Mushkegowuk First Nations Community and Life Experiences

John Paul Jacasum

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Preface

The purpose of this book is to highlight the past and present life experiences of elders and youth in the **southern** most Mushkegowuk communities. This book identifies the aspirations of these communities and reserves as described by the participants. Information found in this book may then be used by these communities and reserves for the future development of cultural, educational, social, and economic activities. This information may also be used to promote greater understandings between the Mushkegowuk and surrounding non-Native communities.

Information on life experiences and aspirations was gathered through audio-taped interviews collected from two elders and one youth of the Chapleau Cree, Missanabie Cree, and Taykwa Tagamou (New Post) First Nations of the Mushkegowuk Council.

These interviews were developed around three general statements given to thc participants:
(1) Describe your life in your community or reserve in the past.
(2) Describe your life in your community today.
and (3) Describe what your life might be like in your community or reserve in the future.

Following these interviews, community information was researched from a variety of sources. This information was used to complement the collected elders and youth stories and frame their words in context.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following people and organizations who made this book possible. The elders and youth of the Mushkegowuk First Nations who participated by contributing their personal stories and sharing their individual and collective hopes and dreams.

Second, the support of the Chiefs and Councils of the Mushkegowuk First Nations, who provided their support and commitment for this book, and in making their communities a better place to live.

Third, the staff of the Ojibway and Cree Cultural Centre, particularly Diane Riopel who provided administrative support, Kathy Perreault who researched the community profiles and collected the photographs, Kim Piché who took the community photographs, and Jim Hollander who co-edited the manuscript and prepared the maps.

Fourth, the Archives of Ontario and the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests for permission to publish their photographs.

And, last but by no means least, I acknowledge the support of the Canada Council for the Arts for funding our publishing program.

To all those who worked and contributed to this book a sincere *meegwetch*.

1 Introduction

The Mushkegowuk Council is the senior representative for seven First Nations in the western James Bay and Hudson Bay. These include Attawapiskat, New Post, Kashechewan, Fort Albany, Moose Cree, Chapleau Cree, and Missanabie Cree.

The Mushkegowuk Council can trace its origins back to the late 1970s. At that time the Chiefs of the James Bay communities formed what is known as the James Bay Tribal Council to work together addressing common concerns. In the early 80s, the organization was renamed Mushkego Cree Council. In 1984, the Council became federally incorporated and shortly thereafter, during an assembly in Kashechewan, it was again renamed Mushkegowuk Council.

The Mushkegwouk Council is governed by a board of seven directors. These members include a chief or councillor from each First Nation, plus the chair of the council. Their goal is to ensure the member First Nations work together to met the needs and aspirations of their citizens.

We have a general mandate to carry out the collective will of our members in exercising self-government through: promoting self reliance and local control, providing for our members in such areas as health, education, fire protection and community advisory services, and enhancing their unique cultures, traditions and languages.

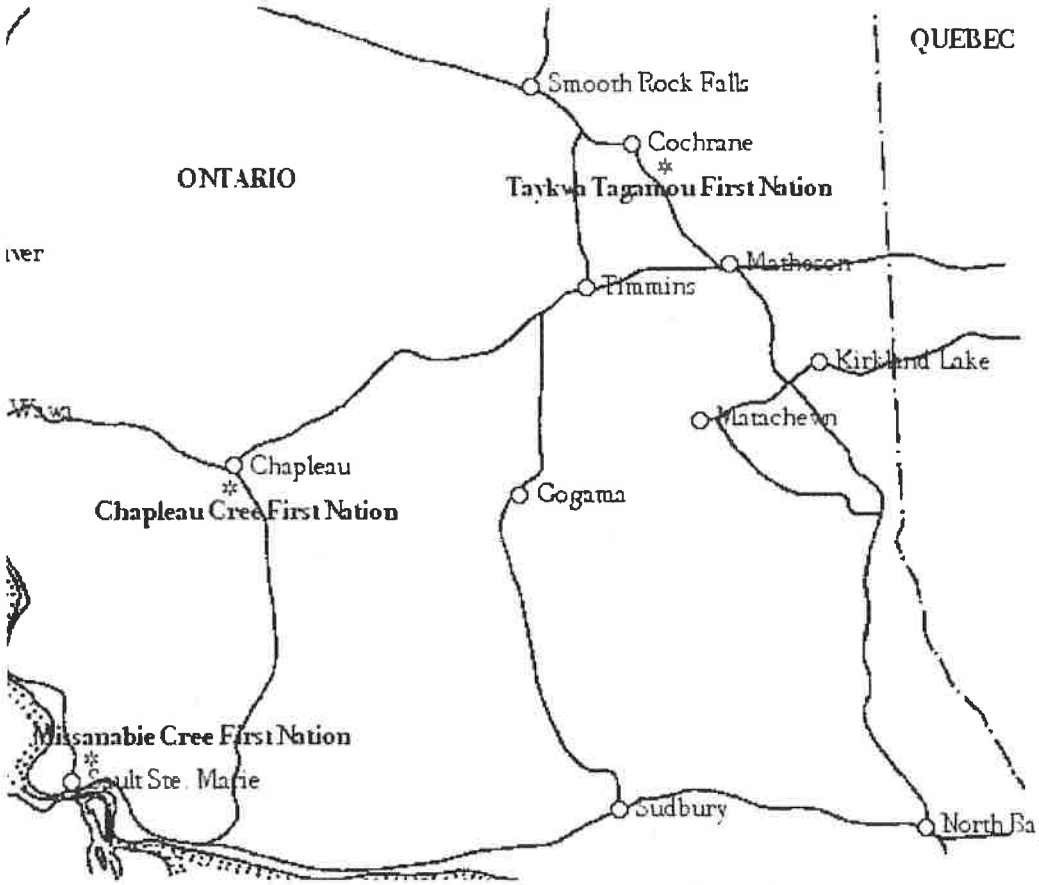
The Mushkegowuk Council is accountable to its members through the directors and through an annual assembly of chiefs, councillors, elders, women and youth delegates.

Mushkegowuk can mean two different things. One refers to the Mushkego. The people who lived there were very strong and powerful and that is the reason we are given the name Mushkegowuk. Our grandfathers unloaded the Hudson Bay Company ships when they came in. The word Mushkegowuk is [also] a reflection of our traditional religion, where we used powerful spirits to protect ourselves. It is said that there are

two kinds of Polar Bears, the greatest Polar Bear was used for spiritual help in our traditional religion.

So these are the reasons why our elders have chosen the name Mushkegowuk Council for our organization. When we are talking about the people we say Omushkego, and our territory is called Mushkegowuk Aski.

– from *Mushkegowuk Council: A Brief Overview*



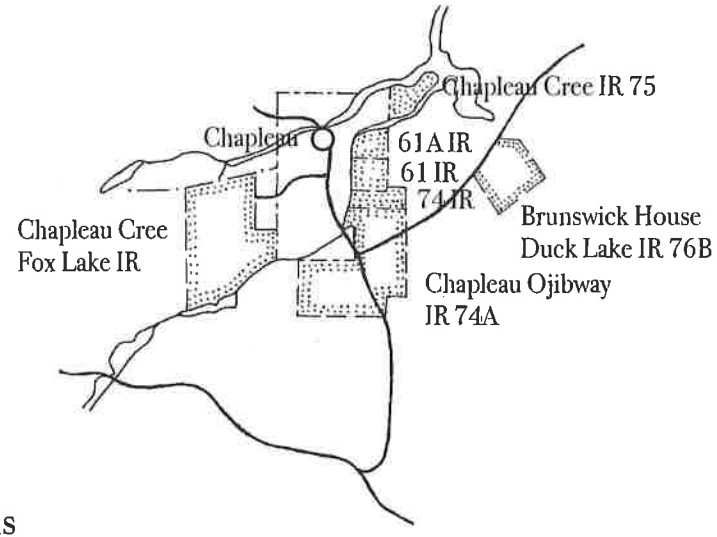
Mushkegowuk Council First Nation Communities

For information on the past life experiences of elders in the **Northern** Mushkegowuk communities (e.g., Attawapiskat, Kashechewan, Fort Albany, and Moose Factory), the following materials may be useful: Jacasum, J.P. (2000). *Omushkegowuk Women's Traditional Practices Project: Restoring the Balance*. Timmins, ON: Ojibway and Cree Cultural Centre or Jacasum, J.P. (2002). *Omushkegowuk Men's Traditional Practices Project: Restoring the Balance*. Timmins, ON: Ojibway and Cree Cultural Centre.

2

Chapleau Cree First Nation

P.O. Box 400
Chapleau, ON
P0M 1K0



The Chapleau Cree First Nation is located on the Fox Lake Reserve approximately three km southwest of Chapleau, Ontario. The Fox Lake Reserve is approximately 1035 hectares (4 square miles) in size. The original reserve, Chapleau Cree Indian Reserve 75, was set aside as part of the James Bay Treaty (Treaty #9) made in 1906. However, this reserve was unsuitable for habitation due to the poor quality of the land. In 1989, the Chapleau Cree First Nation established a permanent community on the Fox Lake Reserve following negotiations with the Federal and Provincial governments.

Population: 362 registered band members with 88 people living on-reserve (March, 2003)

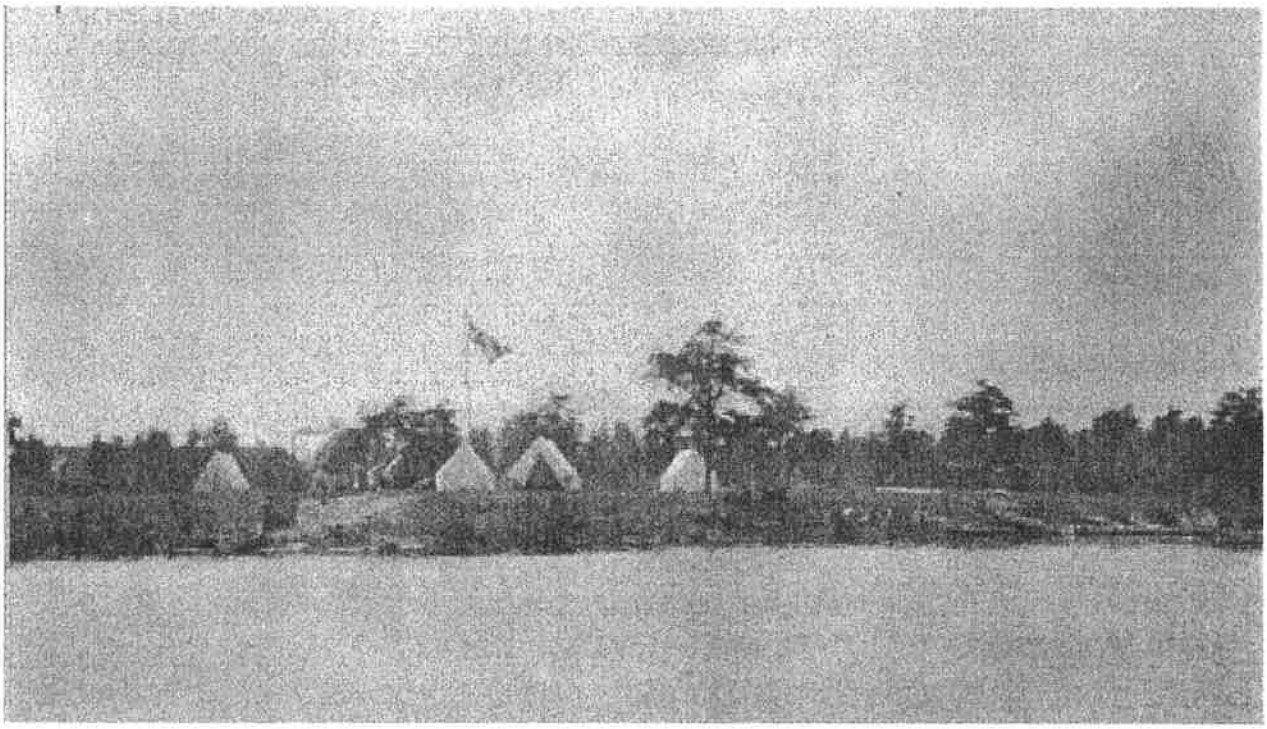
Schedule of Reserves–Treaty No. 9–1906
Moose Factory Crees–Chapleau
"In the province of Ontario, one hundred and sixty acres fronting Kerebesquashesing river."
–from *The James Bay Treaty (Treaty No. 9)*, 1964, pp. 18

The Chapleau Cree First Nation's past and current economic development projects include the construction of Mukeso House (a senior citizen's complex), on-reserve housing, a water treatment plant, an industrial garage with carpentry shop, a portable saw mill, and a band office.

The First Nation's future socio-economic development needs include the following: (a) becoming self-sufficient through individual businesses, (b) implementing community management schemes and control of resources, (c) restoring and preserving the Cree language, (d) increasing the on-reserve population, (e) promoting education, and (f) creating a stable and balanced economic base. Proposals for ecotourism, community enhancement, aboriginal healing, and community access programs are being developed to meet these needs.

In 1996, Wade Cachagee, owner and operator of Cree-Tech Incorporated a geographic information systems (GIS) business, was presented the Youth Entrepeneur of the Year by the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Business Awards.

Languages: English, Cree, French



Commisioner's Tent, Chapleau, ca. 1905, C275-2-0-1, S7647, Archives of Ontario

"The little town was named by Mrs. Noel de Tilley at the request of R. Duschene, a civil engineer employed by the C.P.R. She named the town, Chapleau, in honour of Sir Joseph Adoplphe Chapleau, lieutenant governor of Quebec. ... The Indians called the village then and for many years afterwards, Nemegosee."
–from *Pioneering in Northern Ontario*, p. 371

Marjorie Lee Cachagee

(recorded July 18, 2001)

Biographic Information
Name: Marjorie May Lee Cachagee
Date of Birth: February 15, 1945
Place of Birth: Chapleau
Present Address: Chapleau
Maiden Name: Cachagee
Name of Spouse: Robert E. Lee
Number of Children: 3
Grandchildren: 5
Number of Years Married: 14
Education: Grade 10
Interests/Hobbies: Fishing, Sports, Community Activities, Attending Workshops With Residential School Survivors

Community or reserve life in the past

(1) Describe your life in your community or reserve in the past.

OK, in the past, we had no First Nation. We had one down the river in Chapleau, but it wasn't suitable for our people. I never lived on a First Nation reserve until I moved here years ago. My auntie and my uncle were the ones who raised me until I was nine years old. I lived with them. I remember going in the bush with them hunting, trapping, and in the summer time, fishing. We lived in a little hamlet on the railroad called White Oak that is about an hour west towards Sudbury. At the age of nine I was taken away and put in at an Indian residential school. I was there from the age of nine until I was seventeen. I used to come here to Chapleau. Once in a while, I would spend my summers there with my auntie, my uncle, and my other aunties.

I spent one summer with my real mother. I spent the time with her because she had remarried and had other children. We still had contact. When I got out of the residential school, I wanted to become a physical education teacher, but they told me that I wasn't smart enough. They sent me to a hair dressing school. So, that was the career I pursued. I went to hair dressing school and got my license. I started working, met a guy and fell in love as they say when you're young. I got married and had three children. He joined the military when my son was four years old. He was in the military up to nine years ago. That's when my husband retired from the military. Then we moved here to Fox Lake.

I know there were a lot of hardships for my people when they were growing up, [especially] my parents and my brothers. I had six brothers who also went to residential school up in Moose Factory. I never knew them until I met them in the Shingwauk residential school in Sault Ste. Marie. They're all grown up now and have their own families. I have one brother who moved to this community. He is now the chief. His

children have moved here, three of them. I have one son who works for our First Nation, but lives in the town of Chapleau. I have a daughter who lives in Ottawa and is attending Algonquin College. I have another daughter in Sault Ste. Marie who is just roaming around.

