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# But Life Is Changing Volume One



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Ojibway and Cree Cultural Centre



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But Life Is Changing  
Volume One









## Preface

The five stories that follow were told in Cree by the elders of the O mushkegowuk area. These stories, gathered from 1977 to 1993, were taken from a collection of audio tapes housed at the Ojibway and Cree Cultural Centre in Timmins, Ontario. The recording of these tapes took place under different conditions and purposes that ranged from an informal interview situation for personal information to a formal interview setting for issues on the environment. These tapes were transcribed from the original Cree into syllabics and later translated into English by Anastasia Weesk and J.P. Jacasum. The text was edited by Anastasia Weesk (Cree) and Jim Hollander (English) to make it readable, while attempting to preserve the feeling and meaning of the original spoken Cree.

The Cree elders told two types of stories: (1) *aataloobkaana* or sacred stories about legendary, supernatural, and mythological events; and (2) *tipaachimoowina* or stories about local history and real or apparently real events. All the stories in this collection are categorized as *tipaachimoowina*. These stories provide accounts of personal experiences and remembrances of the elders. They deal with a lifestyle and a world view that are vastly different from that of today. Although there is no traditional term for these stories, they could be called *kaakaskimeewaawina* or advice texts. Advice from the Cree elders is something that we can all use nowadays.

These texts were gathered to provide authentic reading material for Cree speakers in their own language, to supply a primary source of Cree word and sentence structures, to provide examples of Cree literature for English speakers, and to portray a changing Cree way of life.





## Acknowledgements

The editors of this document would like to acknowledge the following people and organizations for their contributions to this undertaking:

Bert Morrison for his initial project conceptualization

Hannah Sutherland for her encouragement and promotion

Canada Council for their partial funding of this project

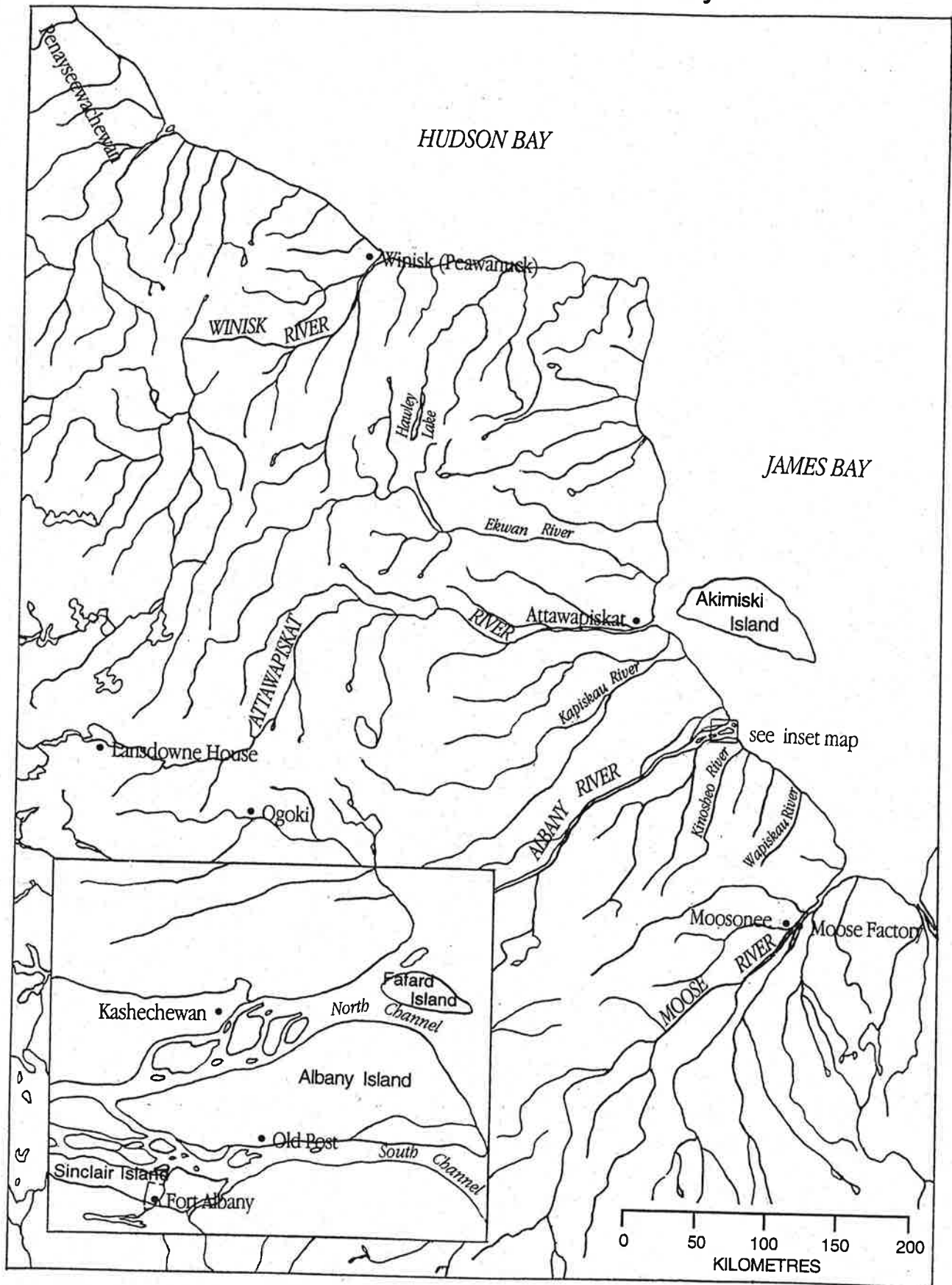
Kim Piche for her secretarial services

Kathy Perreault for her research

National Archives of Canada and Father Lavoie, OMI for their photographs



# Traditional Omushkegowuk (Cree) Territory





1 Δ^Λ ∇ ▷^PσP^, <S'  
▷ΠP<σ° PΠ .<σΔ9^' τ^C  
σa

Pc<' .4cL' ▷Π<P^Δ'

▷<^d.ΔΛP^ σP^Ca d.C^, S^dS' σ^JΓCa σP ∇ Λ>ab^ b  
σC.ΔP^x 9ΠP.<ΔP^ P ▷P ▷ΛP^x Γ.b^ b ▷P^Cσ.<^ ▷L  
L^PaΔb^, ΛC^Vd^ ΔP C^S^9<^x <ΔaVc^ 4Ca^ ΔP^σbP^σ.< b  
P .ΔPL^x S^ <.<P^S P <L.∇.<^x <.<P^U σP^Ca ΔC^S^σ.<  
▷P^PL^x V^Ldσ.< Lb .Δa ▷Jb<a\_x .<4^ τΓCa τ▷ Λ>a  
<^Λ^ b ▷P σP^P^x P >σ ΛLΠP^σ.< ▷σP^Δ.b Γ.b^ ∇  
<.<P^S^σ.<^x <LΓ∇^σ.9.< Lb P b\_a.∇σΓd^ .<4^ σ^J^S'  
Λ>a\_x

<ΛP^ σ^bΠ<J^P σΛLΠP^Δ^x 9c<' .4cL' P^ΠσbP^x <^<σ ∇dJ^C  
.∇P^L^x 9ΠP.<ΔP^ P ▷P σC.ΔP^x .<4^ V^L^ Γa <C^C^ b  
ΔC^J^Λ>τP^L^ b σΛ^ P^b.Δ^x <S^ Lb ΔC<σ^ <LΓ∇^σ.9.<^ ▷C\_x ∇dCσ  
Lb b ΔP b\_a.∇σΓb.Δ^x P\_σ.∇^ Lb P ΔC^ <^C\_x P <Π Γ^S^PΠ^ <^C  
∇ ΔC^L^x ∇ <Π ΠΛ C^J Λ>τP^L^ PΠ <Π Δ^d\_σ.Δ^L^ P <Π Δ^d\_σ.Δ^  
τ^C σa\_x J\_a .Δa C.V PΠ Δ^d\_σ.Δ^L^, ΓP.∇ 9.b^ PΠ Δ^d\_σ.Δ^L^ b  
Δ.σL^x Δσσ.<Δ.<P^PaΔba, Δσσ.<Δ^J.<P^PaΔba Λd P^P^P\_σ<L^P^C^x  
<P^C^P^Δa Lb <ΛP^x J\_a P^P .Δa .∇Γ^σΠδ^S^J^Δ^x ∇ Λ^P Π <C.Δa  
Λd P^P^P^P\_σ<L^P^x J\_a .Δa 9.b^ C.V PΠ ▷P P^P\_σ<L^P^L^x ∇  
τ▷S^Λ>τP^L^ Lb .<4^ b .<Δa.Δ^L^x σΓ^ .ΔP^S\_a, σΓ^ ▷^U^H, ∇.<Δd  
<σP b P b\_a.∇σΓP^x

∇ ▷.bσ Lb ∇ J^PbUP<^ .∇^b^x 9b^ L\_a ΓP.∇ <.<∇σb^ ΔJ^U<^ σPΓ^



P'P'<LJ'<ΔbΓd' Γ·b' 'CΛC' <σLx 'CΛC' ∇ P'P'<Lr' L'P'aΔba<sub>x</sub>  
 9CC·Δ' Λd<sub>x</sub> P V'ld° Lb ņΛa·∇ σ'U'x <C·Δa dCP' L' P ΔC·<L'x L'4°  
 Lb ·Δa ņΛa·∇ σ'U'x' <C·Δ' Λd Δ'P'x dCP' L' <∇σba P Δb·Δ·<L'  
 σ·s P ·Δ·Δd<' <C·Δ'x Δ'b' b P ·Δ·Δ', P σ'ņ·<d<', Δ'·9° V'z';  
 σ' aV·<L'x σaa' Lb ·Δa 'P J'P σ'fa' ņΛa·∇ ∇ ·Δ'P·9P'J'z'x  
 ΔC<' Lb σ'c ·Δa <'C <a σ'U'x 'P V'P a'f<Δb·Δ' σ'c σaa<sub>x</sub>  
 dC·Δ' <L' P σ>° ∇ Δ·Cσ·<L'x Δ'Λ ∇ ΔJ'U'z' <d'P·ΔbΓd',  
 'P·<L'° Λd ∇ Γ'J' <L' ∇ PσΛ'ba·∇'x J'a 'J'P ·<L'° ·Δa ·Γ'P ∇  
 <ņ σΛ'x 'ņCC' Lb <'C ·Γ'P P'P'<LJ'<ΔbΓd'x

∇d Lb b ·Δ <ņ ΔC'P'J'z'<', <σP <·<L'z' b <σJ'LP', <Pσ' b  
 ΔUσCd'P' ∇ <L'ΓΔ'P', J'a 'P'9σU' C'U ∇ Δ'P ΛLņP·<·9 Δd  
 <·<L'z' <L'x Cσ Λd σ'c 9 <ņ Δņ·<·9 σb' ΔU9<sub>x</sub> J'a ·Δa L'°d'  
 b P V'P Δņ'z' bC Δņ·<' <C ΛLņP·C·∇x Λ'J'J' L'a Δņ ∇b b  
 Γ'aa·bσσ' 9·bσ° bC J'C·L' b ΔUσCd'P'x

Δ'Λ ∇ <ņ Δ'PσP'z', <L' 'Cņ Δ'<σ' P'P' <ņ <<J'U'z'x <L' ∇  
 ņΛ b'P'C'z' P'P' <<J'U'z'x <L' P'J'Cσ·<' V'z'·b ∇ P'P'ņ<L'x σ'c σaa  
 P'P' ·Δ'P·Δ·∇'z' ∇ P'J'Cσ·<'x s'd' J'a ∇'·b 9·b' 'J'U'x σ J'P  
 ·Δ'P·Δ·∇·<' Λd<sub>x</sub> σ J'P ΔC<' Λd ΔC<a'· <ņ·L' ∇ ·ΔCΛ'P'LP'x ∇  
 LΓ'aaCJ'·<P' <ņ·L' ΔC<a'·b<sub>x</sub> ∇ Δ'·bσ ∇ Δa<ņP'z'x σ<J'·ΔCaa'  
 Λd σC'z'σaa<sub>x</sub> ∇ Δ'·bσ L'a Lb <C·Δa J'CL' <∇σb' ∇ ·<σΔ9' ∇  
 ·Δ'P'<', Γ'ņ·b ∇ L'σb<L'x 9·b' Δ'z' Λd b Δa<C' ∇ ·<σΔbσ·<',  
 P'°Cda' σ'c Λd L'·b'J'z'x ∇·<d <σΔ' <P'C'z'x ∇ <ņ Δ'·ņΛaL·<' L'a  
 ∇ ·<σΔ9' <∇σb'x s'd' J'a σ·<σΔb' ∇'·b<sub>x</sub> σ J'P ba·<<b' Λd ∇  
 J'P'bU' ∇ ·<σΔbσ·<'x





