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CHARLES W. RYDER
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Story of the settlement of the Carry the Kettle (Assiniboine) Reserve.
 - Detailed description of old agricultural practices.
- ASSINIBOINE ELDERS WORKSHOP 4

History of Carry the Kettle Reserve

CHARLES W. RYDER:

The Assiniboines call it The Little Mountains that are together known as Harlem, Montana. This is the Assiniboine territory, through to Cypress Hills and Wood Mountain area and we were settled in the Cypress Hills.

All of a sudden the white man decided they were going to move us to another location. This is what my father told me. The Man Who Took the Coat refused to move for a long time. Every time they'd ask him, he'd say, "No, I love this place, I do not want to go." But the white man was persistent so at last the Assiniboines were persuaded to move to another location. They brought two-wheeled carts hitched to oxen and they moved them. He doesn't remember how many days they travelled. They moved them to this new location; as you all know it was Skull Mountains. They settled us in this place. There were two chiefs, The Man Who Took the Coat and Long Lodge. The Man Who Took the Coat died and Long Lodge died later. We are the people of the Man Who Took the Coat here today. Long Lodge band lost his land and joined with The Man Who Took the Coat

band. The reserve wasn't settled, there was a lot of controversy.

My father was working for the Indian agent putting in crop when some white men decided to survey some land for us. So the Man Who Took the Coat said, "Give me a nice piece of land where I can raise cattle and plant crop." So they surveyed the present reserve of Carry the Kettle. They gave the Indians cattle and I remember when I was a boy I saw them plowing with a hand plow pulled by oxen. They dragged some sharp barbs to work the soil after they plowed and they scattered wheat by hand and they harrowed it with oxen. So everyone put a crop in this way. That time the wheat really grew good. When harvesting they had long crooked sharp blades swinging towards you to cut it (scythe), and all the men and women tied the sheaves by hand and stooked them. The white man was teaching them. All this I saw when I was a small boy.

I heard they were going to thresh the wheat. All the people gathered to see this event. They hitched horses to this machine. They went in a circle round and round. Where the horses go around in a circle, there was a rod leading from the centre out to the machine. This operated the gears of the machine. All the sheaves were stacked around this machine.

From the stack the men passed sheaves to each other down the line and the last two cut the strings and my father was the man who fed the sheaves into the machine cylinder, first with his left and then right hand, as the sheaves were coming in from left and right of him. This is how they threshed the wheat. It had a straw carrier which carried it out the other end. They hitched two horses each end of a log like a sweeper and dragged the straw away from the machine, rows and rows of it. When it's oats straw the men stacked the straw for cattle feed. In later years they bought a mower pulled by horses. This mower had a platform and when it was full a wooden arm sweeps the grain off, and the men and women followed behind and tied them into sheaves. Sometimes when they ran out of twine they used sapling or wrapped the green straw around the grain and tied it. This was the oldtime way of harvesting. In later years when we grew up we raised about four hundred head of cattle and farmed many acres of land. This is what we did when we moved here. That's all I have to say now. My brother, Donald Rope here, knows about the history of this reserve and he will tell you about it. His father, old man Medicine Rope, had cattle and also raised some sheep.

(End of Interview)

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