

Harriet Translation

This here we are cleaning, you understand a little eh? This here we are cleaning, you do this, your knife has to stand like this, let's see, you try, you missed, now you, this way look, too much, your turn now, that's how. That's it now. You remember a little. You are no standing. You now. That the way it's done see, this way now, this way and this way, this way now, do you know, you, you now, its has to be done in turns, yes, "hello," oh the same good day good man, good day good man, this way, that way, we'll never get done, we are taking too long. You now, this way now, yeh. Tell stories now. It was my Dad that taught us how to play Little Knife. There use to be a lot, no only 2; we use to be a lot of us playing. This way see? My Dad is who taught us. He was real good at playing Little Knife, not only us there use to be a lot of us playing. You have to clean good the spot, where you're going to play. You start this way, this way after; the one that finishes first is the winner. We use to play a little bit if we had pennies, we use to bet. Long ago when we use to play. Some were real good at it. Not like today. You have to use all you fingers, this way. First your index, this way, and then your thumb, all, and then here, here it use to be hard, you tend to stab yourself. Then after this way and this way too, and this way and after this way, and you do it this way. That's when someone wins; the one that finishes first is the winner. There use to be a lot of us when we use to play. My Dad use to play with us. When we use to play without him we use to get angry with one another, us kids use to make each other angry, and when we'd ask Dad he would take the little knife away from us. Then we'd have to stop. After that we'd make a ball and go play with old rags. We'd make the ball old socks too, is what we made it out of. We would stack 3 cans, when we don't have the knife, then this is what we'd play. We use to steal Dad's little knife without his knowledge; we'd steal it and play. He sometime wouldn't lend it to us; he would keep it from us. Oh yes, oh yes, oh yes. Them too, they played a lot. Everybody played, it was the kids, cause them they worked when they were tired, they couldn't play good cause they wouldn't play cause they were tired at night. But us, we were never tired; of course, we didn't work hard. But for them, they worked real hard and got pretty tired when they were not tired on Sundays, nobody worked on Sunday. Everyone was home. That's when they use to play a lot and ball too. Even the old ladies use to play a lot. These old ladies. Not only the young. Old ladies, old men. Them too, they played. There was Little Knife. They also called it "On the Hand" and that too is what they use to play.

He told us what happen to the people in the States, where he came from. These cousins were visiting one another. This one came to visit his cousin. This guy was living in a tent. While they were talking, suddenly one had to go. The other one was cleaning his gun. It fired off. He hit his cousin while he was outside and he said, "You sure did wrong. You know you better run away. They won't believe, anyway, I won't stay alive. It's best you run away," he said to his cousin. He then took his rifle and ran off on foot. He had no horse so he took off running. He had to run away so the police won't