ΛJCσ·Δ' ∇ ΠΛ'β' UΛα' ∇ P'9σ'βU' ∇ ΔΠ ΔΔσ'α·β' b  
ΔJCσ·Δ'x Γσ<σ° Lb ΔσL ∇ J'βU' ·Δ<' ∇ ·Δσ'βσ·Δ' ∇  
PP'β<β'x Ja CΛ'δ' ∇ ·<'C·Δ PJCσ·Δ'x ∇ ·<'C·Δ PJCσ·Δ' ·Δα  
Ja 9·β' P J'βU'x Ja Lb εδ' rP ΔPU<' Δλ·Δ' J'β' ΔσL b  
Δ·Uλ'x εδ' Lb ·∇Cσ<' α·Δ' 9·β' ·εΛ'x Δσ' ·Δα ΔPU° Δλ·Δ',  
εδ' Lb Γ'δ' ΔσL' 9·β'x ∇ Δ·βσ Vλ·β' ∇ Δ'<σ' ·Γ'x Ja ·Δ4'  
Δσ'α<C'x

Δσ' Lb σ'C ΔL b ΛLΠ'ασ·Δ', ·∇Γ'Πδσ·Δ' La VC·Δ·Δ' Δ'β° ∇  
ΔλΓ'x ∇ ΔΠ ββ·Δσ'σ' ∇ ΔUσCP' Δ·Δλσ'ε, b L'α·Δ' ΔΠx ΔσP  
ΔΠ b σ<Δ' Δ·Δλσ'ε' ΔΓ'·β', J'·β', δCPλ' Δ·Δλσ'ε' b σ<Δ'x  
ΔσL Lb ·∇Γ' ΔP', ∇β Λδ ∇ L'α'α'σ' ΔL'α'Δβσ·Δ' b ·ΔσΔ9σ'<'  
Δ·∇σβα'x εδ' Δσ' ∇ ΔΠ ασ'<σ'x ∇ Δ·βσ Lb ·∇Γ' ΔΠ αLU'β'  
·∇Γ' ΔUσCP' ΔσP b ααβ'α' Δ·Δλσ'εx ∇ ΔΠ ασ'<σ' ΔσP b  
·ΔσΔ9·Δ'<'x 9β' Ja Δ·∇σβ' ·ΔσΔ9° σαα' ΔC b Δσ' ΔCλ'x ∇  
ΔΠ P'β<Δ' Δ' Ja P ΔΠ P'β·∇σC·L' ΔσL ∇ JC'P'x V'P' ·∇β ∇  
ΔΠ ΔσL' 9·β'x Ja P J'βU'° PP' Π<ΔβU' 9·β' PP' ΔΠ PJCσ·Δ' ·∇β  
Γ'CA ∇ Δ'<σ'x

Ja Lb rP ΔC ·Δα J'β' P'9σU' Γ'β·C ·Δα PP' <σ' ΔΔΠλ'x σ'ε  
Λδ J'PP'9σU' ∇ <σ' ΔΔΠλ' Δσδ' ΔσL b V'P' JC'λ'x ΓCσ ΔΠ ∇  
<σ'σ'λ' 9β' ∇ σΛλ' ∇ ΔUσCL'x ∇'β Lb J'β ΔΠ Π<P'J' σ'C  
ΔσLx

9β Lb P Δ'<σ° PP' ΔΠ ·Δ·Δλ'x ·Δ4' σ'βCα σλα' ∇ ΔCJΛ>σ'λ'  
b ·Δ·Δλ'x ∇ Δ·βσ Lb Vλ·β' b JC'λ' Δ'Λ b ·Δ·Δλ'x b JC'λ'<' Λδ



Ja <C •Δa Γa •Δ4' 30P Δ0'x P <00 >00' Γa σP b ΔJ  
ΔC>P< <σLx Ja Lb C•Δ' 30P 0<0'J' <σL ∇ P <Δ00' Δ'Λ b  
CdJα' σP'x

V>b Γa 300<0'J', b Δ'•b •Δ•Δ> •Δa <σLx Ja σ•<σΔbC' <σL  
•Δax ΓCσ 3PΛdσbC' V>b <σ0'9 a•Δ'x •Δ4' ΓCJ Λ> <σL b  
Δ•U>'. 3C∇C' ∇ Γa'•bΓ'x •Δ<' b Δ'•b LΛd' Λd' •Γ0'x σσaC0'0' ∇  
'C<L'x σσ'J9C' V>' <σL 0'0'x σ'JbJ<σ' σ'0' <σP dC0'>'.  
L'•bΓ•Δ' Δ5 Lb ∇ 'C<L'x b bP'P' Lα L'•bΓ' ΔJα•b'x b9 σ'•C P  
<00 σ<a' •<LJ' <σL Δ00' b Δ•U>'. <σL Lb L0' ∇ 0Λ'•b' ∇  
σ<L' <σ> σ •Δ P'9σUC' •Δ4' P0 Δ00'x 3P <•ΔJ' <σL ∇  
0Λ'•b'x σΛ' <•ΔUC' <σL ∇ 0Λ'•b'x Γa >Pα' ∇ P0<L'x <σ>  
Δ'<d0' b >P>'. 3PdC•Δa' Lb 9b' ∇ <00 <ΛC0'0'x ∇ D•bσ Lb ∇  
ΔJα•b' PΛ' ∇ 'C<L', ∇ P'P'•b' <P0 D0 <•b' ∇ P'P' ∇ Δ'ΛJ'  
L'•bΓ'x bα9 ΓCJ ΓP', σa>' ΓP' ∇ Δ'Λ0'0'x <0'•σ J'Ca ΓP' ∇  
Δ'Λ0' Δ'ΛP'x CΛ'd' ∇ P P><σd<σ ∇ ΔJα•b' PΛ'x

b Δ'•b dC•∇>' Lb ∇ P0<σ>', Ja •Δa' 30P P0<σa'x •Δ4' ΓCJ  
0<Δb' P Δ'<σa'x •Δ4' Lb V>d 0<Δb' Δ'ΛPαdP<σ' DCa' ∇  
V0' Λ'<σ0' <σP b •Δ0'•ΔP0'x Ja Lb σa Λ'<σ•CC' Λ•ΔΛ'x  
σΓJσ' <P' σ'0'J'x 9CC•Δ' PΛ0'<σ' Λ•ΔΛ'x σ•Δ<L' Lb L'•bΓ' ∇  
Δ'ΛJ'x Ja •Δ4' P ΔJ 4'•b∇a' ∇ d'CP' L'•bΓ'x ∇ D•bσ Λd  
C•Δ' ∇ ΔJ <dJ>', ∇ LΛd' C•Δ' a•Δ' 7•b' ∇ ΛC<•Δ0'•bσ•Δ' Λ0'  
0'0'x σa Lb σaαb0'0' 0'0' P0 •b>'•b>U'x σL9' P LΛda'x •Γ0' Lb  
∇ ΔC>' L•Δ' b ΔJ Λ'dP'•b' b V0'•Δ' ∇ b'Λ<σ' L'•bΓ'x b •Δ<L'  
L'•bΓ' •Γ0' D0 ∇ V0' ΔJ <P<σ'x •b'0' Λd σaCdP', <σ>



σ·ΔC>Lbσαα'x ∇dCσ Lb b ΔP ΔΠσb·ΔL' rL'x P <Π αCbΓD>b·Δα' Lb ∇ ΔJ Γ·αJ' ∇ b<σ·Δ'x P JP b<U·ΔΛσb·Δα' Λd'x ∇ Δ·bσ b <Π ΔJ d'ΛL' ∇ 'C·Δ dC·∇L'x P <Π >P·Δ' ·Δα dCP'L' ∇ 'C·Δ ΔCΛP' b P ΔJ ·bCΛ'bL'x ρL9' Lb P ΔCΛP·Δ'x Ja εd' 9·bσ° ΔP ·<C·L'x ∇ Δ·bσ b ΔJα·ΔL' V'L·b <σL ∇ PΛdσ9L' rL' ∇ ρPCL'x

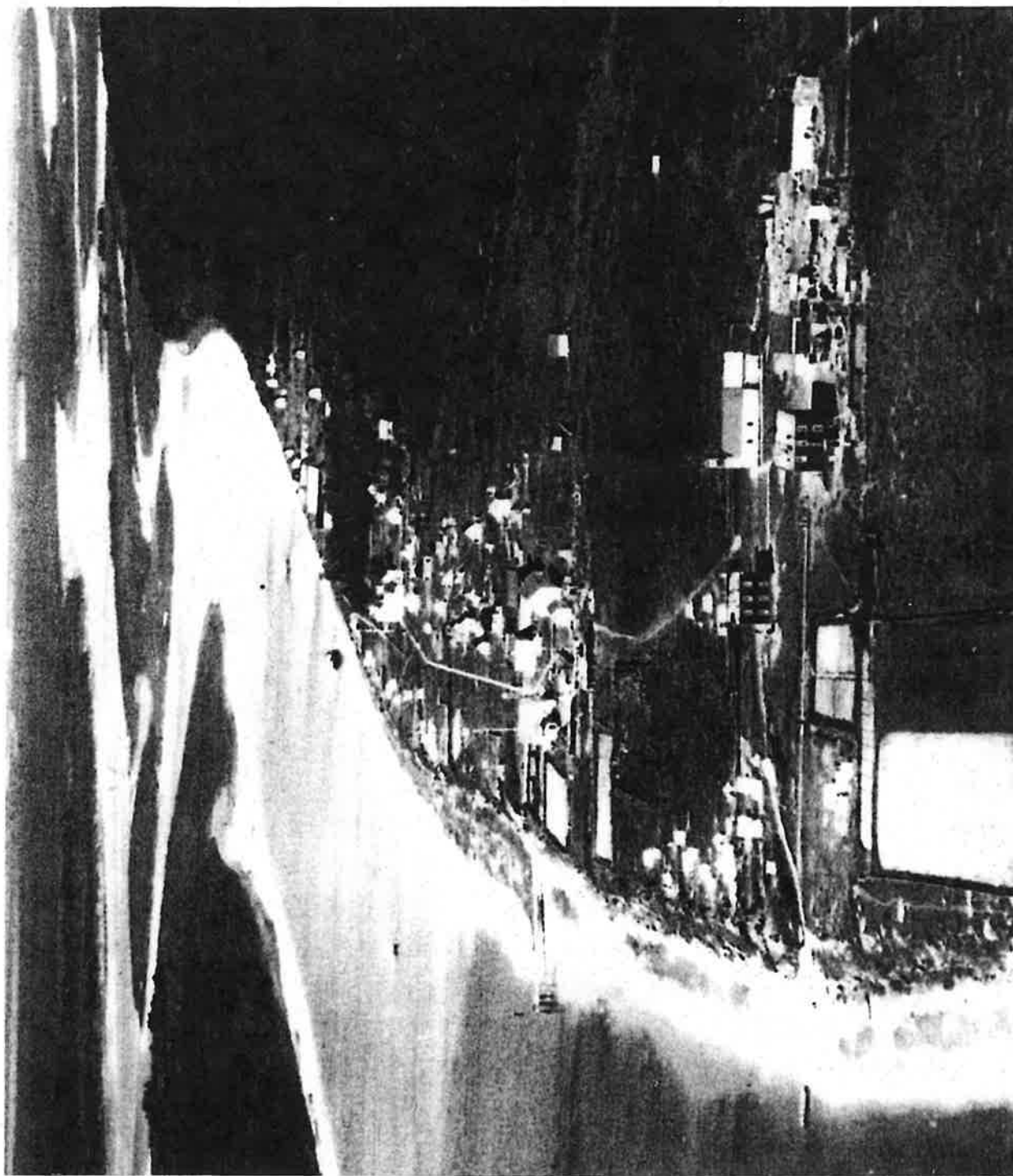
Γα Lb V'L·b ∇ Δ·bσ ·ΓP V'L·b' b ΔΠL' 9b' ∇ P σJ·<αrΔdL' σΛ'x ΓCJ Λ>' ·<4' <·ΔP U <σL ·Δαx ∇ ΓP'·b' ∇ <Π <·bΠ' ∇ ·<σΔ9L'> 9·<'·b' b ΔPbU' PΛ'x Δ'U<σ Lb σ·<σΔbσαα <σL ∇ <Π <·bΠ'x ∇d Lb <ε'L' ·<4' σρ ΠΛ'·b° ∇ P ·<·∇α·bΠ' PΛ', <ε'L' 'PJCα' ∇ ·Δ αP ·<σΔbσL'x ∇ <4Uα·b' b ΔJU'L' Δσd' P <Π PJCα'x ·<4' Lb V'L·b Pσ·bσ'·b' P ΛJCα' ·<σΔbα V'P' ∇ P <Π bα·<<CL' ∇ LCb'dL'x <bΓ' Lb <'U<' σ·<σΔb'x Ja Lb bα9 'CΔUσU' ∇b P' <·bΠ'x Ja ΓP·<Δ> <'C'x ∇ J'·C'·C'·d·∇' <'C b <ΔCΠ' Lα Λd ΔJα·b'x ·<ΛP'·b'x 9CC·Δ' Λd b εsd<σ' L'·bΓ'x <'Λ' Λd ·C·ΔJα'x P' <<bΠ' ∇Pbσ Lb <σL bJCL'x σρ ε'·9' ΓP' Δ'·ΛCΠ'x Ja bα9 PJU' P' <·bP<σD'L'x <<P'·L'·bΓ' α'·Λ'x Ja bα9 <L'·9·∇σCdP' ∇ ·Δ b·9 ΓPΓ'L' <'C ΔP L'·bΓ'x ∇ Δ·bσ Λd <C ∇ ΔJ U·<C' σ·ΔJ·<b'x <σε Lb VραdP'x CbL'> Lb ∇ P'P'L'x ∇ σΛ·<' Lb σΛP'·bb' ·∇P P ΓP<σL' L'·bΓ'x ∇ <·b·bP<σ' ΛP'·bb'x VP α<'d<σD'° σ·ΔJ·<b' V'P' ∇ VP ΔJ'P'α' ΔPbΔb'x ∇dCσ Lb b P ΔP <·bJ'ΛJ'x ∇ Δ·bσ ∇ <Π ΔJ d'Λ<C'L' ∇ 'C·Δ dC·∇L' ρP'x α'<Cb' Lb ·<·Δ'x <·b'U'L'° <'U b ΔJ d'ΛL'x ∇dUσ Lb b ΔJ <PαP'L'x ∇ Δ·bσ Γα b <ΔΠL'> V'L·b Γα ∇ ·<σΔ9L'x <C σααbP'C' ∇ ΔUσCL' PΛ' <ρ·∇σd' 9·b'x











