus providing – perhaps in hindsight – another reason that, as stated in the following sentence (6), 'he was a very well respected man'.

⁵⁰*mak'óc'e* 'season, year' According to Denig (2000 [1854]:21-22), "Their year is composed of four man-ko'-cha or seasons. . . . These four seasons make a year which again becomes man-ko'-cha or the same as a season. This is difficult to explain. . . . For a year or four seasons they say a winter. A man may say 'I am 40 winters old and one summer.' Yet sometimes the same man will say, 'I am 40 season old.' This is still right. He will also say that he is 80 seasons old or 160 seasons old. All of these are correct and understood immediately, as in the one case you mentally take the half, and in the other the quarter. This is often done among themselves, but with whites they generally name the winter only to designate the year, yet man-ko'-cha (season) is the right name for a year and would be received as such by all the Assiniboin." [Spelling and punctuation are as in the original.] Mrs. O'Watch also immediately understood *mak'óc'e* as 'year', although she herself says *waniyetu* 'winter' or *ómak'a* 'year'. (Nasalization of *a* in the form recorded by Denig is assimilation from *m*, and in fact, this is the more common pronunciation.)

⁵¹The great northern plains smallpox epidemic of 1837. A mural painted by the narrator's son, George Shields, Jr. on a wall in the home of the narrator's daughter, Philomene Shields Tucker, shows Pronghorn's dates as 1829-1885. Pronghorn is therefore seven years old at the time this story begins, and an astonishing ten years old when he joins the war party, subsequently being made a chief for his war deeds, as described in sentences (306)-(584).

⁵²Battle River is considerably north of the US/Canada border, flowing from Alberta into Saskatchewan. It joins the North Saskatchewan River near present day North Battleford, SK.

⁵³*oyáte* 'people, tribe, band, nation' can be collective or distributive. Collectively, it may refer to a political unit (band, tribe, nation) and the specific unit is determined from context. This story describes the devastation of a several individual bands, but this particular reference seems to encompass the entire Assiniboine nation of the day. Throughout this translation, the words 'band', 'tribe', and 'people', when used in a collective sense, are my own interpretations of *oyáte* based on context. Incidentally, *oyáte* is also used to refer to classes of animals understood to

(18) Then the people my grandfather stayed with, too, all died. (19) They didn't get sores, but they got headaches and their backbones kind of broke.⁵⁴ (20) Many of them died, it is said.

(21) So, right at that time, the smallpox was so bad that nobody could stop it. (22) At first they didn't know what it was. (23) They just thought it was an ordinary sickness, so they hired holy men and they tended to those who were sick but no one was healed, it is said.⁵⁵

(24) So all at once a holy man said this, it is said. (25) "This sickness is so bad it will wipe us out. (26) None of the spirits will answer us. (27) The door in the sky is closed to us now. (28) That is why no one can be healed," he said, it is said. (29) So then, "Instead, I think it will be the end of everyone here," he said. (30) After that people died day and night.

(31) At that time when he was living up there, my grandfather was a boy. (32) While everyone around them was dying, all at once his mother said this, it is said. (33) "My son, look at this. (34) Those who are lying here and there on the ground are already dead. (35) They are never going to get well. (36) So our people are wiped out. (37) I, myself, already have a headache. (38) I think I'm coming down with it now."⁵⁶ (39) So then because of this she said, "I will make you some provisions." (40) His mother pounded some dried meat and made pemmican. (41) She sliced some grease⁵⁷ and mixed it in. (42) "These are only for you to eat. (43) Don't feed the dogs. (44) Instead, you are the one who will eat this." (45) So then, "When I die, when I lie down on the earth, I will not get up any more. (46) I, too, will die. (47) But when each day comes,⁵⁸ go stand up on the hill near this camp and look around.⁵⁹ (48) All at once some who have survived will be going in some direction. (49) Watch for them. (50) When you see people like that, you follow them," she said, it is said.

have a strong relationship to Indian people, especially the buffalo, *pté oyáte* 'the buffalo people/nation'.

⁵⁴Mrs. O'Watch tells that severe hiccoughs accompanying the illness would thrust the head back with such force that the back broke. She describes their having used stakes (*húpe*) in an attempt to prevent this. Sturdy sticks were cut and sharpened and stuck in the ground. People would sit down with their backs to these sticks and lash themselves to them to try to keep their backs from breaking. It is not clear what would cause such severe hiccoughing, since cough is generally not a symptom of smallpox. Yet, the phenomenon of breaking backs is mentioned in several Assiniboine oral histories as an effect of some 19th century epidemics and, as Mrs. O'Watch's detailed description of *húpe* indicates, was remembered well into the 20th century.

⁵⁵*wó 'ayupte yuhápišj* literally, "they did not get answers," understood by Mrs. O'Watch as 'their prayers were not answered'. "To have an answer" in the context of holy men tending to the sick means to have one's prayers answered by the spirits, that is, to get what is asked for. In this instance, the prayers were for healing and so both Mrs. Tucker and Mrs. O'Watch, two decades apart, intuitively translate this phrase as 'no one was healed'. (Mrs. O'Watch did not offer a literal translation until asked about the constituent words.) I have used the figurative interpretation here and in (28).

⁵⁶*miš waná emác'eyjka o'?'jka*, literally, "me, now, I will catch it, I think."

⁵⁷Mrs. O'Watch tells that rendered fat would be pressed into balls or blocks for storage, pieces of which could be sliced off as needed.

⁵⁸*ápa h́ta* lit.: 'whenever it is day'

⁵⁹*t'ipi* can refer to a single tipi or to the collective circle of tipis of a band, that is, a camp. This contrasts with *ét'i*, a smaller, less permanent camp such as those of hunting or war parties.

(51) So then at night, it was like when people were still alive, making the noises they used to with their activities, just like normal again, it is said. (52) At night when that happened, he went outside but there was nothing. (53) It was the ghosts of the people who died who were doing that.

(54) It kept on like that when all at once a camp crier [said], it is said, “It is summer now. (55) Now, people, we will go somewhere,” he said, it is said.⁶⁰ (56) “Get ready. (57) Put on all your best clothes. (58) Now we will go somewhere.”

(59) When he stopped speaking, well! through the tent wall he [the boy] could hear⁶¹ the sounds of breaking camp outside,⁶² it is said. (60) So then, while that was going on he went outside – nothing! (61) Everything was still standing just as it had been. (62) “Oh, I guess it’s ghosts who are moving around,” he thought.

(63) He went back inside but he felt restless. (64) He even recognized voices of boys he used to play with, spinning tops on the ice, and when he could hear muffled laughter and movement of them outside, playing, he went outside but there was still nothing, it is said. (65) It was those ghosts.

(66) In a little while the camp crier spoke once again and said, “Now all of you are ready. (67) Now we will go,” he said, it is said. (68) Then, through the tent wall he heard them moving off in some direction. (69) So then, while that was happening, he went outside again but there was nothing.

(70) So then having come back into the tent again, he sat. (71) His mother had told him, “Don’t ever let the fire in the tipi go out. (72) There is lots wood here so always keep it lit. (73) If it goes out there will be nothing you can do. (74) You will freeze,” she told him. (75) Then remembering that, he knew how to tend the fire.

(76) After a while, then he heard the muffled sounds of everyone leaving, it is said. (77) He went out but there was nothing. (78) The tents were still standing just as they always had been. (79) So he went back into the tent and sat, then he added plenty of wood to the fire. (80) He also ate some of his pemmican that she had made for him.

(81) Then from outside he heard a woman calling to her dogs, it is said. (82) As he listened, all at once the door opened and she came inside. (83) He knew who that woman was, it is said. (84) It was his sister-in-law. (85) She was a ghost, too. (86) Then this boy saw her. (87) “Oh, my poor brother-in-law, it’s hard on you with all your friends gone,” she said, it is said. (88) So then she just warmed her hands over

⁶⁰i.e., move camp, which was always done at the change of the major seasons of summer and winter.

⁶¹*níyg* ‘to hear obliquely, as through a wall or from another room’, used alone or together with *nal’ú* ‘to hear’: *níyg nal’ú*. As far as I can determine, both mean ‘he heard it obliquely, as through the wall’. Sometimes for the sake of a more felicitous English sentence, I use ‘hear muffled [sounds]’ for *níyg*.

⁶²*owáhec’y* ‘the sound of breaking camp’. This entails such sounds as the swooshing of tent covers being pulled off their frames, the clatter of tent poles falling on each other, travois being pulled down from where they were leaning and then being packed, etc. Mrs. O’Watch explains that this word does not refer to just any clattering sound, e.g., dishes or wood being stacked or children running around playing (her examples). It refers specifically and collectively to sounds associated with preparation for travel. In modern usage, it can refer to the sound of suitcases being packed and rolled across the floor, car doors and trunks opening and slamming, etc.

the fire. (89) She went outside again and through the wall he heard her go off somewhere, it is said.

(90) So then, day and night, there were no more of those sounds, it is said. (91) This was because all of the ghosts had left. (92) Then it stayed very quiet. (93) So he was very restless. (94) After that he didn't hear anything; it stayed really quite.

(95) So when it was like that, he went outside and over to that hill and stood and looked around. (96) After quite a while there was smoke rising from a tipi in the distance. (97) "Oh, someone must be alive over there; I had better go there," he thought. (98) He went there.

(99) Then as he got close, dogs were barking. (100) As he was close by, a girl peeped out then pulled herself back into the tent, it is said. (101) So he was already there and he stopped in the doorway. (102) Then inside the tent the girl said this, it is said. (103) "Mother, my older brother is standing outside here. (104) He's going to come in," she said. (105) So then he went in. (106) So this girl was lying beside her mother, covered with a robe, lying with only her head showing. (107) These, too, were all dead. (108) She was lying next to her mother, who was also dead.

(109) Then this boy said this, it is said. (110) (He took this girl as a sister.) (111) "Younger Sister, look around, those you see, they're not sleeping, they're dead. (112) They will never get well. (113) So now, I think they [the survivors] have gone somewhere. (114) I see their tracks. (115) Wherever it is they went, we will go, too," the boy said, it is said.

(116) So the girl got up and sat with her head bowed, saying nothing. (117) She took a stick and sat stirring the ashes. (118) So again he told her some things, coaxing her, it is said. (119) "Look, Younger Sister, when you've eaten up all your food, you will starve. (120) Then wolves and bears are going come inside and eat you up!" he said, they say.⁶³

(121) After that she agreed to it⁶⁴ and so, "Let's go," she said, it is said. (122) "Let's go, my older brother." (123) Then, "One of those dogs is mine. (124) When we go on camping trips, he always carries me," she said.⁶⁵

(125) Then, "Oh, there is something . . . (126) If you have moccasins, take them," he said. (127) Having said that, she dug through her things and after a while she took some moccasins her mother had made for her and she put [i.e., wrapped] them in her buffalo robe.

(128) She went outside and called her dog. (129) This was a very big dog, one of those travois

⁶³*káya* 'they say'. The narrator departs from his usual quotative *hyštá* 'it is said'. *káya* indicates a more direct knowledge of the reported events than *hyštá*, which is usually reserved for legends and folk tales. In fact, considering that this is the narrator's grandfather's life history, which the narrator has received from his own father, it is surprising that he favors *hyštá*; *káya* would be justified as the preferred quotative.

⁶⁴*wjána* 'to agree to' but also, 'to believe, to have confidence in'. The word suggests that the girl is not giving in, but rather, has been convinced by the boy's arguments and has confidence in him.

⁶⁵*o'íkna* This can refer to a full camp move or to "camping trips" in which smaller family groups occasionally hunted small game away from the larger camp circle during the hunting season, to supplement the meat and hides from full scale bison hunts coordinated by the entire band.

dogs, standing there. (130) This dog was fat, it is said. (131) This was because the girl had been feeding him. (132) Then when the dog had lain down, she looked at all the travois leaning against the tipis and said, “This one is my travois, my dog travois.” (133) She tried to take it but she couldn’t. (134) The ends [of the travois poles] were frozen there [to the ground]. (135) So then with the boy’s help, she took it down and dragged it and they attached it to the dog that had lain down. (136) But the boy didn’t know how to fasten a travois to a dog, but the girl knew.⁶⁶ (137) But she didn’t tighten it very well; everything was loose. (138) So then, “Oh, I guess my younger sister knows⁶⁷ what she’s doing,” he thought, and so he tightened the ones that weren’t done well.

(139) Then they finished. (140) Then, “One of those robes is mine,” she said. (141) “Take it,” he said. (142) So she took hers, the kind of robe with the hair left on. (143) Having put all her moccasins into it, she strapped it on and they were ready to go, it is said. (144) (I don’t know which way the tracks went.)⁶⁸ (145) So then they went there.

(146) Although it was winter, it was now getting on towards spring, it is said. (147) On the sunny side of the trail everything was melted and the trail was uneven. (148) During that time the month is called “uneven trail month.” (149) It was a spring month.⁶⁹ (150) They followed the tracks of a moving camp and the girl was really enjoying it, it is said. (151) She was happy, it is said. (152) So she would go running ahead and stop for a bit and when her older brother caught up she would do it again.

(153) All at once the girl said, “My older brother, now I’m tired, she said. (154) Then he told the dog to like down [and] the dog slowly lay down on the ground. (155) Then the girl climbed on, shook the snow from her moccasins, wrapped them and put them away. (156) In this fashion, he led the dog along the tracks, it is said.

(157) So they kept going. (158) All at once, there was a big river [and] they camped there. (159) All at once there was a grove of trees with smoke rising from within it. (160) Then, “Oh, there must be someone over there,” he said. (161) “Younger Sister, stay here. (162) I think I’ll go look,” he said.

(163) So then there were two young men staying there, snatching⁷⁰ things from anyone who passed by, it is said. (164) When any of the survivors who were traveling around came by there, they kept snatching things from them. (165) They weren’t well: one was unable to move while the other one could

⁶⁶Dogs and travois were women’s possessions, and the process of hooking them up was therefore the province of women. Men were not expected to know about this.