I can't really talk about the reserve in the past, because like I mentioned earlier I never lived on the reserve. I always knew that Brunswick House reserve used to be in Tophet. Many of my relatives are still there today. It was hard, but I deal with it [the long history of residential schools] every day.

Do you know when this reserve first got started?
This reserve [got started] here because the other reserve was not feasible to live on. It was all swamp land. It was near the sewage plant. I know a long time ago people lived there. They didn't live there long. This reserve got started twelve years ago. At that time Doreen Cachagee was the chief. They found this parcel of land and that's how it began. It's very pretty here. When I first moved here, there were hardly any children. We didn't have a bus. We were just able to take them in a little van. Now there's so many children here that we've bought a bus. The First Nation bought a bus. Just last year they had to buy a bigger bus because there's so many young people moving back now with their own children. At first there might have been four or five children here and that was it.

"This reserve [got started] here because the other reserve was not feasible to live on."

What was that other reserve called?
I can't remember.

Do you know where it's located?
Yes, I do. It's located on the tip of the back river near Chapleau. I forget how many acres of land this is. I should have been more prepared, but I was told that we could never stay there because it's all swamp and muskeg. We couldn't build any homes there or infrastructure because of that. When Doreen became chief, she started looking for land with the other band members. This [the Fox Lake Reserve] is what they found. I think it's four square miles of land.

What do you think is going to happen to that land over there?
I don't know. I heard a lot of people talking about it. They only say that maybe we

should build youth camps for the summer time only. There probably won't be any water or sewer, but maybe they could build outhouses. We haven't really gotten into a lot of discussion about it. We just sort of put it on the shelf. Once in a while someone would bring it up and then we have a discussion on it. Then it's put on the shelf again.

What's the population on the reserve?
On the reserve, I think there are about eighty people. There are a lot of houses on the reserve that are band owned and there are a lot of houses on the reserve that are privately owned. People have their own mortgages. They have a senior's complex here with six apartments for our seniors and our elders–three of them are two bedrooms and three of them are one bedroom. It is full all the time. Our children are bussed from our First Nation to the schools in town.

Senior's Complex

What's the total band membership?
I would say approximately three hundred and fifty people who are scattered right across Canada. We even have a band member who lives in Australia. We have band members in the states and the rest are scattered throughout Canada from the BC coast to Nova Scotia down east.

Where does the majority of the band membership come from?
I would say that the majority of our band members came from up the James Bay coast. A lot of us are related to the Linklaters, Cheechoos, Cachagees, Sailors, Butterflys, and McKays. So, all our families originated from up the James Bay coast.

Do you know how many people moved here the first time?
I believe at first there were six houses, seven houses being built at first. That would be about eleven years ago. I moved here nine years ago. Then after that, people slowly started moving in. When I moved in here ... I would say there were four houses under construction including mine. My brother is the one who built my house. He built log homes.

When did you start having these gatherings or traditional pow wows?
I would say we had our first pow wow nine years ago. It was nine years ago. That's when Candy Corston was chief. She organized our first pow wow that was nine years ago. Going back to our traditional spirituality, when I was in the residential school, we were never allowed to do anything or even talk about it. Then marrying a non-Native, who was in the military at the time, I totally got away from all my Native people, my relatives and what not. Living a military life, you are posted every two to three years. You were constantly moving across Canada or over to Europe or what not. I always tried to tell them who they were. At that time we used to call ourselves Indians. I've always told them who they were, who I was, and where we came from. I always tried to bring them back to Chapleau when they were small for a visit. My children always knew and accepted that they are Native. I never hid that from them.

Do you know how many chiefs were here so far?
Four, four chiefs in ten years I guess, eleven years.

Community or reserve life today

(2) Describe your life in your community today.
It was a big decision [to move here] because I never lived in a First Nation before. [Also,] my husband and I took into consideration that he is not Native. He retired from the military nine years ago. We were going to move to British Columbia in Victoria or ... to Elliot Lake. Robert and I talked it over and I asked what he really thought of moving to this First Nation. He wasn't apprehensive or anything about it. He was very supportive. So, we decided to move here. We built a log home because I always wanted

a log home. As a child in the bush we had a log home. That's what we did, we moved here. Our children are all grown up and gone. So, we've been here for nine years.

I was a band councillor for six years. It was very challenging. I guess every First Nation has their differences and what not. There are still a lot of growing pains that are still happening, to this day, but in due time I know, well I know, I feel it, I feel this will all pass and everything will be better. It was a challenge for me in the beginning because I've never lived in a First Nation. I didn't know what a First Nation was about except what I used to read in newspapers. [There is] a lot of internal bickering and organizational arguing about who is a band member and who is not a band member. I know we're not the only First Nation that deals with these struggles every day. There's other First Nations that have the same things. But like I said previously, we're a young community. We're a new community. Many of our children are all grown up now going to universities and colleges. My hope is that one day we'll have something here for them to come back to. So that when they go to these universities and colleges, they could bring their expertise back to their home community.

"I was a band councillor for six years. It was very challenging."

Is there is employment on the reserve today?

Well, there is employment as long as we have construction going on within the band

Band Office

administration. We have a gas bar. There's employment for summer students. We usually have summer students every summer and they're employed through different programs provided by government agencies and what not. We have a public works garage where we rent out heavy equipment. We have mechanics to fix that equipment if it breaks down. So, we have that in place. We have carpenters who build our homes. We have people that know how to build log homes. ... I think we need something bigger and stronger. So, when our young people graduate from these colleges and universities they can move back here and put what they've learned from the colleges and universities to use for our First Nations and for our people. This is where I find we're lacking. We have to have something to bring them back here instead of them pursuing other opportunities in the big cities, in other towns, and whatever.

Do they ever have any training programs?
Yes, they do. They have training programs here. Right now we have two apprentice mechanics at our public works garage. I think it's their second year of apprenticeship. We have three women who are apprenticing in carpentry that is a first for our First Nation. I believe it's their second year also.

Do you have anything in heavy equipment training?
We did hold heavy equipment training approximately six years ago through Wabun Tribal Council. Nine years ago when I first came here we were with Wabun. Then we had another chief who decided to pull out of Wabun. That's when we went with Omushkegowuk. So, Wabun received funding for a heavy equipment course. We also had a scaling course here for one year.

We had a Cree language course. Daisy Turner was here twice and I found that the first few classes were just flowing. As it went down near the end, there might have been three or four of us that hung in. I think the people were getting the wrong idea. They figured they could just walk in and spend the week and talk in Cree. Maybe they got discouraged. They never came back. ... Our community needs to know our language. We have maybe four people who speak the language that live in our First Nation who are band members.

Do they have a clinic here?
We have our own health services. Yes, we do. We have our registered nurse. We have a registered practical nurse that cares for people on the reserve–our seniors and our

elders. They have different programs set up for them, such as shopping trips for the elders and medical runs into and out of town.

Do any people work in the town?
[Do you mean] in the town of Chapleau? There's some wives who work in the town of Chapleau. They're employed in the town of Chapleau.

Do you have a lot of non-Native people living here too?
Yes, we do. A lot of spouses are non-Native.

How many mills do they have around this area?
I believe there are two mills in the town of Chapleau.

The people that own the mill have a commitment to the reserves around here to hire a specific number of Native people?
I don't think so. I don't think they have any commitment, not to my knowledge. I know there are some Native people who do work in the mills.

Is any logging done around here?
I believe Brunswick House has Native logging. I think they do logging.

Community or reserve life in the future

(3) Describe what life might be like in your community or reserve in the future.
My life would be retirement, having my family come home, and having my children and my grandchildren come home to visit. Like I said previously, getting our university and our college graduates to come back to our communities to work here, to get married, and to have their children here, that's what I like to see. I'd like to see them come back and work here and work in harmony and just stay here. I enjoy it here and I like it very much. This is my home. As I said earlier, I never lived in a First Nation until I moved here. I love it here. This is my home, my children's home, my grandchildren's home, and my step children's home. I don't like calling them my step children. I call them my children because they were with me for a long time. They're not status, but they come home every year. They visit and they love it here. All my nieces and nephews come here as much as they can. They live in the cities such as Toronto, Montreal, and all over the

"I feel if there was employment for band members who live off reserve then they would move here and stay here and raise their families here."

place. They come home once or twice a year and spend a couple of weeks here. They love it here. They have to stay in the cities and go with the city life because there's no work here. I feel if there was employment for band members who live off reserve then they would move here and stay here and raise their families here.

Do you think this reserve is going to get bigger?
Yes, I do. I feel it's going to get bigger. We're ready for expansion. The only thing is to get work for the young people so they can move here and have a life here. They need that. It just can't be a place for people like me or other people of the First Nation to come here and just retire. We have to bring our young people here. We need a place for them. This is their home. They have to get some kind of high tech employment for them or whatever so that they can return here and continue their life.

How many houses do they have here?
I'm not sure what the count is for housing. There are twelve [houses] on that side of the lake. There are twenty-five or twenty-six homes, not counting our senior's complex.

Do you think other people will be changing their band memberships to come here?
There are a lot of transfers to our First Nation already. We have a lot of transfers from other First Nations.

This concludes the questions I wanted to ask you, but is there anything else you would like to say?
I would like to see our community grow. I always emphasize that to our young people. I'd like to see them come back to their community and make jobs and something to keep them here. This is their home. They should be here.

Do you see anything in the future such as some kind of industry or businesses that will be made on the reserve or close to the reserve?
I could see high tech going on with computers or what not. I could see people working in that field. One other thing I always think we need in this area is a treatment centre. The people from our community or the other communities always have to travel away. Maybe something small in this area would be an advantage for all the First Nations in this area. ...

Do you know if there are any plans for having a school on the reserve?
There's no plan for it, but at one time there was a small meeting on building a school because there are three First Nations here. It was something talked about, but it never was brought to light or anything.

Does this area have a potential for tourism?
Yes, it does. It has a big potential for eco-tourism, but there's obstacles or barricades put up every once in a while. It becomes all political and this is what holds it back. So, if you could get rid of the politics everything would run smoothly, but unfortunately that's what happens. In due time when the young people are all finished their education and come back, they can take over. They will take over and they can accomplish the things we dream about. Also, with so many cutbacks in government agencies it's difficult to get funding and dollars for these things.

Did you see any changes when you joined the Mushkegowuk Council?
Yes, I did. I saw big changes. I found that there were more training dollars for our people and that's why we have mechanics, the two mechanics, and our carpenters. We had people on different training programs. I found a big change from the other tribal council that we were with. Maybe those things were all there too, and we just didn't know it. You know, maybe they could've accessed those training dollars from the other tribal council.

Reg Fletcher

(recorded July 18, 2001)

Biographic Information
Name: Reginald James Fletcher
Date of Birth: September 25, 1936
Place of Birth: Missanabie
Present Address: Fox Lake First Nation
Name of Spouse: Jeannette Bouchard
Number of Children: 4
Grandchildren: 10
Number of Years Married: 45
Education: Grade 9
Interests/Hobbies: Flying, Fishing, Hunting, Carpentry

Community or reserve life in the past

(1) Describe your life in your community or reserve in the past.

I started on the old reserve behind the river. I lived with my grandfather on the old reserve down by the back river in Chapleau. This was in the early forties. I was only about eight or ten years old. I went to the residential school after that. I moved back up to Chapleau in 1975, I think. They had this new reserve—the Fox Lake Reserve. They hired me as a contractor to cut the road in from the highway. I had eight men working with three skidders. We did this in three weeks. We came in seven thousand dollars under budget, so that was a feather in my hat that time.

So, from then on I was working for the band as an operator, as a foreman, and as a councillor. We put all the roads in. We did the infrastructure for all the water mains, the water treatment plant, and about fourteen houses that one year. This was all in 1991. My basement was finished and we were both living in the basement, so I was the first one to live on the Fox Lake Reserve at that time. I was the first one to live on it.

" ... I was the first one to live on the Fox Lake reserve at that time."

From then on, we seemed to have a power struggle on this reserve between the chief and council and a few people who lost, that lost the power. Even to this day there is a power struggle going on. [It is not] like I remember when we were back home, when we didn't have a reserve, but when we were living in a [close] knit community. We ended up by sharing with each other, caring for each other, and helping each other. These are the goals I'm trying to bring back to this reserve. I hope in the future that it will come to this, so that we can get along. [I hope we can] put all the animosity and everything behind us and live in peace and harmony with the Creator. These are the things I want to remember and the things I want to see for our future generation. We have to put the past behind us, all the bad stuff, and go on with the future. I don't know if this is just a statement, but that's the way I feel.

I try to proclaim it in my sayings as an elder on the reserve, in our morning prayers, in our grand openings, or in greeting each other. We have always said *wacheeyay*, *wacheeyay*. I can remember the respect, the love, and the honesty people had for each other back home. This is what we want to work for. This is what we want to strive for, but I think it's a long road to go. We have to forgive, forget and go on. I lived the culture to the best way that I know how. Maybe we're not familiar with all the cultures, traditions and that, but we're always willing to learn. I'm sixty-five years old now. I'm still ready to learn. I'd still like to be able to speak my own language. That's one thing they took away from us when we were young. The more I hear of it, the more I understand. I need to pick up more words all the time. If it were spoken in our community the younger children would learn too. These are the things I hope for.

Health Centre

Do you know what the reserve was called before?

It was Chapleau Cree Reserve seven[ty-five], I think. I'm not sure of the number, but it was only a little piece of land down on the back river. I think it was a hundred and sixty-seven acres or something. It was mostly all swamp. I can remember my grandfather and my grandmother having a house down there with my uncle. There were two houses when I was there. This was back in the early forties.

Do you know where this reserve is?
Oh yeah. I've gone back down to the reserve. I went back down to see if I could find my roots there, but there was nothing but a pile of dirt there now. There never was any road access. It was all by water. I remember paddling down the river with my grandfather.

How far is it from here?
It's only about a half mile down the back river, not very far.

Is Fox Lake named for this lake here?
[The reserve is named] Fox Lake because there were so many foxes around here. They call them *makayshoo* which is fox in our language. ... I think that's why they named the reserve Fox Lake Reserve because there were so many foxes around. When we were first building this reserve there were foxes all over the place. They were feeding from our hands when we were sitting down having our lunch beside the road. The foxes would come right up to you and eat right out of our hands. That's harmony with nature. You don't see that very often.

"When we were first building this reserve there were foxes all over the place."

Did you do any trapping or anything?
Oh yeah. I used to trap when I was younger and when I was with our father. They never gave us a trapline, so we were poaching in the park (Chapleau Crown Game Preserve). That's where our traditional hunting and fishing grounds were. It's a game preserve all the way to the Missanabie River, the Chapleau River, the Kebsquasheshing River, the Albany River, and all the rivers that flow into James Bay, Hudson Bay, and all our territorial waters. They took this section from us in 1925. We have a challenge with the court nowadays. We went in last year on Remembrance Day. We did a hunt and shot two moose in the park. We are challenging the courts on this. Before we were born, I believe our grandfathers and our grandmothers even before us were trapping in this area. ... They gave me a trapline way out of my treaty area, but I'm getting too old to go around there by myself.

Do you still have your trapping area?
Yes, I still have it.