Old Post in the 1940s

# 1      When I became a youth, it was time for me to go trapping.

—told by Gilbert Solomon

Date of Birth: July 26, 1932		
Place of Birth: Old Post		
Present Address: Fort Albany		
Name of Spouse: Annabella		Maiden Name: Sutherland
Number of Children: 9	Grandchildren: 20+	Great-grandchildren: 1
Number of Years Married: 44		
Other Information:		
Gilbert's parents died when he was very young. He stayed with the Grey Nuns in the school at Fort Albany for 13 years.		

I will talk a little bit about my life. My name is Gilbert Solomon. I live here in Fort Albany. I was raised at Old Post. My mother died when I was about one and half years old. The Grey Nuns of the Cross were already here then. That is where I stayed. I lived there for a long time. That is where I grew up. I started school when I was old enough to go to there. I was not taught much, as far as education was concerned that is. My education consisted of syllabic writing and some numbers. I was not taught the English language that much. I did learn the alphabet, but my education was very limited. I was about 14 years old when I left the school. I went to live with my half brother.

In those days, almost everybody left to go and live in the bush. I did the same. When the people who adopted me left for the bush, I went with them. I was not able to do anything yet. They took me with them because they had adopted me. Every year we would spend the winter in the bush only to return in early spring. For about three months in the summer we stayed in the community. During that time, I did not do very much but I did help occasionally. I could not do too much because I was still too young.

People prayed often, every morning and every evening. Prayers were never forgotten. People would also get up very early so they could leave in the early dawn. They would

get ready while it was still dark. Because of the praying, children hardly misbehaved. Unlike the children of the past, these days, children are like rocks. When one speaks to a rock, the rock just sits there. Today's children are like that when one speaks to them. Although I thought my life was unfortunate because I was not raised by my parents, I always listened when advice was given.

I forgot to mention this earlier. I was about ten years old when my father died. I was still too young to know that I was allowed to cry. Because I did not live with him and saw him occasionally, I did not think of him as my father. Maybe that is the reason I did not mourn for him. We were in the classroom when we were told unexpectedly. I had one brother, but there were other half brothers. My father married twice. He had three children with his first wife, one girl and two boys. My brother was also in the school. When I got to the hospital, he had already passed away. I did not see him die.

The children I talked about earlier, the ones who are like rocks, I do not know the kind of life these children are living. What will happen to them in the future? I am sure they will not be able to live as we did. Their behaviour will probably lead them to the wrong path.

When I became a youth, it was time for me to go trapping. I was old enough to go trapping. One morning, I left with the trapping party. I did not do anything yet except help. I helped with the sled. I would hitch up the sled to steer the dogs on the path. That was my job. We would haul all of our stuff ourselves. I would help the trapper by cutting wood or getting whatever was required in setting a trap such as branches or dried grass. I handed these things to the trapper. I was not trapping animals yet. I just observed setting traps.

When it was time for me to trap, I went with the elder who brought me up. I had already learned how to set a trap. Now it was time I set my own traps. He gave me advice on trapping. I already knew that trappers left early in the morning.

The elder told me that when the days are short during late autumn I should leave early

in the morning. He said that was the only way I could get things done. He told me to try reaching my destination by early dawn; so I would leave two hours before dawn. I covered a great distance in those two hours, at least ten miles. By the time I reached my destination, it was already morning and the sun was almost over the horizon. On my way back, I would set my traps. By the time I arrived at home, it was dark. Setting traps was time consuming because of stopping so many times. Sometimes it was difficult to find the perfect area to set a trap. That is what I learned about setting a trap.

We hardly went hungry during the entire time we were in the bush. We always managed to have some food. It is said that long ago people starved to death.

I did what I was taught, to leave early if I wanted things done, if I wanted to do some trapping. I did not handle any traps during dark, only during the day. There was nothing wrong in walking during the night if you know the area. It is best to leave early. When one leaves too late, there is not enough time to do anything. The price of pelts was low but supplies at the store were cheap. Today, the price of pelts is high, but the supplies are expensive. One just breaks even.

Nowadays, I hear non-Natives say that the numbers of the animals are diminishing. They kept records of the people who killed beavers, moose, and other animals. The reason for the decline is that fewer people are trapping animals. That is why the record keepers think that animals are in decline, but it is the number of the trappers that are in decline. There are not many in our community who are still trapping. Because of their advanced age, they can no longer trap. Besides, everything is too expensive. One cannot afford the required equipment.

I do not remember being in danger often. Twice for certain, I remember being in danger during the whole time I was trapping. I mean, when I thought I was going to perish. I will talk about that later.

The time came for me to be married. I was about 25 years old when I got married. I did the same as before. When it was time to leave for trapping, I left. For 15 years, I went to

the bush, but now I no longer trap. It has been about ten years since the last time I trapped. I still go to the bush occasionally. I am getting too old to do the things I did.

I remember once, before I was married, that I had a funny experience. I did not see the thing that scared me. I was halfway home from my trapping during late spring. I had left early that morning when dawn broke. It was not a common practice to leave early when it is dangerous to do so, especially during the spring thaw. One leaves in the day light when one can see the path clearly.

It was noon when I decided to make a fire. There were trees where I had stopped. It was the first dry spot I saw after walking in a swampy area. My pot for tea was not boiling yet when I suddenly had this eerie feeling. Suddenly, I heard geese making their warning call, the kind they make when they see someone. They sounded very close, just past the trees. All of a sudden, they flew away. I knew then that they had seen something. I did not even have a drink. I dumped my pot of tea. I threw my lunch in the bag and took off. There was still much snow in the bush. I knew there was a lake where I was going. I barely touched the ground jumping over logs. I almost forgot my gun in the process. There was still ice on the lake so I ran across the lake. Once I was on the other side of the lake I looked behind me. I did not see the thing that scared me off. That is what happened. After that incident I was never afraid. I continued on my way home. When I arrived at home, I did not tell anyone what happened.

There was another time I was in a dangerous situation. I was married then. I was not doing any trapping that time. About ten years ago, we were going up the river right after the break-up. We were using two canoes, three men in each canoe. There were high icebergs on both sides of the river. We must have camped three times before the accident. At the last camp I had a premonition. I dreamt that I was under water. When I surfaced, it was already dawn. The next day, we left again when the sun was high. Towards noon we went ashore to make a fire. The icebergs on both banks were very high, maybe between 12 to 20 feet (3.6 to 6 m) high. It looked as if the river was blocked.

After we made a fire, we travelled far. We must have gone ten miles (16 km). The others who were travelling with us, were maybe one mile (1.6) behind us. I was not in control of the motor. I was lying down in the bow. Suddenly the motor stopped. I saw big piles of icebergs. We could not land the canoe anywhere because we were afraid of the ice. We decided to remain on the river while we refueled as we were floating with the current. I made sure the canoe went straight. We floated down the river for a while. While we were floating where the ice was the highest, I heard the ice crack. I saw the ice fall towards us. I started to yell to my companions, "We are going to die." In an instant, the ice fell and our canoe went up into the air. Fortunately, it did not hit the canoe. When the ice hit the water, it fell so hard that it upset our canoe. I had no choice, but to jump off the canoe.

We were all wearing hip waders. We had heavy clothing on. It was still cold in late spring. The canoe had capsized. Just like my dream, I went under the water. I was the first one to surface. I did not see my friends when I surfaced. The one who was driving the motor was the first one who surfaced near the canoe. He climbed on the capsized canoe. He was the first to get out of the water. I saw my other friend towards the shore. He looked as if he were trying to swim to the shore. I was far from the canoe. I was getting heavy because my clothes were soaked right through. I had a hard time to reach the canoe because it was floating down the river too fast. I was going under and started to swallow water. I had a hard time to keep myself afloat.

Two more minutes and my heavy clothes would drag me under. When I looked back, the one who was swimming towards the shore had almost reached the willows. He looked like he trying to swim ashore. When I looked back again, after I had grabbed hold of the canoe, I did not see him any longer. His heavy soaked clothes must have dragged him under. His clothes must have been too heavy for him. He disappeared. We never saw him after that. We climbed on top of the capsized canoe.

About ten minutes after the canoe capsized our fellow canoeists came into sight. They took us in their canoe and dropped us off at a suitable place along the shore. We went up the bank to make a fire so we could dry ourselves.

The others went back to where our canoe was capsized to have a look around. They were gone for a while, but they did not see anything.

There was another time where I almost perished in the water. This was about ten years ago. I was trapping at Kapiskau River one late fall just before the freeze-up. My traps were already set just before the freeze-up. We left to check our traps two days after the river froze. We left in the early dawn, early enough to see where we were going. I walked about one hour, on the ice, checking my traps along the way. I had a trap across the river. It never occurred to me that the river would not be completely frozen. There was no current. The wind had blown the snow off the ice and the bare ice was white. All of a sudden, the ice started to crack and I went through the ice. The ice was very thin. I could not hang on to anything because the ice was so thin and very smooth. I started to yell at my friend for help. It was a good thing that he was not that far away. It was very cold that morning. Because my coat was wet, it froze onto the ice preventing me from going under. My partner came running and crawled towards me extending his axe. That is how he pulled me to safety. We went ashore and made a fire to dry out.

It is amazing the way a person survives although he is in extreme danger. Nothing is going to kill him if it is not time for that person to die. If it is time for someone to die then that person dies whether he is in a serious accident or not. That is the way it is with life.

The time when we were capsized by the ice, we were on our way to a fishing camp in Calstock. We were looking for work before there was any work here.

I will talk about my trapping days and the equipment I used. At first we used dogs. That was the only thing used. A dog would pull the gear. Sometimes a person did not have a dog. Then he would haul his own gear during the winter. Sometimes that is what happened when someone did not have dogs. Later, airplanes arrived. Austin Airways was the one who flew around this area. This was the means of transportation for a person to transport supplies to his trapline. This was also the means of transportation if a man wanted to spend one month at his trapline without his children.

A very long time ago there were no beavers here, although there were beavers when I began trapping. About 30 years ago, beavers were being bred and brought in from Akimiski Island. Two beavers were placed in each crate and transported by canoe to the mainland. I suppose one was female and the other was male. People took beavers up the river so that they could breed. Killing beavers was not allowed for about ten years. When trapping was finally permitted, a person could only kill 10 beavers per year. Eventually, the number was increased to 30 beavers per year. When beavers were becoming very abundant, there was no limit on the number a person could kill. That is the way it is today.

Today, there is something else that is being used, a snowmobile. That is what a person used when he wanted to go to the bush. It is true that it seems easier. Although a snowmobile is easier to use, gasoline is expensive here where we live. Everything from the store is expensive. Sometimes it is almost pointless to do any trapping because everything is too expensive. Although the price of pelts is higher, the store is still expensive.

I will tell you a little story. We had nine children. We enrolled some of them in the school and tried to encourage them to remain in school. I am not be able to help them much longer because I am getting too old. That is why I encourage them to stay in school, because I know they would not be able to live the kind of life I lived. It is very hard trying to live off the land. A person who was not raised in the bush would not be able to do it. If a person does not kill any game for food, then he does not eat. But life is changing. That is why children are enrolled in the schools so that they can learn some skills to depend on in the future.