⁶⁷The crucial quotative for this sentence is not spoken clearly. It could be *ec’j c’a* ‘he thought, and so...’ or *ec’jsje’c* ‘he didn’t think’. His motivation in tightening the travois pack differs depending on which reading is correct. If the latter is correct, this would read, “my younger sister doesn’t know what she is doing,”

⁶⁸Narrator’s aside.

⁶⁹Mrs. O’Watch suggests this might be around March in southern Saskatchewan. Further north, around Battleford where these events are said to have occurred, it could have been as late as April or May. Mrs. O’Watch describes the condition of a “uneven trail” as consisting of mud on one side and snow hanging out over the opposite side like a shelf, with space under it where melt water has run through. Such a trail can be treacherous with its mix of ice and mud.

⁷⁰*k’i* ‘to take by force, to grab, take without permission’, as opposed to the more generic *éyaku* ‘take’.

get around. (166) So this one said, “Hey, this is a capable boy. (167) Come here, boy! (168) You’re going to stay here. (169) You’re not going to find any people,⁷¹ no matter where you go,” he said, it is said. (170) “Here’s a musket and lots of powder and musket balls;⁷² you can teach yourself how to use them.” (171) But he [the boy] didn’t like the idea, it is said. (172) The boy said this, it is said. (173) “Wait, I’ll go get my younger sister, who is with me,” he said. (174) So the man said this, it is said. (175) “Yes, come back. (176) We’ll keep this powder and bullet pouch here for you,” he said. (177) But he [the boy] was only fooling him. (178) “No, I’ll take it with me,” he said. (179) So then, instead, he ran. (180) As he was running [back to his sister], the dog smelled the fire and was pulling the girl around to go in that direction. (181) But then he got it turned back around and then they fled, it is said.

(182) Then they went on following the tracks. (183) All at once a woman was coming up the trail they were traveling. (184) So when they met, it was an old woman, it is said. (185) Then the old woman said, “What else are you going to take from me?” she said, it is said. (186) So this boy said, “Grandmother, what do you mean?” he said, they say. (187) “I am here with my younger sister, Grandmother,” he said. (188) Then [she asked],⁷³ “Who are you?” (189) He told her about himself.⁷⁴ (190) Ah! that old woman was a relative, it is said. (191) “Oh, Grandson! I was going after some things at the old camp site but now I won’t go. (192) Instead, we’ll go back from here [to the new camp].” (193) She went back with them to where she, the old woman, was living and she arrived back at the lodge with them, it is said. (194) Her daughter, who was a widow, came outside; she was snowblind. (195) They stayed there, he and this girl. (196) The old woman also knew the girl. (197) Well, so, they stayed there, it is said.

(198) So then it was summer. (199) Since it was summer, they packed up and moved somewhere. (200) Then all at once, the orphaned children gathered together in the evenings and they would always say this. (201) “Hurry up, let’s go away from the camp again and we will cry again,” they would say, it is said. (202) So then, having thus gone away from camp, “Come on, you be the first to cry,” [someone] said, they told each other. (203) After that, once one cried, then all of those children really wailed, it is

⁷¹*wjé’ášta* ‘man, person’, therefore ‘people’, as a number of individuals, as opposed to *oyáte*, an organized group. See n.3.

⁷²Mrs. O’Watch says the word used here for ‘bullets (*máza*, literally ‘iron, metal’) refers to musket balls. The word used for gun, *é’ó’f’aka*, refers to any long gun but in this case must refer to a smooth-bore musket., due to the reference to ‘balls’ and also because breech-loading rifles did not come into common use among whites until the Civil War, more than two decades later than the encounter described here. In any event, many plains Indians favored muskets of a design tailored to their requirements. These trade guns, manufactured at one particular armory in England (and later imitated by other manufacturers) for the Indian trade, featured a brass serpent on the gun stock and an enlarged trigger shield that allowed the weapon to be fired using two fingers, as the Indians were accustomed to from shooting arrows. Muskets were ill suited to hunting because they were muzzle-loaded and therefore virtually impossible to load on horseback, as in a buffalo chase, and were too inaccurate for single targets, such as deer elk, or moose. Consequently, they were used by the Indians primarily in warfare.

⁷³Since the third person pronoun is zero and therefore does not distinguish gender, it cannot be determined from the words alone who asks and who answers, but for reasons of respect, it is unlikely that the boy would ask an older woman to identify herself.

⁷⁴This presumably involved naming his parents and other relatives, since there were no European-style “last names,” and in any event, people were identified by their place in the social structure, that is, by whom they were related to, and within the camp circle were more likely to be addressed by kin terms than by a given name.

said. (204) When they did that, it also made the people cry, so then they wailed, too, it is said. (205) When they remembered all their many relatives, they cried for them. (206) Eventually, they told them to stop it, it is said. (207) “Boys and girls, don’t do that any more. (208) It’s too hard [on us].” (209) So because someone said “don’t do it any more,” they didn’t do it any more, it is said.

(210) As time went by, the boy ran into a different boy, whom he knew. (211) He was an orphan, too. (212) Then, having met him, he stayed with him, it is said, and the boys went around together. (213) That girl stayed in the old woman’s lodge, it is said. (214) Then the boy [said], “Younger Sister, look, I’m going to stay with this boy. (215) You are a girl, so you will stay here in Grandmother’s lodge, with my older sister,”⁷⁵ he said. (216) “Yes,” the girl said, it is said. (217) So she stayed with her.

(218) It went on that way. (219) All at once they went hunting, it is said.⁷⁶ (220) They had seen a buffalo herd. (221) So they chased them, chasing them close to the camp, it is said. (222) So my grandfather, uh, that boy, and his friend went there and [the other one said], “Come on, friend, let’s go where they hunted and shot buffalo. (223) Maybe they will give us some tripe or omasum.”

(224) So they went there together. (225) One [buffalo] was being butchered near the camp; two men were butchering, so they went there. (226) They sat down there. (227) “Ah, boys, it’s good that you have come,” he said, it is said. (228) So one of those who were butchering was from over here where we live now, in the United States, it is said. (229) Over there all the Indian peoples had caught smallpox in the great epidemic. (230) So that one, this young man, was mourning because all his child- relatives had died.⁷⁷ (231) So he thought, “There are people staying across the border; maybe if one of my many young relatives has survived there, I’ll go after him⁷⁸ and bring him back,” he thought, and so he went over there, it is said.

(232) So then this boy thought he recognized the young man, it is said. (233) “This one looks like he is my older brother,” he thought.⁷⁹ (234) Then, “No, my older brother always dressed well and always painted himself and he always braided his hair nicely. (235) This one has just neglected himself,” he thought.

(236) Then those who butchered took the tripe and omasum and shook them and gave them to the boy. (237) He tore it down the middle. (238) “So, boys, go to the water and wash these for us” they said. (239) So they were happy, holding it, they ran over there with it and washed it nice and clean, it is said, until it was white.

(240) While they were doing that, the man said this. (241) “I shouldn’t have come here so soon, but I have lots of young relatives and I thought one of them might have survived, so I came,” he said, they

⁷⁵Reference is to the old woman’s daughter, the snowblind woman.

⁷⁶Indefinite ‘they’, implying the men of the camp, not the boy and his friend.

⁷⁷Reference is to his nieces and nephews (including brothers’ children, whom he would have termed sons and daughters), implying that the young man did not have biological children of his own.

⁷⁸Could also mean ‘her’. See n.17.

⁷⁹‘. . .looks like he is my older brother’ is the literal translation. JT’s translation is “He sure looks like me!”

say. (242) “Yes,” the other one said, it is said. (243) This other one, “The shorter boy might be your younger brother,” he said, and he told him his name, it is said. (244) “Oh, yes, it is my younger brother,” he said, it is said. (245) “I didn’t recognize him.”

(246) Then they came back and they said, “Here, take these back,” they said. (247) Then, “No, sit down and eat it yourself,” they said. (248) Then he cut the bone to get marrow for them and let them eat it together with the tripe and omasum. (249) Then when they had eaten it up, the boy, “Friend, let’s go home now,” he said. (250) Then both of them stood up.

(251) So that man from elsewhere, now that he knew who this was, said, “My younger brother, don’t *you* leave, but sit down. (252) Now that we’re through [eating] I’ll pack this meat and you’ll take it back to my home. (253) One of my arrows fell out over the ridge, so I’m going to retrieve it,” he said. (254) Then having put the meat that was to be taken back on a horse, “You know where my lodge is. (255) Stop there and say this to your sister-in-law,” he said, it is said. (256) He said, “When you stop there, say this, ‘Trick Walker,⁸⁰ come outside. (257) I’ve brought meat for your,’” he said. (258) And, “When she lifts you down [from the horse], don’t go anywhere. (259) Go inside and sit down. (260) I’ll be right back,” he said, it is said.

(261) So he went back riding the horse packed with meat and he got to where he told him to go and said, “Hello! Trick Walker, come outside. (262) I’ve brought you some meat,” he said. (263) Then a young woman – a very beautiful woman, it is said – came outside smiling, saying, “So! this must be my brother-in-law,” she said, and she lifted him down. (264) Then he went into the lodge. (265) Then the young woman unpacked all the meat and turned the horse loose. (266) Right away, she cooked.

(267) So as he sat in the lodge, through the tent wall he heard a horse come running. (268) “Oh, that must be my older brother,” he thought. (269) So in a short while someone outside said this. (270) “Is my younger brother in the tent?” he said, they say. (271) The young woman, “Yes,” she said, it is said. (272) Then he came inside, and he was laughing as he came in [saying], “Ho, my young man,⁸¹ it seems you’ve brought meat! (274) When your sister-in-law finishes cooking, we’ll eat,” he said. (275) When she had cooked, they ate, it is said.

(275) So now, this boy was very pitiful, it is said. (276) All of his clothes were filthy so he was very pitiful, it is said. (277) Nobody even tended to his hair so it was all bunched up and matted. (278) His face hadn’t been washed either, so he was completely pitiful, it is said. (279) So because of this, when they finished eating, he said this [the young man, speaking to his wife]. (280) “Come on, take those deer skins and make some clothes for my younger brother, shirt, pants, moccasins, all these,” he said. (281) So then she measured enough for all of these, a shirt, pants, and moccasins. (282) Then she made them, it is said.

⁸⁰*Owéwak’gk’g* ‘Trick Walker’: this is the translation given by Mr. Shields. Riggs and Buechel give *owéwak’g* as ‘to lie, to tell an untruth, to pursue a crooked course’. As an interesting example of how strict morphological interpretation can give varying results, Mrs. O’Watch first interpreted the name as “Walks with Holy Steps”, from *owé* ‘steps’ and *wak’g* ‘holy, sacred’.

⁸¹ *k’oškápi* ‘my young man’ The plural ending (-*pi*) indicates endearment. Also, the young man calls his younger brother *k’ošká* ‘young man’ rather than *hokšína* ‘boy’, another endearment. His entire manner is affectionate, playfully crediting the boy with bringing home meat, as if the boy had killed it himself.

(283) In the meantime, the young man tended to the boy's hair. (284) He greased it. (285) So then his hair was all matted and stuck together because no one had taken care of it for him. (286) So he washed his hair for him and combed it and combed out all the lice, it is said. (287) So when he had all of that well taken care of, he braided his hair neatly for him. (288) In the meantime, since the young woman had also finished making the clothes for him, he didn't look the same, now that they dressed him in all these nice clothes.

(289) So then they had also already made up a place for him to sleep. (290) So now they said, "Younger brother, you aren't going anywhere; this is your place, it will be yours."⁸² (291) So then when this boy looked at himself, he looked good and so he was very happy, it is said.

(292) That's the way it was, when now [the young man] said this, it is said. (293) "Tomorrow, be ready, Younger Brother, we're leaving to go back where I came from," he said, it is said. (294) Those whom this boy lived with was camped somewhere near Battle River, a big river in Canada.⁸³ (295) So the other one, who came from the United States, was from an area near a town on the banks of the Milk River, which is also a big river. [ck this sentence.***]

(296) So they arrived back over there, but they never walked. (297) They had a horse travois with their things packed on it and each one rode a horse. (298) So in just a little while they got back over here⁸⁴ to the United States.

(299) So then they lived very well, it is said. (300) It was winter once more. (301) It was summer when they came back [and] now it was winter once more. (302) So now he [the young man] set out traps, deadfalls, for him [the boy], so he trapped kit foxes,⁸⁵ and when he did, he skinned and dried them for him then [said], "When the white man comes, you can use these to buy things for yourself," he told him. (303) So he was happy about this. (304) Then he trapped many with the deadfall. (305) When they were lucky, they also caught mink, it is said, weasel-like things.

(306) So, this was in winter. (307) Then all at once he was sleeping [when] all at once something woke him. (308) "Younger Brother, get up," [the young man] said. (309) "The young men have gone on a war party. (310) You will go, too," he said. (311) The boy, "Why is my older brother saying that, I wonder? (312) He told me I make him happy, so I wonder why is he telling me this, but I will go," he

⁸²The literal translation is, 'this [sleeping] place is yours, it will be yours', implying that it is his now and in the future. Each person's place in a lodge was determined by where their sleeping robe was placed. Since the young man had come north expecting to find a surviving young relative, he apparently had also brought a sleeping robe for that child, whoever he or she might turn out to be. Now he is telling the young Pronghorn that the place is to be his.

⁸³*é'gkú sám* 'beyond the border'. This term can mean Canada or the United States, depending on where the speaker is: it will reference the other of the two countries from the speaker's location. The narrator is at Ft. Belknap, Montana, so *é'gkú sám* means Canada in this instance.

⁸⁴(308) *žéc'i* "over there" and (310) *néc'i* "over here": Both refer to the United States. A deictic shift occurs as the family travels from Canada, which had been the deictic center up to this point in the narrative (Canada = "here" and the U.S. = "there"), to the United States, which has always been the deictic center for the narrator and now becomes the deictic center for the family as well (U.S. = "here").

⁸⁵*fo'ká'ána* apparently can refer to the kit fox, swift fox, or grey fox, all indigenous to the northern plains. Two Canadian speakers believe this to be a loanword from Sioux (Lakota *fo'kála*; no cognate found for Dakota).

thought, it is said.

