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PRINCE ALBERT, SASK.
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Description of the difficulties encountered on reserves and
efforts made to combat them.
(Side A)

The time is 10:00 a.m., Tuesday the 30th day of August,
1977. I am Samuel Buffalo, a member of Wahpaton Dakota
Reserve, 94A. Birthdate is October 29, 1929.

I have lived most of my 47 years of my life at Wahpaton,
located 10 miles northwest of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.
About two weeks ago, Mr. Robert Goodvoice, a councillor of the
Wahpaton band, interviewed me about recording some interesting
accounts of Dakota history. He wanted to compile this
information for the Saskatchewan Archives. So I agreed to do
so.

In the years of 1969 to 1972, I was involved with the work
of the Dakota Association of Canada. We were doing research
work on the Dakota Reserves. In the province of Saskatchewan
are Standing Buffalo, Whitecap and Wahpaton. In the province
of Manitoba are Bird Tail, Sioux Valley, Pipestone, and Sioux
Village. It was a project that provided valuable information
about Dakota people. It was then that I decided that the
Dakota history should be recorded and be preserved; if
possible, record all the information we have compiled. There
are certain subjects I usually discuss with anyone interested
in Dakota history and language. On this tape, the topic under

discussion is the Dakota elders' prediction. I quote:

"In the future, the Dakota people will live insecurely."

These elders lived far apart in different regions. Perhaps some of them had never met each other. Yet their forecasts consist of the same words. It indicates that their seventy years of reserve living are alike. The distant location made no difference for the Dakotas' expectation. The elders spoke of the reserve era in two stages. I quote:

"In the past the Dakota people lived well. Today we live disorderly."

They give numerous stories as references. One other mentioned fact is the Dakota language not developing with the people on the reserve. Yet, our ancestors advanced and developed pictorial writing. They preserved their language, songs and messages, depicted on wood and hide. Today, many Dakota cannot speak their native tongue. The growth of the Dakota minority movement expressed, "We are the descendants of

the eastern generation and we will be the ancestors of the new generation." The Dakota were organized by the Tioti system and the motto we shared and we lived in harmony. But this prosperous lifestyle had been confronted and rejected by the reserve era. The original Dakotas' reasons for residing on the reserve were:

1. To live a healthy life.
2. Construct permanent homes.
3. Learn farm development.
4. A school for the children.
5. To work together.
6. Red Coats to protect them and their property.

These reasons can be concised to the following nine word sentence: Their basic purpose for a Dakota Reserve was security. A special need for the freedom to develop a new way of life with old Dakota ideas. The government granted them a reserve and promised to assist in their new adventure. The reserve era commenced with men building log cabins and stables for each family. They extend their work in preparing garden plots and crop fields. In May times, the ladies were marketing willow baskets, rugs, quilts, and wild berries. Some worked as housekeepers at the nearby village or town. These activities demonstrate to fulfill their reasons for reserve life. Most men had seasonal job experience as farm hands, supply freighter, river boat, stock yards, and warehouses. A few advanced in carpentry and brick layers. The archive documents provide evidence that the Dakota people were willing to work and to learn.

Social activities were a weekly dance, chat meeting, religion feast, and hand games. The ladies' game, Kansukute, meaning shooting dice, provided evening entertainment for the

lady folks. At this early stage, several elderly folks equipped themselves with drums, rattles, bells, and sometimes a flute. So often they make their rounds house to house and this is called Tiодоaan, meaning home singing. They sang and danced, encouraging each family with a new motto: we live and we work together. But this fresh and active start was short-lived, because two major interruptions occurred within a decade of reserve life. The Indian Agent rules and the home mission teachings were introduced. The rules interfered with the Dakota group management. The Agent used threatening tactics to prevent men from working together. A Dakota must learn to manage and control his own farm without neighbor's help. The

sales permit control the grain and hay and product of a Dakota farm. The iron brand with I.D. initials, meaning Indian Department, registers the Dakota reserve stock as crown property. When a Dakota wanted to market or butcher a steer, he must have permission. Quite often the Agent refused to issue the permit. The vegetables, poultry, and hogs are recorded. The Indian Agent's rules decreased the farm developing interest. The home mission and school prohibited Dakota language on their premises. A student was punished for speaking their Dakota language. The children were told to avoid certain persons or families because they engage in Dakota traditional activities. These doings were called "evil doers practice." Food rations were issued to the old-age folks but if one was dedicated to the Dakota ceremonies, his needed rations will be reduced for punishment. This type of treatment, by favoring one group and neglecting the other one, had divided the people.