Are you going to pass it on to somebody?
I don't really know anybody who really wants to go that far. I would like to get another trapping area in our treaty area. I'll evoke my rights and trap in any place in Treaty #9. I told the wardens already that I have the right as an aboriginal to trap and hunt in my traditional area and in Treaty #9. These are the things we have to challenge. Now they're changing over the different areas. We've given all this fur harvesting and management to a private company, and all the lands and everything else. This is the big thing we're fighting for–our own lands. I like that song *This is Our Land.*

Is there a river that goes by here?
The Chapleau River in the town of Chapleau flows right from here right down to Moosonee.

Were you ever a councillor?
I was a councillor on the reserve for six years.

Were you a councillor during the time when the reserve went into the Mushkegowuk Council?
Oh yeah, but I'm not sure if I was a councillor then or not. I don't think so. I was a councillor from 1990 through to 1996. I was a councillor for about six years. I'm not sure what time we joined Mushkegowuk. We were associated with Wabun.

Do you know why they switched tribal councils?
I'm not really sure why they switched. I don't think Wabun was doing enough for our people. We were kind of like on the road. We went from the other reserves and that. I think that's what it was, I'm not sure.

Do you find a change since you went into the Mushkegowuk Council?
Well, Mushkegowuk is all right I guess, but it's slow too. You know there's money transferred from the government to Mushkegowuk. Mushkegowuk is transferring it to several places. So, there's money handed down. There's always a little chunk taken off here and a little chunk taken off there. So, maybe it will go to NAN first and then to Mushkegowuk and then to the Chapleau Cree. Each of them gets a little bit of it. By the time the money reaches the Chapleau Cree in training dollars or subsidies or whatever, it gets cut down more and more all the time.

Did you always belong to this band?
No, I started with the Missanabie Cree, but there wasn't anything going on with them. I moved over to the Chapleau Cree here in 1975, I think. I've been with them since. Like I say, there's always been a power struggle here as far as who wants to be chief. We don't have enough people to go around and do all this work, too many chiefs and not enough Indians. [We don't have enough] even on the committees when you get committees out, you know.

Community or reserve life today

(2) Describe your life in your community today.
Well, like I say, there's a power struggle going on here now. I don't like this because I think people should get along. As far as being a resident of the community, I'm an elder. I attend functions. I replace the chief sometimes at different conferences and get some input into how the government acts in money transfers, Rama, and all these different things. I'm with Kunuwanimano Child and Family Services as an elder and I sit there for the Chapleau Cree Reserve. ... I want to help some people. I want to help them get over this and live like decent human beings and get along. I say this in my early morning prayers and in my evening prayers. I thank the Creator to give me the wisdom to even say this. I don't think it's only in our community here. I think it's pretty well all over. It's always a power struggle for chief and council. There's so many different things involved living on the reserve nowadays. Sure, we have benefits that give us tax exemption. We get a cut on our gas. They start to look after the elders sometimes and at other times they forget too. I had them shovel off my roof one winter and then I had to turn around to get them to fix my shingles because they took my shingles off.

Do they have any fish in this lake here?
Just pike in there. They have a little fishing derby in March every year that they put on for the children. We don't have enough activities for our children here on this reserve. We put up a rink here one year. We are sixty-five to sixty-eight years old and we're out there shovelling the rink. We've got so much to give the community. It's been torn down since last year. [There's] no more rink for the kids. They could put up a little place for them to skateboard there, play basketball, play tennis, and some exercise but you know they're too busy doing other things. These are the things we have to do for our children. That's what I'd like to see done for our children. I'd like to see them taught the Native ways of living such as making snowshoes, making drums, and doing

carving and beadwork, and all this. That's not all there is to life, so it's part of our tradition. They have to know the culture too. Why we honour the eagle? Why we take tobacco down? When we take some medicines from the ground? These are the things we have to teach our children.

Are there places around here that are good for fishing or is the hunting good here?
Oh yeah. In fact, I hunt right from my living room, my kitchen table. I sit at the end of the lake ... and I look down the other end of the lake. If I see a moose, I jump in my canoe and bang I shoot a moose and bring it back. I did that three times now and there's jealousy on account of that. I'm not shooting anywhere near any buildings or anything else. I'm on my own reserve shooting moose when they come to my lake. I wouldn't say my lake, but the lake on the reserve. You know there's animosity over that. They said you got the whole area of Treaty #9 to hunt, why hunt on the reserve. Well, that's what the reserve is all about when it first started. You could only hunt on the reserve. You couldn't hunt any place else. I do out fishing now that I'm retired. I take my wife out with the trailer and we go out fishing. [It's] pretty good fishing there, [but] not like it really should be. They do a lot of spraying around here, defoliating the trees and everything else. It's got to get into the food chain somewhere along the line and damage our fishing and hunting. I know it's damaging our hunting, because I went into one area one year. It's faded and there wasn't a leaf around. There wasn't one green leaf around at all. You couldn't even find a mouse track at all. [There are] no birds, nothing, no birds singing, no wolves howling or anything like that. They're not going to stay in that area because there's nothing to eat. These are the things we really have to be pushing against–this biochemical spraying. They want to take logs. They harvest all the trees and everything. They don't even give them a chance to grow up as cover for the animals and that.

"They do a lot of spraying around here, defoliating the trees and everything else."

Do they have a place here for church services?
Yeah, once in a while the minister comes in from town. They have communion at the senior's complex, but we haven't had that for a while either. Things are breaking up and falling apart.

They don't really have a church here?
Not a church on the reserve. We already have an Anglican church downtown.

Playground

Community or reserve life in the future

(3) Describe what life might be like in your community or reserve in the future.

Well, I hope that in the future they'll respect me and look after me because I'm too old to cut my own wood. I live in my own house and I'm renovating, you know. ... As far as the children, I think what you're going to see them growing up and moving away from the reserve to get a better education. Then you don't know if they're going to come back. We have a few people coming back now, but it's not like it should be. There isn't much for our children to do here, you know. If you're not working for the band you're not contributing anything you know. There isn't enough economic development to sustain our younger children as they're coming up. ... Since Mike has been chief, he's been doing more for us as elders. Like I said, they cut our wood, shovel our roof, plow our roads, and that. These are the things I think that should be mandatory for the elders. They shouldn't be out there chopping. I've got a hard time. I've got a pace maker and everything else. I get out and do all these things. I still like to go and walk around in the bush and everything else you know. [I like to listen] to the birds singing and the solitude. You get to mingle with the Creator you know. I'm a believer that the Lord made all these beautiful things for us and that we should look after them.

Do you think this reserve is going to get bigger?

Well, it's going to be a while yet before it gets bigger. There's still lots of room for

expansion. We were supposed to be building all the way around Fox Lake on the southwest side and on the northeast side. We still have about maybe twenty lots on this side and about maybe about ten, fifteen lots on the other side of the lake that have to be developed before we move any further. ... We are looking for more of a treaty land entitlement. I think that one of our goals is to have more land than anything. Maybe we could go into a pro venture with different companies to do something with the land instead of having to take second fiddle. We never had any royalties coming from our forests and our mining. Even with our tourism, I like to see it prosper and grow with the understanding that you have to work together and share. I've been listening to the teachings of the grandfathers: caring, sharing, loving, and honesty. These are teachings that are supposed to be built into our teachers from our grandfathers and grandmothers. They can have everything they need. If they don't have respect for each other, they don't have anything at all. This is my philosophy.

"They can have everything they need. If they don't have respect for each other, they don't have anything at all."

Did the government put money up for the road from the main highway?
Oh yeah, the government paid for the road in.

Did they pay for the paving too?
There was infrastructure money [for it]. The reserve had so much money to put the road in and they contracted it out. They had so much money for infrastructure. Then we started an economic development corporation. Then they bought heavy equipment to do our infrastructure. We dug all our waterlines with our own backhoes, graders, and bulldozers. These things are great assets to the band. ... They started to rent equipment. My philosophy was that you don't rent out equipment unless you have your operator go with it. What happens is it goes out, gets damaged, and comes back. They only pay for the rental part of it. They don't pay for the material cost of fixing it. We have an outstanding account now with Caterpillar to fix one of our tractors. It's outstanding. They want work, but the equipment has to be put back into shape. You have to have competent operators. You teach your own operators how you want them to operate [the equipment]. Then you hold somebody responsible. If it runs short of oil in the engine, [then] that's just pure neglect. If a big log comes up and busts a hole in it and you run short of oil and damage the engine, well that's a different story. But just to run short of oil or hydraulic oil, burn out ten thousand dollar pumps and stuff like this, that's neglect. I did a lot of that work in the field. I was a mechanic for eleven years. I worked on heavy equipment. I can operate just about any piece of equipment there is.

This is what I want to do. I want to pass on my information, my skills to different people growing up who want to learn. That's what I always said. Put them with me for my last five years of work and then they'll gain five years [of experience] from my thirty years of experience. It took me thirty years to learn to do all these things and I can teach them in five. That is a good principle.

Did you ever provide training for anybody on those machines?
Oh yeah. My son and I, we put on a course. In fact, it was done through Wabun. We put on a heavy equipment course. Each of them that came in there didn't have a license for anything. We taught them with all the heavy equipment, the bulldozers, the backhoes, and the trucks with every feature on it. [We taught them] how it's supposed to be operated and when it's supposed to be operated. All the pre maintenance that's supposed to be there ... and the checks and all that. The checks and balances that have to be done before you even start the machine. These are the courses we put on. There were twelve people and I think we had ten of them that passed here. Now we have only two on the reserve here that can drive with an A truck or a D truck license. I had a lot of licenses before. I had an AZ. I had a BZ. Now I got a D, and that's it. I can't drive anything anymore. Even my wheelbarrow is hard to drive now.

Do you think this road is going to be paved here?
It's surfaced now. It's got a prime and surface treatment on it. It's got a tar base with oil and stone like a secondary road just to control your dust and that. As far as pavement, well that's a different story. I don't think you're going to see that unless the band is goes in for a lot of money or something. The government restricts you. There is only so much money for roads and bridges and water and anything else. We asked for another well to be drilled because our wells are deteriorating a little. We want to bring the reserve back up to standards. ... The belts are getting tighter as far as INAC (Indian Affairs) goes. I'm not familiar with what's going on because I put some of that stuff aside now. ... We need that respect and I keep going back to this. Sometimes words of help and words of encouragement [are needed].

Do you know if they're doing any exploration around here for minerals or whatever?
Not for minerals. No. The only expectation was wanting the town once to jump in on the eco-tourism to develop their game preserve as a tourist attraction. They have a big sign out there that says, the biggest preserve in the world. They wanted to get in on the band wagon on that. ... There used to be [one] up around in Missanabie. There used to

be a gold mine up there for a while, but I don't think any revenues came for that First Nation. They poisoned a few lakes and that.

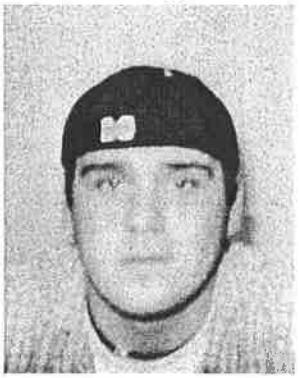
Do they have sawmills here?
Yeah, they have sawmills here.

Do they have an agreement with the reserves as to how many Native people they're going to employ?
No.

I guess a certain percentage of Native people are working there?
Oh yeah. They have a certain percentage, but I don't think it's outstanding. It's just whoever is capable of doing the job I guess. You have to submit a resume. They sit on the hiring list for a year unless you're a key man I guess. They want mechanics, welders, millwrights, or whatever. If you're qualified then they'll hire you. I don't think enough Native people go into trades or have enough trades to fulfill our own needs. We don't have that on the reserve here. We don't have enough men to fill our carpentry, plumbing, electrical, and air conditioning needs. These are the things we have to train our own people for.

That about concludes my questions and I would ike to thank you for giving me time to interview you.
I just like to thank you for having me. I hope the information that I've passed on to you is useful in helping somebody else and for the good of our nation. I thank you very much. *Meegwetch.*

Wyatt Lincez



(recorded July 18, 2001)

Biographic Information
Name: Wyatt Barret John Louis Lincez
Date of Birth: November 22, 1982
Place of Birth: Kapuskasing
Present Address: Fox Lake First Nation
Education: Grade 12
Interests/Hobbies: Fishing, Reading, Women

Community or reserve life in the past

(1) Describe your life in your community or reserve in the past.
Well, I was born.

Where were you born?
OK. I was born in Kapuskasing, Ontario. My mother and father separated when I was in Grade three. My mother moved to the Wahgoshig reserve in Matheson. I stayed with my father until I was fourteen years old. [Then] my father passed away. I moved here because my mom moved here and it was close to the Sault for business. When I was living in Kapuskasing, I was into mischief and did what kids do I guess. Ever since I moved here I turned around a lot because this is a really good [community]. This reserve is a really good community and the people are good. My grandfather turned me around. My grandfather, Lindy Loutitt, is from Moosonee.

"Ever since I moved here I turned around a lot because this is really good."

Was there anything when you first came here?
There was the little band office when we first moved here. The band office was set up just by the stop sign. Last year I worked here and we put up this band office. ... There wasn't like too much for the youth to do on the reserve being sixteen years old. I think they could you know work a little bit better on the recreation, but now we're starting to get a lot more families. We're starting to get more established with more families moving in. There's a lot of children around, so it's getting a little bit more busy for recreation. I don't know what else to say.

Did you come here because your parents came here?
I came here when my grandfather adopted me. ... They had to push when we moved here because Kapuskasing has about ten thousand people. Then going from a town that small to a town with ... two thousand people is kind of like not really bad like culture shock. It took some time to get used to it. Now I think I'm ready to move on. I'm going to the city in September. I just hope that small town life taught me enough.

Were your parents Native people?

My mother is about half Native I guess. My grandfather is a Native, but my father was from Belgium, yeah, French people. My father owned a store. Well, my grandfather ran the store in Kapuskasing called Charlie's Mens and Boys Wear. He used to fly with my grandfather, Lindy. They're both pilots. I just find it really weird how my mother who was born in Cochrane and was adopted by a French couple who moved to Fauquier that's just outside Kapuskasing. My mother was like hanging around with my dad, and my dad's dad who was all along my grandfather Lindy (my mother's real father). You could see the connection there, but it's just the way things go. He's been around her all her life, but they just never knew anything of it.

So have you worked in the past?

The first job that I ever had was working here as a summer student. The first year that I worked here, I was on recreation. We only had eight kids working with us. I was talking to some of the guys here. One guy who works in recreation, I forget what town he's from, but it's somewhere up north, he's got two hundred and fifty children to take care of in the summer. Then I started working at the Fox Lake gas station. When they first established the gas station, there were only eight customers from Brunswick House and the locals from the reserve here. Now, we've taken over all the competition in town and I have to say, well, that we have the lowest gas price. A lot of people from town come to us for gas and I'm glad to say that I took part in it.

Community or reserve life today

(2) Describe your life in your community today.

I find it's really hard to grow up in a small town being eighteen years old. I'm supposed to be, you know, having fun because right after college I'm going into the real world. I gotta start my family, get a job, and stuff. I found it kind of like hard growing up and going to high school in a town like this. It's depressing because of the lack of people and it's not real close to any of the other major cities, well [except], Timmins, Sudbury, and the Sault. You know kids my age want to be down south around this time. They all want to flock to where the warm weather is. There's a lot of politics on the reserve and I don't want to get into it. My grandfather tells me not to get into it. Right now there's a lot of things going on. ... I find it hard being like caught between all this politics and stuff. People, who I used to like being with a couple of

"I think that Fox Lake is going right now and that it's a really like well-managed reserve."

summers ago, don't want to spend with me because of who my grandfather is. I don't think that's right.

Gas Bar

Community or reserve life in the future

(3) Describe what life might be like in your community or reserve in the future.