(313) So then he took a blanket and tied it on with a belt. (314) As he was going outside [the young man said], “Wait!” (315) When they go on a war party, there are certain things they take with them,” he said. (316) So he sat down. (317) The woman [said], “Here, take this deerskin.” (318) Then the young woman took the deerskin and measured for moccasins and cut them out. (319) Then the young man said, “Hey, he’s a young man now, so you can’t go following the war party making moccasins for him. (320) Just tie them up and give them to him,” he said. (321) So she tied them together and measured strings so he could carry them on his back. (322) She gave them to him and he packed them on his back. (323) As he was going outside he asked, “Which way did they go?” he said, they say. (324) “They went westward from here toward the Missouri River,” he said, it is said.

(325) So he went to the Missouri River. (326) Then, “Oh, they followed the river,” he thought. (327) Then there were no tracks. (328) “Oh, there’s nothing here. (329) I think he must have been fooling me,” he thought, therefore. (330) He went toward a cliff and went up a hill then. (331) Nothing. (332) He backtracked again. (333) So then he found the tracks, it is said. (334) Well, then he was happy. (335) “Oh, it seems he wasn’t fooling me,” he thought.

(336) There was deep snow, it is said. (337) The tracks were easy to follow so then he went jogging along. (338) So he followed them, loping along until night. (339) He kept going and at midnight there was a fire visible through the trees of a grove, it is said. (340) “Oh, there they are,” he thought. (341) So he went there. (342) So he went close to it.

(343) There were two war camps, one of which was very big. (344) One man came out of that one and [said], “Hey! Whoever you are, come over here. (345) There’s room here,” he said. (346) Well then, this boy was very pleased. (347) The man who had invited him thought this boy was an adult. (348) The boy didn’t know that, so he was really pleased. (349) So he went over there and because they thought it was an experienced warrior, they made room for him where the chiefs sit. (350) So when he went in, here it was a boy! it is said. (351) So then they all laughed, it is said, with this boy standing there. (352) So they made room for him anyway and told him to sit down there, they say. (353) He sat down among the war party leaders, in the place where chiefs sit, it is said.

(354) So these young men were cooking. (355) They were roasting ribs so they were just right, it is said. (356) Grease was dripping, sizzling and dripping as it roasted. (357) When they finished, they all took branched sticks and sliced meat off, eating like that, it is said.⁸⁶ (358) They fed the boy, also.

(359) So they kept going, following the Missouri River and then went north towards *wanǵbe* (the Bear Paw Mountains) – Crees live there now.⁸⁷ (360) It was winter. (361) They were walking, not riding.

⁸⁶Mrs. O’Watch explains that cooked meat would be speared on a stick and the other end of the stick stuck into the ground so that bites could be sliced off one at a time.

⁸⁷*wa* from *wahǵáksice* ‘bear’ and *ngapé* ‘hand, paw’. It is the site of present day Rocky Boy (Cree) Reservation

(362) So they were headed for the Sweet Grass Hills.⁸⁸ (363) As they were nearing there, those in the lead [said], “Duck!”⁸⁹ they said. (364) So they all dropped down. (365) Then there were a lot of enemies coming from the west, returning from a hunt. (366) They had dropped down in the snow because they had seen them. (367) Eventually all of those in the enemy hunting party passed by. (368) Then the war party got up and went on again. (369) Then again those in the lead again [said], “Duck!” they said. (370) Again they all dropped down, they say. (371) Again it was the hunting party, two of them, it is said. (372) They were driving the horses packed with meat as they walked. (373) So it looked like they were from the group who had gone hunting and were going home. (374) All at once they grabbed their horses and disappeared into a coulee, it is said. (375) “Oh, whoever those enemies are, they aren’t in a hurry. (376) They’re going to make camp and sleep there and hope to get home tomorrow, that’s why they did that,” they said. (377) So they sat there a long time. (378) When it got to be night, they remembered where the place was and they went there, it is said.

(379) [Narrator interjects] Wait, I’ve told it wrong. (380) I said they went north from the Missouri River, but actually they haven’t reached the Sweet Grass Hills yet.

(381) So then they saw something but they didn’t know what it was so someone should go scout it out. (382) So they asked them but not a single one of them said anything, it is said. (383) They dreaded it.⁹⁰ (384) So this boy didn’t know anything. (385) He didn’t know anything [i.e., the practices of war parties]. (386) So he said, “I’ll be the one to go,” he said. (387) So then they told him all about what to do.

(388) So then he went, it is said. (389) So then he thought they would wait for him there. (390) Just after he left, the others left, too. (391) They were thinking about getting to the Sweet Grass Hills. (392) So the boy saw that thing they hadn’t been able to identify and it was a buffalo, it is said. (393) So he didn’t scare it and backtracked again, going back by following his tracks. (394) He got back to where he started from but everyone had disappeared. (395) There were only their tracks, seeming to go toward the Sweet Grass Hills. (396) He followed them, it is said. (397) So then he followed them loping along.

(398) All at once a storm came up, it is said, coming from the west. (399) O! at last he ran much harder. (400) He didn’t get very far when the blizzard hit, it is said, snowing and blowing. (401) So then after a while the snow was covering the tracks as he went. (402) After a while he saw the snow piling up in drifts. (403) After a while they were all gone because of it. (404) From then on it was very difficult for him to walk and he was going very slowly breaking through the snow. (405) So he kept going. (406)

⁸⁸“The Sweet Grass Hills are located in North Central Montana, north of Highway 2, right near the Canadian border. The Sweet Grass Hills consist of 3 distinct buttes with scattered grassy hills connecting them. The three buttes are West Butte (elevation of 6983 feet), Gold Butte (elevation of 6512 feet) and East Butte (elevation of 6958 feet).” <http://www.bigskyfishing.com/Montana-Info/Hi-Line/sweetgrass-hills.shtm>. This website may be consulted for further information and photographs. Apropos of this story, esp. (415)ff., the site notes that “in some ways, the Sweet Grass Hills are one of [*sic*] the most visible mountains in Montana. On a clear day you can see these hills from staggering distances away. . . they seem very tall when viewed from a distance and can also take seemingly forever to reach when driving towards them.”

⁸⁹*K’ún!* Literally, “Down!” but “Duck!” is the narrator’s own translation in the version given at the time of this telling. In an earlier version (Ft. Belknap Indian Community 1983 :101) it is recorded as, “Everybody down!”

⁹⁰*ʔawúkašj* ‘to hate to do, to dread’ Tom Shawl suggests that, in this context, it means ‘they were unwilling to do it.’

Finally he reached the Sweet Grass Hills, it is said.

(407) To the east end of the Sweet Grass Hills there was one peak [that he could see], called “sharp-pointed Sweet Grass Hill.” (408) He reached it. (409) So he climbed it and now he was very tired, it is said. (410) He was sleepy, too. (411) So whenever he lay down somewhere, he would seem to fall asleep and he would dream, it is said. (412) “Ah, this is the boy who is missing,” they seemed to say, but when he sat up there was nothing there. (413) So he lay down for a while. (414) Then he climbed that Sweet Grass Hills [peak]. (415) Eventually, after some time, having gone very far, very high, he got to the top, it is said. (416) So then he wandered around. (417) Then all at once he saw a rock shelter that someone had made. (418) So then he went in and lay down and fell right to sleep, it is said. (419) He wrapped himself up well in a blanket. (420) So then he slept a long time.

(421) All at once he woke up. (422) It was daybreak, it is said. (423) Before sunrise he looked toward the north, it is said. (424) North of the Sweet Grass Hills there is a river called Bear Creek.⁹¹ (425) He saw the creek there like a pencil line.⁹² (426) He saw trees growing.

(427) Then all at once there was smoke rising. (428) After a while then there were many rising here and there so then as the streams of smoke rose they came together so that from a distance they looked like a comb, it is said. (429) “Aha!” the boy [said], “I think that must be the ones they’re looking for. (430) It couldn’t be someone else; it can’t be anyone else but enemies,”⁹³ he thought. (431) “Back where I’m from, at this time of winter, they all go out on the river to spin tops and they probably do this, too. (432) I’ll go there and when the boys come to the ice I’ll run around and I’ll stab them as I run around. (433) So then if they kill me it won’t matter,” he thought. (434) “I’m in enemy territory. (435) After all, I’m an orphan,” he was thinking.

(436) Then he considered this again. (437) Where he just came from was closer than where he was thinking of going, yet he knew he just barely made it here. (438) “Oh, it’s so far over there, I’ll never get there. (439) I’ll freeze half way there. (440) If I get tired and lie down I might freeze. (441) Well, this particular hill is greatly renowned among the people around here. (442) Well, here I will die, I will kill myself,” he thought, it is said. (443) So then, his brother had given him some vermillion. (444) He took it and untied it and mixed it with snow. (445) He painted himself all over. (446) He painted his all hair and the sleeves, shoulders, and fringe of his shirt.

⁹¹It is unclear which river is referred to here. The Marias River was called Bear Creek or Bear River by the Assiniboine, but it lies to the south of the Sweet Grass Hills. Looking north from East Butte, one would see the Milk River in the distance. Yet in every version of this story told by Mr. Shields, whether in English or Assiniboine, he says that Pronghorn was looking north and saw a river called Bear Creek from this vantage point.

⁹²It is so far off that it appears no larger than a pencil line.

⁹³*t’ókapi* ‘enemies’: Mrs. O’Watch (who, recall, is Canadian) understands this word to also refer specifically to the Blackfoot tribe, and indeed, the Sweet Grass Hills are in Blackfeet territory. (The Blackfeet refer to these as the Sweet Pine Hills.) Tom Shawl notes that the term also refers to Gros Ventres. The Gros Ventres and Blackfeet were allies and culturally very similar, e.g., their tipis were almost identical. According to Shawl, today *t’ókapi* is almost exclusively understood at Fort Belknap to mean Gros Ventres, although he understands the reference in this narrative to refer to Blackfeet.

(447) This is the story I have been telling.⁹⁴

(448) They were⁹⁵ headed for the Sweet Grass Hills on foot. (449) So those in the lead saw something but they didn't know what it was. (450) The young men then asked for someone to go scout it out but no one said anything. (451) So the boy said this, it is said. (452) "I'll be the one who will go," he said, it is said. (453) Then, having done that, the war party leaders told him everything he would have to do. (454) So then he was on his way to where this thing had disappeared to and going up a hill [he saw] it was a buffalo bull, it is said. (455) So then he didn't scare it and he followed the tracks going back again and he arrived back where they had sent him from but there was no one there; they had left, it is said. (456) So they didn't tell him they were going to leave. (457) So then he followed their tracks and was loping along. (458) They [the tracks] were good because there was deep snow, it is said. (459) So then all at once a cloud came up in the west. (460) Then it began to snow and along with that there was wind, so it was a blizzard, it is said. (461) Well, then he could only see one peak of the Sweet Grass Hills as he went, it is said. (462) If he hadn't been able to see it, he would have been lost because of the ground blizzard. (463) He looked at it as he was going, now that the tracks were gone under drifting snow. (464) Well, so then as he walked it became very difficult for him but he kept going and going. (465) When he was tired, he stopped and then he went on again. (466) Then at long last, at midnight, late at night, he reached the eastern butte of the Sweet Grass Hills. (467) It was very high and pointed. (468) It didn't help, so he climbed it, it is said; he kept climbing.⁹⁶ (469) When he was tired and lay down, he dreamt, "Ah, here is the one who is lost, lying here," they seemed to say, but when he sat up there was nothing there, it is said. (470) So then he kept going up, climbing for a while then lying for a while or sitting for a while.

(471) Climbing, he eventually arrived at the top, it is said. (472) Then he went wandering around up there when all at once there was a shelter, a rock shelter that someone had made, and he went in. (473) So then he sat in there and wrapped his blanket tightly around him and he lay down. (474) So then since he was tired and sleepy he fell right to sleep. (475) Then he slept for a long time when all at once he woke up before daybreak. (476) So then he looked to the north and there was a river, called Bear Creek. (477) As he looked he saw smoke. (478) After a while, more smoke was rising in different places until eventually it looked like a comb. (479) He sat watching as the rising smoke [from many fires] came together so that they looked like a comb. (480) So then, [thinking about] that over there, he thought, "Oh, I think this must be the ones they came looking for." (481) So then he thought further, "I'll go there and sit and wait for them over there by the ice. (482) Where I'm from, all the boys go to the ice and spin tops. (483) These must do the same thing. (484) If they do that, I'll run among them. (485) Then somehow I'll stab them and even if they kill me it doesn't matter. (486) I'll be lying [dead] in enemy territory," he thought.

(487) Then he looked back at where he had come from. (488) It was pretty close, so he thought again, "Oh, as close as it is, I just barely made it here. (489) This other place is very far. (490) Before I

⁹⁴The remainder of the narrative was told two days after the first portion. Mr. Shields begin with a recapitulation of the end of the first portion.

⁹⁵The narrator uses the singular form of the verb but it is clear from the next sentence that he is referring to the entire group.

⁹⁶That is, it wasn't enough for his purposes to simply reach this butte, so he climbed it.

can get there, I'll get tired on the way.⁹⁷ (491) If I lie down I'll probably freeze. (492) I can't even cook for myself," he thought. (493) He thought, "I think my older brother said that people all around know this hill, so I'll lie [dead] up here," he thought now. (494) So then, having thought this, his brother had given him some paint. (495) He untied it and took some snow and mixed them. (496) He thoroughly painted himself, painting his face, hair, and all the clothes he was wearing red. (497) He scattered some of it around, it is said. (498) The snow turned red where he scattered it. (499) So then he took his knife and he took a stone and sharpened it, it is said. (500) So now he knew the death song that his mother and father had sung when they were going to die of smallpox so he sang it as he sharpened his knife. (501) When he finished the song he would stab himself in the heart, since it was his plan to lie down and die.