I am not that old. I am about 45 years of age. Unfortunately, I did not learn the English language. It was not in school when I was a child. I am talking about the English language. If there was education available like the kind we have today, I am sure I would speak like the Natives down south. I am talking about the elders there. They must have gone to school; otherwise, they would not have learned to speak English. It would have been the same with me. Everybody would have been able to speak in English. That is



why we are being taken advantage of because we cannot speak to those who speak in the English language. They must think the Natives do not like those who speak English, because the Natives do not respond when they are spoken to. The Natives simply do not understand.

There would be many books written if I were to tell you everything that happened in my life. I only talked about two things.

—recorded July, 1977











National Archives of Canada PA 59533

2      **One cannot tell how harsh life  
was long ago.**

—told by Agnes Nakogee

Date of Birth: October 9, 1896	
Place of Birth: Atawapiskat area	
Present Address: Heaven ....	
Name of Spouse: William	Maiden Name: Kataquapit
Number of Children: 9      Grandchildren: Many	Great-grandchildren: Some
Number of Years Married: 60	
Date of Death: July 7, 1983	Burial Place: Fort Albany
Other Information:	
Agnes was the daughter of John Kataquapit and Maggie Shakakamikashish. After her mother died, Agnes helped her father raise her four siblings. Joseph, the youngest, was six months old at that time. Agnes moved to Fort Albany after she got married. She delivered many babies for the people living there.	

Long ago, when one was hungry and food was scarce, any kind of food would do. One would even eat roasted goose wings once the feathers were burnt off.

When I was young, I saw many people who had nothing to eat. Once, two starving adults and two starving children were brought to the place where we were living. Two other children from that family had died earlier. This hungry family survived by eating small fish that surfaced on a little creek. The mother went to that creek every day to get these fish. She would put them in a small pail. Only the mother went to that creek because the father was unable to do this. The mother must have taken these fish from that creek for about one week. For a while, they survived by eating these small fish.

Eventually, this family cut up a rabbit skin blanket and roasted the pieces. Then they would eat these charred pieces. The two children who had passed away, died by choking on these pieces of rabbit skin blanket. To survive, they roasted and ate their rabbit skin blanket. That is what the mother told us when her family was brought to our

place that spring. Her children were buried in the ashes where they had made their fire. It was later that someone went to get their bodies and bring them to Attawapiskat, the closest community, for burial. This family stayed with us for about one week. They never stopped searching for food by the fire. They wanted to eat the pieces of food that were thrown into the fire. When we were running short of supplies, this starving family was taken to Attawapiskat. They were carried to that community in a canoe pulled on the ice. There was some water on the ice at this time.

There was not very much food in the store, only oatmeal, pork, and tea. If one looked for food in the store, these were the things that one would find. This hungry family who had nothing to eat was taken to the store so that they could be given something. I think it was very bad in the past because I too went without food. I was about 14 years old, and had only one parent then. My father and I were the only ones living when they brought these people to our place. They could hardly stand when they arrived. There was nothing to eat. The only things we had to eat, such as muskrats and white owls, came from traps. When my father went hunting, he went hunting for snow birds. That is what was eaten also. Sometimes about 30 birds were killed. We did not really have food then, Whiteman's food that is. The only time one could really eat was when the birds returned from the south.

One cannot tell how harsh life was long ago. Just like someone who gradually regains his strength after being sick for so long, that is how it was when one was hungry. That is how we felt when we lived through famine. We gradually regained our health once we started to eat the Whiteman's food. Everybody was in the same situation. Of those people who were starving, I knew five of them. Two children, two male adults, and one youth were the ones I saw. That was in Attawapiskat. Since I arrived here at Old Post, I knew at least three people from one family that starved. Such was the famine I saw. Anything that looked like food was consumed. The digested food of a rabbit was eaten. I have even seen the clotted blood sac of a catfish ingested. I have seen people eat anything that resembles food. I have seen seals and whales being consumed and many kinds of fish. The insides of fish were preserved to be eaten in the spring. I have seen some of these things I am talking about.



I have seen other survival methods people used during the cold season. I saw shelters made from moss, tree boughs, mud, and wood. People lived the entire winter in these shelters. Different shelters were made for the summer. I saw summer shelters covered with birch bark and grass sewn together. I have seen summer shelters made with three different coverings. People survived in the shelters I have mentioned. Shelters made with wood, and covered with mud, were very warm. It is not very warm when moss was used as a covering. I lived in these shelters. These were the shelters people lived in long ago. Also, I saw people make canoes using birch bark. There was no canvas then.

There was another shelter built. This shelter was constructed in a circular fashion. A fire was made inside this circle and that was where a woman stayed while a child was born. It was not allowed for a child to be born in the home. I did not see this kind of shelter. I just heard stories about it. This story is true because the child that was born and the woman who gave birth are both alive today. It was also said that when a woman gives birth, she was not permitted to eat the head of an animal. I did not see that, but it did happen. A woman was not allowed to eat a rabbit's head or the meat from a caribou's head. It was considered bad luck. If a woman ate the meat from the head of a certain animal, a jinx was placed on that animal, and no one would be able to kill it.

I have seen the shaking tent where animals and people were spoken to, but by then there was already Christianity. We were invited to a shaking tent ceremony, but we did not go. We did not believe in the bad spirit. The shaking tent was a survival tool. People would ask questions about what the future holds. Questions were asked such as whether there will be starvation or will people kill game. People knew what would happen from the shaking tent. It has been about 40 years since I heard about the shaking tent at Kapiskau.

I have also seen a wooden water vessel known as a raft. Mud was placed on the raft where a fire could be made. People would eat on the raft if they did not want to go ashore. They would go ashore at night if they wanted to sleep. If there was much mud on the raft, a good sized fire could be made.

Wood for the fire could also be carried on the raft. The raft would drift far if there were no rapids. Everything was carried on the raft including a small canoe.

I also saw a time where there was hardly any clothing. There were no shoes. People would walk barefooted in slushy water. Long ago, people lived like the animals in their nomadic search for food. There were no shoes, no socks, just leggings. There were no pants. People used to wear old worn coats. They were barefooted, but some people had footwear made from animal skins. People made shoes from raw moose hide. I have also seen footwear made from seal skin. These were worn in the summer and in the winter. I saw boots and mitts made from seal skin. I had seal skin footwear. Seal skin was like moose hide. The shoes made from raw moose hide were never dried. They were kept wet. These moose hide shoes were not allowed to get dry.

I have seen people save seal oil. Seal oil was kept to be used during the cold winter season. I saw seal meat preserved by smoking. I saw that done not too long ago at Kapiskau. I, too, used seal oil. Everybody used seal oil.

I will talk about work. The way work was like long ago. A woman did everything. She would kill rabbits, muskrats, and partridges and would even hunt for lynx when there was nothing to eat. While they were travelling, she might kill a lynx while it was climbing a tree. That is the way life was in the past. A woman could do everything including setting a gill net. She could snare a fox. There were many women who were skilled at snaring a fox. She could snare ptarmigans. A woman could snare a partridge from a tree using a snare, not a gun. The snare would be made from a root. Using the root as a snare, she could get a partridge sitting high in a tree. A person should be able to do anything in life.

Women also cleared land when a "town" was created. I, too, cleared some land, uprooting stumps. Men and women at Old Post used to pull out tree stumps just like tractors. They did not get paid very much for their work. They barely fed themselves. Now you can see how good the town is today.

It would be good for someone to work without charging for his services, as it was done in the past. A person should not charge for the work he does for his people and for God. Young people even the little ones should help the elders. They should not refuse requests for help from the elders. That would be the right thing to do. Long ago, it used to be said that when a person helped the elders without charge, the elders who were very pleased for the help would say, "May you live long for being good to me." That is what the elders used to say long ago. I have often seen people give whatever they killed to the elders without asking for payment. People would haul water or cut wood for them.

I can say this because I did those things I am talking about. I used to make an elder happy by offering my services for nothing. The elder, who was so pleased would say, "May you live one more day." Look at me now. I am very old. I am 81 years old. I have never forgotten what the elders said to me. The elders, who were so poor, used to weep when I went to see them. I would go and do work in their place. They would sit at home with the snow drifting in. I would shovel the snow, bring in plenty of wood, and cut wood for them. They would sit in the cold after their fire had died. They would cry when I entered because I would make the fire they could not make themselves. I have never forgotten how poor the elders were long ago.

I never had that experience. Everything is fine in my old age. I have a good home, I eat well, and I have decent clothing. The elders I talked about were hungry and cold. It was like living outside. There was snow in their homes, snow where they were lying, and snow on top of their bed coverings. There were no blankets then, just rabbit skin blankets.

Because I did those things, sometimes I think that is why I have lived so long. It would be very good for a child to hear what I am talking about. It would be very considerate for a young person, who is willing to listen, to treat the elders right.

—recorded July, 1977







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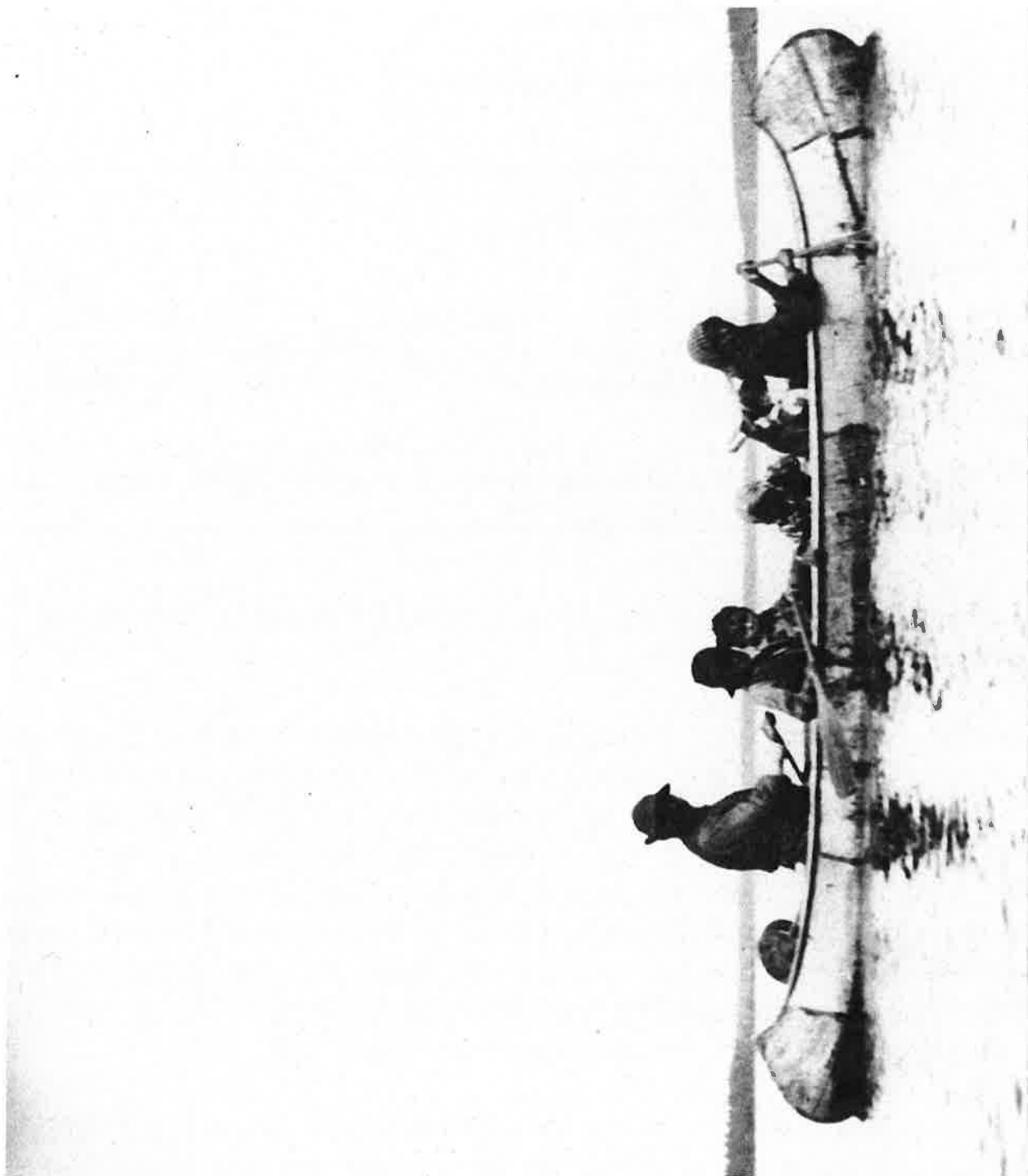












National Archives of Canada PA 59662

### 3        Some of them did not take the advice of the elders.

—told by Sarah Hookimawillillene

Date of Birth: January 1, 1876		
Place of Birth: Attawapiskat River		
Present Address: Heaven ....		
Name of Spouse: Andrew		Maiden Name: Okitogou
Number of Children: 6	Grandchildren: 8	Great-grandchildren: 18
Number of Years Married: 58	Her husband died on November 7, 1953	
Date of Death: January 28, 1980	Burial Place: Attawapiskat	
Other Information:		
Sarah was the daughter of Jacob and Sophie Okitogou. Five of her children died at an early age. Her one surviving daughter is Mary who married Albert Mattinas. Mary was 90 years old as of April 25, 1999.		