There could be two more sawmills, another water plant, and enough housing for an extra two hundred people. I think that Fox Lake is going right now and that it's a really like well-managed reserve. The people are all good people. There's one hundred percent employment. I just think that all around it's a very good community. They only could only build it up from here. I think, the former chief Bill Cachagee, did some real good things for the reserve. He put in the first roads and the first houses. I don't know, but for a young reserve I think we're going to do OK.

Does the council or the elders include the youth or are they being excluded?

I think we're being excluded. The communication is there, but it's just they don't like make us feel welcome. I don't think there is any room for the youth to get into it with there being so much politics. I honestly, like personally, think that it would just be better if the youth just stay out of politics because I think politics are really a bad thing.

Do you think the youth should voice their opinions so the people can know how they view things from their perspective?
I don't think we get the respect that we deserve being the youth. We're the future and I don't think that we get the respect that we should get. They just see us like we're kids you know.

What do you think about the traditional activities they have here like traditional pow wows or gatherings?
I meet a lot of interesting people around like pow wows and stuff like that. I met some of the greatest people I'm ever going to meet around pow wows. I think that the pow wows are great here. There are a lot of like chances for the youth to get into it. ... The women go out and they teach the other ones. The men go and well however it goes. Actually, I've never been to a sweat lodge myself, but yeah like many people do get into that kind of stuff. ... The youth must get into the traditional [stuff] a lot more. None of the youth around our reserve speak Cree. I understand a little bit of Cree just from my grandfather and his buddies talking and stuff. I think they could do a little bit more about teaching the kids tradition, yeah, the youth.

Do you have anything else you want to say or any further comments ?
I just say don't do drugs, heh, heh, heh.

3

Missanabie Cree First Nation

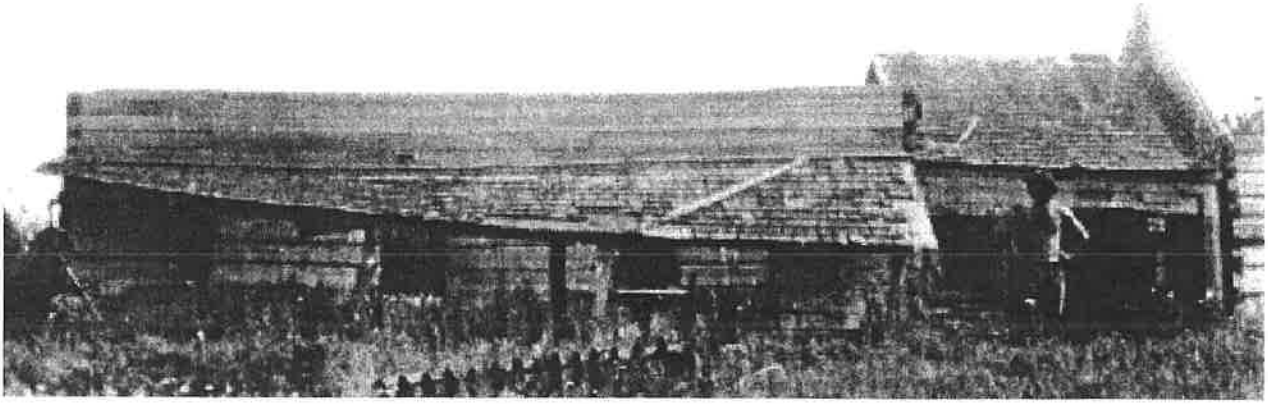
174B Hwy 17E Bell's Point
Garden River, ON
P6A 6Z1

The Missanabie Cree First Nation currently has no reserve land base. The Band Office is located in Sault Ste. Marie. The Missanabie Cree First Nation's traditional territory centred around Missinaibi Lake, Dog Lake, and Wabatongushi Lake. The Missanabie Cree First Nation plans to establish a reserve by 2005 or earlier.

Population: 345 registered band members (March, 2003)

The Missanabie Cree First Nation's current and future economic development projects include the following: (a) purchasing a small business centre, (b) forming business partnerships in the areas of forestry, computers, water bottling, and alternative energy sources, (c) developing a feasibility study for a community centre, (d) investigating partnerships for log hauling, (e) developing a training program for Native residential construction workers, and (f) submitting proposals for various initiatives, e.g., Island View Camp expansion, purchase of newer equipment, formation of the Missanabie Development Corporation, and forestry activities such as sawmill operation.

Languages: English and Cree



Missinaibi Lake, Old HBC Post, 1944, Ontario Department of Lands and Forests

Jackie Fletcher

(recorded November 14, 2002)

Biographic Information
Name: Jacqueline Mary Fletcher
Date of Birth: December 12, 1942
Place of Birth: Chapleau
Present Address: Sault Ste. Marie
Maiden Name: Fletcher
Name of Spouse: Doug Markie
Number of Children: 4
Grandchildren: 5
Number of Years Married: 17
Education: Grade 12, some University
Interests/Hobbies: Guitar, Singing, Clogging, Sitting by the Water

Community or reserve life in the past

(1) Describe your life in your community or reserve in the past.

I never lived on a reserve. I ended up living in a very small railway community, on the CPR railway, between I will say, Chapleau and White River. The little community was called Lochalsh. It was made up of French people, Indian people, some Swedish people, and from time to time there were Portuguese people coming through who worked on the extra gangs. These were the kinds of things I was exposed too. There were some English people and all kinds of different cultures living in that small community.

"There were some English people and all kinds of different cultures living in that small community."

What I remember about being there was that I had a lot of freedom to come and go when I wanted when I was a kid. It was a small community. Basically, the whole community kept an eye on the little kids. There was a core group of us. There were about seven, six or seven of us, who were about the same age. We always played together. We always had fun. We were able to come up with games or activities to do every day. I don't remember ever being bored when I was a kid. We did not have TV, but we had a radio.

The most memorable time I had was when I used to go back in the bush with my mom and dad. We would go and set up camp in the bush. We would fish. My dad used to hunt and trap. We would set up camp in the winter time. I remember we used to take my little sister on a toboggan. I used to be in the toboggan too. They would take us to the camp and we would stay there, sometimes for a couple of weeks.

In the summer time, we would do the same thing. We would go fishing. My dad used to guide tourists, so he would take us as part of his guiding. The tourists would have their own tents and we would have our own tent. It was like those prospector's tents, but

there were no boards on it or anything. We used to line the tents with boughs, spruce boughs. I remember her, my mother, doing that. She used to cook out in the open fire. I remember her, making fish in the frying pan and making bannock on a stick—those kinds of things.

I used to love going fishing with my dad. He used to fly fish all the time. I was not really interested in fly fishing, but I liked the spinning rod. He showed me how to use that. I would bait my own hook and those kinds of things. I just loved being in the bush. There were always things to do. Our family was always very happy back then.

The sad part about it was when we had to come out. When we came out my dad would be drinking and when he drank he was a violent person. All the time, he would get mad at his own family like my mom. He would get mad at friends or at anybody who was there. He would start to get angry about that. That's one part of my life I really feel bad about. ... My mom used to hide us when she knew my dad was drinking. I guess my salvation was that my mom never drank. She was always looking after and taking care of us. That was a real good thing.

The thing that I remember about the community was when the trains would go by. We [the group of kids] would all go down and watch the trains. We would watch who was getting off the train and who was getting on. It was an exciting time of the day. It did not matter where we were. If we were all swimming, or you know, if we were sliding, as soon as we heard the trains, the passenger train, we would all run down to the station, so would all the community people. In the summertime, we would live off the hazelnuts, cherries, pink cherries, raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, and goose berries. We used to play in the bush a lot making all kinds of trails and camps and things like that. In the wintertime, I can remember, if we got up early in the morning there would be crust all over the place. You could run where you couldn't go when the snow was soft. That was so much fun. You could slide. I used to have a good time when I was a kid.

There was a lot of drinking in the community—not only Native people, but non-Native people. I guess that happened all over the place. The other thing that the adults used to do was play cards. There would be different times when they would come to our house. The adults would come to our house. We could hear them laughing and everything from the bedroom. They did not drink at those times. I don't know why, but they never drank when they played cards. They always had good food. Someone would make

something special for that night. It was fun because we could hear all kinds of laughter and storytelling when they did that.

My dad, my uncle, and my cousins all guided at the tourist camps. That's where they made their money. In the winter time there was hardly any money, but in the summertime there was lots of money flowing around. I remember a couple of years when my dad was trapping in the winter and he did not have a good season at all. We did not have much money for Christmas, but we always had Christmas. That's what I remember and even if we did not have money, my mom and dad would make things so we could have presents for Christmas.

My grandma used to come around all the time. She would speak Cree to my mom and dad, but they never spoke Cree to us. We never learned our language. There were a lot of teachers who came to our community, but there was no structure to the school system. I remember just fooling around in the school all the time with the different teachers. One time, there was a teacher that came who was very nice and very strict. We were learning, but that wasn't very often. I guess it was because of what they were paying the teachers and the isolation and those kinds of things. That's why the education wasn't that good there.

I was 14 years old when I was sent away to the residential school, me and my younger sister, here in Sault Ste. Marie. That was a hard thing for me. It was hard enough to go to an institution that big. That scared me as well as having my sister there and not being able to talk to her or anything.

Salvation for me was that I could play guitar. I brought a guitar with me and because of that I immediately had a lot of people who were interested in me. [I] would sit around my bed at night. That took away the loneliness and sadness I was experiencing. My younger sister was going through a very, very rough time. She could not make any contact with anybody, especially me. So, she ended up staying there for that year. I talked to my mom and dad about it and I told them to take her out of here because she is getting so sick and weak. They saw that too. I said I cannot sleep at night; it's affecting me too. The following year, they took her out and I was able to concentrate more on school work. It was a hard time because the only times you get to see your parents was at Christmas time and summer time. Once in a while they would come up,

but they did not have much money. They could not do that too often. They did not have much money they could send us.

After Grade eight, I went to Anna McKay here in Sault Ste. Marie. I took the special testing they do when you go to a different school. They told me that I would be in Grade eight for two years, but that year I graduated from Grade eight. The next year, I went to Sir James Dunn High School. I ended up still being in a residential school, but I had a further walk to go to school. In the following year, they boarded us out in the community of Sault Ste. Marie. I ended up with a lady ... who lived on North Street. I still remember the address and everything. I stayed there until Grade eleven. Every year I had to go back there. When I think about it now, I didn't realize it at the time, the government was paying her monthly to have me stay there, plus I had to do all the work. So, she not only had money from me, but she also had a servant there. She was not mean to me, but she was not a welcoming person either. It was just that I could stay there and I had to do the work. She never was the kind to give me a hug or things like that. I was not allowed to use any of the [machines] like the washing machine, the sewing machine or anything like that. I basically had to eat all my meals by myself.

The following year, she brought in two more people, two more girls for the residential school. They had the bigger bedroom and I had the smaller bedroom. We had lots of fun because we were able to share the workload and the company. The year after that, I guess she was not able to handle the three kids so there was me again, by myself. I stayed there until I finished Grade eleven.

From there I went to Toronto and met my common law husband. We had four boys together. We did not stay in Toronto all that time. It was in 1976, that we moved to Nova Scotia. That's where his parents were staying. We were playing in a band at the time in Toronto. The other couple in the band, who were from Newfoundland, had secured a few contracts in Newfoundland. We decided to go over and tour. We left the kids with Doug's parents in Seattle, Nova Scotia. We could not make much money because all the money we made was spent flying back and forth from Newfoundland to Nova Scotia. On our way back we were supposed to come to Toronto. I said that I am not going back there. So, we ended up renting a house right by the ocean. It was a four bedroom house and I think it was only $275 a month. We stayed there from '76 to '92.

Living in Nova Scotia was a good experience and a beautiful country, but every year

(or about every second year) I would come back to the Soo, to White River, or to Lochalsh because I missed this country so bad. All the time that I was down there, I would come back to the reunions–the Shingwauk reunions here and the reunion in '91. That was when I really got the feeling for, the need to come back home, to the reserve or to the community, where all our people used to be. So, I started to make inquiries about it.

"... every year (or about every second year) I would come back to the Soo, to White River, or to Lochalsh because I missed this country so bad."

I had a friend who worked with Indian Affairs. I was telling her that I had such a longing to come back here and start a community. In the meantime one of the band members here, Archie Nolan, was already doing some research. [He] secured some dollars to get the research done about our First Nation. So, he was already working in that area and he called me a couple of times. It was so strange, that the same time he called me, was the same time that I was thinking about coming back here and get something going.

... In '91, I told my family back home that I have to go back to Ontario, because I had split up with Doug anyway in 1985. I told them that I was coming back home. My dad was 85 at the time and he was still in pretty good health. So, I packed up everything on January 16, 1992, and headed back to Sault Ste. Marie with what I just could put in my car.

I got here and spent a whole year with my dad, my sister and whatever. I got to spend a lot of time with my dad before he passed away in 1993, February 1993. It was this gut feeling that I knew that I had to come here and I never regretted that decision.

The hardest thing for me was that I had left all my children and grandchildren down there. Although they were boys and their father was living there anyway, I figured they could bond a little more by being together and not having to depend on me. It was a very hard and difficult time for me. We would write letters back and forth. Then my dad passed in 1993. It was strange when I came here in '92 in January. People were telling me that they don't know why I came back to Sault Ste. Marie because there is no work here. There is nothing here and I will be on welfare and all these kinds of things.

By April of that year I was employed full-time. I had a career of my own here at the information centre in Sault Ste. Marie. So, I was back on payroll again and doing quite

well for myself. In '94, I was able to buy a home here which I am still in now. Eventually, each one of my boys ended coming back here. Three of them live here now and one boy is still in Nova Scotia. I still have two grandchildren down in Nova Scotia. I have three grandchildren here.

What's hard about being here in this community is that we still don't have a land base for our First Nation. That's why I came back. As soon as I came back, I ran for council. I became a councillor for the Missanabie Cree in '92. I remained on council until the last election in 2001. I think it was in 2001, so I was on council for nine years. During that time I worked very hard with the rest of the Chief and Council to secure a land base. You don't know how hard it is working with the federal and provincial governments until you are sitting across the table from them and trying to figure out how they work things. They are very cagey on how they deal with Aboriginal people. They have all kinds of processes that they put into place and when you start following these processes, they change the game again. They either change the players or they change the game plan so you are steadily playing catch up. You never have ... level playing fields with the governments, so it's a very, very difficult process. I really commend the First Nations who do have their land base because they must have went through a lot of struggle to get that. We have been promised land since 1905, and we still don't have a reserve. Both governments acknowledged their obligation to us, but, like I said, they play games. They have your community dangling by a string. When they say jump we had to say how high. It's very frustrating.

Community or reserve life today

(2) Describe your life in your community today.

It's nice being here in Sault Ste. Marie because a lot of the members from our First Nation are here. A lot of our members are spread out across Canada. There are some in the states as well as California and Florida. At one time, all of our people lived in the communities of Missanabie and Lochalsh. In 1927, the government decided to put in a game preserve in our traditional area and that immediately made us criminals overnight if we wanted to hunt and fish or trap in that area. Eventually our people just spread out all over the place trying to forget the mainstream society. They are still all over the place.

What we were able to do as a First Nation was to find enough dollars every year, since '92, to bring our people back together again. Every year we go back to Missanabie.

When we were first starting this process, we took them to Wawa. Then we had a couple of meetings in Wawa and then every year after that one we had one in Thunder Bay and we had one in Missanabie. Even until last summer, we got all our people together again. It's nice to have all your relatives in one place, but there is so much tension when we do that because, especially when it's election time, ... our band members fight among each other. I don't know why that is, but I think that's the way the government sets things up. Because as long as we are fighting with each other, they don't have to worry about us talking to them. It's a learning process for us. We are just very new at all this.