(502) So then he didn't even finish the song because two men from the war party were out scouting and had camped not very far down the hill. (503) Then hearing the boy's song, they knew who it was. (504) They went to where this boy was sitting in a rock shelter and singing, it is said. (505) They said this, "Ah, that boy who is lost is lying here . . . he's sitting here," they said.⁹⁸ (506) But he thought he was just dreaming again so he said nothing. (507) After he finished singing, he looked at them and they said, "Ah, he really made himself red and he's sitting here [like that]" (508) Then when he finished, they asked him, "Why are you doing that?" (509) He [said], "I thought when I finished my song, then I would stab myself and I would lie [dead] on the ground here, that's why I was doing that." (510) "Ah, this boy almost made a terrible mistake! (511) Our camp is just below here. (512) We're sleeping there. (513) You were the first to see this other [enemy] camp," he said, it is said. (514) Then he said, "We're cooking meat, too. (515) When we get back there, we'll eat." (516) Then he said, "Did you see smoke over there?" (517) "Yes, I sat watching it all morning," he said, it is said. (518) [The other one said], "Come on, let's go back down."

(519) So they went back and when they were close to the camp they called out as they went, it is said.⁹⁹ (520) "You, too, should call out the way we are as we go along," they told him. (521) So when they called out, there was also this small voice, it is said.

(522) Close to the camp, they all stopped just outside for this purpose: (523) They made a pile of buffalo chips. (524) Then someone kicked it all down. (525) They did this because they had seen many tipis.¹⁰⁰ (526) So then, having stopped outside the camp, they offered the pipe and told them what they

⁹⁷*hepiya* 'on the way' (Lowie 1918:266) Mrs. Tucker gave this as 'half way', but I am assuming that she meant it as an approximation rather than a precise measure so I have used Lowie's translation.

⁹⁸Mr. Shields first says "lying here" since this event realizes the boy's earlier dreams (420),(479), but the boy happens to be sitting at this moment so he corrects himself and says "sitting here." I have retained both, since the speech error is relevant.

⁹⁹Tom Shawl notes that there were a variety of calls, e.g., a howl like a wolf indicated 'enemy sighted' and a yelp like a coyote indicated 'signs (only) of enemy'.

¹⁰⁰According to a note in the DeMallie transcription, Mr. Shields explained that "they kicked the pile of buffalo manure. Two scouts [were] always selected after the war party in every country. If the scouts find a big encampment of the enemy, they make a big pile of chips and kick it to pieces – if they kick only a few away, they found only a few enemies." Apparently the same custom was followed for scouting buffalo. Tom Shawl elaborates by noting that it was the war party who stacked the chips that returning scouts kicked, while the scouts were away. This is logical for a couple of reasons: the war party knew where the pile was so they could watch for the signal and the returning scouts did not have to take time to find and stack buffalo chips but could immediately give the signal

had seen.¹⁰¹ (527) So then they all recounted, “This boy was the first to see them,” they said. (528) Thereupon, this boy also told how he had seen the camp. (529) When they had finished, they entered the camp and they all ate. (530) They all ate the ribs that had been roasted in the fire, and whatever else had been put there., and after that they changed their clothes and put on their warm clothes and then they went, it is said.

(531) I already told about how they saw the hunting party. (532) In that part, first, a large hunting party disappeared from sight on their way home when two from the hunting party, those that had gone out of sight, did not go with them, but stayed nearby and disappeared into a ravine. (533) So then at dusk, they went close. (534) They crept up on them and saw their horses. (535) So then beside there they saw a dark object. (536) They thought that was it [the small enemy camp]. (537) Then a group of them told them to rush it quietly [without yelling]. (538) So they did that. (539) But then that wasn’t it, it is said.

(540) They moved to a different place. (541) The horses started snorting and jumping around where they had hobbled them. (542) So they had startled the horses. (543) So it wasn’t here at this place, but it was close. (544) So then when [the horses] all settled down again, they looked for another place close by, and in a place sheltered from the wind they saw sparks from a fire. (545) “Oh, there they are,” they thought. (546) So then the enemies kept saying to the horses that had been scared, “Hááá” [to quiet them]. (547) They meant the horses. (548) So eventually they smoked, passing the pipe to each other, it is said. (549) They smoked it up and put it away, and went to bed – oh, they were already lying down. (550) But now, “Something like wolves has scared the horses,” they said then.

(551) So after they had sat there a long time, they crept up on them and rushed toward them and stopped close by and shot at them¹⁰² and hit them. (552) So then the boy rushed toward them. (553) Then one member of the war party stabbed [the other one] in the ribs with a spear. (554) So when he was pulling it out it [the spear point] was caught and it pulled him over, so that it turned him over into the fire. (555) Then that enemy was groaning, yelling and throwing up his hands and scratching his face, trying in vain to see. (556) Then that enemy dropped to his knees, it is said. (557) This boy, my grandfather, grabbed him by the hair [now that] they were the same height. (558) So then he struggled with him as best he could and knocked him face down on the ground. (559) So then everyone reached him, it is said and each of them took some of the scalp with a knife, it is said. (560) By that time, since all of them had taken some hair, they had each “captured” him.¹⁰³

(561) After that they were going back home, it is said. (562) They weren’t going to bother with the horses. (563) “They won’t know yet, but by the fourth night they will know why these [men] didn’t come back and they’ll be coming after us. (564) By that time we’ll be back over there at our camp,” they said. (565) So after that, they ran away, it is said. (566) My grandfather couldn’t keep up so the young men pulled him by both his hands so that his feet didn’t even touch the ground as they ran holding him, it is said. (567) When they got tired, others took over. (568) They kept going that way and got back to the

upon return.

¹⁰¹ *opáǵe wjč’ák’upi* literally, ‘smoked an offering to them’ but Tom Shawl says ‘offered the pipe’ is the usual translation of this phrase.

¹⁰² Mrs. Tucker understands this to mean that they shot with arrows.

¹⁰³ *iyóhwjč’ahipi* Mrs. O’Watch identifies this as referring to the practice of counting coup.

camp. (569) When they got there, they put on different moccasins and threw the wet ones away.

(570) So then they were still on their way back home, it is said. (571) When they were near, there was a blizzard. (572) So then the tracks got covered. (573) So then after that they kept on coming back. (574) On the fourth day they got back to the Missouri River from the Sweet Grass Hills, where they had come from. (575) It was four days since they got back from the fighting, it is said.¹⁰⁴

(576) So then the war leader sang a song. (577) He sang it well. (578) When he had finished, well, then he named the boy. (579) He said, “*Hóu!*” he said.¹⁰⁵ (580) So then it was a song of high praise, it is said.

(581) So then they kept going again, back to where they had come from. (582) They arrived back at the banks of the Missouri River. (583) When they got back, they told some of them what the boy had done. (584) Right away they made him a chief, it is said.

(585) So then his older brother said, “Ah, Younger Brother, when you left I looked for you because I thought maybe you didn’t want to do it. (586) When I said that and you went off alone and didn’t come back, I looked for your tracks and when I found them, I saw that you were following, so I thought, ‘When men go on a war party they are good to one another. (587) I’m sure they will take good care of my younger brother,’ I thought, so I stopped following you,” he said, it is said. (588) “So,” he said, “you have done well for yourself. (589) Right away you did all four deeds,” he said, it is said. (590) “The first is to go on a war party,” *he said*.¹⁰⁶ (591) “Doing it in the winter is the second,” he said, it is said.¹⁰⁷ (592) “Scouting is the third,” he said, it is said. (593) “Taking the enemy alive is the fourth, and that is very difficult,” he said, it is said. (594) “You even went one beyond the four by taking a scalp. (595) Now you have joined the chiefs,” he said, it is said.

(596) It was that way, and then the boy was going to go play but, “Come back soon, Younger Brother,” he said. (597) “When they discuss things in the council tent again, you are to be there, too.”

(598) So, when the chiefs have decisions to make, they go to the council tipi. (599) So then whenever they went there, they had him come, too, and participate, it is said. (600) He never said anything, just sat and listened when he sat with them, it is said.

(601) So as time passed, he grew up and from then on, whenever he fought, he continued to earn war deeds, counting many coups. (602) And so it went until all at once he finished earning all his war

¹⁰⁴*waktékupi* ‘they came back from fighting’, more precisely, they came back from the killing (*wa-*, an indefinite detransitivizer with the approximate meaning ‘things/people’), *kté* ‘to kill’).

¹⁰⁵*Hou!* An interjection used by men to call attention, indicating that important information follows, different from *Ho!* or *Ahó!* which are men’s words to indicate approval following a comment or prayer.

¹⁰⁶Spoken in English

¹⁰⁷Tom Shawl states that the Assiniboine were the only plains tribe who made war in the winter and therefore making war in winter, with all its hardships, was considered a war honor. The term used for this was *oc’áku káğa*, literally ‘make a path’. (Incidentally, this was the Indian name of Shawl’s grandfather, Dan Kennedy, author of *Recollections of an Assiniboine Chief* McClelland and Stewart Limited:1972).

deeds.

(603) I'm supposed to be telling how my grandfather, Pronghorn, grew up. (604) Now I will tell what happened after he went on the war party as a boy.

(605) When the war party got back home, the warriors told they boy's older brother all about how the boy had behaved. (606) So this man said, "Ah, Younger Brother, when I told you to join the war party I was just testing you. (607) I thought, 'I wonder how he will do?', so then I said that.¹⁰⁸ (608) You were strong willed. (609) I saw your tracks where you left to follow [them]. (610) I thought, 'Men on a war party look out for each other, so they will look after my younger brother,' and that eased my mind," he told him. (611) "So right away you accomplished war deeds while you were away from home. (612) Right away you have joined the chiefs," he told him, it is said. (613) So from that time on, when the chiefs camped together, he went into the council tent. (614) When there was anything for the chiefs to consider, they also invited him, for him, too, to say what he might think about it, because he had now joined the chiefs.

(615) It went on like that and he grew up. (616) He was more strong-willed than ever, it is said. (617) He did things that no one else did.¹⁰⁹ (618) From then on, even if deeds were life threatening, he would do all of them. (619) Something must have been protecting him [because] no matter what he did, he never harmed himself, it is said. (620) So each time he went to war, he earned another war story. (621) So then he continued to accumulate them like that, and after a while the stories he earned were foremost among those that chiefs tell, it is said.

(622) So then his older brother also told him this, "Younger Brother, these are all my best clothes, all of these will be yours now," he told him, it is said. (623) "Someday when you have a tipi, they will paint your brave deeds on the tipi. (624) I give it to you. (625) I give you this tipi pole with a feather tied onto it. (626) I also give you these tipi pins with feathers tied on. (627) However, Younger Brother, there are strict rules that go with these things, but if you follow them well, all will be well in the lodge where you will raise your children. (628) It is likely that in the future you will have a wife and children, since everyone who grows up on earth does this," he told him, it is said. (629) Then his older brother gave him all the things a chief has, including all his chief's clothing, it is said, a weasel-trimmed shirt, and leggings, moccasins of the kind called *inǰptǰpta* – I don't know what style that means.¹¹⁰ (630) Nor do I know how they did that [trim] with the weasel. (631) So right here he got all those things. (632) So now the young man was properly clothed, he was a genuine chief, it is said.¹¹¹

(633) Even to this day here on this reservation, he knew the Gros Ventres we live with as long as

¹⁰⁸i.e., told you to go

¹⁰⁹*zé táku ec'ǰpišǰ, níyuhana ec'ǰ.* lit., 'what they didn't do, he did all that'. The Mrs. O'Watch interprets this as 'he did what other people wouldn't do; he did more than other people did.' Mrs. Tucker interprets it as 'he did all the things that were hard to do'.

¹¹⁰The narrator is saying he doesn't know what style this word refers to.

¹¹¹Reference to Pronghorn changes here from *hokšína* 'boy' to *k'ošká* 'young man', indicating the maturity and recognition he has attained through his deeds.

he lived, it is said.¹¹² (634) The Nakoda people all knew who this man was, it is said. (635) A great many of the Cree also knew who this man was. (636) So then he had grown into a great man, and he earned it all himself.¹¹³

(637) It went on that way, then all at once, he joined another war party. (638) But he always walked at the back of the war party, it is said, never among them, but always at the rear.¹¹⁴ (639) It was like that when all at once they stopped together and he went to where they were bothering with something. (640) He got there and said, “Holy smokes!”¹¹⁵ Look at that! (641) This is a huge rattlesnake.¹¹⁶ (642) It’s dangerous;¹¹⁷ don’t bother him,” he said. (643) They wanted to kill it but, “No, don’t bother it, it’s dangerous,” so they left it alone.

(644) Then my grandfather took a bow and sat down beside it, thinking he could press the snake’s head down onto the ground with the bow. (645) But it was very strong so it jerked away and bit him on the thumb, it is said. (646) So then he let it go. (647) So then some of them stoned it. (648) So where it bit his thumb there were two tooth marks and dark blood was oozing out, it is said. (649) So he took a bow string and tied it tightly around his thumb and taking an arrow he lanced himself deeply in the two places where the tooth marks were, it is said. (650) So now where he had tied his thumb and lanced it, blood was gushing out.

(651) So then he looked for something on the ground, since it was summer he took some kind of medicine and chewed it and pasted it on. (652) Hoping to stop the bleeding, he chewed the medicine and put it on and tied it. (653) Because of this it stopped hurting right away. (654) This snake is the most

¹¹²This echoes the statement in (5), but again it is uncertain what is being said. The subsequent mention of other peoples who knew Pronghorn in (634) and (635) reinforces the expectation that Mr. Shields would report that the Gros Ventres knew Pronghorn, yet here, as in (5), he unambiguously says ‘he knew them’ (*snokwíc’aya*) rather than ‘they knew him’ (*snokyápi*). Here the statement is even more puzzling, since there is temporal disparity between ‘even to this day’ and ‘he knew them’.

¹¹³Mrs. O’Watch offers a more elaborate interpretation: ‘he made his own luck; he made his own destiny; he made himself high by earning it himself.’

¹¹⁴This “rear guard” position was taken by the most respected warriors. If a war party was being pursued, the bravest and most skillful fighters dropped to the rear to fight the enemy so that the rest of the party could escape. This suggests that such warriors were of the so called *nap’ésj* or “No Retreat Society,” which Pronghorn was, according to his descendants.