Sometimes I cannot say a word to anybody. When I look at people, I think of the past and I get so lonely.

I lost my children when they were very small while we were out in the bush. There were many people who died. There are about three people in that graveyard in the bush. A young man by the name of James Chamoosh died in the bush. That young Chamoosh was looked after by his brother. While his brother was looking after him Chamoosh died in the bush with those three people I talked about. They were young too and died in the bush. There were other young people that died not too far away from the trapping grounds where we were. In that year there were an awful lot of young people who were buried in that graveyard I'm talking about. This young Chamoosh I'm talking about, he was just a young fellow and he was staying with his brothers and sisters.

This Chamoosh, it was too bad that people asked him to go to the bush at this time, because it just happened that he died there. When we went over there, we saw those people sitting there by the river, making fire, and when we went over there,



that is when we heard that Chamoosh had died. When we got there, it was my brother-in-law that made that box.

Yes, a coffin, it was my brother-in-law who made that coffin for Chamoosh when he died. Also, my brother-in-law prepared everything and made it nice for Chamoosh.

There was a tent there, and that is where the body of Chamoosh was kept. My brother-in-law started to do everything possible to make it nice for Chamoosh. This young man, the one I'm talking about, used to be so kind and lovable. Everybody liked him, and he really liked me too. I used to give him sugar, flour, and lard. I used to provide him with those things to show that I was kind to him, because they did not have many things needed to live. Talking about that time, there were still no moose. They were so scarce in the bush. Sometimes we got a caribou. There were about five men. Out of these five men, there only two elders, not really elders as we would call them today, they were middle-aged and the rest were young fellows. There was a middle-aged woman that died there. That was Jerome Fireman's wife that I'm talking about. That woman, I will always remember her, was so kind. She was a really kind hearted person. Maybe it's because she received the right kind of education—to be prepared and to be kind. I know that she received a good education by the way she used to respect us and by the way she used to show her love to all the people.

Out of the 30 men that died in the bush, these two elders were very spiritual. They were respected in those days. The rest were young. The middle-aged lady was very spiritual although she was young.

Even all those young people who died, you could tell that they were educated in the right way, because they were kind and they showed their respect and love to all the people. This is why I say they were well educated, because they were very spiritual and they practiced that spirituality.

This middle-aged lady, the one I'm talking about, died in a state of grace. I am sure she was blessed by our Creator although she did not receive the last sacraments and

communion out there in the bush. I am positive that she had many blessings because of her good actions among her people.

Before we used to leave for the bush, we always went to see the priest and receive communion.

When she got sick, she started to have much pain in her chest and started to spit a lot of greenish mucus. She would try very hard to get up and skin the beavers and things like that, whatever her husband used to kill. Finally, her health just gradually kept going down and she could no longer do that. She died like that.

There was another man, the husband of Janie Hookimaw, who was one of my relatives. He had died too, but died far away from where we were. They brought his body to that place where we were. This relative of mine was brought to that place where we were. He was already dead when they brought his body, so that they could bury that man in the same graveyard where we used to put the people who died in the bush.

Then there was another man who died in another area, in the opposite direction of where my relative was. They brought that body in too, so that they could be all buried together in that graveyard.

In that year my brother-in-law drowned in that river too, the one I am talking about, in that area. He drowned in that river, the same river, because it was getting dangerous. It was almost at the break-up when this accident happened. I have two of my own children buried there in the graveyard that I am talking about. One girl and one boy, the girl was the first child I ever had in my life. That was my first child, she died there.

I did not have children until I was quite old, because I did not have my periods for a long time. I did not have my first period when women usually have them.

Because in my days we never had that until we were old. It is only lately that this generation is getting it really, really young, when they are still kids.

That is why young people today are starting to have children very young because they get their menstruation at a very early age these days.

I cannot remember everything. I cannot recall any names especially. There were many young babies that died that year while we were in the bush. There were also two babies brought to the same place that I am talking about. These two babies that died were brought over there. They were strangers, people that we did not know. I think that they were Ojibway. They did not have much of anything like, you know, warm clothes, warm blankets, a tent, or anything like that. We provided warm blankets for them and we tried to help them as much as we could. No matter how we tried to talk to the mother, she would not listen. So I think that is why some of her kids died because she did not take the advice the elders gave her.

We always tried to give the best advice that we could to the young people and to this couple that I am talking about. We used to tell them to keep warm because they had small children, to keep a good fire going, and to put many branches around for a windbreak. They did not have a tent because they could not get one from the store. These things were scarce in those days. When we saw them like that, we just provided warm blankets. We could not give them any canvas or anything to make a tent, because we were using what we had in those days. You know sometimes young families were careless too. Some of them that did not take the advice of the elders, and they soon saw what happened to them.

When I had my children, I had them a distance apart. I did not have them one after another. That is how it was. We did not have children one after another. We had children, but sometimes we would not get another child until the others were walking around. That is how it used to be in those days.

My father was married twice. His first wife drowned while they were in rough rapids. That is when the canoe tipped over. I guess my father's first wife, who was very tired and sleepy, fell asleep while she was breast feeding her child in the canoe. The canoe just tipped right over. The whole canoe tipped over. Even my father's first wife and the kids

went completely over. I guess my dad said, "Oh, did all the kids go over," and I guess he could not—he was trying to save her—save his wife. So he got two of the kids, he got them by biting the clothing of one and by holding on to the other one. I guess my father said, "I could only get two," because it was a strong current. He said, "I only have two kids with me." He was only able to save two. Apparently, my father's first wife was still hanging on to the canoe and I guess when she heard that, she just let the canoe go. That is what happened to my father's first wife.

Yes, yes, she just let go of the canoe and she drowned right there. That is when my father was widowed. The second woman was given to him, because there were people who wanted to look after my father. That was the reason this woman was given to him. The reason they gave a woman to my father was that there were French people who wanted to look after my father and keep him. Nobody wanted my father to go away, far away with those French people. They wanted to keep the family together. That is why they gave this woman to marry my father. My father took the woman so that the family would stay together. That is how my father got his second wife.

Yes, but I cannot recall the family name of my mother. I do not know what her last name was before she married my dad. I cannot tell you her family name because I just cannot remember, but her first name was Sophie. When my mother died she really had a peaceful death. She died in the community that they started for the first time in Old Post. The community was first built near the mouth of the Albany River. That was where the first church was built at the mouth of the river, and that was where the first school was built. That is where my mother died and was buried. Some ladies took me over there to visit my mother's graveyard. When we got to the graveyard, it was so nice, so nicely fixed up. There were big white crosses all along the graveyard. All the people buried there were all identified with their names on the crosses. There was only one other person that I recall was buried where my mother was. Those ladies that I am talking about, they were my relatives who took me over there to visit my mother's grave. The one person that I recall very well, and that I am very positive who died of tuberculosis was Shano Fireman's wife.

Her name was Angela. Her father's name was Sakaypay. That is my story about all those people who died in the bush.

In our days there was no such thing as a settlement yet. People were settling down wherever their hunting ground was good for them. Even that community that I am talking about, you would not even call it a community because there were no people in that community yet, where the first school and the first church were. The only reason it was called a community was that it had a store. I remember my father used to come when I was a little girl. He used to come and get some food that we needed for the bush. That is why I say that we called it a community. There were no people staying in one community year round or anything like that. We only saw each other when we went to get some food.

That is the reason we had to go to where the church, the school, and the store were. That is why we had to go over there. Also, I told you before where my mother was buried, that is the same place that I am talking about. The year that I am talking about, people were getting government help. I think people who were widowed got help from the government. We were preparing to go somewhere that time. They were going to go and load the food and things we needed in our trapping grounds. One of my sisters was staying with my mother after she was widowed. While we were preparing to go, my mother just got sick and that was where she got sick. My mother got sick during the night. We were all ready to go and bring our stuff to the bush, all the supplies that we needed for the bush. When my mother got sick, she did not recover. Even after two weeks we were still sitting there, waiting for her to recover. We had much food in our canoe and all of our supplies. People were allowed to charge what they needed for the whole winter, especially food. That is what they used to do in the past.

Since my mother was sick, the priest asked us if we should let our mother go. If we took her with us into the bush, then we could not do the work we wanted to do. We could not trap, because we would have to look after her if she continued to be sick.

A year after my mother went to the place where the priests looked after her, that is where I guess my mother died. She did not even get to see Christmas because she died before Christmas. We were going to go and visit her because we came out of the bush to spend Christmas. We met some people when we came to the settlement. When we saw these people, they were cutting wood. That is when we heard that my mother had died. We had prepared much food, you know, like caribou that we had killed in the bush. We had a lot of that in our sled. I had prepared much caribou meat that I wanted to give to my mother. I made a separate package just for my mother, to give to her when I saw her, but she had already died. I had an aunt. I cannot recall whose mother that aunt of mine was. However, I gave the parcel, that I had prepared for my mother, to my aunt after I heard that my mother had died. That aunt of mine gave me many clothes in return.

Many people were talking to me when I heard that my mother died, because I was really, really sad and I could not help crying for my mother because I really loved her. I cried even though I knew my mother had a happy death and knew the way she used to live her life. That is why I really think she had a happy death. (Because I loved her and I missed her love that is what got me even that I know though that God helps everybody when we go through suffering.) Many people were telling me how to look at the suffering that our Creator was giving me. I had many people trying to console me by their good words and their wisdom. Even the priests gave me kind words. The priest said that it was almost not necessary to have High Mass for my mother because she was such a good person. She went through a lot and I am sure she really received the blessing of our Creator to be happy. Then the priest said that we would have Mass not necessarily for your mother, but for all of us who were still living on this earth so that we would have the strength to accept the suffering that we feel in our hearts when we lose someone. These are the words that I received from the priest. So when I think of my mother I feel happy when I think of her, and I feel happy when I think of the words of the people. At the same time I think of my mother because I loved her as everybody loves their mother. I sometimes cry. I cry in my heart longing for my mother's love.

That is the most difficult thing to go through when your mother dies. It is their love and kindness, everything that they do for us. So when I went to visit my mother it was not a physical visit because she had died there. I just went to visit her grave yard. It was really beautiful because the graveyard was fixed up really nice. All the crosses were well painted and well identified. The ladies that brought me over there started to make fire, not too far away from the graveyard. They made water and tea for me because they could feel that I was really suffering, you know to visit my mother like this. So when I saw that small settlement, the first building I saw was the church, then the school, and then the building where my mother died. I recall my mother when the priest asked me to send her over there. I recall her being so obedient. She just did not want us all to have a hard time looking after her. She went so very willingly to that place where she died. She did not act like some people who do not want to go there because they do not want to leave here and things like that. I never saw my mother saying a word when the priest asked her to go where she would be looked after.

My daughter had many children, but only one of them is living. It is John who is still living. Yeah we really went through a lot. One of my grandchildren was killed. My daughter's son was killed when he was in the boarding school. I call it killed because they were in the boarding school. I guess the people who were supervising them did not know what was going on among the boarders. Maybe they had problems because those kids ran away from the school. Those boys who ran away died.

They did not get mad. They just took it. They suffered a lot, just took it, and never got revenge on anybody. When they found those boys who had run away, all they could find were their bones in the bush.

The nurses here work really hard. They really look after the patients well and all the women who had their babies here. Those nurses worked really hard and delivered the babies here. That is really what they used to do here, and they did their best. They did their work with the ordinary patients, the patients that you see here, and us too. The nurses take good care of us.

Ladies knew how to deliver babies. It was even worse in my day when people wanted to have their babies. Sometimes when they were moving from one trapping ground to another, there were people who were expecting. While they were travelling they would pick up some warm, not warm, but nice grass. They would gather some of that nice grass. They would keep it in case of an emergency while they were travelling from one trapping ground to another. Sometimes a lady would go into labour unexpectedly, and they would not even put up a tent or anything like that. They would just make a big fire and put many boughs around where the lady was going to have her baby. They would warm up the grass, and she would lie there. She would have her baby outside there. They would make a big fire so that woman would not get cold and they would cover her. After the baby was born they would take the baby and just put it in a rabbit skin coat. Somebody would take off their rabbit skin coat and they would just put that baby in there with no clothes, nothing. They would just keep the mother the same way. They would cover her up and put a canvas on top to keep her warm. That was why people were looking ahead. They were always keeping grass with them in case somebody who was expecting had a child along the way. They would just put down the grass and warm it up. That would be the bedding for the mother who was going to have her baby.