So, it's going to take time to bring our community together. What saddens me today about being in this community is that we don't have a community hall where our people can come together. We always have to go and rent something from somewhere. We are not eligible to apply for any projects to build a community hall because our traditional area is up in Missanabie. So, we are always between a rock and a hard place in trying to get our people together, but we still do it.

We are all related, all our First Nation people are first cousins, second cousins, aunts, uncles, or whatever. Our First Nation [office] is here in Sault Ste. Marie. I have been working now since '98 for the First Nation. I was laid off past March as a Proposal Developer. Then I got hired back on as a Shingwauk Residential Support Worker. I am looking for ways how to help out our people who went to the residential school. We have about 15 elders that had gone to the residential school who are still alive today. We have lost a few people since '92. So, we are trying very hard to help not only the survivors, but the intergenerational family to recognize what the residential school has done to us as a people. It is not only the residential school, but what happened to us prior to that when contact happened. There were a lot of things done to our people such as disease, take overs, land grabs, all kinds of things. I am doing my part while I am working on this project and identifying places where people can go to heal or send articles that people can read to ease their pain. We have had a lot of deaths in our community lately. ... It's very sad because we can't visit these people or anything. They are spread out all over so we do the best thing we can do. When any of our members are in the hospital we send flowers, we send get well cards, or talk to them on the phone trying to give them some hope and those kinds of things. We are not doing too badly as a First

"We are not doing too badly as a First Nation without any land or with a big core budget. I am quite proud how we look after our people."

Nation without any land or with a big core budget. I am quite proud how we look after our people. We do a lot of fundraising here in Sault Ste. Marie.

Community or reserve life in the future

(3) Describe what life might be like in your community or reserve in the future.
In terms of what my life will like in the community in the future, my vision is to have housing built in the area of our traditional land around the lake. I would just love to walk up a little trail and visit one of my son's places or walk up this trail and go to another son's. [I would like to have] my grandchildren around so we can fish together. I would love to live in a community were we are not wasting energy or resources that we have in the community. We should share what we have like we did long time ago. If anybody killed a moose then the whole community got pieces of it.

I am finding it awful to know my culture. I am learning more every day. I never could get anything out of Christianity the way I was taught in the residential school. It does not make sense to me today. I am looking at all kinds of different cultures and what they do. [I am looking] at the way I was taught to do things like smudging, the feathers, the different things that we do, the tobacco tying, and all the ceremonies I am learning about. They make sense to me. Anything that is close to the earth is what I am interested in.

I know that my vision of living in the community where everything is ideal, the way I see it, probably won't happen to that effect. I have a feeling that most of it is going to happen, but that we are also going to have to share whatever resources we have. It doesn't matter where we are living. We have always shared in the past and that is not going to be a big deal. I just want to pray very hard for clean water, and put a stop to all the digging of Mother Earth and the use of all the resources for money.

I cannot think of anything else right now other than I hope that we live in peace in this country. If we do finally convince the governments to get us land, and I particularly don't like it to be called a reserve, then I would like it to be called a community.

How many siblings do you have?
OK, you were talking about siblings. My mom had seven children and my dad had four before they met each other. After they met, me and a younger sister were born. So, we

have fourteen siblings, but only one is a full sibling to me and that is my sister Joan. She works here. The rest are half [brothers or sisters].

Are your parents still alive?
No, they both have passed away.

When you mentioned a community, what was it called again?
Oh, Lochalsh.

It was a railway town. It was ten miles away from Missanabie.

Is there anyone living there right now?
There is one tourist resort down there that stays there all year. That's about it. You cannot even recognize the place when you go back there.

Were you taught how to hunt or trap when you were with your dad?
Yeah, they taught me how. They wanted to teach me how to hunt. They got to the point where I was shooting a gun, where I was shooting at cans and everything, but when it came to shooting an animal I could not do it. So, that was the end of my hunting. I learned how to snare rabbits and as long as I did not see them being killed in front of me, I guess I could do it. I know how to clean smelts and things like that. I even learned how to cook fish, make tea, boil potatoes, and make a fire. I have seen them dig holes and keep the food in the ground so it doesn't spoil.

Have you tasted any Canada geese?
I don't remember that too much, but I remember my dad loved goose. My mom would always make sure that there was goose for New Year's. I found that it was a little bit too rich. I used to love partridge or rabbit or whatever, but I wasn't too fussy on geese until around 1994 or something like when I went up to Moose Factory. I tasted the different ways that it was being cooked and I liked it. It wasn't something that I grew up with. We had a lot of ducks when we were kids and pickerel. My favorite fish is pickerel. We ate trout too.

When you were growing up where there times when you or your family ever went hungry?
I don't remember ever being hungry, but I remember we never had a lot of food in the house. We would get rations sometimes from the train. We would get boxes and in

them would be cans of tomatoes, flour, lard, sugar, and that kind of stuff. We always had meat. There was always rabbit or wild meat.

Yeah! That's what I remember. I don't remember ever getting really, really hungry. There was always something to eat. Today, it bothers me if I look in my cupboards and there are only a few cans of things or a little bit in the fridge. I don't like that. I like to have everything full, all my cupboards full, my fridge full. I guess there were times when food was pretty scarce, but I don't remember being hungry. I remember when I went to the residential school, the food changed and I was hungry there all the time. I wasn't getting what I was used to. I used to wonder what I am going to eat tonight now. It didn't taste right or I wasn't satisfied. I wasn't being fulfilled with the kind of food that I was used to.

Was there any other school close by?
No, there wasn't. Like I said the teachers wouldn't stay in that community because it was too isolated. You know when I think about it because my parents didn't have [much] ... it must have been pretty rough for them to send us there. It was against the law too if we didn't go to school.

Did your other siblings go there too?
Oh yeah. The one before me there had it really bad. By the time I went, it was towards the end and they gave us coats, boots, and stuff like that. I guess the other kids before me never got those kinds of things.

Did you find that you were abused while you were there?
Not really. The only way I was abused was by not letting me see my sister or talk to her. They kept us apart all the time. I did not experience difficulty. One matron smacked me in the face because she thought I did not do my work, but I had already had it finished. That did not happen a whole lot. It only happened that one time. Of course I couldn't speak the language or anything. When I was walking to the school with a lot of the Cree girls, they talked to me in Cree, but as soon as we got close back to the school we were not allowed to talk. So, I learned quite a bit from there.

Did your parents speak their language?
They did. My dad could speak Cree and Ojibwe, or Oji-Cree. My mom and my

grandma used to write to each other in syllabics. I used to take the notes back and forth from my grandma's house to my mom's house.

Is there anything else you want to add here?

I hope this First Nation never quits. At times we get down, but I hope that we never quit. I hope we just keep going until we get what we rightfully deserve and that we don't take no for an answer because it's our homeland back there. We should be there. We should be here with the resources that we need to get started. So, I hope the younger generation picks it up again and keeps this ball rolling. The other thing I would like to see is us getting our language back. There is only one person in this community who speaks Cree and he has nobody to speak to. The other person [who could speak] has gone to Toronto. That's about it.

"I hope this First Nation never quits."

Hulbert Bain

(recorded November 14, 2002)

Biographic Information
Name: Hulbert Arthur Bain
Date of Birth: May 29, 1925
Place of Birth: Franz (along CP Railway line)
Present Address: Sault Ste. Marie
Name of Spouse: Adelaide Dold (first deceased), Gereulline Boissoneau (second deceased)
Number of Children: 9
Grandchildren: 8 or 10
Great-grandchildren: about 12
Number of Years Married: 37 (17 + 20)
Education: Grade 8
Interests/Hobbies: Hunting, Fishing, Driving

Community or reserve life in the past

(1) Describe your life in your community or reserve in the past.

When I was very young we used to go visit grandpa Fletcher at Missanabie. ... I didn't have much to do with Missanabie as a reserve. I used to visit Franz. There's not too much to tell about Missanabie except about childhood play and the people that lived around there, Ethan, Allen, Aunt Alice, and the Noahs. Other than that I haven't got too many older recollections of Missanabie long time ago.

Where is Franz?

Franz, well I had a relative there. I had Auntie Black. Well, I don't know what her first name was, but we used to go there. That was my mother's sister. We used to go visit Franz a lot because I was born in Franz. We used to go there for dances and what not. I got to know my cousins real well, all the Black girls, ah Harry, Myrtle, and what's the other one now, Harry, Myrtle, Evelyn of course then there was Jiggs and Darcy among the family. We used to go to Franz quite a bit because my dad was a conductor on the Algoma Central. So, anytime I wanted to go up there I just have to ride in the caboose and away I go. I went up to visit all the relatives there. Missanabie was a little more off beat, so I couldn't go to Missanabie anytime I wanted to go. Until my teens I ... used to go to Franz a lot, but not too much around Missanabie.

Franz is located about thirty miles or twenty-six miles north of Hawk Junction. It was not too far. Sometimes we would walk there to go to a dance. A few of us, teenagers, would walk up there to go to a dance. [Walking] thirty miles, twenty-six, thirty-six miles was nothing then of course. I walked all my life you know like snowshoeing and what not. Primarily, I got my training pretty young walking long ways.

When you went to the dances did you go right back home after the dance or did you spend the night?

Well, we spent the night at my, my aunt's place. Then the next day we would catch a freight train ... or if there happened to be a passenger train we would have our few pennies left and we'd buy a ticket and go back to Hawk Junction. A lot of times if we didn't have any money, the conductor just looked the other way and would tell us to go sit down in a corner some place and be quiet. We did pretty well in our younger days.

Did you stay around this area all your life?

I stayed around the Hawk Junction area. I was raised there. Then I worked on the railroad. When I got tired of the railroad, I'd go find another job. [I did] a lot of mining work like staking mining claims or cutting picket lines that went along with the education I had. It wasn't too high, only Grade eight, so I got the medium jobs. I got to know really well what I was doing, so it followed me in my life well until my sixties. Then I had to give it up. I'm getting a little bit older too. That's the life I led building log cottages and mining work. I worked for myself most of my life. I did a fair amount of trapping to keep myself alive with my family. I did a lot of hunting and trapping. It was all different kinds of jobs that you need for a good life. That way you're not sitting on one job for the rest of your life like my dad. I have a couple of brothers who were retired from the railroad. The older ones, my older brother and my dad, retired from the railroad, but they didn't last long after that. I passed sixty-five and I'm still going, but if I'd been working on the railroad I'd probably be dead by now.

Mrs. Black, Missanabie, ca. 1905, C275-1-0-6, S7602, Archives of Ontario

How many are there in your family?

I got married when I was twenty years old. I had six children. Then we, my wife and I, parted company. Later she died of cancer. I ah took up with another girl in a married situation, but not churched. I had three children from that marriage–two boys and one girl. Both boys grew up to be police officers

which they are today. One boy got killed last summer when he was on the highway. The girl, well she is just carrying on.

Did you have a common law relationship with your second wife?
Well, yeah my second wife, well it's a common law relationship. That was before I knew I could be a status person. As a Native person I grew up with all Native people, but we never bothered about our status card or whatever even though my mother was status. We were all brought up in a white society type. I never thought about that then, so [we have] come ... far. Quite a few years later, well we started realizing that we have a heritage back there. We got some roots some place, so we started looking into it. Later I found out that I was status person and that's why I'm here.

"As a Native person I grew up with all Native people, but we never bothered about our status card or whatever even though my mother was status."

Where did you attend school?
I went to school in Hawk Junction. I went until I was fifteen years old. I had a problem when I was younger. I had rheumatic fever, not romantic, rheumatic fever. That kept me out of school for a year, maybe two years. So, when I did get back to attending school, well I was the biggest kid in the school. I said well I have to get out of here. So at fifteen, fifteen and a half, I did get out of there. I went to work. My dad said you don't need to do that, get an education, so at Grade eight I'm gone. From then on I'm self educated in a lot of things.

Did you ever attend residential school?
I never did, but ah I my second wife she did go down to Spanish or some place else. She ah attended a residential school and I think her sisters they did that. I know that some of my people, Cree people, attended [what is now called] Algoma University in Sault Ste. Marie. What do you call it?

Is it Shingwauk?
Shingwauk yeah.

Did your parents tell you to go to school?
Yeah, they wanted me to keep on going to school and get a good education. My dad was pretty adamant about that, but ah I guess, well, when you're young you don't want to do what you're supposed to do. The kids today are the same way, but ah a little

worse than we were. My brother went to school, got his high school education, and became an office worker on the railroad. My older brother and me, well we never went to high school. We could've went, but we didn't go. ... If you wanted to go to high school then you had to leave town. You had to go to Sault Ste. Marie to get a higher education. There was no high school in Hawk Junction in them years. If you wanted to go to school you had to go to Sault Ste. Marie. You'd have to leave home. Well people didn't have enough money to ship me and board me out to school. Well, you know people have a hard time doing it even now. ...

Did your siblings go to residential school?
No, none of us went to residential school.

When you were living with your parents, did your dad that teach you how to hunt, fish, and trap?
Yeah, he taught me how to trap and how to hunt more or less. My mother was the one who used to take me out and teach me how to snare rabbits and what not. My uncle Brodie taught me how to set traps for beaver and muskrat. My older brother and my dad taught me what he could, being a railroad man. He had trouble with his feet or something you know so he couldn't run around the bush too much. I learned a lot from his knee and that's how I learned a lot of my stuff. My mother taught me most of what I know about the bush. We hunted together and fished ... so I was able to carry on that kind of life.

Did you eat different kind of animals?
Oh yes, we always had moose meat and fish. I was a fisherman right from grade school. If they wanted to find me, all they had to do was [search] a stretch of creek that goes back to town. All they had to do was go down there and holler and that's where I'd be. There was a little pool in there and I'd catch them little speckled trout and what not. Then I graduated to setting snares. I was the pride of my family because I brought a lot of rabbits home. I think I was fourteen or fifteen years old when I shot my first moose. I never stopped from there on. I got to be the hero as far as ah game is concerned. We got a lot of rabbits, a lot of partridge, and a lot of fish. I was a good fisherman and my parents did well as far as ah game is concerned. They did well on fish too.

Who taught you how to skin a moose or other animals?
Well, I learned to skin animals from one of the Indian families there by the name of

Soulier. Now old Bill Soulier he ah taught me a little bit about skinning a beaver. He was trapping so he says come on I want to show you ... come here my son, I'm going to show you something. He taught me how to skin a beaver. Then later on with moose, well, I just had to learn that myself from what I saw in the bush. As far as skinning and dressing a moose, I pretty well learned that myself. My dad told me how to hunt and where to go at certain times of the season. ... I brought a lot of moose meat home to my family ever since. I did all right last week. I got another moose, but it's pretty well every year that I do that. ... I shot a moose not too long ago, about two weeks ago.

I guess you have to know the proper way to skin a moose.
Well, you want to get a moose on his back there. There are lots of people who shoot him in the water. I know some Indian people that just clean him up right there in the water. I never tried that, but you got to get the moose on his back. Then you go ahead and skin him part way. Then you take the entrails out–the guts out you know. You get up to his throat there, up to his esophagus, up on his chin, and then you cut that. Then you follow that down to what I call his yodelling tube, heh, heh. Then you hang on to that or if you get some help, you hang on that, and you cut down by the spine. You pull till you could pull that whole thing right out the back end. You cut his intestines all the way back, all that casing, and it'll come right out his bum ... you pull it all out and away you go. Then you finish skinning the moose. I never drag a moose through the bushes. I bring it home and skin it right away. Then I carry a little saw and a little axe. I quarter and I hang it in a tree. Then usually the next day I come and get it and it's all drip dried, just like your clothes. He's ready to carry. I put it in the pack sack or throw it on my back and then carry the quarters out. It's hard work, but now people are hunting right on the road.