¹¹⁵*hónkecé* is unanalyzable but is routinely translated by native speakers as ‘holy smokes!’ or ‘holy cow!’ even though these expressions are somewhat dated. The modern English language scatological equivalent would be an inappropriate translation since such expressions do not exist in Assiniboine. *Hónkecé* is used by both men and women and can be used in mixed company.

¹¹⁶*snohéha knuñinápi*: Mrs. Tucker translates this as ‘rattler’ but Mrs. O’Watch is quite insistent that this means a shed skin of a rattlesnake, and not the snake itself. Perhaps she hears *knuñná’i* ‘to peel off one’s own’, but on close listening, Mr. Shields rather unmistakably says *knuñinápi* ‘to rattle one’s own by shaking’. The more common term for rattlesnake is *sjtéñna* (“tail rattle”), attested both at Carry The Kettle and at Ft. Belknap, even by Mr. Shields himself.

¹¹⁷*wókiniháka*: *wa-o-kiniha-ka* NOM-LOC-be.afraid-(unspecified formative): hence, to be something that causes one to be afraid, to be fierce or ferocious, or scary, and by extension, to be dangerous.

dangerous kind. (655) If someone didn't do this, he would die right away, and that's why it didn't kill him.

(656) It went on like this when, oh, yet again, again he joined a war party. (657) Then they followed the Missouri River. (658) Then all at once they stopped. (659) It was spring [and] the water was high. (660) There, uh, they stopped at a bend in the river. (661) There was a whirlpool in the water. (662) They stood watching it. (663) A big piece of driftwood came floating and when it went in there it spun around and disappeared underneath and emerged somewhere else, it is said.

(664) Then they said this, "Ah this whirlpool here is dangerous. (665) "What would happen if something goes in?"¹¹⁸ Would it survive, we wonder?" they said. (666) So this was how he was thinking again. (667) So then he was sitting above the flowing river and he took off his shirt, leggings and moccasins and jumped into the water, it is said. (668) So then he was floating in the water and floated into the whirlpool and when he got near it, then he spun around in it and disappeared. (669) He was pulled under, it is said. (670) So then they stood watching. (671) After a while they thought he had died. (672) Then all at once, some moments later, he emerged somewhere else far away, it is said. (673) He came up shaking his head. (674) So then he started swimming and got to the shore and said, "Well, then, you said you wondered if anything that went in would survive. (675) Look – as you see, I'm alive," he said, it is said.

(676) Ah, then in the same way once again, he joined another war party. (677) Then, again they stopped. (678) They stopped at a high, steep cliff, it is said. (679) Standing up there, they peeked over and it was scary. (680) Well, the wind was coming up from below, it is said. (681) So again they said, "Ah, if something went [off] there, would it survive?" they said. (682) Again he was standing there and right at that moment he jumped, it is said. (683) Ah! all at once then..., then..., they heard a big thud. (684) There was a buzzing in his ears because he had knocked himself out, it is said. (685) Then all at once, because of what had happened, they ran around [i.e., to the bottom] and they all got there. (686) Then he came to his senses but he had fallen on his back with his eyes toward the sky so he saw the sky. (687) He saw the blue [i.e., recognized that it was the sky] and eventually he knew that he was alright.

(688) So once again he didn't die. (689) He kept doing these things because he wanted to die. (690) A spirit must have been watching over him so that's why he didn't die.

(691) So then in the same way, once again, again he joined a war party. (692) Again they stopped. (693) As usual, he stayed at the back, it is said. (694) Then they stopped together and he went up there. (695) Close by there was a nest of snakes. (696) They were in a big ball, just lying there, it is said. (697) "Ah, look! these are dangerous things. (698) If something goes in there, I wonder how those snakes will react," they said. (699) So in the same way, again he took off his shirt, leggings, and all, and he rolled around in this ball, lying in it on his back, it is said. (700) While he was like this, the snakes all scattered in every direction, going back into their holes until there were none left. (701) When there were none left, he got up and they had all disappeared, but I guess they were really bad because that evening he was very sick, it is said. (702) He had a headache and he kept vomiting for a long time, it is said. (703) He had been

¹¹⁸*takúh* 'something specific': It is clear from the next sentence ('would it *survive*?) that they are actually curious about what would happen if *someone* were to go into the whirlpool. They have already seen what happens when *something* enters the whirlpool. Despite this discrepancy in animacy, this does not seem to be a speech error. Both Mrs. O'Watch and Mrs. Tucker readily understood the statement as referring to a person and neither suggested the (to me) logical alternatives, *tuwé* 'someone' or *wjé'ášta wáži* 'a man'.

on his back in the snakes. (704) Lying on his back in a nest of snakes must have been a bad thing. (705) That's the end of this one.

(706) And so it went on like this. (707) There are some others that I don't remember, unfortunately, but he kept doing many other deeds that I don't remember. (708) I never thought anyone would ask me and it was so long ago that I don't remember. (709) But there was one about when he was at a fort, called Fort Union in English, when he was a young adult, I think, but I don't remember that one.

(710) Another one is about when they went to Canada to the Hudson Bay Trading Company, as it is called in English. (711) I think that's where it was. (712) From that place whites brought things they [the Indians] used to buy, bringing them out to the Indian camp; they brought them and sold them, trading for buffalo hides, beaver and muskrat pelts, all those things. (713) Then everything was sold out. (714) Then in order to have something else to sell, they brought a keg of liquor and opened it and sold that, it is said. (715) Oh! the people had things to sell again after all, it is said. (716) Then some of them sold the robes they were saving for themselves and they were all drunk, it is said. (717) So once they were drunk, they were dangerous, it is said. (718) Some got angry and demanded more liquor. (719) But the head trader asked four respected [Indian] men to guard them, it is said. (720) But when, unexpectedly,¹¹⁹ they gave liquor to some of the four, they drank it and got drunk and three of the four left so that my grandfather was the only one who stayed there as he was supposed to, it is said. (721) When they offered him liquor he didn't want it, it is said. (722) He didn't want any because he had seen them all drunk.

(723) So after that he was the only one keeping watch, it is said. (724) Then some of the Nakotas who were drunk had weapons and then when they came threatening him and he stood in front of them, they recognized him. (725) "Oh, this here looks like a relative of mine, my nephew, to be precise," he said, identifying his relationship to him, and they turned and left. (726) When some of those who were very drunk came straight at him, he grabbed them by the shoulders, turned them around, and shoved them toward home, and right then, those who recognized him didn't come up to him any more, it is said.

(727) It went on like that until everything was sold out. (728) Then the head trader said this, "You have guarded us very well. (729) Nothing was taken from us by those drunken Indians. (730) We are grateful to you but everything we would be glad to pay you with is already gone. (731) Tomorrow when we go back, you follow us. (732) When they [i.e., we] get back to the fort, we'll pay you with lots of nice merchandise," he told him, it is said.

(733) So in this way, when they went back, he followed them to wherever it was they said the fort was and they arrived there. (734) There were soldiers in there, guards. (735) Trade was carried on there. (736) The *wašicu* as they are called, told the boss how this Indian, Pronghorn, had acted.¹²⁰

(737) Then all at once, one day he invited him, it is said. (738) "The boss wants to see you," he told him, so he went over there. (739) So this white man was a soldier, it is said. (740) So this white man spoke Sioux very well, it is said. (741) He told him this. (742) "My boys told me about you, that you were

¹¹⁹*jtúh* no single word captures the meaning; it generally means something like 'contrary to hope, expectation, plan, intention'. In this instance, it indicates the illogic of giving alcohol to the very guards the whites had appointed to protect them from those who had been drinking.

¹²⁰*wašicu* is the word used to refer to whites, although it does not reference color, but refers to the earliest perceptions of whites as possessing power unfamiliar and mystical to the Indians at the time.

supposed to look after them and behaved well. (743) So you saved their lives and I'm grateful. (744) When you go home we will give you a lot of nice things, so I called you over because I want you to feel good so you will be thankful," he told him, it is said. (745) "But first, because you've pleased us, I'm going to tell you something. (746) You Indians everywhere, all tribes are everywhere, I'm going to tell you how all of you are going to live," he told him, it is said.

(747) "In the future, the white government¹²¹ will see you and want to talk to you. (748) Their purpose is to carry supplies in steamboats on the big rivers. (749) They tell you that's what they want. (750) One summer, the government will put all the merchandise outside the fort," he said, it is said.

(751) Then this one, Pronghorn, said this, it is said. (752) "Friend, what do you mean, 'they will put all the goods [outside]?',", he said to him.

(753) "What I mean is, the goods they used to sell to you they will put outside for free, put it there and they will give it all to you for free," he told him, it is said. (754) "They'll tell you the reason is so that they can haul their goods on the big rivers but they'll be fooling you, they'll be lying. (755) All these goods they put out are to buy the land. (756) They're buying the rivers, dirt, grass, trees, rocks – they'll even buy you, too! (757) They'll buy the buffaloes that you eat, too. (858) That's how it will be in the future. (759) There are things, precious metals, in the ground, too; they'll buy all of them from you and you won't even know about it," he said, it is said. (760) Then, "When it's that way, white men called buffalo hunters will come and they'll stay all over the land everywhere," he said. (761) "They'll wipe out the buffalo, but they don't want the meat. (762) They'll be collecting the hides to send somewhere across the ocean. (763) They'll do that. (764) When they keep doing that, in the end, when they have wiped out all the buffalo we have, you will know hard times," he told him, it is said. (765) "After all these bad things, finally, you won't be doing what you want; you'll be all grouped together with someone monitoring you. (766) You won't be the way you want to be. (767) They can buy everything they want – they will even buy you, too," he told him, it is said. (768) "I know a lot of Indians. (769) Although your ways are different, I think you're an intelligent man," he told him, it is said. (770) "That's why I'm telling you well [i.e., accurately]. (771) None of what I have told you is good; I have only told you bad things," he told him, it is said.

(772) When he finished talking, Pronghorn¹²² said this, it is said. (773) "Ah, friend, what you told me, none of it is good so, myself, I don't want it, he said it is said.

(774) Then he said this, this white man said this, it is said. (775) "Yes, friend, you are right," he said, it is said. (776) Then, "When they put the goods out, beside it they will put up, uh, something like a flag, on a pole and there will be a rope at the top and a big metal thing at the bottom that is very sharp,

¹²¹Mr. Shields states in (711) that he is uncertain if these events take place in Canada, so the precise location is probably less important to him than that the "prophecy" that follows applies equally to the United States and Canada.

¹²²The narrator misspeaks himself saying "*t'at'áka hényupa*" 'horned buffalo bull' rather than *t'at'óka hényupa* 'Pronghorn'. The intended name is used here. This is also true of (780) and (*).

they will also put there.¹²³ (777) Any person who doesn't want this,¹²⁴ they'll drive this spike through their jaw and up through his head with a crunching sound and hang him high up there. (778) In this way it/he will stand up there for four days," he said, it is said. (779) This will be done to anyone who doesn't want this," the white man said.

(780) Then Pronghorn said this, it is said. (781) "Yes, friend, it will be me. (782) I intend to do that. (783) Everything you told me is bad. (784) I don't want it," he said, it is said.

(785) "Yes, friend, do it," he said.¹²⁵ (786) Then the white man [continued], "When one person dies, nobody knows where he has gone," he said, it is said. (787) "If you do it [i.e., take the goods], this land will all be good for you again after a while," he said, it is said.

(788) Nonetheless, then, "I will do it [i.e., refuse them]," he said, it is said.

(789) Then again he said, "Yes, I know what your plan is. (790) I know what you are going to do, but, friend, don't do it. (791) Don't do what you are thinking," he told him, it is said.

(792) Then Pronghorn, "No, friend, I'm going to do it anyway.¹²⁶ (793) It's very bad, what you've told me. (794) I dread it. (795) The Indian people are very poor," he said, it is said.

(796) Then the white man said, "No," he said, "friend, don't do it. (797) What I've told you, you, yourself, will not know [experience] it. (798) Four generations from now, they will know of what I have told you, in the future," he said, it is said. (799) "Don't you do this now – you'll be dead before then," he said, it is said. (800) "Don't do it, friend. (801) The Great Spirit knows you," he said, it is said. (802) "In the future you will have a good life and reach old age. (803) The Great Spirit pities you," he said, it is said. (804) But he didn't convince him, instead he had already set his mind on doing it.

(805) So it was this way and when he was going to come back, he was riding a horse and leading a horse packed with all kinds of good things that they had given him, and he left, it is said. (806) He was not very grateful, it is said. (807) He was only thinking about what he had told him. (808) He was only thinking of how much the Indians were going to suffer. (809) So it was this way but he took what they gave him.

(810) And when he got back, in the council tent when the adult men sat together to tell stories, he told them four times what the white man had told him. (811) "What he talked about is not good. (812) The things we always buy they will give us for free. (813) Then when we have all those things, in the future, they will wipe out the buffalo on us. (814) We won't even have our free will. (815) In the end we will starve, that is what that white man meant." (816) Then, "I told him what I was going to do," he said,

¹²³Mrs. O'Watch could not picture what is intended by this description.

¹²⁴That is, any Indian who does not want to accept the goods that the government will offer.

¹²⁵i.e., take the merchandise

¹²⁶i.e., refuse the merchandise

it is said.¹²⁷

(817) So it was that several winters later, all at once, a different tribe got those goods, supposedly different tribes were already doing it and were taking them, it is said. (818) They hadn't taken them yet but all at once they had a bad holy man put a spell on my grandfather and he got sick, it is said. (819) He lay there unable to move. (820) Now that they had done this, now the goods were offered so some Indians, Nakoda specifically, took them, it is said. (821) The first one from there was a man called First Flying, it is said. (822) He was over there among the people that were giving things out so he and his wife packed up all those nice things and coming back to the camp of my grandfather's people, they told about it. (823) So all at once he [Pronghorn] heard them talking about what they gave him [First Flying]. (824) He heard them say what gifts First Flying had brought. (825) "Oh, that thing I dreaded, now it seems they have done it," he thought.