Soon thereafter, an internal problem among the people was noticed. It was called Okiciyuhpapi, meaning "pull one another down." The term and activities are well remembered by the older members of these reserves yet. A person showing business competence higher than the rest, he became a target to be discouraged, to give up his occupation, and this usually happened. Then in the 1930s, the Depression decreased the reserve's living standard to a very low point. By this time, from Chakusa(?) beyond boundary came a slow beat dance called Kahomni meaning "rotate swing," a very suitable dance for the younger generation who are idle and restless. The Kahomni dance usually reached its peak during winter months. Sometimes the dance will continue every night for weeks.

An old man started to criticize Kahomni. He informed the people that Kahomni cannot be considered as an entertainment, but the method of inviting troubles and unhappy experiences because every song wording consisted of one of these -- a sad heart, I am crying, you left me, I am in jail, we are drinking, and so on. "If you hear these words too often, eventually it will condition your mind to do these activities," he warned. But very few pay any attention to his warnings. As the years went by, the Kahomni gradually changed to violence. There were more and more drunk brawls at the dance. Broken homes, family negligence were increasing. Young people were directed towards

jail. The death rate among children was upward. The people were unhappy and socially disorganized. Some families confined themselves in far corners of the reserves. Others moved away from the reserve. The interest in community activities were

next to none. Likewise the Kahomni dance ceased. But it was too late. The period that the Dakota lived well had been swung away with the Kahomni. The aforementioned description of Dakota reserve life was experienced by each reserve at different times. The elders observed that the Kahomni started early in the twenties. It reached a high performance throughout the thirties and declined to an end in the late forties.

The old age pension, family allowance, social welfare allowance and land lease payment were extended into the reserves for the first time. This financial support augments the reserve's standard of living. It provides some plans to advance to managing and controlling business in private, co-op and band operation. These enterprises had shown new potential income for the people. But the access to social and welfare allowances was too easy. More and more people were becoming social and welfare recipients.

This was the beginning of what our elders called "today we lived disorderly." The elders agreed that the welfare issue has a meaningful purpose. It assists unemployed men with families, sick persons, and especially neglected children for immediate care. But the reserve's unemployment problem created a misunderstanding about income. Since no temporary job programs were available to the young people, the social and welfare assistance became the only steady income for them. The job-hunting and job-holding ambitions were lessening. But monthly assistance increasingly progressed through the years of the fifties and the sixties; this problem being supported by the liquor outlet for Indians in 1957. The long desired privilege advanced in support of disorderly behavior. The rock bottom life depressed many into themselves. Suicide among teenagers climbed and the rate is high at the time of recording this tape. The Dakota people are in a bad situation whether they are living on or off the reserve. The early developed motto, "we live and we work together" is now in question.

The sixties commenced with the faint sound of beating drum. The beats became louder and louder, attracting the Dakota people to a new entertainment. This is called "Under the Big Top Celebration." Each summer the big top extends to a different reserve. It provides and opportunity for people to meet each other several times every summer, visiting one another abroad constructs a better understanding of reserve life. The Big Top motivated competitive activities between reserves and among the attendants. The Dakota community interest expanded with group singers, group dancers, fund-raising projects.

There is a method called Tidowan, meaning home singing, commonly used for every family canvas. It should be described on this recording. Tidowan is conducted by a group of singers and dancers, including other means of musical sound-making. They visit each home to provide a short entertainment of singing and dancing, usually performed outside and near the door, unless the homeowner invites them indoors. The M.C. makes his announcements in the first moment of silence. He will tell the family of the next Big Top Celebration's date and month. He will continue, to say it was their reserve's project to broaden friendship and develop talents. But Big Top can only accomplish this by every family's support. So naturally, a family will donate money or something that can be auctioned. Tidowan is repeated several times in a year. One other progress is the revival of Dakota Peji, meaning grass songs and dancing costumes. Many fine arts of designs, beading, and other needlecraft were displayed by younger people.