How many brothers and sisters did you have there?
Ah well, brothers and sisters. I have one, two, three, three brothers and then sisters I had four. We were a big family, the Bain family. They're all gone now except I have one brother who's left that's it.

Community or reserve life today

(2) Describe your life in your community today.
When I was about twenty or twenty-five, I worked on the railroad. Then I called a lot of places home, but Sault Ste. Marie has been my home now for the past fifteen years or more, twenty years, something like that. I have been to the Sault ever since I was a

child. I live in a senior citizen's complex. There's about sixty people in there. It's just like a little village, but I get away a lot. I go up to my camp. I got a camp way up around Geraldton. I get away from looking at the four walls. I can't stay in one place, so I do a lot of travelling. I got family all over. They're just like a bunch of partridge. They just fly all over the place, so I go visit them. I got a good little car and I'm always on the road. ... I got diabetes. In bad weather I go walk up and down the mall. Other than I go up the edge of the country here. I go ride the country roads and go walk up some places. I don't care to stay in town too much. I could live some place. I don't want to live with somebody. I'm a person that likes to be alone now like a hermit.

"Then I called a lot of places home, but Sault Ste. Marie has been my home now for the past fifteen years or more, twenty years, something like that."

Where is your camp located?

My camp is located just outside Geraldton on Highway 11. They call it the Sturgeon River and in Indian they call it *Nahmaywahmeeneekwan*, but nobody uses that. Nobody can pronounce it. I have a hard time, but it's called the Sturgeon River. It's between Geraldton and a little town called Jellicoe. If I want to go shopping or I want to go see somebody I just hop in my little car and I go in either direction. I know all the people pretty well in Jellicoe. [It's a] small town, a small community, just like Hawk Junction or Franz. When I was young, I liked that place. I did buy a house there one time. I stayed there in town and then I decided that I wanted to stay outside town. I sold that house, moved down to that river, and built a cabin there. I spend most of my summers there. In the winter time [I come] here to Sault Ste. Marie.

Are there non-Native people living at the senior's complex?

Yes, there's two Native people there. The rest are all, well, European mixed people, just plain old Canadians. There are two Native people in there plus myself, that's all. I don't know [maybe there are] fifty people in that place. We all have our own little apartment. You know if we want to visit, we go down to what they call the common room. We do a lot of visiting and the ladies have tea there every Wednesday. Once a month they have, what you call, a supper there. Everybody brings something and everybody gets along pretty good. It's just like a little community. I know a lot of us were brought up in a small little town, well, this is almost like that. I would like to live in a small community like in the past.

Was the Sturgeon River named because there was sturgeon there?
One time I went to get a pail of water. I told my friend I saw the biggest fish down there. I said I thought it was a log. I was going to get it pulled. [I was going to] push that log away from where I get water. I turned around and that damn log swam away. He said it's got to be maybe a sturgeon left in the river from a long time ago. They used to drive logs on that river which they haven't done for, oh, twenty-five years now. Somewhere along there anyway a sturgeon could've gotten up all along that waterway. ... That waterway strings all along down to Lake Nipigon. There possibly could be some in there at one time and maybe even a stray one now. ... I heard of people catching fish they couldn't land and the line breaks. It must have been a big pike. Well, I saw twenty pound pike came out of there and we landed them

Did you ever have a chance to eat them?
No, I never did eat sturgeon, but I was always willing to try. I used to do some work for Ernie Lunenberg in Nakina. He did fly a lot of fish in from the Albany River, Ogoki, and all those places. He would bring sturgeon in for the market. He said if you want a sturgeon, go in there and grab one. They might not miss it, but they weigh everything. I said no, what am I going to do with a great big sturgeon here, sixty or seventy pound fish. I never did try it, so that's as close as I got to it.

Community or reserve life in the future

(3) Describe what life might be like in your community or reserve in the future.
Ah well, if they ever did get this land base, I'm pretty sure that I would move over there. I have family that's interested if we get to go there. We would come there you know and visit. ... I think I would get more involved in the council or whatever you want to call it. I'm more interested in what's going on like right now. ... It would be a good community to spend some time in. I don't know about young people, but I think it'll be a good place to be.

I would definitely go and live in Missanabie if I had a place to go. I thought about it before you know. Three years ago I asked if I can go over there and build myself a place, but where are you going to build it. There's no place to build unless you go and buy some land from the railroad or something. If Missanabie had land I could, well I'm getting pretty old, build my own place. I would endeavour to do that, but if they were to build places for people, well, I'd definitely would be interested in going there. I got

"I would definitely go and live in Missanabie if I had a place to go."

transportation, so if I got to go and see a doctor I can go anytime I want. Some people haven't got that. I like driving people around. That's what I do with my family. I'm always running around going to the doctor or going to the shopping centre. I would get along good there I believe. Yeah, I would like to live there.

Is there anything else you would like to add here?
Well, I could get going here just like a magpie. ... I don't know. I had a good life up there. I worked at the log house there for Duke Clement who was married to Brodie Fletcher's daughter. I worked for him for about five years. I've been around Missanabie a little bit. I used to leave my truck over in Missanabie, but I was just in and out. I didn't spend much time around Missanabie except when I looked around to see where I played when I was a kid. ... I have no regrets and a lot of that. I'm a non-smoker and a non-drinker. I got nothing else to do but visit and travel around and keep myself busy.

I had an idea about what we could do in Missanabie as far as work, income, and what not. I figured if somebody could start getting after the government and see about being caretakers of the game preserve, then they could look after the preserve and the government wouldn't have to bother with it. You got people right there, living right there. They could look after it and hire their own game wardens. ... The Missanabie [Cree] could have their own game warden to take care of that place there. I don't know. I was thinking about that too. It's just like having a fox looking after the chicken coop. If the people wanna go get a moose instead of getting a permit from the chief, then they'll go in there to do that. ... It has to be conducted just like a government. The Missanabie Cree would be just like a little government, so there's a possibility there.

Greg Fletcher

(recorded November 14, 2002)

Biographic Information
Name: Greg Albert Fletcher
Date of Birth: August 24, 1976
Place of Birth: Sheet Harbour, Nova Scotia (father is a Micmac from the Millbrook First Nation)
Present Address: Sault Ste. Marie
Education: Grade 12
Interests/Hobbies: Baseball, Hockey, Other Sports

Community or reserve life in the past

(1) Describe your life in your community or reserve in the past.

Okay, to describe [how] it was in the past is going to be kind of hard for me as a Missanabie Cree member because we never had a community in Missanabie. We didn't have our land claim up there yet. I was born in Nova Scotia and raised down there for approximately eighteen years. I pretty much had no idea what Native people were like, what they were about, what our culture was or anything like that.

So, I grew up pretty much non-Native until I got into my late teens. Then something started making me go and find my own culture. I started like seeing pictures of Natives in books and hearing about things like an eagle feather and things like that. I was just always inquiring. I was always curious as to what that was. I knew it was part of me. I knew I had to find it, so I moved up here when I was eighteen. I started looking for it and learning from a lot of the elders and all of the traditional people around Sault Ste. Marie.

"I grew up pretty much non-Native until I got into my late teens."

That's where I first started getting a hold of my Native culture. I started to realize where I was there. I guess I could give you an overview of the way Missanabie would have been in the past based on what I have learned from my elders. ... From what I know, it was basically a railroad town and it was a pretty isolated town. You had to make your entertainment, that type of thing. It sounded like a very good place to live back then. It would have been nice to experience. I know that for a fact because ... I can see the joy in their faces when they are telling stories and everything, when they remembered those times. Like I say, my life in the past has been down in Nova Scotia. Anyway, I knew I was a Native person living down there in a white or a non-Native community. I was looked at as the Indian in school and things like that. I don't know if I would say if I was discriminated against a lot, but I was. Down there people didn't know what Natives were like except from what they saw in movies. [It was] pretty much

the same for me, I didn't know what I was like myself being a Native person except for what I saw on John Wayne movies and stuff like that. I started to realize what is actually out there and started to connect with the land and everything else [when I started using my mind and heart]. I would have understood a lot more in the past and I would have been able to get through a lot more things with a lot more ease if I had just realized from day one that I was a Native person. If I had realized what that was all about then I could have explained things to my teachers and my friends a lot better.

What kind of school did you attend in Nova Scotia?
I attended a regular public school. ... Me and my brothers and my family were pretty much the only recognized Natives down there [so when there was] any kind of stereotype or any kind of discrimination against Native people, we were always singled out. Other than that, most of the people gave us some respect because we basically had to get it, otherwise we'd be just picked on all the time. I guess my older brother basically gave respect for us in that community. Nobody really gave us too much trouble after he fought our battles against racist people and stuff like that. Once I started growing up and going to school, people did not really discriminate against me so much as being an Indian person. They knew already what my brothers stood up for and stuff like that and they didn't want to try that with me.

Since you were living there, I guess your parents were living there too?
Yes. My mother is from the Missanabie Cree [First Nation] and my father is from the Millbrook First Nation in Nova Scotia. He's a Micmac and that's how I ended going down there. I think my parents got together in Toronto and then they ended up moving down there in '76. I was born down there. I stayed down there for a good eighteen years.

Is your father here too?
My father is currently living in Nova Scotia. My mother and father split up when I was nine years old.

How many in your family?
I have three older brothers. My father had a boy and a girl with another woman before he met my mother, so I have three older brothers and then an older half brother and an older half sister. I don't really know those two at all.

When did your mother and you come down this way?
My mother moved up here in '92. I believe the main reason she moved up here was that her father, my grandfather, was living here in the Sault. He was living here at the time and the doctors didn't give him too much longer to live. So, she wanted to spend her final years with him, a year or two, before he passed away. She moved in '92 and I guess I chose to stay down in Nova Scotia. I was basically on my own down there until finished high school and everything. Then I moved up here in '95. This would have been after my grandfather passed away.

Do you find it different here compared to Nova Scotia?
Oh yes, very much so. It's like there is so much more Native awareness here. Like down in Nova Scotia there's not too many people that walk around saying they are proud to be Native. The general stereotype down there is that a Native person is someone who lives off the government, who takes his cheque and doesn't work, or on the other side of that coin is basically a drunk. So, when I came up here it's almost like every second Indian I meet is almost throwing their arms in the air saying that they're Native. When you go down there there's not too many people who want to say that unless they're getting something out of it anyway. I guess it's starting to change now because I noticed that since being up here over the past five years there is a lot of Native awareness. It's starting to grow pretty much everywhere, especially in the small provinces where people did not know that Natives live there like them. Native people in these provinces are starting to stand up now and say hey, we're here and you people better start listening to us and we have something to offer.

"I guess it's starting to change now because I noticed that since being up there over the past five years a lot of the Native awareness."

Have you attended any of the NAN chiefs' meetings or Chiefs of Ontario meetings?
No, I have actually inquired a couple of times about going to some of these meetings. I was told it was a good idea for a youth to go and attend these meetings, but that was pretty much as far as it went. I was basically always told that there was no funding and that was basically it, other than the fact they more or less patted me on the back and said yeah, that's a good idea, that should happen, you should go to these meetings. Then it would just stop at that.

Have you heard people saying that the youth are going to be our future leaders?
Heh, heh, I understand that completely, yes.

And what is your perspective on that?
My perspective is that I know for a fact once my generation comes into the position of chief and council that we are not going to be as passive as the past generations have been. We are not going to sit there and do these monthly meetings while our members are suffering. I have talked to all the young people around my age and even younger and we're very frustrated over these meetings that really go nowhere. We hear all the chief and council and all the people in positions of authority saying we can't do this, we can't do that because we got no money and funding. Yet every month there is a meeting going on. They always go. They fly away and stay in this nice hotel and everything. There's just too many contradictions that a lot of us young people are seeing right now in our leaders. Once we get in that position where we have control we are not going to be passive about it anymore. We are not gonna let the government say OK, we have to have some kind of meeting and we will talk with you next month and defer this meeting. There is gonna be no deferring any meetings. I know that for a fact. I know for a fact right now, if I was the chief of this First Nation that I would be down there in Ottawa. I would actually be physically fighting for our land rather than spending dollars on what most people that I have talked to see as just wasting money. A lot of these meetings that have the same agendas, the same recommendations, and everything, so I mean it's just a big endless circle that they're running and not really getting anywhere.

Do you think you will live in the community if this First Nation gets a land base?
I can't really give a hundred percent answer on that right now. I'd like to say that yes, I would like to go back to the community but it depends on the mind set of who's living in the community and on my personal situation. I know for a fact that once we get our land claim I will be back up in our community, at least four months out of the year. As for the rest of that time I don't even know where I'd be, but I know I do want to go back up there. I want to start something up there. I'd like to start my own business up there, but like I say it is a matter of finding out who is gonna commit to go back to living to land and what type of mind set everybody has who is living on that land. If I go up there and I don't feel a sense of community among the people who are living there then I can't say if I am hundred percent sure I am gonna live there, you know what I mean. I feel distrust among strangers and among people living here in the Sault. I can't really walk down the street and trust people a couple of houses down from me. I don't want to do that on my own. I don't want to have the same type of feeling on my own reserve;

you know what I mean. I would rather go and live in Toronto where I can expect that type of feeling from strangers and not have that feeling from my own family members.

Community or reserve life today

(2) Describe your life in your community today.

I am not feeling part of it at all. I am growing very distant from it. Our leaders have wasted so much time and money on these meetings and talk that it really doesn't do anything. [Like] getting involved in things that really have no use to our First Nation, not at this time anyway, like getting involved in business when we don't even have our land base. We shouldn't even be taking that road until we get our land base and have an actual rock to build on, you know what I mean. It's like going out and picking eggs for the Easter egg hunt, but we have no basket to put them in. So, we are breaking all the eggs in our pockets and everybody is getting mad at each other for doing it.

I don't know if it was just me or what, but there was a time, may be three or four years ago, when I was very positive about the Missanabie Cree First Nation. I wanted to commit myself to it. I thought it was the place where I really wanted to be and belong. After the past two or three years hearing all these unfulfilled promises about us getting our land claim, the understanding is that the only people who are benefiting or who are getting anything out of the Missanabie Cree First Nation are those who are working here in the band office. The rest of our members are stuck. We can't even apply for a loan. We're turned away because they don't have money and yet two weeks later they're having a meeting down in Toronto where everybody has single rooms. That's why I say that when our generation gets in the position of chief and council, I hope that we are all aware enough that if one of us does start slacking off like this and delaying things then the rest of us will get on that person's back. I am hoping that if I get into the position of chief or council that if the rest of the council or the chief get out of line then the rest of the council jumps on me and says listen, we ain't gonna take that, we want action, we don't want words.

"Right now we are almost like a coin. There are two sides to us."

Right now we are almost like a coin. There are two sides to us. One side is people who are filled with a lot of hope. They believe in the Missanabie Cree so much and everything. They believe that we are going to get our land claim and that this is gonna happen very soon. Me, on the other hand, I really don't see anything like that coming our way until we go and actually sit on Ottawa's Parliament Hill and demand

what we are rightfully owed instead of just setting up meetings with the Minister of Indian Affairs this month and then having to wait three months to meet with him again. In the meantime our elders are passing on and they should be buried on our traditional lands up there. No one in those authority positions seems to think that way. They just seem to think about getting their own cheque nowadays.