(826) So now his relatives gave a fast horse and many nice things to a holy man and held a prayer song ceremony to make him well, it is said. (827) They wanted the goods that were here now so they had a bad holy man make him weak and this way they got what they wanted. (828) After it was this way, he got well again, it is said. (829) But now that they had already taken the goods anyway, he couldn't do anything about it.

(830) Every time I think about it, what my father told me about his father's behavior was right. (831) Indians lived here in what in English is called North America. (832) This land was beautiful country everywhere thousands of years ago. (833) Everything grew nicely on it. (834) All the water was good. (835) The people were nurtured by the buffalo. (836) There were good things in the earth. (837) All of them, lots of oil, silver, gold, as they are called, all these things were worth a lot of money but they got all of it for cheap centuries ago. (838) Right now, the white people are still taking lots of good things from the earth. (839) None of it belongs to us. (840) Now it's over; they sold it; slyly, they beat us to it. (841) By then my grandfather was already an old man and couldn't do anything even though he was a respected man then.

(842) So back then the Nakodas went back and forth across the border, sometimes above the border and again over here to the United States, over here again, going back and forth. (843) So then my grandfather had one boy, my father, his only child. (844) They were staying over in Canada again when he [Pronghorn] got sick. (845) He was sick but even with all of the medicine and hiring of medicine men to treat him, nobody could make him well. (846) He died over there, it is said.¹²⁸

(847) So then, my father stayed over there. (848) He loved his father very much so he was lonely. (849) He was very broken-hearted so he stayed near his father. (850) Even though he had died, he stayed near his father's grave, in order to stay close to him. (851) While he was doing that, the Métis, as they are called, made war. (852) Ah, that war that they made over there is called the "Louis Riel Battle" in English. (853) My father joined that war over there.¹²⁹ (854) He joined the war because he wanted to die.

¹²⁷That is, he is going to reject the goods.

¹²⁸According to the records of Pronghorn's descendants, the year is 1885. See note 81..

¹²⁹ The 1885 Métis uprising at Batoche, also called the Northwest Rebellion, was in the territory of the allied Assiniboine and Cree tribes of Saskatchewan. Pronghorn's son, Took The Shield, is said by his grandchildren to have participated in the battle of Cut Knife, May 2, 1885, [one of the battles in the Rebellion] in which a

(855) But something must have been watching over him, too, since he didn't die as might have been expected. (856) He kept running through the line of fire but nonetheless none of the bullets touched him anywhere. (857) "Oh, something doesn't like my plan, so I am alive," he thought, so he didn't do it anymore, they say.

(858) So when the war was over, the soldiers held a trial for the ones who had made this serious trouble and tried them. (859) They were hanged, breaking their necks; about twelve or fourteen Indians were hanged there. (860) When that was over, my father was still over there and because of this he thought, "Oh, this is worse than I expected. (861) My father is dead anyway and I will never see him again. (862) I will go back to my own country after all." (863) So he came back, it is said. (864) Also, some of the local people helped him by hiding him. (865) And he came back, it is said. (866) And he arrived back over here.

(867) Back then, this Indian reservation was over there by Chinook (Montana). (868) That's where he arrived back, since that's where they lived. (869) So, a lot of his relatives were already here; they had had help and once again they looked like decent people. (870) From there, once again they moved them over here from the first place they were living to here, where we live now. (871) The US government gave it to them so once again all of them were over here. (872) Then the Gros Ventres lived here, too.

(873) So then my father and my father's family lived over there east of the Little Rockies.¹³⁰ (874) Then these things the US government gave them, uh, "treaty goods," as they were called, when they did that, they gave them cattle. (875) They gave them things to farm with, to make fields, plows, all that stuff, they gave them. (876) Spades, pitch forks, saws, too, all those things they gave them. (877) So my father took good care of the cattle they gave him and they grew well. (878) Some did raise them well. (879) Others, uh, these Nakotas, they gave them cattle but they were hungry. (880) Eventually they ate them all up, but my father didn't do that. (881) Eventually – it wasn't so many, but, around sixty or seventy he raised over there where he lived.

(882) Meanwhile, next to him, there lived a cattleman, in English, "Colburn Cattle Company" it was called – he lived over there. (883) So then this white man liked my father, so whenever they butchered, he sent a cowboy to my father's house and told him about it. (884) So, Indians like things like intestines and tripe. (885) This white man knew that and he liked my father. (886) When they told him about it, he went over there and he took those things he liked, intestines, tripe, all those things he liked and in addition, the white man cut off some meat and gave it to him.

combined force of Cree and Assiniboine, under the Cree chief Poundmaker and his war chief Fine Day, defeated a Canadian force of approx. 390 soldiers and volunteers who attacked their camp at Cut Knife Hill on the Cut Knife River in Saskatchewan. It was the most significant native victory during the Métis Rebellion. It is sometimes compared to the 1876 battle of the Little Big Horn, with the significant difference that Poundmaker ordered his warriors to allow the Canadian forces to leave once they were in retreat despite the vulnerability of the Canadian troops to a complete massacre

¹³⁰“my father and my father's family’ It is uncertain if this is what is meant. The words used are *até aténa*, literally, ‘my father and my paternal uncle’. Mrs. O’Watch was familiar with the individual words, of course, but not of the meaning intended by using them together. The translation given here, ‘father and father’s family’ is her best guess.

(887) It went on like that, then my father had two sons and a daughter that he raised over there. (888) Then they got sick and all of them died over there, it is said. (889) So my father was very broken-hearted since all of his children died. (890) So my mother said, "We won't stay here. (891) We will go somewhere else. (892) It's too hard on us. (893) My children that I was always with are gone, they've passed away, they are dead.

(894) So then, because he was so sad, he didn't even take his cattle with him; he left them over there and camped somewhere else, it is said. (895) I know where he camped: he camped about three miles east of what is now called Vermilion Creek. (896) So he didn't go back for his cattle. (897) But this cattleman took care of them, looking after them for him, therefore. (898) When there were calves in the spring, he branded them for him. (899) Eventually there were a lot, so the cattleman went to the agent, as he is called, and told him how my father was behaving. (900) "I have been taking care of his cattle, but (901 *merge?*) there are a lot so I'm not going to do it any more; instead, he has to look after them himself, so you should tell him," he was saying, so the agent told my father about it so after that he came for his cattle, and (902 *merge?*) he took them back again. (903) I saw those cattle myself – I don't know how many, but less than a hundred, maybe sixty or seventy, I don't know.

(904) It went on like that and then I was growing up (i.e., I was born). (905) Then, uh, one day, from the school, those who would go to school, an Indian policeman went to the [homes of] the children who would have to go to school to tell them about it. (906) One day, one of those Indian policemen went to my father's house and spoke with him and left. (907) After he left, my father went inside and said, "Son, the policeman who came said you'll have to go to school. (#) The first sessions are tomorrow so you will go now," he said. (908) So they told a young man to cut my braids and (sure enough) they took scissors and cut off my braids and clipped my hair. (909) So then, my father didn't take me. (910) Rather, I went there by myself. (911) O, uh, as he saddled a horse for me, he said, "Son, next to your cousin's house there is a white man who married a Nakoda woman, and I'm pretty sure we're closely related to that woman's father. (912) Their children go to school. (913) When they come, go with them," he said. (914) So when they went, I went with them.

(915) I didn't speak a word of English, I couldn't understand or speak, either. (916) So it was very hard on me in the (enemy) school over there. (917) When the white teacher spoke to me, I didn't understand. (918) So when he asked my name, I didn't understand since when I am among them I am called "George Shields", as they say it. (919) Ever since then, they call me that to this day, although in English it should be "George Took the Shield," but they left out "Took the Shield," and just say "George Shield," so that's my English name. (920) So I'm still [called] that now.

(921) As of now, I've lived eighty-four years. (922) It's spring now; in the fall, I'll be eighty-five. (923) So my father had reached seventy-six when he died, so I have lived longer than he did.

(924) So Indian tribes everywhere, we have lost our own languages. (925) We don't speak English very well, nor do we understand it. (926) The present generation look like Indians but we've lost our own language. (927) But now we are learning Indian words from back then and we'll bring ours back once more, they said. (928) But I, myself, was very much against it. (929) If all the Indian peoples everywhere were to speak English, if they knew the laws, they could use that in the future. (930) At the present, if someone comes for things that belong to the Indians, nobody know about it. (931) This country has infinite wealth, countless millions in metals in the earth but none of it belongs to the Indians.

(932) So there are many other events I should tell about but I guess this is all I will say.

(933) So then, I've already finished telling my grandfather's life history. (934) Now I will tell about myself. (935) So I went to school and I didn't learn a single thing. (936) When I was in school, they way they teach now is different from that. (937) Back then, we didn't learn any of what the white teachers taught us. (938) It seemed like they didn't care if we learned anything, but it seemed they only thought about the money they got. (939) So they wrote letters to Washington telling all the good things they were doing. (940) I was pretty sure they weren't writing [the truth] about themselves, I thought. (941) So, myself, I was going to school but I wasn't learning a single thing, I didn't learn a thing about reading and writing. (942) When I quit school, I didn't speak any English.

(943) The reason I quit school was because of my father. (944) The cattle, now that he was an old man, he couldn't ride very well so I wouldn't go to school. (945) He told me what I would do, then that I should do as he says (946) I should help out, he said, so that's why he took me out of school. (947) But I didn't feel bad back then, since I couldn't think about it very well.

(948) So back then now I couldn't think. (949) Once I had children of my own, I had to think for myself, what I was going to do. (950) I thought about those things I couldn't do, so I told my children always, always go to school so that they could speak. (951) Then these very children of mine finished twelfth grade. (952) But I'm a poor man so I didn't have money. (953) That's why I couldn't afford to send them to school beyond the twelfth grade. (954) Beyond that was university, as it is called, but I couldn't send my children. (955) Money was sent from Washington for Indians to go to school and become educated but there wasn't very much so some were left out. (956) I was one of those who were left out and because of that I couldn't send my children to university. (957) Eventually all of my children married and looked after themselves.

(958) In the future, they put us Indians here together. (959) I don't know why they did this. (960) For some reason they put us all together like this and I wonder why they put us (that way), I always think. (961) Half-breeds, instead – although there are some here and there on the reservation – their fathers are white and they raise them [i.e., off the reservation], so they know everything. (962) In contrast, Indians got put together here at the agency. (963) I, myself, am one of those, so I'm poor. (964) Now my children are taking care of themselves, but they're not getting on very well. (965) But they're thinking for themselves what to do.

(966) So no one knows how Indians will fare in the future. (967) Whatever they do on the reservation, these councilmen, as they are called, they are the ones who decide. (968) Once they've decided something, they go through with it. (969) That's the way it is. (970) In the end, I was never one of those councilmen. (971) They urged me to be one, but I wouldn't do it. (972) I don't speak English very well so I can't council among white men.

(973) Well, that's all I will say.

5. Relationship and Advice to the Young

Advice

(1) Today I will tell about when there were lots of buffalo on this land, the Indian people and how they cared for themselves, and what their beliefs were. (2) I know a lot about those things. (3) I was raised by buffalo chasers.¹³¹ (4) My father was a buffalo chaser and my mother was, too. (5) They raised me. (6) A grandmother of mine also raised me.

(7) So then, they lectured me on the ways the Indian people looked after themselves. (8) One thing they wanted me never to forget was, “Never get mad,” they told me. (9) “Also, never kill people,” they told me. (10) “Also, never talk about people,” they told me.¹³² (11) “Never laugh at old men and old women who are poor,” they told me. (12) “There are spirits looking after these old people when they have reached old age,” they told me. (13) Then, “When you have a house, when you have a wife, you will have food. (14) If all at once an old woman comes begging, even if it is your last bite, give it to her and she will really thank you,” they said. (15) Then, “When you are generous, you give food to poor people, you might not know it, but after that you will give good luck. (16) You will get more than you gave. (17) A spirit will pity you because you did good deeds and he will do that,” they told me. (18) Another thing, “Never laugh at old women or old men who look pitiful or have ugly faces.” (19) That is what they told me. (20) “Then Indians will live into the future, from now on.”

(21) “There are children, too, orphans, who are poor, too. (22) When you have food, if they come to your home, feed them. (23) They are pitiful, when your mother . . . their father and mother are dead and they are orphans and there is no one to help them. (24) Be good to them.” (25) That is how they lectured me.

(26) Then, “An Indian you live with all at once one gets angry, threatens you, when you know of one like that, your wife cooks something and cooks food and (you) invite the man. (27) Call him by the kin term for his relationship to you and invite him. (28) Tell him, ‘Come on, my relative, come over to my house (and) we will eat.’ (29) Then he will come. (30) When he comes, you will smoke a pipe with him. (31) When you finish smoking, then you tell him why you invited him. (32) But first you feed him. (33) Your wife will feed him. (34) When you finish eating, then you will talk to him. (35) You will listen to him.” (36) Then, “and [*sic*] he will change his mind and stop thinking those thoughts.” (37) So, “Your thoughts are good. (38) They are strong. (39) The angry man’s thoughts are weak, though. (40) They are not strong.” (41) Then, “The one who is angry, even though he is angry, he will get over it.” (42) That is how they lectured me. (43) “In the future, he will live.”

(44) “Indians have things they respect. (45) So, if you see one of these traditional ceremonies, never say anything against it. (46) Those things they do were taught to them by the spirits.” (47) Then, “If you don’t believe in those things they do, even if you don’t believe them, don’t say anything against them. (48) Those are your friends and relatives who are joining in those traditions.” (49) They said this to tell me. (50) So then that “future,” [that they talked about] I think they meant this [time we are in now].

(51) Back then they said, “In the future you will be among the white men. (52) The prayers that they will make, they will be telling the truth. (53) They are really true. (54) When the spirit (Jesus) walked on the earth, they wrote all his words on paper. (55) They never forgot everything that spirit said. (56) So these are all the truth. (57) So even if there are lots of different churches, they are all praying to one god. (58) Even if you don’t believe it, never say it is wrong,” they told me. (59) Then, “All the reservations have different churches and all your friends and relatives are scattered so they will have their

¹³¹The term has the more general meaning of ‘old timers, people from the old days’.