That is what happened in the past.

—recorded August 2, 1977













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National Archives of Canada PA 59572

## 4 It is not like the way it used to be.

—told by Moses Sutherland

Date of Birth: September 7, 1913		
Place of Birth: Opinnagau River		
Present Address: Heaven ....		
Name of Spouse: Juliette		Maiden Name: Carpenter
Number of Children: 9	Grandchildren: 42	Great-grandchildren: 28
Number of Years Married: 59		
Date of Death: January 17, 1998		Burial Place: Attawapiskat
Other Information:		
Moses worked all his life. He was good at trapping and hunting although it was very hard. Moses did not go to school. His parents were his only teachers. Moses worked for the Hudson's Bay Company as a clerk. In addition, Moses taught himself carpentry. He built houses and even built a big boat used in the Bay.		

First, if a Native wants to succeed in life, he must be taught accordingly. A non-Native has been able to use his culture, his knowledge of the culture, and knows what to do to succeed. So should the Native. The Native should be taught how to live in the bush. Everybody should be told not to forget their language and the things they used to do. Many are forgetting those things they used for their survival, their ability to learn how to do things.

All of those things are forgotten. Take for example today's students; they do not know these things. They do not even know how to make snowshoes or to make other things. I am sure everybody knows about this. This is what happens when someone wants to use the resources from the land. They are forgetting even their language. They do not know what to call some things. The hunting methods are forgotten. Hunting is no longer being practiced. However, some are still hunting, but using modern equipment. Everything is motorized these days. Long ago, people used to haul their possessions by themselves or sometimes they used dogs. That is what I saw done.



I will say a few words about the issues we will be talking about; the things used in the past. There are still some who practice the things used more than 50 years ago. However, there is one thing that must be addressed. These things are not easy to be taught inside a classroom. It would be like teaching from a story. Those who will be teaching the traditional way life will not be able to teach it because they did not follow that kind of life. They will not be able to express how harsh life was.

It is hard for people who work in an office to teach these things. The high school graduates do not know the things they write about. They will not fully understand these stories because they did not live the life. There should be an attempt by those who are still practicing this kind of life to teach the easier methods. The old hunters knew how to hunt skillfully and how to make the equipment they needed for their survival while living in the bush. They also knew the animals they depended on for their survival.

It has been four years since I returned to Attawapiskat from Albany. I was born near the Bay. We lived on waxies, ducks, yellow legs, seals, polar bears, fish, white fish, trout, suckers, red suckers, pike, rabbits, ptarmigans, grouse, partridge, foxes, white foxes, otters, and mink. We ate all these to survive including moose and caribou. The people that lived inland did not use some things that were used while living near the Bay.

People used different methods for making the things they used. I will talk about one thing. To cure a moose hide; the flesh is scraped first. Then the hair is removed. Following that, while the skin is frozen flat, it is scraped. Next, the skin is washed until it is clean on both sides. After that, a brain mixture is applied to the skin. Then it is left to sit for one night. After that, the skin is hung outside in the shade so the sun does not get to it. There it hangs for two weeks until the skin becomes soft. Following that, the hide is hung inside near a stove until it is cured. Any heat will do as long as it is not a direct sun light. The hide is again soaked in warm water until it is soft. Subsequently, it is wrung to draw as much water as possible. Then the hide is stretched until it is completely dry. A very dry wood is chopped to be used in the tanning of the hide. It is tanned or smoked inside where there is no wind. Occasionally the hide is checked until the desired color is achieved.

Another thing I want to talk about. I will not be able to teach using only words. For me to teach I need to demonstrate. It would be almost useless to use just words. It takes a long time to make snowshoes. To find the right kind of wood takes a day; sometimes the right wood is found easily. Only the perfect tree will do. It takes about three days to carve and shape a snowshoe. The snowshoe frame takes about four days to dry. After it is dry, holes are made on the side of the frame where caribou babiche will be applied. Making the holes and lacing the front and the back of a snowshoe takes about six hours. It takes about eight hours to complete the lacing of a pair of snowshoes. Making the babiche for snowshoes takes awhile, at least four hours. That means making enough for a pair of snowshoes. To make a toboggan also takes a long time. It takes a day to look for the wood. It is not easy. Sometimes it takes two days to carve and bend a toboggan.

I will say a few words about what is on my mind, those things that are being considered for teaching in the school. It is believed that they can be taught by an experienced person. These things cannot be taught in a classroom, at least not by a person who has no first hand knowledge of these matters. Someone who has experience of these matters should teach these things. A person should have knowledge of the things that be can be taught inside and outside the school. This person should know the traditional way of doing these things. He should be able to demonstrate the methods used. There should be somebody who can demonstrate the setting of a trap and the also teach the hunting methods. It is not easy for someone to learn simply by listening. It would be like listening to a story by a non-Native; it does not help us. Listening only does not help. We do not see how it is done. Take for example the airplane. We hear an expert made the airplane, but we do not know how he made it. This is the same thing with an automobile. We did not see the person make it. A man made these things with his own hands. The same applies to the things a Native made in the past. Nobody will learn just by hearing.

We see many things made by the Whiteman, things that travel in the air, on the ground, and under the sea. A man made those things, but we cannot make those things although we can see them. The same goes for the Native. It is necessary to have someone who has a first hand knowledge teach these things.

He would be the one who is qualified to teach. Some of these stories are true and some are exaggerated. I am not old enough to remember the very old traditional way of life. When I was growing up, we already had the equipment and food that came from the Whiteman.

I have written the different thoughts people have concerning what the Whitemen did in the past and the things our children are being taught. The Natives think that those things are good for us. We hear this a lot. I will read what I wrote. There is one thing that is amazing. According to what we hear about the different things talked about, according to the stories we hear, and according to the people who know about the school laws say, all these things will be good for us. The school laws the Whiteman makes will be good for everybody. They are saying they are not ruining our culture. The Whiteman says everything they teach us will be good for us. They say everything we learn will be good for us if we accept the school laws. We cannot talk about these things. First, we must think about what different people are saying.

There is other talk. Our people are saying that the life our ancestors lived long ago is drastically changing. It is not like the way it used to be. Often we hear our people say that our culture is being destroyed ever since the arrival of the Whiteman and his introduction of school laws. We hear our people say, even on tapes, that we would have been better off if the Whiteman had not come and bothered us. They say the Whiteman is ruining our culture. Our children are being taught a different way of living. We are destroyed by what the Whiteman said would be good for us. That is what I hear all of the Natives say. They say it is like we were made to put on a coat we cannot take off. They say it is the Whiteman who put this coat on us. There are many things in that coat that will eventually destroy our culture. That is what our people are saying. What then can we do? We must think and talk about these things the Natives and the Whitemen are saying. Our ancestors had a harsh life. We have lived and experienced some of the old life. So often we have seen a child born that was only to die a short while later. Many times, it has been said that he would have lived, but that is the will of the Great Spirit. There is nothing we can do about that.

Often it happened that a child died of hunger or from hypothermia. It was hard travelling by canoe in the extreme cold and travelling around the Bay. People think that a person died because there was no medicine. Sometimes there was a short supply of everything, even before the arrival of the Whiteman's food. Sometimes people went without food. People used to boil wood charcoal and drink the liquid to make them strong before their morning journey. They did not drink that liquid often, only when they did not have anything to eat. When one was in trouble, it was hard to inform someone because there was no communication of any kind. I saw that. The only way a person knew when someone was in trouble was when he saw that person. Today's generation does not know how hard a life one had back then. They cannot believe that people did what they say they did. I wonder if a modern day person would drink the charcoal liquid. I am sure he would think that it would kill him.

Many things happened when life was very harsh. I think, all the things that are being taught in school today will be good for the person if he can secure employment from the education that the government wants to impose on the people. It will be beneficial to use the Whiteman's education as long as it is not used in the wrong way.

All the survival methods the Natives used long ago such as living off the land, knowing the language, the hunting methods, all the things used in living the traditional life, help a person to survive if he cannot obtain any employment. If a person does not receive government assistance and if he did not learn to survive from the land, he will not be able to survive at all. It is true what these people are saying, that the Whiteman took everything from us, that we did not hang on to anything when education from the Whiteman was first introduced. Today's generation is very unfortunate. Some of them do not know how to wear snowshoes. Some of them do not know how to handle an axe or a knife, or when to butcher an animal.

People are saying some of the things that came from the Whiteman are ruining our culture. Some of these things are indeed ruining our culture. Take for example the liquor. It is the cause of many problems. Even the English language is causing different kinds of problems. The English language can be used for corruption. All over the world,

the English language is used to produce books on different subjects that are harmful. By the same token, it is good for a person to learn the English language, so that the Whiteman cannot take advantage of the Natives. It is good to be able to read the laws.

It happened often in the past that a person does not understand what the government intends for the Natives. There are non-Natives who fight the government for the Natives who do not know what effect the laws have on the rights of Native people. That is the reason one must learn the English language. We are living among the non-Natives. The white people know what is in their future, but the Native people do not think about these things. It is necessary to know what the Whiteman intends to do. Some are saying that the Natives are being informed about issues and are being asked what they need for their own benefit.

Take for example the non-Natives. They are creating certain things by writing these things they call laws. Some important issues are talked about, but the Native does not think about these things the Whiteman calls laws. The Native does not understand the things the Whiteman writes about. The Natives think that some of the things the Whitemen are doing are not good for the Natives, but that is the way it was in the past. Whatever the Whiteman did was not good for the Natives. It is very important to know and understand the laws the Whitemen are making and what effect they will have on the Natives in the future. Truth should be used and not lies to the Natives. The Whitemen benefited from our land, and we on the other hand are poor. This does not look too good. The the houses Natives get are inadequate. There is no running water and no sewage system. There is no place drain the dirty water. It is an unhealthy environment for the people.

That is all I have to say.

—recorded August 4, 1977





סדר לב דבר אהבה' אלהי'א'

מחלה צדאח'דלה' דה'פ' ו ד'ד'ר'צ'א' .ד'ג'ל'א' ו .ד'י'א'ח'ב' נ'ר'ע'ב'ס'ב'  
ו <<L'ד'U'א' .א' .ד'י'ב'ל' מ'ר' .ד'ג'ו' ד'ר' א'נ'ו' ר'ר' א'ב'י'q'ס'L'c' ד'C'  
א'ב'ס' ר'פ' ו'ב' ו ד'א'd'א'x' <N'L' א'ד'ל' ו ד'נ' D'C'd'f'b' b' א'b' b'V'f'z'b',  
b' א'b' R'f'c'z'b' f'b' ו D'f'c'z'b'x' f'b' .ד'ה' א'd' P' ד'c'c'א' ו  
<<L'f'c'א'ד'ב' .v'f'b'l', א' L'p'x'

ו ד'ב'ס' L'b' b' א'f' R'f'p'מ'd'l'ד'י'c'א' ס'ד'ל' א'ב'ד'ל' ד'ס'L' ס'א' b' P' c'c'l'א'x'  
ו ד'ב'ס' L'b' q' א'f' <g'p'p'ד'י'c'א' ד'ד'f'z'b' ד'י'p'ס' ד'c'f'c'f'b'x' א'י'א' P'  
<g'p'p'ד'b' ד'ד'f'z'b' .v'f'b'l' ד'י'p'z' ו ד'c'c'c'x' ד'מ'ל' L'b' א' <g'p'p'ד'b'  
ד'ד'f'z'b'x' .א'f'p'l'd'p'ד'b' ו ד'c'f'c'f'b' ד'ס'א' .b'c'c' q'b'c'b'א'x' f'c'b'ס'ס'  
D'f'p'א'ס'ד'ו'x' ו ד'ב'ס' L'b' א' f'c'z'f'א' .v'f' Δ'U'ס'c'l'א' .b'c'c' q'b'c' b' ד'נ'  
ד'c'c'b' ד'מ'ל'x'

