INDIAN STORY DAY
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Indian People
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Story
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Long Ago
DUNHWODUN

Nobody lived that long ago, 200 years ago. Because there were too many grizzlies, they came out into the prairies. Out here in Bald Hill. Indians lived right in the valley here, and, of course, they went in bunches when they went hunting.

They had medicine of their own against grizzlies. They had a rope they carried with them all the time, so they weren't scared of grizzlies. Well, grizzlies never bothered them, either. Because they would bring that rope, and, like if they were going to lasso the grizzly, the grizzly would take off. They would throw dirt at them.

You know this place was real wild, up here, up at Camel Farm, right where Fred lived now, back up in there, they said there were big holes there, about that big around, and they would go right in the ground, and my father said when he was young, they used to go up and throw rocks down in there. You could hear it rolling way down in there.

There were several holes up there. I don't know what lived in there, at that time.

Right where that water tank is now, right where Willie Quimby used to stay, right back in there, there was a hole in there. They tried to cover that up. They would throw rocks and everything in there. They could hear it hit someplace down in there, but they never knew how deep that hole was.

So they just threw trees, and brush over that hole so nobody
could fall in there. He said he saw it several times. Three, he said, three holes up in there. You throw a rock in that hole, it used to go down until you couldn't hear it any more. It was deep. I was in there one time. I drug that dragon out of there. I hit him right in the face. Do you believe that?

Lions, they used to travel over the Trinity Alps. I know up there up at the end of Trinity Summit, at Haycrest, long time ago, they used to say, "Don't camp there. That's where the lions come through."

So nobody camped there at that certain place where you can't camp.

Yeah, that was just like up here at Dayton Prairie, where they call that swag. That was their crossing up there, in that swag, and they said, "Never camp around there."

Because just a little ways from there that backbone just runs right down there, into Minor Creek. Indians used to travel through there, they had a trail through there. Pretty steep, though, just right on that ridge there, well, just where it breaks off flat, when you get up on top, that ridge there.
This is a story about Fred. I'll tell you what Fred did one time. I went in a place. I'd heard it described since I was a boy. Probably a little younger than you kids in here. They used to tell us about the lions that existed maybe 200, 300 years ago.

And there was a den over here they call Miner Creek. And there were a lot of them that disappeared. They knew where that lion packed them. They would find their bodies there, bones and stuff like that, they would pick it up, gather it up, and take it back and bury it.

So they used to describe that place, so I got a notion I'm going down in there one of these days. So I had a high-powered rifle and I went down in there. I could hear the falls, and I went in there, and came out to that creek down in the bottom. There was a big pool in there, a wall narrower than this building here. It was just a rock wall. It was just churning there. I couldn't see the falls, but I could hear it. Oh, that pool in there was so deep that you couldn't even see the bottom, that water was just green. In the middle part of it, there was a rock sticking up there that looks like a table. It's flat at the top. That was his table where that lion ate his killings.

So, I went around there, and I got above it, and I looked at that falls. It was about 70 feet high, that falls. That's where that den used to be, there's a hole in there. That's where the lion lived there.
And then, the way they described it, was true. It's still there. The flood and all that stuff, it never changed it. So, years back, there's two people from here who went over the hill to visit. And, on top of this ridge up here they call Dayton Prairie. It's not too far from there down into Miner Creek. And these two fellows, they were walking, and they thought they heard something behind them. There were two of them following. They were going to kill them. So he told his partner, we better do something. There's something behind us. So he turned around and saw those two lions. And they ran, they took off.

This first guy came to a tree, he climbed up in there. Those lions can't climb.

So this other fellow, he was a little bit too slow, he couldn't make it to that tree and they got him.

This fellow, he was kind of smart, he took the belt that he wore around his waist and he knew he was going to be up there quite a while, so he wrapped that belt around that trunk, and then tied it back here, so if his arms would get tired, he wouldn't fall out of the tree. He had a safety belt on, and he watched them eat the other fellow up.