¹³² i.e., don’t gossip

own beliefs and will join (accordingly). (60) For that reason, respect the various churches. (61) Never say anything back toward them,” they told me. (62) They spoke the truth.

(63) So, back then when Indians were raised, when a boy was growing up, an old man came every single day, every morning, and lectured his grandson. (64) What people kill, [unintelligible] they told them.¹³³

(65) Lastly they said, “These are bad habits,” they said.¹³⁴ (66) They said, “Stealing things from your friends or relatives, whatever they have, don’t set your heart on it. (67) If they have something that you really like, use something they might like to have to trade for it. (68) Don’t trick him out of it.” (69) That is what they said.

(70) Then further, “A second bad deed is also this: don’t chase after a married woman. (71) Don’t focus your thoughts on her. (72) Those are bad,” they said. (73) “That woman is not yours, she is some other man’s. (74) When the time comes that the man finds out, he will quickly get angry and he will kill you (and) you would be the cause of it.¹³⁵ (75) So don’t ever chase after a married woman,” they said to tell me.

(76) So another thing my father told me is, “These days the white man’s cities are everywhere (and) this reservation is close to (one of them). (77) And something bad is the Indians that like alcohol. (78) Try to avoid it. (79) Never bother with it,,” he told me. (80) But I forgot that sometimes, so when I was a young man I would drink alcohol. (81) I’ve quit now. (82) Now that I know better, finally I quit. (83) I, myself, am thankful for that.

(84) Then again, when Indians advise their children, this generation here, they don’t know anything at all. (85) This generation’s parents don’t tell them anything. (86) Some – I shouldn’t say this, but some these days do bad things themselves. (87) Even the children, they even drink with the children seeing it – alcohol, beer – they drink all that stuff.¹³⁶ (88) They’ve taught the children to do the same thing!

(89) I’ll tell you something about myself. (90) When I was a young man, I drank. (91) My children, when they were little, even saw me doing that, uh, they saw me drinking beer in the house. (92) These days, some of my children do it, too. (93) I always think I am the cause of it today.

(94) So that is how Indians lectured one another. (95) All of that stopped more than sixty years ago. (96) Older Indians, all the old men, have passed away. (97) All of the lecturing has stopped now. (98) Children today aren’t raised in the old ways; instead, they do nothing. (99) So now if only someone would write down on paper the old lectures they gave each other, those Indians who go to school could read them and if only they used it to teach them, I wonder how it would be? (100) I always say that might give them something to think about.

¹³³ The exact words for the phrase in brackets are unintelligible but Mrs. O’Watch understands this a ‘must first kill something else, probably and animal, as an offering.

¹³⁴ I am uncertain of the meaning of this sentence.

¹³⁵ Mrs. Tucker’s and Mrs. O’Watch’s interpretation of *ĵknúhahana* (reduplication of *ĵknúhana* ‘all at once’ is ‘sometime’. ‘Find out’ is a dative/malefactive form of *snokyá* ‘know’ > *snokkíya*.

¹³⁶ ‘Twith the children seeing it’ This is the literal translation. The English colloquial rendering – and the one given by Mrs. O’Watch – is, “Tin front of the children.” *ženáwa* ‘...all that’: In Mr. Shield’s English telling, he says, ‘...all that sort’, which suggests that *ženáwa* in this instance implies more than the two-member list he gives, so I have added ‘stuff’ to capture this implication. I use ‘stuff’ rather than ‘things’ because it seems more in keeping with the narrator’s style.

(101) So, these days, Indians everywhere are poor. (102) They all live in houses on pieces of land. (103) So I think there is one good thing. (104) Indians growing up today know how to read and speak English. (105) In the future, they [will] know how to read with great reliability [i.e., comprehension]. (106) I always think that if they can understand the laws it will be of benefit to them.

(107) I think that's all.

Relationships (*Wótakuye*)

(1) Again, this time, I will tell about relationships. (2) Way back then, when Indians were growing up, the first thing they were taught was relationships. (3) “A woman says to her daughter, ‘That young woman you see over there is your relative’, she says.¹³⁷ (4) A man, too: ‘Look, my son, that young man you see is a relative.’” (5) That is what they said. (6) How these relationships go very much from generation to generation is what I am going to say.¹³⁸

(7) When my son marries, I will be related to his wife's relatives, too. (8) So that is the belief they have. (9) So these relationships of the Nakoda people never stop, so relationships come from marriage, too, and these relationships go on. (10) They never stop, either. (11) That is the belief they have. (12) So, I'm going to tell how it is today with my own relations (through) my children.

(13) One of my sons has a Blackfeet wife. (14) So now that woman is my relative, my daughter-in-law. (15) So then some also married Sioux. (16) And those are also my daughters-in-law, uh, and my grandchildren who are Cree, it's the same way – they are also my relatives. (17) I've also always had Crow relatives across generations over there. (18) The way relationships go across generations, my mother's aunt's children were raised over there with the Bloods, so that generation are also my relatives. (19) That's the way it is. (20) Then, again, on my father's side, I have relatives among the Gros Ventres that we live with., on my father's side. (21) So, because it's this way, Nakoda relationships never end, they will really continue into the future. (22). But this generation, they don't know about it. (23) These only know their immediate family – their father, mother, older brother (female), younger brother – that's as far as they know.

(24) That's all.

More about Relationship

(1) I'm going to talk again about how everyone is related to each other. (2) The way the Nakoda – well, Indians everywhere – are related to each other never ends.¹³⁹ (3) Well, when a person has children and then has grandchildren, they remember for four generations. (4) So, but today we live among the

¹³⁷ Mrs. O'Watch suggested that this sentence might mean ‘the daughter of that woman is your relative,’ which she thinks would have the underlying message, “I so don't go after her.” Syntactically, this interpretation is implausible because there is no antecedent for the [s]he said’ at the end of the sentence, and also because of the following sentence, which has parallel construction. Furthermore, in the English telling of this section, Mr. Shields states that men train men and women train women, which is implied in sentences (3-4) as I have translated them.

¹³⁸ The literal translation of the phrase used here is ‘very much goes all along’. In this instance I have used a slightly freer (but still awkward) translation because the literal translation does not convey anything at all. In fact, according to Mrs. O'Watch, Mr. Shields' meaning is even more forceful, along the lines of, ‘these relationships bind us and stay strong across the generations’.

¹³⁹ The specific name of the tribe, Nakoda, can also refer to ‘Indians’ in general, but there is also a more general term, *ikcéwǰc'ašta* ‘common, ordinary, usual people’. Mr. Shields uses both terms here for contrast. He is describing his relationships as a Nakoda man, but these relationships include relatives among other tribes.

whites. (5) But the white way of relationships is different. (6) For them, it only goes as far as grandchildren, I think. (7) So, for Indians it's not that way, rather, it goes four generations.

Advice from George Shields's Father

(10) These are more things my father told me.¹⁴⁰ (2) He gave me advice. (3) "Son," he said, "you have a life ahead of you. (4) Then, "Your life will be lived among a different people. (5) These will be the white people," he said. (6) There will be Indians, too, but only a few. (7) The land will be full of white men. (8) The white men are very determined. (9) They're brave," he said. (10) The white men make laws," he said, "rules." (11) "They make some laws very strict. (12) We have to live by them," he said. (13) Then, "If someone tells you about one of those laws, really remember it. (14) Don't ever break that law," he told me. (15) Those ones called white men are brave. (16) They are determined. (17) You, yourself, are a coward. (18) You get scared easily," he told me. (19) White men aren't like that. (20) If they want to do something, even if they lose their lives and die for it., they do it. (21) They die for it. (22) But if you know something will kill you, you're afraid and you won't do it. (23) You, yourself, are a coward," he told me. (24) "If one of these called white men hits you for some reason, never hit him back. (25) If you get really mad and you kill him, they put you in a penitentiary and they will keep you for many winters. (26) You will cry. (27) You will shed tears. (28) You will be broken hearted," he said. (29) Therefore, from now on, never kill a white man. (30) Don't even do it in a fight," he told me.

(31) That's all.

¹⁴⁰ It may be kept in mind that Mr. Shields's father, Took The Shield, lived the first half of his life 'free'. He was born in 1857 and did not move to Fort Belknap until 1886, at the age of 29. The behaviors he learned from childhood were the time-honored customs of his people; interaction with whites had largely been governed by trading conventions and warfare. The notion of being subject to laws – rigid and not open to negotiation – was wholly unfamiliar to him, as it was to most native people during the transition to reservation life.

6. Story of Wild Horse Butte

(1) These white men asked me to tell old stories such as the old men used to tell. (2) When I tell them, they will make a tape recording of it.

(3) I will tell about what is called Wild Horse Butte. (4) Back then (they didn't say what year it was), some Assiniboines were coming from the east on a war party. (5) They planned to go to war against Indians who lived to the west. (6) Then they were in view of Wild Horse Butte when they saw with their own eyes something running away. (7) All at once they saw some horses. (8) So then he squatted down. (9) "Down!" he said. (10) They all ducked down to hide but the horses just kept grazing.

(11) They were just below where Wild Horse Butte pokes up. (12) So then they sent a young man to scout them out. (13) He was able to follow their tracks through a coulee. He got close and looked at all of the horses grazing around. (14) He pulled back behind something so he wouldn't scare them. (15) He looked again for some lodges but he didn't see any. (16) He didn't see any Indian camps anywhere.

(17) So right away he went back over to where the war party sat waiting. (18) "I didn't see a single camp. (19) The horses were still there." (20) That was what he told them about it. (21) So then the chiefs [said], "O, I those must be wild horses. (22) I think they are ghosts. (23) Well, we will go closer and scare them off," they said. (24) So then they stalked them through the coulee. (25) When they got close they went riding into the midst of them and the horses snorted suddenly. (26) They put their tails in the air and they all ran to a nearby ridge and disappeared. (27) So when they got there, too, they were gone. (28) There was nothing there. (29) So then they didn't know what to think. (30) Then one of them said, "Oh, these things we saw are not ordinary. (31) These must be spirit horses. (32) That's why we saw them. (33) They are holy. (34) We will not see them again," he said. (35) So then, believing that to be so, they pay any more attention to them. (36) They continued on their war party, it is said.

(37) Well that's the end of this short story.

7. Story of Snake Butte

(1) Here is another story, about Snake Butte, situated in the Little Rockies here on the reservation where we Nakoda live with the Gros Ventres. (2) Long ago, back when there were still a lot of buffalo, the young Gros Ventres men, I think it was, would go up there and fast (make a vision quest), it is said. (3) Then one of them [said], "I will sit there for four days and nights. (4) I will come back on the morning of the fifth day," he said. (5) Now on the fifth day, he didn't return as he said he would, it is said. (6) So then his relatives [said], "For some reason he has not come back. (7) Maybe some men from a war party passed by and killed him, so we will look for him," they said therefore.

(8) They climbed up to where there was a stake marking where he had fasted and he was lying there, it is said. (9) So then only his bones were lying there. (10) Long ago snakes used to live there, it is said. (11) It was those that ate him up, it is said. (12) So then they brought him home. (13) They brought his bones back there. (14) They brought him home and buried him somewhere, they say.

(15) After a while, another young man wanted to know what had happened. (16) "I'll try it, too," he said, it is said. (17) They forbade it but he was determined so he, too, went there on a vision quest, it is said.

(18) So now at dusk on the fourth night, it seemed to the one sitting there that everything was shaking, it is said. (19) Then at that time he thought, "Something holy, something good is coming," so then he wept very hard for something good, it is said. (20) Then as he stood crying, he prayed.

(21) All at once [listening through his tears], he thought maybe he saw something. (22) He looked and there was a big snake going around over this way, it is said. (23) Because of this, now he was scared. (24) He looked down and they were in a hole. (25) Ah! there were all kinds of snakes piled up, so he stood up and jumped to a clear space and ran away, it is said.

(26), Then later he went back again, they say. (27) A tall, slim man had gone there.¹⁴¹ (28) He went to the fasting place. (29) It happened to him, too, so whenever all these snakes came, he would cut small pieces of his skin off and throw them around. (30) In that manner he fed all the snakes with his skin, it is said. (31) Then all at once he quit doing that and it was all bloody, it is said.

(32) So he was sitting there. (33) All at once a tall slim man went there and told him this, it is said. (34) "You weren't afraid of my children. (35) I am very grateful that you fed them," he said, it is said. (36) "Those are my children," he said, it is said. (37) "You are doing this because you want something, so I will give you a power," he told him, it is said. (38) "If you are killed in the future, when good liquor is poured into your mouth four times, you will come back to life," this snake told him, it is said.

(39) So then he got back home and he told about it. (40) So then, they ate the first one up. (41) "He did not feed my children so they ate him up," he said, it is said. (42) So then he told what he had seen. (43) So they said the name of the one that stayed there but I don't remember – something like Buffalo Calf Coat, I think. (44) Maybe it was different.

(45) So then that one went down to where white people used to sell things along the Missouri River. (46) He got drunk and when he was drunk, he was dangerous, it is said. (47) There was a flagpole standing upright beside the store. (48) He ran right up the pole. (49) When he got to the top he turned around staggering and it looked like he would run back down, it is said. (50) So then the white men were

¹⁴¹S.27: It may be that this sentence is said in error at this point, since it is repeated verbatim in s.33. It seems clear that the young man does not see this other man until later.

afraid of him. (51) It was wintertime and they grabbed him and tied him up, made a hole in the ice where the Missouri River was deep, and threw him in. (52) He went under the water and drowned.

(53) In the spring some people from his tribe were going on a war party and one of them found the one who had died beside the river, it is said. (54) He drifted and became lodged against something, so [someone said], "I found this man on the shore." (55) So then they all looked at him. (56) "This is him, this is that one," he said. (57) "He used to say something, so we'll try it," they say. (58) One of them had a little bit of liquor. (59) So then he held it. (60) "Give me four drinks, pour four in my mouth, and I will come back to life," he always said. (61) Well, we will find out," they said.