catch him, so the cops could not catch him. So I guess he was in hiding for a long time. He was in hiding. He had a wife here. He had two over there and I think he had two or three in the States. Those were the places of his hide outs. He was sure rich on women. He was sort of giving up. He was suffering too much. He thought, never mind if I freeze. He took his little blanket on top of a little hill and this is winter. On the top of the hill, he shoveled a bit of the snow aside. He laid down and covered with his little blanket. He thought, this is where I'll die. This is where they'll find me in the summer. Suddenly he hears a noise coming towards him. He did not move. He just laid there cause he had given up on life. It's okay for me to die he thought. A big wolf came to lay down beside him. He laid down beside him. Again, he hears another noise. Another wolf. One in the front, one at the back. One at his head and one at his feet is where the wolves laid. He's not cold. They are keeping him warm these wolves. The big wolves are keeping him warm and that's how he fell asleep. When it came daylight, as soon as he made a move, the wolves got up and ran off a ways and stopped. They stood and watched him. He got up and started off. Here the wolves started following him when he'd shot something. Prairie rabbits. They were plentiful. When he'd shot a prairie rabbit, he'd cook some and he'd feed his wolves. Whatever he killed, he'd have to feed his wolves. The wolves followed him later while he was in the tent visiting. The police knew where he was. They came there and called to him from outside and they were on horseback and him no horse. He took his knife and slashed the tent. From there he ran out. He ran away. The bush was not too far away. He left the horses. He outran the horses. He was on foot and the police had horses. He outran those horses. It was the wolves who gave him, it was the wolves who gave him strength. He sure was strong. The wolves helped him a lot. He was on the run for a long time, he was on the run. Suddenly he gave up. He thought I am suffering too much. He was suffering himself. He thought I am suffering too much. I am going to see the police because I am suffering too much. Sure as heck, he went to see the police. Although if he would have been on the run for one more year, they would not have been able to do anything to him. He was on the run for a long time. He was on the run for a long time, nine years, but he was tired. If he had finished that, they would have left him alone. He took his rifle and went to town, to give himself up. He said okay, do what you want to me. I have suffered enough. I don't want to suffer myself anymore. The police looked at him. You ran for nine years and you suffered yourself being on the run. He took the rifle and gave it back to him. He gave him shells. He gave him money. Now, he said, your wife, your children, go and look after them and that's how they let him go. And that's how I think he lost it. He lost it. He never seen his wolves again. He had no one to help him any more cause he didn't want any more help now that he had given up. So he never seen his little wolves again.

I think I was only five years old when I remember my Dad and my Mom were plastering. You can not use just any old kind of dirt. The dirt has to look good. Yellow dirt, it's gotta look like. That's what you use for plaster and old straw. We would go to the stables to gather straw and that's what we used

and water for mud. That's all us used. After they were dry, my Dad would go find, I don't know how he found it. He was the only one who knew where this was, white dirt. He used to go and find white dirt. That's what he would bring. It would look like flour. You mix it with water and it looked all white. You'd use this with a brush and would brush it on all walls. With the lamp on it was bright inside. That was a long time ago about Dad. My Mom was real good at plastering. Also in the fall, sometime my Dad, sometime in the summer. Sometime in the beginning of winter. That's when my Mom's hands do the plastering. That's why Mom's hands look that way. Now she can't use her hands because her hands use to get so cold plastering; it was cold out. Sometime there was snow on the ground already when she would start plastering. She was trying to finish the outside. You know, it is very cold and you're trying to plaster outside. You know it is very cold and you're trying to plaster outside. Mom's hands would freeze. That is why Mom's hands look like that. Now she can't do anything good. Yes, yes, yes, yes. Sometime though, it would be about two years that my Dad would get the white dirt. Not right away. We didn't use it all the time. Not all the house use it. I can remember just plastering houses and nothing else. When you build a log house, you use trees sometime you see a little flower sprouting out, cause it that a long time before the trees die there would be leaves in the house. Those houses were war. You plaster a log house good, they are warmer than these kind. Yes sometime us kids when we were in bed we would sneakily take from the wall and eat it. Grandma use to say, don't say anything to them. That stuff is good. It will do them good. As long as it's not too much. But us, we would steal a lot. Sometime you could see the holes from us stealing the mud to eat. Grandma use to eat a lot. She use to say it was good for the kids. I don't know how true that is. But this is what we use to tell us. Of course, she use to take up for us. Whenever we got in trouble so Dad would not whip us. Well she said, it does us good. The fact is, we use to steal a lot. My godfather use to be a good caller whenever we use to have dances. When we use to have square dances. When they use to dance jig. My Dad use to dance jig real good. He use to try to teach us how to dance jig and my godfather use to call and his sons too. One of his sons was a good caller. That's the one who taught me and after, when he turned older, he got lazy and didn't want to call so he'd call me and teach me so that no one would ask him to. So after, I would do the calling and his son would take turns calling. My godfather taught me. We didn't know any of that kind, nothing. Just only jig. Only jig and square dance. That's the only ones. The towel dance. The rabbit dance. No. That was before Elvis was heard of. That was before Elvis was known of. But after, we did you know, we use to try and dance it, but we couldn't. We just couldn't do it right, so we gave up, cause we just didn't do it right. We just could not dance that way at the dances, but it use to be the old people, not us, when we'd make a dance. We'd go to a house, even if there was only four of us, like two boys and two girls. Let's go pick them up when we'd go to a house, just any old house, we would ask. You know we haul out the stove, the table. We'd chuck out everything and we'd dance. But the old people use to have Basket Social. They use to auction them and whoever buys the basket has to eat