And this other lion, after he got through eating this other fellow, he took off. And this other fellow waited for this one in that tree. It laid under the tree, and once in a while, it would stare at him, look at him.

And I guess this lion got tired waiting. He got up, and then he took off down the hill. So, that's how this fellow got away. So he kept on going where he was going, He didn't want to turn back, so he just kept going. And he ran.
When he got down to the village down there, he told what happened. So they had about 4 or 5 of them, they got this blanket, Indian blanket, it was made out of deerskin. He took them up there, and then they gathered up all those bones that were all scattered around there. They took it back and brought it back here to Hoopa. They had a burial.

That's how it happened there years ago. Almost 200 hundred years ago. See, lions used to exist around here.

My great-grandfather, he could see them, he was almost 100 years old, they had a Barnum and Bailey Circus there, they brought it to Blue Lake at one time.

We told him there were some lions, African lions. And he wanted to look at them, to see how big they were. So we took him up there. They were in a cage, some of them were laying down, and some were standing up. So, anyway, he looked at them. And he said, those African full grown lions weren't too big.

He said, "They're small compared to ours. Ours were big ones, black all over. They were a lot darker color than African lions. They had manes on them, and everything, like African lions.

So lions used to exist here in the United States. Grizzly bear, they're all gone, up further north, you can see them. Around Montana, all those parts up there. There aren't any more around here, there's no more grizzly bears."
MED+LD+M, that's where I belong. Captain John's Rancheria.
And they had a place there, they trained for Stick Game. Well, not only for Stick Game, but for luck. They had a place up there where that airport is now, they used to have a Stick Game field, and they ran back and forth, and they used to train there in the fall of the year, when it gets real cold.

You run around there, back and forth, you run with the wind, the wind will blow the leaves, and you just run right with that. And you jump in the river, way up at the end of the valley. At Capt. John's Ranch. And swim down. You swim down to where that rock pit is now, rock crusher. There used to be a rock there, but I don't see that rock there any more.

You get out right there, and you run around that rock, and roll around on gravel. It used to be so cold that the gravel would just stick on their bodies. They jumped back in the river and swam back across.

And these people, they have a fire going up there in that sweathouse. That's where you get back, and you go to sleep there. And you'll dream, you'll dream what's going to be.

If it's Stick Game, that nobody is going to lick him. So that was the medicine.

There used to be a lot of people living over at MED+LD+M. One guy, he trained there for that stick game. They said he was kind
of a fat fellow. Short, fat guy. So they were having a stick game. He was sitting up there. He was tanning hide on up there. At that old house. So they had Stick Game, and they told him, "You better play."

"No," he said. "You know." he said, "When I trained here, when I was a young fellow, I dreamt that I played sticks, and I picked one guy up, and threw him down. Slammed him down so hard he never did get up. So, that's why I don't want to play."

Oh, they made fun of him. "You're just scared." they told him. They finally talked him into coming out and playing. So he did play. So, sure enough, he picked this guy up and slammed him down. And he never did get up, that fellow.

So that's why he said he never wanted to play.

There used to be one old guy over there. When he was old, they said, he used to play sticks. He said he trained there long ago, and he said "You know, I'm not alone out there when I play sticks, there's somebody with me all the time. Some fellow runs along side of me, and that fellow is with me all the time. When I grab that guy's legs, that fellow will fall over, and I'll take the tassel out. He was a real old guy.

He said, "I'm not alone out there. The spirit is with me all the time." Everything he does, that fellow is always there to keep him. They used to train, not only for stick game, but for luck. Like, for going out killing deer, and for fishing. That's all they did, hunt and fish.

They used to go out in the mountains, the men and gather limbs and things like that. And, bring them back down for their
sweathouse. And the women would gather wood along the river -- for their use. And they got their canoes from Klamath, from the Klamath Indians. They were the ones that made the canoes. And they had a lot of canoes in Hoopa. They traded with Klamath, their Indian stuff, woodpecker rolls. That's the way they bought their boats.