(62) [They] took him and put him on his back [and] his skin was all wrinkled up and dried out. (63) "You always said, 'Pour liquor in my mouth and I will come back to life,' you always said." (64) The first time he poured it it kind of dribbled down his throat. (65) Again a second and third time [they did it] the same way, when all of a sudden his leg kind of moved, it is said. (66) So then the others were afraid, it is said. (67) "Stop! (68) Don't do it! (69) If he comes alive again, he will kill us all," they said then. (70) "All of you stop!" (71) They left him and went away, it is said.

(72) That's the end of this story.

8. A Story of the Little Rockies

(1) They told me to tell another one, about the Little Rockies. (2) It's not very long. (3) My father told me this one.

(4) These Gros Ventres that we live with, they lived around here, it is said, where there is a hot water spring. (5) So at that time the Gros Ventres lived at Lodgepole, it is said.

(6) Then there was a smallpox epidemic that struck them and they were wiped out, it is said.¹⁴² (7) So the young men did not want to catch smallpox, so when they began having headaches, they would go over to the hot springs, over there in the hollow towards the west, and all these young men shot themselves over there. (8) These rather nice looking young men all wiped themselves out by shooting, it is said. (9) They went back over there with one of those so-called muzzle-loading long guns, and they put in a musket ball and gun powder and rammed it in. (10) When it was loaded, they used their big toe to push the trigger and a lot of them killed themselves that way, it is said.

(11) Then, uh, a Nakoda boy, who was an orphan, was raised by the Gros Ventres, it is said. (12) So there was one he had taken as his older brother and this one said this to him, it is said, "Younger Brother, look, you've heard the shooting. (13) We'll go over there now, so put on all your best, form-fitting clothes," he said, it is said.¹⁴³ (14) Because of this [what the older brother said], now he knew what he was talking about. (15) "Oh, they kill themselves here, [and] he's getting ready to kill me, too," he thought, but he thought it through carefully. (16) "Yes, I'll do it," he said.

(17) So then, "Look at it this way: Your father cared for you so he raised you so that you weren't in need of food; you weren't in need of anything. (18) Now, all of these are dead and I will not [let it] kill me. (19) If you go on alone, after a while you'll have a tough time. (20) You might starve somewhere. (21) You might even freeze." (22) "Yes, I will go. (23) Wait, I think I'll just go outside." (24) "Oh, come right back," he said. [*indistinct*] (25) So then he went out side and he ran off any which way into the woods, fleeing aimlessly far away into the woods and then lay down on the ground, it is said. (26) So this young man waited for him to come back, but he never returned. (27) Oh, now he knew, "I guess he ran away from here. (28) Well, it's up to him," he was thinking. (29) So he went there and all at once he heard a shot, it is said. (30) "Oh, my older brother has already killed himself," he said, it is said. (31) So over towards Lodgepole, whenever someone died, they tied them high up in a big tree somewhere around there and if some were still there, one of the Gros Ventres would come back to buy, who usually went by the name of First Son. (33) Then it just so happens that he built his house them. (32) So now in this community, this Lodgepole community, there lived a man called Oscar Gray on the site of one of these old burial trees, it is said. (34) He didn't know that. (35) So all at once it was summer. (36) Whenever it was summer, they [spirits] would come into the house and grab him. (37) Even if he locked the door, they came inside. (38) Whenever that happened, they [Oscar and his family] were paralyzed with fear. (39) Eventually they got used to it happening.

(40) There was this other man called "Seven." (41) So one Saturday he went to get his rations. (42) "Grandson, I think I'll sit and tell you stories tonight." (43) "Yes, that's very good," [Oscar replied].

(44) So then Oscar's wife made tea and gave it to them with some bread to eat. (45) He was telling stories, it is said. (46) Now it was after midnight, late at night. (47) Toward daybreak "Ah, Grandfather, you can make up a bed for yourself over there so you can sleep. (48) Yes, and Grandfather, there is something I want to tell you. (49) For as long as we've been here, those spirits come inside and now when it's happening, we're used to it, [so] it never bothers us. (50) It straightens up the dishes and

¹⁴²(6) - *sótapi* One would expect *wjč'ásotapi* 'it wiped them out'. It is clear from the story that the term does not mean completely wiped out, indicating instead severe decimation.

¹⁴³*ʔʒs*, of *ʔʒza* 'be tight'. Tom Shawl explains that loose-fitting clothes were considered shabby. One's best clothes would fit snugly.

things as it moves around over here. (51) Be on the lookout for that. (52) If you don't know about that, it will frighten you," he told him. (53) Then he said, "Ah, Grandson, I'm not afraid. (54) Right when it comes in, I'll smack it upside its head and make its ears ring," he said, it is said. (55) "Well, it's up to you," he said.

(56) So then they went to bed. (57) After midnight, all at once the dogs started barking outside.¹⁴⁴ (58) They had been sleeping, [but] this woke them up now. (59) "Grandfather, that's it now." (60) "It's coming to move in with you. (61) Be on your guard," he said. (62) Toward daybreak he was expecting the one that came inside, "I'll make its ears ring," he said. [*SMACK!* (Narrator claps hands loudly)] (63) Well! Those dogs ran right into the door. (64) All at once the door sprang open. (65) So then they [the people] couldn't even smudge with sweetgrass because they were stupefied. (66) [??]¹⁴⁵ (67) Ah! He couldn't even move, it is said.

(68) So when daylight came, [Oscar] was cooking for [Seven]. (69) "No [don't bother]! (70) I'm going home now. (71) This is a fierce, bad house, Grandson! (72) I'm never coming back!" he said.

¹⁴⁴Barking dogs often indicate the presence of spirits since dogs can see spirits even when humans cannot. See also "Man Who Married a Ghost" in this volume.

¹⁴⁵Not all of the words in this sentence are clear, so the meaning of the sentence as a whole cannot be determined, although it appears to mean something like, 'the one who was going to make their ears ring was scared stiff...' There appears to be a direct quote, also, although who speaks and what they say is unclear.

9. A Story about Lodgepole Community

(1) This (man) again told me to tell how the Assiniboine and Gros Ventre community [Lodgepole] first got there. (2) I know how they met so I will tell about it.

(3) At first, this reservation, called Fort Belknap, was over there, toward the west at Chinook, Montana; toward the south, across the Milk River, they made the agency where the Assiniboine people stayed. (4) The Gros Ventres didn't stay there, rather they stayed somewhere else. (5) It might have been to the north. (6) So only the Assiniboines stayed there.

(7) So, uh, those from here (?had) lived in Canada, so some of the bands went back and form [between Canada and the US]. (8) Meanwhile, the halfbreeds were making war.¹⁴⁶ (9) So when that was over, they didn't like [staying in Canada]. (10) Since they didn't like it, they all came back over here. (11) My father was one of them, and my grandmother, too, who came back over here and went over there to the community at Chinook. (12) Their relatives lived over there, also. (13) So then they stayed over there.

(14) Then all at once one of the Gros Ventres uh, married three, or I guess four, Assiniboine women. (15) They all took each other as sisters. (16) Uh, Running Fisher was the name of this Gros Ventre [man].

(17) The Gros Ventres were camped somewhere. (18) They scouted them here so they knew that they (the US government) fed them here. (19) So then the Gros Ventre chief went to the lodge of the Assiniboine chief [*indistinct*]. (20) He [said], "We are related to each other. (21) Now we Gros Ventres have nowhere to go. (22) [*?So*] We are hungry. (23) They feed you here [and] we want to join in on that, too, they [*?my people*] say. (24) So then the Assiniboines now, "Yes," they said, "stay here."

(25) (?Right away) they told the white agent about it. (26) But he said, "No," it is said. (27) This food that we watch over here is belongs to you Assiniboines alone. (28) It is not for the Gros Ventres," he said. (29) But when they [asked] again the same way, the fourth time the white man said this, it is said. (30) "Yes, I will do it," he said, it is said."

(31) So there, uh, a whiteman worked there back then, what they used to call a teenaged blacksmith [*indistinct*], he said. (32) That one said that. (33) The white agent kept asking them, "Why would you divide the food two ways?" (34) The other one [said], "It is already theirs, it belongs to the Assiniboines. (35) The Gros Ventres want to join in with the Assiniboines, too. (36) I want to buy [a piece of it?]," he said, it is said. (37) So from then on, they fed the Gros Ventres, also.

(38) It went on like that,, then this [*indistinct*]. (39) I don't know where they got it [*?the extra food?*] from. (40) They all come over here [to Ft. Belknap] together, the Assiniboines and the Gros Ventres. (42) So then they stayed here. (43) Here, uh, I was born and here I was raised.

(44) So these days they ones who are called Gros Ventres over there, there are some that are my relatives, who are from my blood. (45) They are mixed blood Gros Ventres. (46) All those Indians of long ago respected each others ways back then. (47) We are related to all of them over there.

(48) That's the end. (49) *That's all.*

¹⁴⁶This is a reference to the 1885 Riel Rebellion, also called the North-West Rebellion, an unsuccessful uprising of the Métis in Saskatchewan, under the leadership of Louis Riel.

10. Two Stories of the Long Lodge

(1) Again, they asked me to tell a story about a long lodge, so I'll tell a little something about it.

(2) Back when there were a lot of buffalo roaming around, there were these holy men. (3) In mid summer when the berries ripened, they erected two or three tents to make a long lodge and all the medicine men and holy men were invited. (4) When it was so, they cooked all their best foods from all over and put them down and then those who had knowledge of sacred powers would demonstrate the so-called 'sacred feats' they were able to do.

(5) It must have been at one of these so-called long lodges. (6) One holy man said he got his power from bullets, it is said. (7) Whenever there were some of those things, they brought him a gun and they looked at that holy man. (8) They all looked at him and that holy man said this, it is said, "No, he doesn't want that kind of shell."¹⁴⁷ (9) It will be bad. (10) It won't work right in there," he said, it is said. (11) But here [] he was very determined, it is said. (12) He said he would shoot, it is said. (13) He was standing in the door with that big double-barreled gun, about this big, and black, it is said. (14) "They're going to shoot at me now," he said. (15) So then the one standing [there] decided to sing, it is said. (16) He finished singing and when he came to the end he stood there like this. (17) Then one [said], "No, you, your self will do it." (18) So then he took it. (19) Even though he hated to do it, he shot. (20) Now he did it that way and then he through himself down, it is said, and the tent came collapsing down on him from the impact, it is said. (21) Then he said, "Wow! It's a good thing I wasn't standing over there or it would have been the end of me!"

(22) [Juanita Tucker:] Did he make them shoot him?

(23) [George Shields]: *Yeah, [meaning uncertain. . .]the other people couldn't [make it] work because they didn't got that power. (24) But he just insisted so, "It's a good thing I didn't stand there," he said. (25) Great, big bullet holes through that tipi. (26) That's all.*¹⁴⁸

(27) Oh, ok!¹⁴⁹ (28) At those demonstrations I was telling about, one holy man had his power from a prairie dog, it is said. (29) That's what made him holy, what gave him his power. (30) So [indistinct] each one kept giving his own demonstration and now that they were finished he said to that one, "Oh, now it's your turn. (31) You're the last one. (32) You will show what you can do," they told him.

(33) So then he untied his medicine bundle and he had a prairie dog skin. (34) He put sage this way and he put it on top of it. (35) This prairie dog skin was just sitting there, all wrinkled and dried up. (36) Then he prayed and when he finished singing, it [the prairie dog skin] made the characteristic sound of the prairie dog, and went all around making that sound. (37) One, two, three, four times it was making its sound then and with a popping sound, he hit it with a stick, it is said. (38) Then, uh, this prairie dog skin stood up and, "Dáh, dáh, dáh!" [it was] *barking around there*. (39) *I guess he's picking, picking on that sage.* (40) *All around there*, the whole time.

(41) That's all.) (42) That was a short one. (43) *Turned back to hide, you know.* (44) *That's all.*

¹⁴⁷*Iyókatkuḡe* 'nail' - The team of consultants believe that this may be a speech error. The expected word is *i?ókšu* 'shell, cartridge'. The presumed word is used in this translation.

¹⁴⁸Mr. Shields says the last four sentences (23) - (26), in English. The meaning of the first half of (23), consisting of two Assiniboine words followed by the English words "they know it before that happened . . .", is unclear.

¹⁴⁹Apparently someone has asked Mr. Shields to continue this story by telling another incident that they have heard him tell before.

11. A Funny Story from Fort Peck

(1) This story is from Canoe Paddler community (Assiniboines at Fort Peck.)

(2) There was an old man who was deaf but he could see. (3) So he had a milk cow. (4) So when he milked it each morning, he and his wife drank milk. (5) They liked it.

(6) Then it went on like that and he went to milk it again . (7) So this milk cow was going to have a calf. (8) It [the calf] must have dropped because it lay there dead. (9) This man was not sad, but rather, he was happy. (10) He dragged it back home and put it inside and butchered it. (11) So then he really hurried. (12) Food was hard to get so people were stingy with it. (13) So his wife covered up well so no one could have told [they had done it] and she also wiped up all the blood. (14) She wiped it all up like that and covered it up.

(15) So there was another house next door to theirs. (16) This man who had the cow had a daughter who was expecting a child. (17) [?It was born the same night but he didn't think of that.] (18) So at the house next door they must have heard that the man's daughter had had the baby.

(19) So that one [next door] said, "I heard it. (20) I'll go there and I'll [?find out]. (21) I don't know whether it was a boy or a girl." (22) So then walked over there and went inside. (23) When he got close, the dogs barked. (24) The wife said, "He's coming." (25) Now, [the old man] *he didn't like it.* (26) He sat with his head bowed. (27) The door, well, he knocked on the door and came inside.

(28) he went there. (29) [?He pushed him.] (30) I didn't hear. (31) What is your daughter's child?" he said. (32) *He didn't think about his daughter's baby.* (33) *He thought this man's talking about the calf meat, instead.* (34) "What is it?" (35) "Oh, it's nothing. (36) *It was only about this big so we ate it up.*" (33) *He thought he was bumming some meat.* [Laughter]

(37) [Juanita:] *That man was asking about the baby.* (38) *He was worried he was going to have to give him some of that meat, you know.* (39) "It was so tiny, we ate it up," he said.