Are you continuing with your education?
I am planning on going back to school next year in September. I want to go and get my business degree. It's gonna take me two years with an optional third year if I choose to take that with my MBA in business. I am planning on just taking my two year course and get my business degree. I already have a business plan in mind that I would like to start up. During my last year of school, I plan to write up my business plan while I have access to my professors, so I can take advantage of every avenue I can. Then about a month or two before my final exams I want to submit my business plan. I want to see if I can get my proposal in and get all the grants and loans. ... I want to have my business open in the year 2005. I am at the point too that I don't know if I can even trust my First Nation to get involved with my business.

As far as I am concerned, I may just buy a piece of land somewhere and run it under my own accord because that way I don't have to follow any rules and regulations of the chief and council of the current First Nation. Part of me, a big part of me, would love to say listen I would like to start this big business and I would like to have the band take over forty-nine percent of the business and hire First Nation members and stuff like like. The way I see a lot of people in this band, I don't think I can trust them like that. It's a sad thing to say. I am sorry, but that's the way I am feeling now.

I don't trust too many people in this First Nation, it may be because we haven't lived together for ninety-five years. I am sure that's a big chunk of it. We haven't had our land base ever since 1905. I mean, you spread some people around over a hundred years and it's going to be hard for them to trust or even talk to each other after that. Hopefully, we will be able to get our personal agenda and personal feelings out of the way and get our community out in the forefront where it should be.

Are you involved in any activities or events with the Missanabie Cree?
With Missanabie Cree, no, I am not, because I was getting involved last year and I was told to stop. I was starting to get involved in drumming. I had drummed for about three

or four years here in the Sault with some local drum groups. I was on the pow wow trial for about two or three years straight, every weekend. ... I knew a lot about drumming and I was asked by a few people from my First Nation to teach the youth drumming. So, I came in here for a couple of weeks and everything was going fine. I think we went about a month, one night a week for about a month and then of a sudden for no reason, I don't know if it's for no reason or whatever, but two of the administrative people at the band office called me in the office. They asked me some very personal questions and told me that I shouldn't be doing drumming anymore because they didn't like my lifestyle. I may have had unhealthy lifestyle with the things that I did, but I wasn't bringing any of that around the drum and yet they wanted me to stop right away.

Now this is where I am starting to lose the trust of my First Nation. The people in my First Nation come to me and ask me to teach the youth about drumming. I accept and I start teaching them. Then I have other authority people in the First Nation come to me and tell me to stop until the chief and council decides something about it. I don't hear nothing for four months. Once I finally do hear something about the drum, the drum has already been going for two weeks. They're doing it every Wednesday night. ... I mean that one little piece of the pie is where my trust issues lie with this band. Like I say, I love this band to the bottom of my heart, but they are pushing me away.

Would you recommend other youth continue with their education?
Most definitely, that is the most important thing. The most important tool we have as youth is to go out and get our education, so that we can learn what we must to stop all the wrongs that we see and to stop all the contradictions. We [must] keep talking to our parents about [this] and everything. There's so many youth out there nowadays who are frustrated with the way people in authority are running [things]. I say that when we get into that position we better damn well know what the hell we are getting into. Before we get into that, we better get our education down pat. I mean, there's many times I have suggested to the chief to send one or two youth to that meeting [Chiefs of Ontario] with him even if it's only one meeting every two or three months. You know every one of them chiefs should come to the meeting with one youth. The youth don't have to say anything–just sit there and observe. So, at least when comes time for that youth to decide that they want to run for chief and council, they know what they are gonna get into. They know how chiefs are supposed to act among each other and what issues they talk about and things like that. I mean when you have

somebody who is in Grade seven, Grade eight, and Grade nine right now, they're starting to look at their college or university choices. I mean you gotta get them in there and see what the actual chiefs and councils are gonna do. So, if they chose to run for chief someday then they can start now and make the proper decisions about the courses that they should take. This would benefit them in the long run instead of just taking regular general arts and sciences courses at the college. If I knew then when I was fifteen or sixteen years old what I know now about Native politics and things like that, I would have picked a lot more political science courses in high school. I may have gone to college or university on some kind of political level, because I love politics. I didn't know that at the time being a young teenager. I didn't know what politics were really about until I started getting past the age of twenty and started getting involved. I knew youth politics and basically that was all that.

Community or reserve life in the future

(3) Describe what life might be like in your community or reserve in the future.
OK, there are going to be two answers to that one. Hopefully, I will give the positive side first.

Hopefully, very soon we will get our land claim and we will actually include everybody in the planning process of the community, not just to have chief and council or four or five people to design and implement the plan of the community. I know this from experience. If you get two or three or four people to decide on one thing for hundreds of other people, the majority of the people are not gonna appreciate what's been decided on because they were not involved, especially when it's something like developing a community.

If things go well, we'll all get together and come up with a good basic plan that we can all live with. That is the closest to harmonious as we can get. ... I am hoping that our community becomes more open minded, so that people just don't think that their way is the only way and that everybody else is wrong. We have to get rid of that aspect of thinking if we are gonna live in a community, otherwise we are just going to be fighting with each other all the time.

I am hoping that it will be a model community where people can look at our community and say you are on Missanabie Cree land and bang, they feel this energy. They feel they're in a place where there is no hatred, there is no anger, and there is no jealousy

or anything like that among each other. I'd like to be in a community where I don't have to worry about my children if they are playing in the backyard or running down the road playing. I'd like to know that there are people in the community who are gonna watch out for my children and vice versa.

"I think our community could be a model community ... ."

I think our community could be a model community for pretty much any other [community]. We have so many different opportunities and avenues that we can get a hold of in every area like business, economic development, culture, and tourism if we just do it all holistically and include everybody in our decisions. That's the only way I can see us living in peace with each other.

The other way is that I see a lot of negative things happening in our community. I see governments stepping in pretty soon and taking control of our administration. I don't even know if we are gonna get our land claim, to tell you the truth. It doesn't look promising at all to me. It doesn't look promising at all to many other people that I talk to either.

Like I say right now, I still don't know if I'd live in that community or not. I think I'd love to anyway. I'm pretty sure because I love all the people from Missanabie Cree. It's gonna be hard for us to get back the hundred years that we have been apart from each other. We have got to get that "I" mind set out of that community, otherwise it's not gonna be a community at all. It's just gonna be a bunch of houses in the bush.

From your understanding, did Missanabie Cree ever have a land base before?
It's not really a land base where our members can actually go and live off. My understanding is what they call our reserve was an island up in Missanabie that is actually owned by the Michipicoten First Nation. I guess they classified it as our reserve just for paper sake. I mean if you go up there and you look at the island it's just a big rock. You can't live on it and you can't drill on it. There's nothing you can do on it really. ... Basically from my understanding is that back when the government signed the treaty with us on paper we had a First Nation and we had a reserve. ... If you go up there and look, there'd be no way anybody could live on that little piece of land. My ancestors, like my mom, grandparents, and everybody from the band, were living either in Missanabie, Dubreuiville, Franz or those little towns all around there. They're all spread out. As soon as the residential school came into play, they started bringing

everybody, the younger kids, into the cities. Now we're just finally starting to get back to where we should be. We're losing the general teachings from the land itself. We're losing that natural energy that's out there. When you go on the land, you need to live on the land. You learn things I guess from the land, but when you're spread out everywhere and you live in cities for over a hundred years, it's hard to do that.

Do you know if that island you're talking about is the only island that the reserve has now?
We don't even have that. It's Michipicoten's. ... We're leasing a little piece of land from the MNR right now that we actually have to pay for that was meant to be a satellite office, but I don't know what's going on now with this chief and council. They seem to be changing everything all around and nobody really knows what's happening except for them I guess.

Do you consider this more like an urban reserve or another community?
I wouldn't even consider this to be a reserve. I'd consider it to be as an organization. At one time I believed, I really did believe, that our chief and council was fighting for our First Nation and getting our land claim in. Now over the past year even the past two years it just seems that the people who are in any kind of paying position are too comfortable in those positions. All they want to do is just to come in, put their forty hours in a week, and collect their cheque. I really don't see how that word community fits into the Missanabie Cree.

Where do you have your gatherings?
It's, not right in the town of Missinabe, it's about ten minute drive away from our First Nation. A few years ago they went and got involved in a tourist business. They bought a tourist lodge up there with a few cabins and things like that. Slowly we've been developing it and building more to it. So, every year now I guess we've been having our gatherings there, but like I say, that's another, another avenue of wasted money that I see. It's because although we do have access to it and everything like that, it's still not on Native land. It's on government land and we have the issue of who gets to run the place. It seems that whoever is on chief and council gets family members to run that place up there. You see a lot of favouritism going on with certain people.

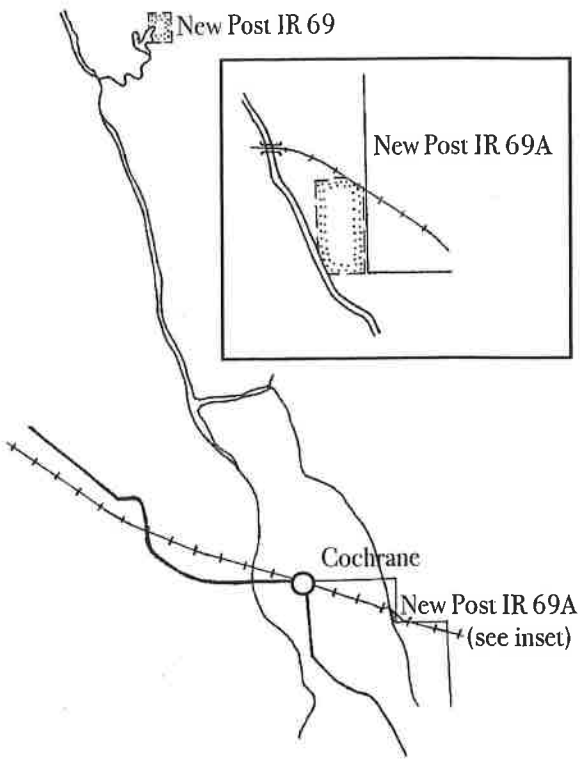
Is that where they're planning to have their land claim?
As far as I know, no. That might be one of the areas, but we have at least four or five different areas that we could choose from–all within the Missanabie area. Once the community finally gets to pick these sites, they may not even be close to the lodge that we have. I really don't even see any sense of us getting that lodge. They spent almost a million dollars on that lodge and then they're telling us they don't even have money. There's a lot of us members who are living off welfare and we're starving to get through the next two weeks for our next cheque. We see this First Nation throwing away money left, right, and center. ... If we actually all had that sense of community and we are honest with each other and had that sense of community in our hearts, then we wouldn't have to worry about anything like that. Like myself, if I felt that type of feeling from the people of the Missanabie Cree, then I'd want these people involved with me. You know what I mean.

I have been doing things with youth, especially Native youth for a long time. I've been a youth rep for my First Nation for three or four years. I was a youth rep at the sacred assembly in Hull, Quebec. I've always been involved in Native youth things ever since I was sixteen, seventeen. I really started getting into it when I moved up here. I started going to meetings all the time and everything. We keep telling our elders, our leaders to listen. We're young and we're going to be the next leaders of tomorrow. We want you people to listen to us. After years and years and years of us yelling at them they finally turn around and say OK we'll set up these meetings. We'll get the youth to have meetings and everything and give us our recommendations. That went on for maybe two years, not even two years, and then all of a sudden it just kind of fizzled out. It was basically another wasted effort. If they would actually listen to some of what our youth groups have been saying and put some of these ideas in motion, then we could be a lot farther right now. I'm not speaking for Missanabie Cree in general, but I mean Native organizations everywhere.

4

Taykwa Tagamou (New Post) First Nation

R.R. #2–Comp. 0, Box 2
Cochrane, ON
P0L 1C0



The Taykwa Tagamou First Nation is located on the New Post Indian Reserve 69A approximately 14 kilometres east of Cochrane, Ontario. This reserve, established in 1984, is about 117 hectares (0.45 square miles) in size and is the most populated. Timmins, the largest nearby center, lies about 104 kilometres west of the New Post Indian Reserve 69A. The original New Post Indian Reserve 69 was set aside as part of the James Bay Treaty (Treaty #9) signed on August 9, 1905. This reserve is approximately 2072 hectares (8 square miles) in size. However, due to its remoteness, it is presently unoccupied.

Population: 261 registered band members with 93 people living on-reserve (March, 2003)

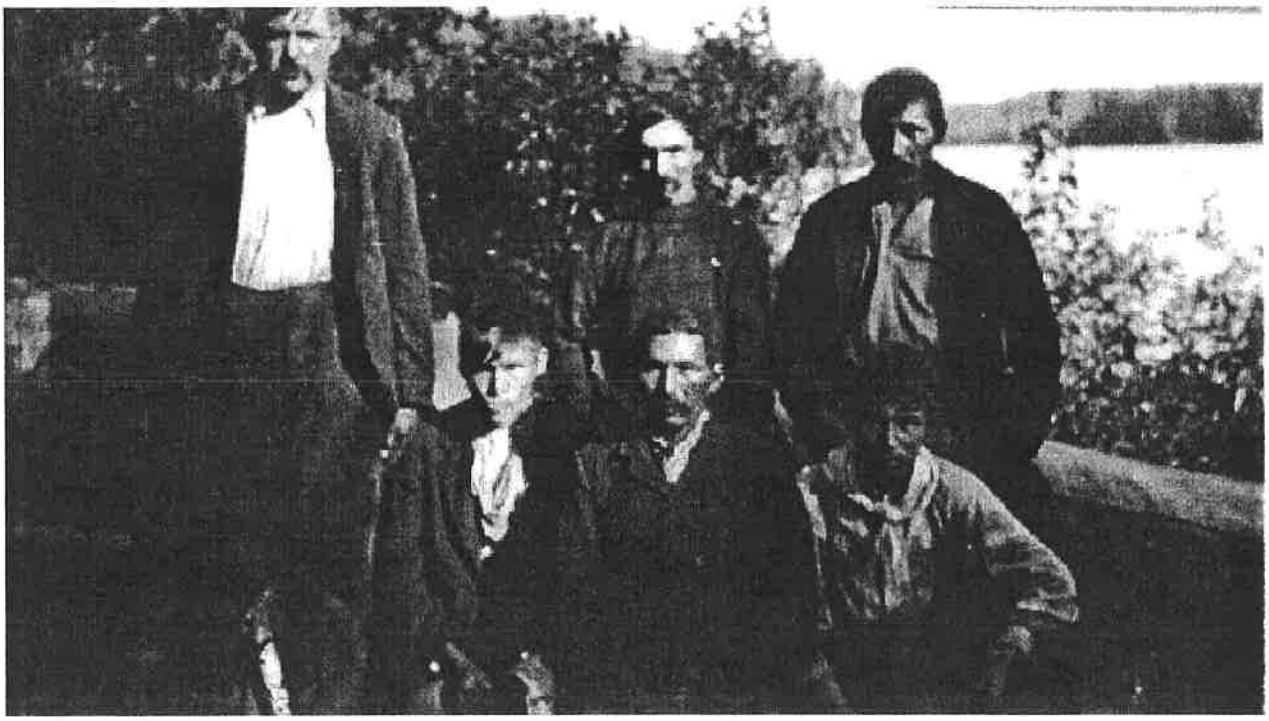
Schedule of Reserves–Treaty No. 9–1905
New Post

"In the province of Ontario, beginnning at point one mile south of the northeast end of the eastern arm of the lake known as Taquahtagama, or Big Lake, situated about eight miles inland south from New Post on the Abitibi river, thence in a northerly direction about four miles, and of sufficient depth in an easterly direction to give an area of eight square miles."
–from *The James Bay Treaty (Treaty No. 9)*, 1964, pp. 12

The Taykwa Tagamou First Nation's past and current economic development projects include the construction of the S. Frank Archibald Memorial Complex (including a band office and community centre), Taykwa Tagamow Economic Development Corporation offices, fire hall, medical building, and on-reserve housing. In addition, several local businesses such as JTP Logging, a convience store, and a chip stand have appeared in recent years.