ו ד'ב'ס' .א'א' b' P' א'f' R'f'q'ס'c'l'א' .v'f'b'l', ד'v'ס'ב'א'b' b' P' v'f' א'ל'נ'p'f'b'  
ו .ד'c'l'p'c'c'א' L'a' ו c'c'p'b', ו ד'נ' b'v'f'א'ס'ד'b' ו ד'ל'f'f'f'b'ס'ד'b'x' v'd'  
L'b' ח'c' ו ד'נ' q'z'c'z'b' ו ד'l'f'f'f'b'ס'ד'b'x' ו ד'ב'ס' L'a' ו א'נ'c'b'b'c'א'  
f'b'l' ו .ד'א'י'p'U'P' .ד'י'ב'Δ'ב'ס'b' c'c'n'א' ח'א'b' ו .א'p'f'b' ד'v'ס'ב'א'b' v'b' b'  
ד'l'f'f'b' .ד'י'b'Δ'ב'ס'ס' .<L'f' <f'f'c' א'p'ל' ד'z' f'p'v' מ'c'b'מ'c'ס' L'p'z' ו  
L'U' ד'l'f'f'f'q'f'b' ד'v'ס'ב'א'b'x' ו ס'b'j'f'b'x' ו ד'ב'ס' v'z'b'א' ו q'z'c'z'b' ו  
י'b'c'v'c' א'p'ל' ד'z' f'א' מ'c'd'p'c'ס'b' ד'v'ס'ב'א'b' ו ד'l'f'f'f'q'f'b', ו א'b'j'f'b'  
ו ד'נ' .ד'ס'f'b'f'b' א'd' ד'ד'f'z'b'x' א' .ד'י'ב'ל' ד'ר' Δ'c'c' ד'v'ס'b'א' .ד'c'Δ'n'f'b'  
ד'ד'f'f' b' א'f'א'd'p'f'b' ד'ד'f'z'b' ד'מ'ל' b' א'ל'n'p'f'b'x' א' ד'ס'L' ד'r' א'f'א'b'א'  
.א'א' .v'f'b'l' ח'U' b'z'f' Δ'c'Δ'ס'b' b' P' v'f' Δ'c'z'p'c'א'x'

















עד לב וכן אכפא'ב' אלנר'ד'

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ויד לב סב נכר'א' וז'ב' ק'ב'ב'א' ב' פ' •דל'ט'ס'ל'ל'א' א'ל'ל'ט' ט'ט'  
פ'ט'•ד'ר'ל'ב' ו' ד'ל'ל'פ'ל'א' ו' ל'ב'פ'ב', ג'ר'ו' ל'ב' ו'ל' פ' ב'ו'ט'ט'א'א' •ו'ר' ג'ט'  
ו'ל'ג' א'ב'•ד'ל' ו' נ'ל'י'ב'ט'ב' •ב'ד'א' ד'ר' ד'ט'ד'ב' ג'ט' ד'•ט'•ו' •ו'ל' פ' ל'נ'•ק'  
ט'ב' ל'ט' ד'•ט'•ו' ב' ב'ל'פ'ט'ט'ב'ד' ל'א' ד'ל'ס' ל'ב' •ד'•ד'ל' ו' << ג'ט'ס'ר' ו'ל'ל'  
ו' ד'ט' ס'ל'ט' ג'נ'•ק' ט'פ'ט'ב'c' ו'ס'ד' ט'ב'•ב' פ'ט'י'c' פ'ר' •ד'ג'פ'ל'd'ל'c'° ג'כ'ס'  
ג'ר'•ו' •ס'כ'י'ל'ד'ד'א'א' ו' ג'l'd'c'c'b' ו'ס'l' •ד'כ'ז' פ'ט'•l'c'° •ד'•ד'ז' •l'א'ב'  
ב'•ד'א' פ'ר' ד'ט'ד'ז'א' ו' ד'נ'c'° ד'c'b'ס'•d'א' ו' ד'•ב'ס' ו'ז'•ב' ו' פ'  
ל'ט'ס'ט'ל'ג'n'c'° ט'ב' ו' ס'l'ז'b' ג'ר'•ו' ל'ב' ו' ו'ד'r'p'b' א'ג'י'ט'•b' ג'כ'ס' ט'b'd'  
l'd'p'•d'b' ו' ד'•ב'ס' ל'ב' ו'נ' ד'ט' ג'•ד'r'b' ו'ס'p' ס'ג'i'ט'•d'b' ג'א' •ו'ל'ט'° ד'ר'  
ד'נ'•d'b'.

א'כ'ד'ז'•d'° •ו'ל'ס' ו'ס'l' •ד'כ'ז' ג'r'•c' ס' פ'•l'c'° ס'א' א'ב'•ד'ל' ו'  
א'כ'd'•d'q'c' ו'ס'g'ס'° •ד'כ'ס'° •ב'•ד' פ'ט'•q'c' ל'א' ו'•ו'ס'b'° ו' ד'c'l'r'p'•i'c'°,  
l'p'b'b'•d'q'c'° ל'א' ו'ס'g'ס'° •ד'כ'c'° ד'c'c'd'q'g'b' ו' ג'•d'c'° ו'c'd'q'•d'x' ד'd'c'ס'  
l'b' l'q' ו' ד'r' ג'ז'ל'n'p'•i'c'° ו'ס'l' ו' כ'c'p'b'x' ו'•ב'ס' ב' ו'r' כ'c'p'b'  
p'g'z'q'•d'b' ו'ס'g'c'° ו' א'כ'd'p'•d'q'r'b'x' ג'r'•ו' l'd' q'•b'c'b'° •ס'l'p'z' ט'i'c',  
ו'כ'i'ל'z', •d'p'q'q'q'b' ט'i'c' l'b' •ו'l'ט'°•q'כ'z'b'x' ו'•d'd' ו'ס'd' ב' ו'r' א'כ'd'p'•d'q'r'b'  
p'g'z'q'•d'b' •ו'ט'b'x' ג'א' q'b'c' •d'i'b'l' א'כ'd'z'° ד'r' ו'c'c'c'° •ו'ט'b'x'.

ו' ד'•ב'ס' ו'ז'•ב'° ו' r'b'd'n'r'c' ו'•ו'ס'b'° •l'p'° ו'q' ב' l'z'd'p'c' p' ו'c'c'n'p'°  
g'i'n'd'b' ב' ו'd'q'c', g'q'd'd'b'x' ו'•d'd' ו'q' l'q' ו' ו'c'c'n'p'•i'c'° ו' r'b'd'n'r'c'  
ו'•ו'ס'b'°x' ד'z'i' g'z'g'g'° ו'q' ו' ו'c'c'n'p'c' ו' p'q'b'p'b'ט'b' q'•b'•b'°x' ג'א' •d'i'b'l'  
l'c'c'ס'ס'c'° ו'•ו'ס'b'° q'•b'ס'° •ו'l'ט'° ו' ד'n'c' ב' d'p'b' ו'q'ט' א'l'l'ט' ב' ו'n'  
l'c'c'c'c'b' ו'•ו'ס'b'° •ו'l'ט'° ו' d'n'p'x' ו'z' l'q' ב' p' א'כ'd'c'ס'•d'b' q'•b'c'b'° ב'  
d'ט'ס'c'•b'b' ו'•ו'ס'b'° •ו'l'ט'° ו' d'n'c' ו'l'g'°x'.



▽ ▽·בס P ΔP<sup>b</sup> אס רר<sup>ל</sup> ·▽ר Δ·U9<sup>א</sup> ΔC <מ<sup>ל</sup> ▽ P>רP<ר<sup>ב</sup> <Δר<sup>ל</sup>,  
 ▽dCס ב <ΔN Δר Γר·Δל<sup>א</sup> <ר<sup>ל</sup> Δס<sup>ל</sup> סר C·<ר<sup>ל</sup>U<sup>ו</sup> ·Δר Lר ΔN <ר  
 ▽<sup>ל</sup>·ב סP<sup>ב</sup>·ר Pל<sup>ל</sup> L·בΔU<sup>ו</sup> ΔL סרר<sup>ל</sup>· ▽ ▽·בס Lב ·▽ר P<sup>ל</sup>UסC<sup>ל</sup>·  
 <סΔ 9·ב<sup>ר</sup>ב<sup>א</sup> ·▽<sup>ל</sup>·ב<sup>ל</sup> ב N<CCL<sup>א</sup> <סL ▽ ΔP<sup>ב</sup>, ר<sup>ל</sup>dג<sup>א</sup> ▽ ·Δ <ΔרC<sup>ל</sup>·  
 ▽ב ▽ P <ΔC<sup>ב</sup>· Jר Lב Δd dרC<sup>א</sup> <סL Pר CCL<sup>א</sup> <סΔ 9·ב<sup>ר</sup>ב<sup>א</sup> ב P  
 Vר <ΔרC<sup>ל</sup>· ▽<sup>ל</sup>·ב<sup>ל</sup> Pר ·Δ ב·9 ר<sup>ל</sup>dΔ·<9ל<sup>א</sup>· ר<sup>ל</sup>d<sup>ל</sup> Lב ·Δר ▽ ΔC<sup>ל</sup>PdΓ<sup>ל</sup>·  
 Lר סC<ר<·<·< L<sup>ל</sup>ר<sup>ל</sup>·ב<sup>ב</sup>, ▽ ▽·ר<sup>ל</sup>P<sup>ב</sup> ▽ Γס·בCCL<sup>ב</sup> <סL L<sup>ל</sup>ר<sup>ל</sup>·ב><sup>ל</sup>·  
 ΔdCס Lר ▽ <ΔN Δר ΓגΔL<sup>ל</sup>·< <·▽סב<sup>א</sup> <סL ▽ CCL<sup>א</sup>· ר<sup>ל</sup>·L<sup>ל</sup> Lר  
 ▽ Δ<sup>ל</sup>·C<sup>ל</sup>·C<sup>ל</sup>· <·▽סב<sup>א</sup> ▽ ΔC<sup>ל</sup>PdΓ<sup>א</sup>· ▽ ▽·בס ▽ C·<·<· <מ<sup>ל</sup> Pל<sup>ל</sup>· ב  
 P<sup>ל</sup>·בס· Γ<sup>ל</sup>·▽ Lב ΔΔ 9·ב<sup>ר</sup>·ב<sup>א</sup> ב <ΔN C<sup>ל</sup>·ר<sup>ל</sup>·P, P<sup>ל</sup>·ר<sup>ל</sup>·Δ<sup>א</sup> <·▽סב<sup>א</sup>  
 P<sup>ל</sup>·ר<sup>ל</sup>·▽סC<sup>ב</sup>, C·V<sup>ל</sup>·C<sup>ב</sup> 9·ב<sup>ר</sup>·בס·ס<sup>ו</sup>· ב ·ΔC<sup>ל</sup>· ר<sup>ל</sup>·L<sup>ל</sup> UΔ bC Γג<ר<·<· Pל<sup>ל</sup>·  
 <מ<sup>ל</sup> ב P<sup>ל</sup>·ב<sup>ב</sup> ΔL C<sup>ל</sup>·ר<sup>ל</sup>·U·  
 ▽ב Δר<sup>ל</sup>·ב<sup>ל</sup> ר<sup>ל</sup>dג<sup>א</sup> LΓ<sup>ל</sup>·C<sup>ל</sup>·C<sup>ל</sup>·U ·<4<sup>ל</sup> ▽ ΔNר·ס·<·<·; ר<sup>ל</sup>·L<sup>ל</sup>· bC Γ·ר<sup>ל</sup>·פ<sup>ל</sup>·<·  
 ·<·ר<sup>ל</sup>· Lב Δר<sup>ל</sup>·ב<sup>ל</sup> ר<sup>ל</sup>dג<sup>א</sup>·<· Δ<sup>ל</sup>·<C·ס·<·<· <·▽סב<sup>א</sup> ·<4<sup>ל</sup> ▽ ΔNר· Jר P·C·Δ  
 C<sup>ל</sup>·ר<sup>ל</sup>·U· ΔC<sup>ל</sup> 9·ב<sup>ר</sup>·ב<sup>א</sup>· ב P Vר C<sup>ל</sup>·P<sup>ב</sup>· ▽<sup>ל</sup>·ב<sup>ל</sup> P<sup>ל</sup>·Δ·ר·<·<·<·<·· Vל<sup>ל</sup>d Δר<sup>ל</sup>· Δd P  
 ·<·<·L·ב·ס·<·<· ר<sup>ל</sup>dג<sup>א</sup>· Vל·ב ▽ ס·L<sup>ל</sup>· <·ר<sup>ל</sup>·° P ·<·<·L·ב·ס·<·<· ▽<sup>ל</sup>·ב<sup>ל</sup> ·Δר·  
 ▽ ס·L<sup>ל</sup>· Δd P ·<·<·L·ב·ס·<·<· <·ר<sup>ל</sup>·° ▽ Δ>ס·ס· P C<sup>ל</sup>d<sup>ל</sup>· ס·ר Δd <·ר<sup>ל</sup>·°  
 P C<sup>ל</sup>d<sup>ל</sup>· ב Δר ΔC<sup>ל</sup>·ב<sup>ל</sup> ·Δר· <·ב·Γ<sup>ל</sup>· Lב <C·Δר ר·U ΔCΔ<sup>ל</sup>· C<sup>ל</sup>·ר P  
 ΔC<sup>ו</sup> ר<sup>ל</sup>dג<sup>א</sup>· ▽dUס Lב ב <ΔN·Δר C·<·<·Γ<sup>א</sup> ר<sup>ל</sup>dג<sup>א</sup> <·U Δ<sup>ל</sup>·L ▽  
 ΔC·ב<sup>ל</sup> <Δר·Δ·ב·Γ<sup>ל</sup>· ▽dUס ב <ΔN ΔC<sup>ל</sup>·ר<sup>ל</sup>· <·▽סב<sup>א</sup>· Δ<sup>ל</sup>·L ▽ <ΔN  
 P<sup>ל</sup>·9·ס·C<sup>ל</sup>· ר<sup>ל</sup>dג<sup>א</sup>· Pר <ΔN ·Δר·Δ·ר<sup>ל</sup>·· 9ב Jר Δר <ΔN <Δר<sup>ל</sup>·9·ס·C·L<sup>ל</sup>· ΔΔ  
 9·ב<sup>ר</sup>·ב<sup>א</sup>· ב <ס·J·C<sup>ל</sup>· ב P Vר <ΔN·C<sup>ל</sup>·ר<sup>ל</sup>· P<sup>ל</sup>·Δ·ר·<·<·<·<· Δ<sup>ל</sup>·L ▽ <ΔN  
 LΓ<sup>ל</sup>·C<sup>ל</sup>·<·ב·ס·Δ<sup>ל</sup>· 9·ב<sup>ר</sup>·ב<sup>א</sup>·ר·° ▽ <ΔN Γ·ס·<· <·4<sup>ל</sup> ▽ ΔNר·ס·<·<··





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## 5 We raised our children the way we were raised.

