

Bob: Do you suppose, Jess, the reason each family had his dog was to warn of approaching strangers?

Jess: Yeah--approaching intruders. There's two or three reasons. Now like if I was a young man and just got married and had a tipi of my own and I belonged to these dance lodges, you know, like Gourd Gang or Tomahawks and they would have a dance and my wife would have to stay by herself, well, for that reason, I'd have a dog. Maybe my folks camped right by them, and when that dog barked, that means that somebody's intruding around my premises. My father and my mother would come out there and see what's going on. They kept dogs to give notice that somebody was intruding around there. Same way with the old folks in camps. They had a lot of meat on the ground that they just covered up with a hide or canvas, and some dogs might come running up or somebody might want to steal, and their dogs always kept the place on the watch. That's the reason they kept dogs. Or a saddle.

(Did they keep their dogs in tipis?)

Jess: Oh yeah. They kept dogs--they had places for them.

Bob: Many of the places I go now, they've got a little hole about like that at the door, and when you knock on the door they look through there and you can't see them. If they don't want to talk to you, you just as well go away. Then in other places I knock on the door to see about the kids, I don't look at the door--I look at the window shades. If they pull the shade up--if they want to talk to you they'll come and answer the door. If they don't, you might just knock the door down, but they won't come.

(Do they have dogs now?)

Bob: Oh, there's two families that have got little old dogs--two in Watonga. The Long family up there has got a little old dog--they've got a fenced yard. And I go to the gate and I'm not going inside that place. I stay out there and let the dog bark at me till the mother comes to the door. Then down at Old Lady Whitebird's--she's got a little one-eyed dog down there I keep my eye on--I just don't like to be bitten.