When I grew up, there were a few canoes left. There was one guy that used to live up at Tish Tang. He had one, and Ralph and them. They had one. And the Haydens, they had one canoe. The Davises. And we had one -- big canoe. And down this valley here, the Spencers -- and Rudolph Socktish, they all had canoes.

So they had no problem when they had Deerskin Dance, they had Boat Dance. They all had canoes. Well, that's the way they used to travel -- in canoes. I know when I was small, they had a Jump Dance down at Weitchpec. They didn't have any roads down to Weitchpec, so we went down in a canoe.

And this Davis outfit, that was our neighbors, they went down, too. They took their family. So we all went down in canoes. We camped down there, halfway down to Weitchpec, next day. We went on down to Weitchpec. So we crossed the Klamath River, pulled our canoe out, and camped right there. And took in the Jump Dance. We went there and took it in.

And coming back we would camp along. They had to pull our boat up. And there were riffles. So we would camp along the river. Oh, us kids, we would have a good time. We would camp along. We took our time.

In the summertime, we didn't need a tent. We just slept on blankets.
And the Klamath Indians, that's the way they would come up to Hoopa. They would come up in canoes. They would pull their boats up, and that's the way they used to come.

In the winter, they didn't travel much. Everybody stayed home. And in the Wintertime, they had a Kick Dance. That's a farewell party, or, if somebody comes back, there will be Kick Dance, and they have big eats. Or, when somebody is going to leave, they make medicine, and they have a Kick Dance.

I know they had one across the river where Milo used to stay over there, when Calvin and Glen Carpenter were drafted into WWII. So they made medicine for them. They had a Kick Dance.

All night and in the morning they danced. And Glen and Calvin stood in the middle. They had woodpecker rolls on. So they had a big dance for them because they were leaving, so they don't get hurt over there. And they both came back.
There's a way the mountains are supposed to be, the hills, everything. Now they are tearing the mountain down, coming into the Valley. There's a story about that, the eagles who live up there don't like them disturbing the mountain, something bad may happen. I'm afraid of that down there. I don't go that way, I haven't been down to Willow Creek in a long time.

That place has an Indian name where that campground is today. The Forest Service claims it. They say it's theirs. It's got an Indian name, that, place. They call it Κ+ΝΟΝΟΝΟΟΟ+ΚΩΝ. That road goes over the hill above the highway and comes out at Knight's. That's the way our people used to travel. There was a trail that went down to Sugar Bowl in those days. It takes off on the main road. It goes down the hill.

We walked that road a good many miles. We walked to Sugar Bowl. We gardened, we picked fruit. We walked back, everyday. There used to be a log cabin up on top.

A fellow used to live there. We used to pass by there. We would go down over the hill, and work there in the garden. We walked down early in the morning, worked all day, and walked back in the evening. We'd go again in the morning, and work again, all day.

We were tough girls. We put in a lot of mileage. Barefooted, we walked. We packed our shoes. Sometimes we would put them on. We got tired walking barefooted so we put our shoes on.
My sister, and my aunt, and me. Three of us. I wasn't very old when I used to walk that far. I was quite young: ten, eleven years old. That's all. I had my walk.

We used to walk clear up there, and pick up willow sticks up there below Solahides. You know, Mrs. Solahides? You know that lady who lives against the bank up there, on the hill? Right down in there we used to pick sticks. Willow sticks.

Today people can't walk. They have to have a car for anything. They say, "I can't go, I have to have a car." I wish they were there in my day. I've done my walking.

I've done my work. I had my family. I worked for my family. I worked for other people. I babysat for other people, I washed clothes for other people, I served for other people. Mend clothes for them. I did everything.

Now they tell me? You better do this. I can't do it. I tell them, "What's the matter? When are you going to learn to do that? You've got to learn. There is not always going to be somebody around you. I don't know about these young people."