—told by Dorothy Friday

Date of Birth: March 24, 1926  
Place of Birth: Old Post  
Present Address: Kashechewan  
Name of Spouse: Alfred  
Maiden Name: Stephen  
Number of Children: 4      Grandchildren: 25      Great-grandchildren: 11  
Number of Years Married: 55      Her husband Alfred died on December 18, 1998  
Other Information:  
Dorothy and her husband spent most of their married life trapping and hunting. This required them to move around a lot. Dorothy acted as a midwife for many children born in Kashechewan when doctors and nurses were not available.

I think the way we lived in the past is most important, the nomadic life of trapping, snaring, fishing, and netting. By catching game this way, we could survive and feed our children while we were living in the bush. We never used the Whiteman's food that the modern generation is using today. We survived through the wild food we obtained from the land.

When we started having children, we raised them the way we were raised. Today, it is all very different. The children hardly eat any wild food. It seems that they are living on store bought food. It's not right for a person to do that to a child. He cannot be healthy if he does not have any wild food. It is only through eating wild food that children were healthy and developed properly. That is what I think.

Long ago, bottles were not used in raising children. All we did was breast feed the children we raised. That is what I did to all my children. I breast fed them until they were two years old. I never used bottles. When they were old enough to eat food, I was still breast feeding them. I fed them wild food. Also, I made porridge with broth, not water. Today, women make porridge for their children using water. They do not use broth.

Today, the young parents are not careful in how they raise their children. They do not wash or boil their bottles properly. The doctor I worked with told me to boil the glass bottles at least half an hour before they were being used. But today, these bottles are made of plastic and you cannot boil plastic bottles. When I think about it, I imagine that is why children get sick. I taught my daughters-in-law to keep their bottles clean, to boil them after each use. This is what they did. They would breast feed their first born babies. Then for the next born children, this modern generation used bottles.

When a baby was bundled in a bunting bag, moss was used for a diaper. While I was using moss diapers, I never took my grandchild from the bunting bag although we travelled all day. When I carried him in a tikinagun, I bundled him in a rabbit skin blanket. Although I kept him in the bunting bag all day, he never developed a rash from the moss. I would only take him out of the bag after we made camp in the evening. In those days, all we had was a wigwam, not a tent.

Whatever I did, I did according to how my mother taught me. Babies would be clean if people used moss. Long ago, by using moss, children were very clean. Today, children are not clean. They have a bad odour from using those useless things. Their urine has a very strong odour. That is why I think the things that are being used nowadays are useless.

I remember watching the elders pray before they went to bed. Again in the morning they would pray. We could hear praying from people who were living in tents. People who did not have houses made their tents by the river. Before the sun went down, we could hear praying and singing from those tents. The same thing happened in the morning when the sun came up and when the children got up; people started to pray and sing. Unlike today, children did not stay outdoors late at night. That is the way it was in the old community where we lived.

The old generation lived in the bush looking for means of survival for their children. They constantly gave their children advice. That is why their family life was strong. Because of the advice they received, children did not get into trouble. I do not think it is

like that today because parents do not bother talking to their children about not to getting into trouble or staying out all night. It would be better if children were to go to bed early in the evening. The whole town would be peaceful just like in the old days. People never stayed in the community except during the summer when they returned from the bush at the end of May. That was the only time people would live in the community. That is the way we lived when we were young, those of us who are now older. That is the way it was a long time ago.

As for the family life, when people got married, they would leave their parents' homes and would set up their own household—just the two of them. That is why people had good relationships. Their parents did not look after them. They looked after their own family affairs. They lived according to how their parents lived. That is why people in those days did not have any problems.

Now people have marital problems because they practice those things that cause problems in a married life. These problem-causing practices were not in effect in the old days. That is why they had no hassles in their married life. Although they got angry with each other, they did not remain angry for a long time. They did not dwell on the issues that made them angry. For those people who did not remain angry, their anger was like a passing wind. I think that is why people nowadays separate, because they chose to remain angry with each other for a long time. They cannot forget when they say something against each other. It is damaging for a person who does not want to forget the things he has said against another person or spouse. It is better for a person not to dwell on wrongdoings.

Also, we were not supposed to bear a grudge after sun down. That is the way people lived in the past. They did not keep their grudges after they went to bed. People forgave each other although they were angry with each other. As far as I can remember that is the way it was. I think about the past when I see young people angry with each other.

I was like that too. I cannot say I never got angry. I got angry, but I never remained angry for a long time. I did not dwell on it. I reestablished my good relationship with the person I was angry with. That is what we were supposed to do.

I think it would have been a lot better if there was no drinking. Things would not be the way they are today. If there were no alcohol related problems, we would be leading a life similar to the one led in the past. Drinking is a factor that creates marriage breakdowns because it disheartens people and it also creates interfering factors. It is the reason people do not have a good rapport with each other today. Because of their immaturity, they do not know how to straighten out their problems.

The modern generation is following their parents' examples, which is why this generation behaves the way they do. That is why people are having so much trouble. The young men who are getting married these days do not listen. Even young women do not want to do what they were taught. When somebody is talking to some of them, it's just like talking to wood. They should not do this when advice is being given because someday they will think about their parents. That is why I think that they should not do this, when somebody is giving them advice, whenever I see them in trouble.

Often I talk to my grandchildren because I want to make sure that they do not become disheartened. It does not work that way. There is somebody stronger who is leading people astray every day. That is why young people are easily persuaded. That is what I think when I see these things happening. Things would be better if only young men and women would listen when they are being advised. Whenever there is something going on, such as meetings, these are the people who should be invited. They should be encouraged to lead a decent life that would be beneficial in the future. They should be taught to look after their children so that their children will not look like a discarded thing. There are many children in that situation. There are some people who are taking these children as if they are "catching something that is being blown in the wind."

My daughter has been looking after unwanted children. I keep telling her to look after these children properly, to raise them as I raised her. She is doing what I told her. It is so heartbreaking to see an unwanted child in need when his parents are alive. When a child is being looked after properly, he considers his foster parents like his own parents. That is what I know about these problems. People are doing great injustice when they relinquish their duties given to them by the Creator to raise these children. The Creator gave us these children to raise for Him on a temporary basis, not to mistreat them in any way, and to do our utmost to raise these children properly. That is the only way the Creator will look after us. That is what I think about these children when I see them in this situation.

Long ago in the old communities, there was a lot of merriment through playing different kinds of games. They had great fun dancing on New Year's Day. The old generation loved to dance. Sometimes they danced until dawn. There were other joyful activities that people enjoyed participating in. They never included anything that would interfere in their merriment.

Today, people include drinking in their activities that eventually caused them some harm. Life was not like that. I never heard people hurting each other through dancing and playing games. Life was very peaceful. In the summertime, people enjoyed playing games such as racing. They did this at the beginning of July. My grandfather was funny. People would race in a sack with their feet tied together. There was a marker down the river where they would turn to come back. There were willows down the river. My grandfather ran through the willows. It was only when the runners were returning that he came out of the willows by the river. "What is the matter with these runners, I thought they wanted to run, that's why I ran into the willows," he said as the runners were approaching.

When he danced, my grandfather was funny. As far as I can remember, I only knew one of my grandfathers. They called him Ojibway, but his real name was Richard Solomon. That was my mother's father. Once at a dance, we laughed at my grandfather when he fell as he swung his partner around. He just laid down still holding his partner at the



waist. That is how the old generation lived. They had fun although they did not use anything that would enhance their enjoyment. That is why the community life was strong because they did not have anything that would create problems.

There was no such thing as drinking in the community across the river (Old Post) where I came from. Whenever there was going to be a wedding, we were aware that some old men made something to drink. Sometimes they would drink that stuff, but it was not given to the young people. Only the people who made that stuff drank it. They never had any hard liquor; only home brew as they called it. That was the only thing they drank that I know of. At least that was what I heard. I did not see them drink it personally. I heard about this recently after all our grandfathers died. The old men who came to this reserve are the ones who talked about making it. I do not want to mention any names, as they are no longer living, because I am just telling the story. I do not want to say anything offensive about them. I am just telling these stories because I was asked.

Early in the mornings these old men went out in their canoes to wait on the river for loons and ducks that we know as whistling ducks. We enjoyed watching them call these loons and ducks. We could hear them laughing as these old men missed when they fired at them. That is the way they did things. We do not see that anymore because people are being influenced by other things. People do not believe when we talk about these things. It is a good feeling when we look at the past and reminisce about what the old men and women did.

On Saturdays, we saw old women coming from the bush carrying tree boughs on their backs. These boughs were used for changing the floors of their wigwams. To them it was just like washing the floors in a building. They would throw out the old ones and put in the fresh boughs. That is what the old women did. They also smoked fish. This was a good nourishment for the children. The old women would smoke geese and ducks. They would also roast waxies and Canada geese. The old women would also bury potatoes in the hot ashes. Once the potatoes were cooked, they were fed to the children. When potatoes were buried in hot ashes, they would eventually cook and taste just like roasted potatoes. That was one great way of cooking.

Older women picked berries such as the cranberries, high bush cranberries, and other kinds of berries. They even went hunting. I cannot remember, unfortunately, everything that I could talk about.

Now I will talk about something amusing that happened to us while we were living at Kinosheo River. We had all gone to bed when my mother told us not to move. A skunk had entered our dwelling. I guess as the skunk was wandering around, his fur must have tickled my father's feet, so he kicked it. The smell was unbelievable. The smell, when the secretion was released, woke us up. My mother was angry with my father, especially after she told him not to move. That was the time we had an unfortunate incident with a skunk. There were some smoked geese hanging in the tent and they all had that skunky smell. We ate these geese anyway. Other than the smell, there was nothing wrong with them.

There is medicine in a skunk's scrotal secretion. Often, I saw my mother use that secretion as a medicine. Whenever she felt dizzy, she would sprinkle that secretion on her bannock. In doing so, she would get better. The old people used that as a medicine. Long ago, the old generation used willows, roots, cedar, and cones as medicine. Pharmaceutical drugs were never used.

When somebody cut themselves with an axe, the sticky gum from a pine tree was used. It was very effective in healing a wound. These wounds never got infected the way they do today. That is what they used when somebody suffered these wounds.

I say this because that is what happened to my finger. Pus developed as the skin started to peel. It has been two weeks and it has not healed yet. I still have a bandage on that finger. That is why I say these modern medicines are not that effective. I have not tried to use all the medicines used in the old days; however, when I have a cold I use cedar. I boil the cedar and I drink the resultant solution. People get better when they do that. That is what I do today whenever a person has a bad cough. All these things were done in the past.

It would be better today if we did not rely so much on modern doctors. Every time somebody has an ailment, he runs to a doctor. They do not try the medicine the old generation had used. In the past, a person would see a doctor only once in the summer. Occasionally a doctor would come in the winter. He came only twice where we lived, although across the river in Fort Albany there was a doctor. That was where people saw a doctor once there was a hospital. That is where people went once they knew that a doctor could help them. Eventually, they did not bother with the things I mentioned, the medicines the old generation had used, once they relied on the doctor in giving them what they needed.

Community life was so strong because the people did not use any foreign materials. Whenever they wanted to have fun, they took it from their hearts. They never included anything that would create problems. People were only separated by death. I never hear about people leaving each other. It was only recently that I heard about this type of thing, about twenty years ago. That is what I know about these things I mentioned. I do not know what other people are thinking.

That is all. Thank you.

—recorded December 17, 1993





Father Lavoie, OMI