Others found new opportunities in the research work of the Dakota Identity development. The Dakota people are preparing to have Dakota language classes in their schools on the reserves. There is much language developing to be done for the literature of the reserves. The Dakota language is an impressive dialect because of its many verbs. Nouns will be the main concern in updating the Dakota language. Another area is producing text books. There are sufficient interesting Dakota stories suitable for reading. The aforementioned activities were advanced by the "Under the Big Top Celebration." It provided a chance to exchange ideas and information for the Dakota people. Often one will see men seated in small circles. They are discussing many reserve problems; and how to solve them is usually suggested. This can be observed during the Big Top days.

One important change has developed. This is the Canadian Dakota reserves organized themselves. Here again Under the Big Top Celebration should be credited for it. Exchanging visits brought the seven Dakota reserves to one body. It is used for organizational approaches in claims and research. It is called the Dakota Association of Canada. This Association was established in November, 1969. So far, the Association progressed in two fields of work: the Mississippi Santee claims, and Dakota history. There are other interesting areas proposed to investigate. The Dakota people have advantages through their own Association. Their full support can empower new organizational privileges. Also, it can be adopted as Tioti to provide external services. So the seven Dakota reserves will be organizational wise with a desirable future prospect.

But sad to say that the promoter Under the Big Top Celebration is struggling to exist. Our Dakota elders forecasted this would happen because Dakota reserves are in the stage, "we live disorderly." Sooner or later, the disorder activities will extend to the Big Top attraction. This was seen as Big Top dueling with alcoholism, since it is truly a conflict of interest which gradually separates people within each reserve. "Don't come to the Big Top drunk." In reply is,

"Don't come to my home for Big Top support." This internal disorder produces a trend for Big Top Celebration. One by one, the reserves will pass the summer without Big Top attraction. However, by this time, the Dakota cultural recovery will be so great that experience will perpetuate in other new adventures. Whatever happens, the basic need should be challenged. That is security. Until Dakota reserves are structuring time for security, we may avoid our Dakota elders' predictions.

Now this is a summary of what has been discussed:

The Dakota reserve area being used as a foundation of the Dakota elders' predictions. It consists of two stages. The first one was referred to as, "In the past, the Dakota people lived well." Why do these elders say they lived well in the past when we observed them with many hardships? That is true, but internal corruption did not dwell with them. The Dakota movement into the reserve was in one body of families. The first motto, "We live and we work together," clearly states another evidence. We live, meaning the reserve be used as a survival purpose. How they are going to use it is shown by "we work together." One other point that can be made is the reserve visualized as a Tioti as far as they are concerned, because their spoken words, Tioti Unyanpi, illustrates that. So the first settlers of the Dakota reserve know who they are, what they are going to do, and how they are going to do it.

The second stage has been noted as, "Today we live disorderly." Originally this had been developed by interferences. Official permits must accompany their plan or work. This limits and controls their action for accomplishment. Desire for freedom to work in Odakod, meaning Dakota belief, identity, skill, and attitude, was incomplete by confusion. In support, the constant dual issue of money and alcoholism maintained the Dakota people on the road of confusion aiming for the elders' predicted future. Meanwhile, Under the Big Top attraction existed as a puzzle picture of Odakod, which drew some attention with the desire to put the picture together. While others go on as, "we dance and we will compete with one

another," these last two interests barely promoting the Big Top for a secured popularity. But Owiyanhantukesni, meaning unpopularity, strengthening will build the freeway to our Dakota elders' prediction. In the future the Dakota people will live insecurely.

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

My name is Samuel Buffalo. I am a member of the Wahpaton Dakota Reserve 94A. And today I want to talk about the history of the Wahpaton Dakota Reserve.

Chief Ainyanke had about, over ten families. And he was requesting, to the federal government, a reserve where he and his band can reside. And in 1894, the reserve was granted.

And August 1894, the reserve has been completed as far as the surveying. Now, the people here dwell on this reserve and spend most of their time away from the reserve. There was no reserve, a farm development, until four years after the completion of the surveying. My grandfather Budown Tutankakeapi moved in the spring of 1898 on the reserve to farm. He was with his son, 8 years old, Herbert Buffalo. And after that, they were engaged in farming. And at that same time the home mission and the school was built on the reserve. The home mission was operated by Miss Lucy Baker, better known in Dakota name, Missy Baka.

(End of Side B)

(End of Tape)

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