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PRINCE ALBERT, SASK.  
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LANGUAGE: ENGLISH  
DATE OF INTERVIEW:  
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INTERPRETER:  
TRANSCRIBER: J. GREENWOOD  
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Robert Goodvoice, born 1901.
- account of the 1862 Minnesota Massacre and, in its aftermath, the movement of a group of Sioux (Dakota) to Prince Albert, Sask. under the leadership of Tarasota(?).
- the 1885 Riel Rebellion and its effect on the Sioux (Dakota) living in the Prince Albert, Sask. district.

(Side A, Tape IH-111)

...night after night, the Dakotas and the Hotonka(?), they have meetings whether to fight or not. But most of them, the majority of them would rather fight. Wipe out the whites and save the four boys and live in this country all by ourselves as Indians in our own Indian country. This is the idea and on this side, Tarasota, "In another couple of months, it is going to be cold and we have lots of old people, lots of crippled people, lots of sick people, orphans, children. We can't start a war now and keep it up and win the war. This is impossible. The Wasitiu, the white man, there are many of them and they have the powder, that is the gunpowder. They have the guns and they have the shots and they have the caps and they have the bullets. But we have - a few of us got guns - but we have to

buy the shot, the bullets, the gunpowder and the caps from the Wasitiu, the white man. We can't last long. Besides we can't have enough grub with us. No matter where we go, we have to have grub and this is something we can't do. We will be on foot and we wouldn't be able to carry any load of grub and our bedding and our tents so it would be a very foolish thing for us to fight the white man, the Wasitiu." Tarasota, this is the stand he took. But the other side, there was more people that wanted to fight than the ones that didn't want to fight. Besides they were influenced by the Hotonkas(?). The Hotonka(?) is a quite a big tribe. There is lots of them. They are the ones that wanted the Sioux's to fight the Wasitiu, the white man.

Now, it was arranged that when the moon comes up full, that night, the night of the full moon is the last night they are going to have a meeting. And then the next morning, the following morning would be the morning to start fighting, to start the war. So they had meetings night after night until the time arrived when the moon came up full. Then the meeting was over just about daybreak. Tarasota went home but he didn't go to bed. He sat outside his tent until the sunrise. And he was still sitting there and then he saw a few people going towards the village and some more and some more until ladies and everybody with clubs, axes, whatever they can, whatever weapon they can get ahold of, and they went towards the village. But Tarasota and his people, none of them go. They stayed at their tent until the sun was quite a ways up. It was between the twelve o'clock mark and the sunrise. That would be about half past nine or ten o'clock. Of course, the Indians didn't have any watches at that time and they go by the sun and they say the sun was quite high. It was halfway between sunrise and midday. No sign of war, no report of guns, nothing. So Tarasota said to his fellow men he is going to go

and see. "It is a good thing if they give up and it is a good thing if they are not going to fight but I am going to go and see what's the decision. They might change their mind after they get over there."

So he walked over there and this, a man, the Indians call him Wopetohanska, that means a tall merchant, he was ready for the day's business. He had the door open and he was standing outside the store. And the people were sitting on the ground, standing here and there and they are all over, lots of them. And Tarasota went right to that - to the store and there was a man sitting there. And there was a man sitting close to the store, the entrance of the store. He looked at him and by gosh, that was the man that wanted to fight. He was sitting there just looking at this Wopetohanska, the tall merchant. And Tarasota said to him, this is what he said, "You wanted to fight and I told you not to fight but you insisted that you were going to fight. You have got all these men behind you. You convert these people to fight with you. Now, what are you doing here? You are just sitting here doing nothing, you are not fighting." And this man here had his gun under his blanket. Tarasota grabbed his gun and pulled it out of his

hands. And Wopetohanska stood there watching. And Tarasota shot Wopetohanska down and that is what they call - that is the start of the Minnesota Massacre. Where the man had fired the first shot, his name is Tarasota. He came to Prince Albert in 1876 and stayed in Prince Albert district and died about 1909 or 1910. He died a natural death and is buried among the other Dakotas in the Prince Albert district.