with the women who has made it. The basket that was made by the woman and the man who bought it, then she would have to eat with him and that's the one she'd have to eat with. If your husband does not buy it, then you don't eat with your husband. You'd have to eat lunch with someone else. You have to go sit and eat with whoever. The old men use to try and bid on their old ladies baskets. But us, we were broke. We couldn't buy. We didn't have any money to go eat with someone. But they use to make a lot of money. They just bid any old way. Sometime they use to drink those old people and when they were half shot and they had money. They sure weren't stingy with their money. What? No. For us. Never. No. No. Just only Basket Socials was what the old people use to make. If they want to help out someone. If someone's going to build a house and he's alone and they are going to help him. That's when they would make those Basket Social. They would use this money to buy food to go and feed all the ones that have gone to help this person. They all helped out each other. Yes. Not like today. You know, long ago, all Métis got along with one another. Not like today now. That's because no one had anything. Everybody didn't have anything. You know, you borrow. You borrow from someone who lives close by. They go a borrow flour, tea, sugar. Things like that they loaned to one another. We, no one had money. Nobody was rich. We were all poor. They all came there to help each other. Everyone who lived nearby would all come over to help the one who was building. People sure use to help each other a lot long ago. My aunt told us. My aunt Lisa had told us what had happened to her relatives. One of her aunt had died. Well, these two women didn't get along well. They didn't get along. They had made a promise. One said, if I ever die, I am going to come and get you, she said to the other woman. Well, when she died, no one believed her. While at the wake, well that woman was there too. She started getting scared. She was afraid. She just remembered what she been told. That was one of her relatives. Suddenly she became very sleepy. But it was dark and she was sleepy. The house that they were holding the wake at. There was another house nearby where they would go and have a sleep. That where this woman has to go and have a sleep. That's where she was told to go and sleep. But no one wanted to go with her so she had to go alone. When she went out, a loud scream was heard outside. They all ran out to see and there laid this woman. When they came in and looked at this woman, her mouth was full of hair, as well, hands full of hair and so she had come to get her. She had come to kill her. My Aunt Lisa was the one who told us. They say that this has really happened. That's....my aunt had said. She too has heard about it. No, she did not see it. She too had just heard about it. No, she didn't see it happen. She just heard of it. Yes, well, that's where she came from.

Mary

Question: How did you make a living when you were little?

Answer: Well, I went to school. Yes. We had to cross the river to get to school. But in winter, we had to walk, cold or not. Papa made a house closer to the school, that time. I helped them plastering. I liked it, you know. No papa wouldn't let me go. I was sixteen and he still wouldn't allow me to go to a dance. My brother, one time asked Dad if I could go to a dance. Dad said yes, but don't let her dance with anyone else but you, he said. He didn't want to go. Dad was not gonna go. Suddenly, he shows up. He just came to sneak around to what I was doing. That's all what I had to do, just dance with by brother. Other guys came to ask me to dance with them, but I couldn't. And one asked me. He wanted to take me to a powwow. Not a chance. I couldn't go. She was a woman that didn't want us to watch her when she does something. But, we use to help her, that's when she wanted us to help her. She was getting a little old.

No, I didn't live on the road allowance with Gilbert. My son was born over there. We came home and my sister and brother went for a walk and these horses are standing there. They grabbed one horse and they throw me on and whipped the horse while I was on and I fell off. That's why now I am afraid to horseback ride. Me and Gilbert would just drive off. We'd get two and bring them home with us for a couple day and we'd take them home again.