But the war started. They burned the houses and killed everything, even cats and dogs, chickens, horses, cattle, whatever is alive in their path, they killed it. Now, what is the name of the place where this war started? I never heard the name. But they say they went south until they come to, it must be a creek, it must be a creek or a river. We call it (118). That means a river up to there. When the American Army met them they crossed the river and were right after them. By that time, Tarasota and his bunch, they took off, they run away from the battle zone northward. They crossed the river there too. There must be another river there so they say they crossed on rafts and on logs, whatever that can hold them up. They made rafts and then the young men, they bring a load of people and then swing back with the raft to get some more and the old people and the crippled and the sick and children and they bring them across to the north side of the river, and from there they kept on moving north. By this time, the war was going in full swing and how long since the war started, my grandparents didn't know. They were there at the start but

they were a long ways from it when the war stopped. And they stayed close to the border until 1875, I think it is, and then they come across. They came across, they crossed the border and then they kept on coming to Prince Albert district. I mentioned this in the number one and two tapes that I have recorded.

And there are some people that turned back. They travelled northward to Prince Albert but there was lots of them that turned back and they camped someplace in the southern parts around Cypress Hills or up in that part. And they, there is only a few there. It was part of the tribe and they broke into a war between the two of them, between, yes, there was two brothers that got into a row and then they got into a fight and then the war. The camp divided into two war camps and then they slaughtered each other. After this slaughter took place, people moved northward until they come to Prince Albert. And they stayed in Prince Albert district, worked for the white people in the city, in the town. They hunt and they trap and they make rugs and mats and they made their living by doing this kind of work until 1885, early in the spring when this Northwest Rebellion broke out. Now, this is where again they were in - just about getting into trouble. Tarasota was in Prince Albert then. He called a meeting and told the people that they were - they ran away from a battle that took place and they are way over here in the north, away from their own land. And he said they struggled from day to day just barely existing.

And there was a war broke out between the Wasitiu, the white man, and the halfbreeds. He asked the people to keep away from this 1885 Northwest Rebellion. And he told them that he is moving north towards Candle Lake, up in that district, and he wants the people to follow him. He told them to obey his command. And he told them that they have to obey him, that he is travelling north and he wants everybody to follow him. This time, there was a man. He is from the southwestern part of this country around Montana up in there some place where the Tetons are. He belongs to this here Sitting Bull tribe. The Dakotas call him Tituwanhanska, the tall Teton. He has a name, a real name but I forgot his name. And this Tituwanhanska told Tarasota and the Dakotas not to leave Prince Albert. Stay with the people that are in Prince Albert and he told them, "The halfbreeds are not going to win this war. We don't know how long it is going to last but they are not going to win. So you stay right where you are and stay with the people of Prince Albert." This is what Tituwanhanska told the Dakotas. And there was a merchant called Ramsay. I don't know his first

name or his initials. Another one, Betts, and there is a man, he wasn't a merchant but he was one of the leading families at that time in Prince Albert. His name is MacBeth. And there is another man the Indians call him Lame Clark. His name is Clark and he is lame, he has got something wrong with his leg that he is lame so they call him Lame Clark. And another man, Andrew Knox. He is a carpenter. All these men, they are Wasitius, they were white men, business men, popular persons of the city of Prince Albert them days. They told these Dakotas to stay with the Prince Albert people. Move into the Prince Albert city limits and stay there till the war is over, this 1885 Northwest Rebellion is over. They all say they don't know how long it will last but they all say that the halfbreed is not going to win the war.

But Tarasota, he forced the people to follow him, that he is going to leave the Prince Albert district and go north and stay up in the north country till the war is over. At least a month after the war is over, then they will come back. And he got them to follow them. About twenty or twenty-five families. They went towards the north until they come to a road and he told them to follow that. And that road led to a place called (266). That is the way they called it. This river, (268), that means a river. Now it is known as Torch River. They come there and then they camped there for a few days. They made a dam using some stones, rocks, they made a dam and they made a little space where the fish could get through. And then on the other side they made a kind of a net out of willows and branches and the fish coming through that, they catch them in this net that they made. And then they went north but all this time, some people have run out of flour, out of food. And what they were eating, they were eating nothing but wild meat, moose, elk, and jumpers and ducks and partridges and prairie chickens. Well, the people were getting tired of it and some say they are going to return back to Prince Albert after they reach Torch River. And Tarasota says, "No. You people stay.

You people stay right with me," he says. He said, "I am the man." This is what he told them early in the morning. "I am the man that likes to shoot people," he says. "Anyone of you that is going to move towards where we came from, you will hear my gun. You will hear the report of my gun." And then saying that, when he finished he fired two shots in the air and then he says, "Now, anybody that wants to go back to the city, get ready and go. Walk past here, the road." He blocked the road and he told them, "Walk past here. You will never get by this line," he told them. He had his gun loaded. So his brother, his brother (319), he went up to his brother, that was

Tarasota's brother, the youngest of the family and he told him, "Brother," he says, "this kind of ideas and this kind of transactions that you are just about to commit again, you have done it in the - across the border - and you are going to do it again out here in the bush. But I am here," he said, "and I am going to be on this side of the road and you on the other side. And I am going to ask the people, the ones that are wanting to go back, I am going to ask them to get ready and go back. And I am going to tell them to pass between me and you, my brother," he says. "Remember I am your brother and I am going to ask the people to pass between me and you. We'll see if you are going to stop them. I will be here to see that you don't stop them." And he too fired two shots in the air and reloaded his gun and stood there. And then he told the people, "All right, all those that want to go back, get ready and go. I am here. I will be here between you people and my brother. I will be watching him," he says.

In no time, the camp, everybody pulled down their tipis and their tents that they made shelter for the night, everybody had them in bundles and on their backs and they walked slowly between the two brothers. Tarasota was sitting down. (362) was standing up. They walked in between them slowly. They all hang on to each other by the hand and they walked past these two brothers with loaded guns and away they come. They come back to Prince Albert. And (372) stayed there. Everyone of them returned to Prince Albert. And when everybody left, the only tent that was left was Tarasota's. He was left behind. (381) was the last one. He walked away from his brother facing him, he walked backwards facing his brother. He was the last one until he came out of sight. And then he followed the people, he stayed behind the people. And there are times there he will go off the road into a bush and sit there to see if Tarasota is coming. But he never showed up. So they left him behind and they all came back to Prince Albert. Took them a few days to do it but they all got back.

In the meantime, this here Tituwanhanska, that is his Indian name, he stayed in Prince Albert and he was scouting for the Wasitiu army, the Mounted Police. He was helping them. They put him as a scout and he was scouting for them. Any Indian or halfbreed, anybody coming from the war zone, he would come ahead and report it to the headquarters in Prince Albert. And they will go and catch these people, find out what they are

coming for, why they are coming to Prince Albert. And when the war was over, this Titawunhanska, he helped the British army so they got him a place, a piece of land, and they built him a little house there and he stayed there until he died.

Tituwanhanska had three sons. I don't know their English names but they had Indian names. Tituwanhanska couldn't talk English or his wife so they had Indian names. The oldest one, his name was Kamunakoo and the second one was Heckajo and the third one was Keyweekuja. That is the three boys and they all died shortly after Tituwanhanska died.

Tituwanhanska's English name was John Baconsfield. Where he got that name I don't know but that is what they called him. He was known by the Wasitius, by the white man, John Baconsfield. And we, the Dakota people, know him as Tituwanhanska. And this story that I have on this tape is told by my grandfather and many other old, old people. That is how I come to know this story as I have got it on tape here. And another thing that I would like to say is that, why I mentioned Tituwanhanska is this, he gave good advice to Tarasota. He told him to stay with the people of Prince Albert during the rebellion but Tarasota didn't listen to him. He would rather take the people away from Prince Albert and towards the north which he did. And it just about caused another battle over there between his bunch and his brother's bunch. And Tarasota came back about ten days after the rest. But he didn't come to the camp. He stayed away from the camp, not too far but he stayed, we'll say about the distance of about half a mile. He was there with two other families who were....

(End of Side A, Tape IH-111)

(End of Tape)

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