The First Nation's future socio-economic development strategies include involvement in the ecotourism industry and continuing to develop business ventures for the community.

Languages: English and Cree



Chief Esau and Abitibi Indians–New Post, ca. 1905, C275-10-05, S7568, Archives of Ontario

New Post in the Abitibi district was "established before 1880 and operated into recent time, on the Abitibi River near New Post Brook."
–from *Canada II The Owners of Eden,* p. 127

Madeline Vincent

(recorded December 13, 2002)

Biographic Information
Name: Madeline Mary Vincent
Date of Birth: May 5, 1947
Place of Birth: Moosonee
Present Address: New Post
Name of Spouse: Tom Kioke (common law)
Number of Children: 3
Grandchildren: 5
Number of Years Married: 14
Education: Grade 10, Nursing College, Community Health Representative, Mental Health Worker, Prenatal Nutrition Program Worker
Interests/Hobbies: Camping, Sewing, Reading, Bingo

Community or reserve life in the past

(1) Describe your life in your community or reserve in the past.

Um, I worked in New Post for eleven years now. When I first went to work, there were only seventy-three people living there. Frank Archibald was the chief back then. I learned traditional ways, Native traditional ways from Frank Archibald. He taught me a lot of things. Then I went to Winnipeg, Manitoba. My sister Hannah and I went over there. We went on a healing journey, both of us, because before I started working for New Post we used to drink a lot. I stopped drinking when I realized what I was doing with my family. My sister and I kept going back to Winnipeg for our healing. When I was working for New Post, they told me I had to train for a Community Health Representative. So, I went to Sudbury for that at Cambrian College. They taught us for one year. We had to do our self-healing because their mandate was that you have to heal yourself before you can help anybody. So, I went on my healing journey. I graduated three years later as a Community Health Representative. ...

There were no traditional ways in New Post until later I guess. After I did my healing for three years, people started practicing their traditional ways. Then I brought Peter Wynne and Paul Wesley to the reserve. They were all traditional people, medicine people. They were pipe carriers. The people learned about spirituality and started to change their way of life. ... I believe that we pray to the same Creator, but we do it in different ways. My common law husband, Tom, doesn't practice what I practice, but he respects what I believe and I respect what he believes. This is the same Creator, but we have different ways of praying and different ways of doing things. We don't go to church till we're invited. We do that to respect other people. We do sweat lodges–that's our church. We do it when we think we need it like for some special requests, e.g., to go on with our healing journey, to help our families or to help our

community. Sometimes we just have a healing ceremony for the people in New Post that believe in these kinds of ceremonies.

Today, I'm working for Inninew Friendship Centre as a prenatal worker. I have always liked health services and as you noticed I have always worked with the health program. You know, even though when things go wrong, I advise the youth not to give up. [I advise them] just go on with their beliefs and go on with what they think is right. Just like what we're doing. We just go on with our life you know and believe what we did was not wrong. What we did was for our people not for ourselves, we say.

What did you do when you were living in Moosonee?
Oh, OK. I only had ah a Grade four level. I got married when I was eighteen. My first [child] was born when I was eighteen years old. I got married very young. We lived in something like a two room shack you could say. We had a wood fire and no running water. We had electricity by then but that's all we had. I stayed home with my first born. Sometimes in the summer, I'd do kitchen work in the restaurants or be a waitress at the Moosonee Lodge.

My second born, little Nikki, Nick, was kind of I don't know [slow]. They wanted to put him away, but my father said no he'll be all right. I guess you could say he was well, retarded, but I don't look at it that way. I look at him like us–like a human being.

I was very interested in medical school. When I was in Grade four I was told I was never going to learn. They said I was wasting their time and I was wasting my time going to school. ... I guess you could say I was a slow learner or maybe nobody had the time to teach me like they do today with people who have a learning disability. I had one woman who really encouraged me to go back to school. She believed in me. She worked with me and then I had my Grade ten.

Then I applied for nursing at Northern College. I graduated and took my registered nursing assistant. I went from North Bay to Hamilton to Ottawa and then back home again to Moose Factory. I stayed for six years and then I decided to go live down south in Timmins. I worked here at the Golden Manor and the Porcupine General Hospital. They were part time jobs. I worked two jobs. I worked there for five years and then I went to New Post.

When you were growing up did you ever do any hunting or fishing?
Yeah, we went with my dad every spring. We went out to James Bay. We would stay there. We used to go up to ah, what you call the French River. We used to set camp there. I can remember that part. My dad fished and my mom dried up fish. I remember that. We had a simple, well I don't call that poor, but we had a simple life. I remember we used to sleep and live in a teepee like a half tent house. We just moved in a house when I was just a teenager. I remember we lived on wild meat most of the time. My favourite foods were geese and fish, that's my favourite wild meat. Yeah, we lived on wild meat when we were teenagers. Then we started living on hamburger like you know, store brought [food]. I believe, I remember when I first tasted store bought food I didn't like it. I thought it tasted funny. I remember my uncle David Wynne. He had a store and he gave us pop. The first time I ever tasted pop I thought it tasted awful. I didn't like the taste anyway. I got used to it as we grew more. My uncle did a lot for us. He used to let my dad charge there. He would come back from his hunting or work. He used to work on the Hudson's Bay [Company] boat. He used to be gone most of the time in the summer. We would only see him in the summer from June till August. In September he would go out to the bay and hunt. Then when he came back he would go out to his trapping grounds. We never went to his trapping grounds when we were small. When we were young my dad believed that education was very important to us. He used to say, I don't know how the old people knew that, [but] your work whatever you were going to be doing is going to be replaced by the machine. He's right, there's computers now that's taking over. Even people that work as janitors have to know the chemical stuff you know. You have to have high school. You have to have graduate from high school. I don't know how those old people knew, but maybe it's a vision I guess or dreams eh.

Did your parents speak the language?
Yeah, they did. I understand Cree. When an elder talks to me I understand what they're saying, but I can't speak back because I'm scared I might make a mistake or they'll laugh at me. We grew up with our language. When we went to school, they told our parents that if we don't speak English the government was going to take away their family allowance. We have to learn English to go to school. That's what they used to tell our parents. Every time when we spoke in our own language during school, we would get a strap for it. They would strap us for it if we were caught speaking our language.

"When we went to school, they told our parents that if we don't speak English the government was going to take away their family allowance."

Was that a residential school?
No that was a public school, Moosonee Public School, yeah.

Why would they do that?
I don't know why. I don't know, to this day I don't know why.

Did you ever go to residential school?
No, no I never. That's one thing my dad never believed in was sending us off to residential school. He believed that the children's places are with them even though we were poor. He didn't send us. He didn't think it was right. We were lucky.We were one of the lucky people who didn't go there.

How many siblings did you have?
OK. There were four of us alive back then, but one sister died recently about twenty years ago. There were four of us out of ten children. Out of ten, four of us lived.

When your dad was alive was he doing any trapping?
Yeah, he was a very good hunter and trapper. He was very good at it.

Where did he go trapping?
Ah, some sort of lake, Sandy Lake, I think it was. He used just dogs you know. He used to take about a week and a half to get to his trap grounds. He had four dogs and he would go from our place and then by the time he would get there it would take him, lets see, about a week and a half. When things got modern again, he started using a plane. They would drop him off there and then he would be picked up after the ice broke up.

Did he go by himself?
Yeah, well sometimes he did. Then sometimes he gets a partner to go with him.

When did you first come to New Post?
[I came] about eleven years ago, eleven years ago from today.

Why did you move there?
OK. I saw a job advertising for a community health nurse, community health representative. I went to speak to Frank Archibald about it and he said sure, apply you

got a good medical background, that's what we need here. So, I applied for it, did my interview, and got picked out of four people who applied for that position.

Do you know how old New Post was when you first moved there?
I really don't know you know. I think it just started, maybe five, four years [ago]. I can't remember.

Were there a lot of people there?
No, no, just seventy-two people. There's more now here. I believe they are in the hundreds now. It's growing. They didn't have a store when I was there. There's a store here now. They didn't even have a community hall, but they have all that now. They have a health centre, a community hall, a band office, and a store right across the street. There were eight homes when I was here, and now they have five new homes.

Community Complex

When you first moved to New Post was the area good for hunting or trapping?
Oh yeah, it was good. Every spring they would have a hunting week. All the kids in New Post used to go and all the parents used to go. They used to catch a train from Cochrane and go to Low Bush. Almost everybody went except a few that couldn't go because they had to stay behind in case there's an emergency, but most of the people from New Post went. Yeah, there was good hunting. They still snared rabbits. They still

went fishing and they still did their hunting in the spring and in the fall. The spring hunt was a big thing for New Post, but they don't have that today. They only have maybe two, two families going, before they used to have about five families going. I don't know why that is.

Do you know anything about the old reserve?
No, I don't. I never got to see it, but I heard it's nice over there. They have falls there. I don't know why they replaced their reserve. Maybe it would've cost them too much because you have to go by boat to get to that old reserve. It would've cost the government too much. I don't know. I don't know the reason.

Did your father teach you about trapping?
No, he never taught us anything like that. We used to just get wood and water and things like that, but never trapping or hunting.

Do you find that wild meat makes you energetic or strong?
Yeah, I find that, ah, when you eat wild meat, you only eat one big meal at noon hour. ... We only ate one big meal a day. In the morning sometimes we had tea *baloss* or left over rabbit stew. [We used to have] porridge, *aloomenabe*, and um bannock over the fire, not in the oven, just over on top the stove. My mom never used to fry [meat]. Most of the time when she cooked she boiled moose meat. She used to boil those sturgeons too. There was hardly any frying till later when the stores came. When they started to buy things from the store, that's when they used to start doing their frying.

Did your parents ever use anything from the bush as medicines?
Oh yeah, my dad was very good at that. He got everything from the bush like cedar if we had a cold. He put it on our chest. I remember one time the doctor said I was allergic to the sun. I used to break up if I went outside. My skin used to break up and weep. So, the doctor told my dad, my parents, that we can't do anything for her and she should just to stay out of the sun. My face was all red. ... So, he got mad and he says that he'll go get his own medicine in the bush. He did. He made something that to this day I wish I knew what it was. He put a cloth on my face, my arms, wherever I was breaking up and you know it went away and never came back. That skin disease I had never came back. My dad always wanted to teach me about herbal medicine–about bush medicine. Today, I can kick myself because I used to say we don't need that. We

got nurses and doctors to do that for us. Ha, ha, ha, ha, I remember telling him that. He says that you're going to be sorry what you told me. I'm sorry now.

How was your health when you were living off the land there?
I don't remember. All I remember being sick was when I was about, say about, eight years old, but I can't remember before that. I don't remember going to a hospital, but when I was eight, from eight years old and up, I can remember going in and out of the hospital. This was when we were introduced to store brought meat. I'm diabetic. I find that if I eat wild meat my sugar is lower. If I eat store brought meat like pork chops or something like that or hamburger my sugar would go up. ... I find that when we go camping, when we camp out, we eat a lot of wild meat. When we bring moose meat with us or we kill a fish or a rabbit, it's always boiled. I find that my sugar is down, but when I eat regular food my sugar goes up.

Do you think somewhere out in the bush that there might be medicine good for diabetes?
Yeah, there is that Labrador Tea. If you drink that they say your sugar goes down and your blood pressure goes down. I tried it and sure enough my blood pressure went down and my sugar level went down too, but you have to continue taking it. ... Then there are blue berries. It's true what they say about blue berries. If you take blue berries at least once a day in the morning like a bowl full, your sugar level will be down. I tried it out and it worked, but you have to eat those blue berries all the time. [It's the] same [thing] with Labrador Tea. They say Labrador Tea cleanses you and is good for your kidneys too.

Community or reserve life today

(2) Describe your life in your community today.
Well, I just live there. I work at the Friendship Centre here in Cochrane. I don't do any volunteer work in my community because I'm afraid of my leaders. ... I worked in the community and I know what the needs are and what they want from our leaders. Our leaders didn't even want to meet with our people and that is why my colleagues protested. I wasn't there when that happened. They say that I was one of the people who blockaded the door, but I wasn't there. I was at the hospital when that happened, but I supported them. ... From the time we asked to meet with our leaders and community members they haven't met any of us yet, today. So, the people that are living there stay away from the band office because they're afraid our leaders are going to charge us. We don't want to be charged by the law.

Yeah, it's an awful place to live in right now. The children are getting affected by it too. The children are acting up. ... What they're doing, it's not normal. It's not a very, very healthy community right now. ... I don't know how these leaders can call themselves leaders when the whole community is down. I find that I do more in Cochrane, like volunteer work, than in New Post right now.

They even changed our name to Taykwa Tagamou First Nation. We still call it New Post though. The people in the community still call that New Post, but our leadership calls it Taykwa Tagamou. If you go to our community you can see how the people are feeling.

Taykwa Tagamou First Nation

Why did they change the name?

I don't know what. We don't know why. The people don't know. There's no communication [between] the chief and council and our members. There's no communication at all. Every time we want to communicate they want to remove us from the band office. They get the law after us, so we stay away from there. I remember one time just recently we had our community circle as we call it. All of us showed up at the community hall and you know our deputy chief got a NAPS officer to remove us from there even though we were doing a healing circle. Then one time the priest went down there to do a memorial service for the people who passed on from our community.

They were going to remove us again. Now we are scared to even go to that place or even go to get help from the health centre. We do it on our own now. We won't go see a community health representative who usually does that because we're afraid to go there. I'm afraid to go there and the other people feel the same way. What kind of leadership is that when people are afraid of their leaders? You shouldn't be afraid of the leaders. They're supposed to be there to help you and people are afraid of them.

Did you decided to come and work here because of the problems?
No, I came to work here because I needed to do something. I never stayed home more than maybe three months at the most. When I had my heart surgery, I only stayed home three months. After that, I went back to work. I had to do it. I'm not the type of person to stay home. I have to work, you know. ...

Is the hunting and fishing good around New Post?
We couldn't go fishing or camping. We didn't go camping at all this summer because my spouse is working. We only went fishing once, maybe on a weekend, but the other families they go camping. Maybe two or three families [go] that's all.

Just to go back briefly, what does Taykwa Tagamou mean?
I was told it means a big lake or something. They say that's not how you really say it. It's that Taykwa Tagamou is not worded right. I don't know.

Do the families in New Post get along well with each other?
No, they're always fighting like any other First Nation I guess. They disagree on things.

Do they ever have any gatherings here on the reserve?
No, the only gathering we have are individual, for an example, if I want a sweat lodge, I would announce it and send a memo out saying that there's going to be a sweat lodge on Saturday and then we're going to have a feast at my house. People would come and gather at my house. These are the only gatherings we have now, but before we used to have feasts. We used to have birthday parties for elders, children, and things like that, but now no community feasts or anything like that.

Have you ever been to Low Bush?
Yeah, I went there this spring. We didn't go hunting. We just went for a ride. My

common law husband showed me where he used to go hunting. They haven't been there for a year now–since last spring. They only go near Iroquois Falls road. There's a lake there and that's where they go hunting. There's only two or three families that went there.

Was Low Bush a small town?
Yeah, it was a small town. The town used to be over the bridge. They could hunt on this side going to Cochrane. There's a little place where they hunt.

There's about three buildings left. I guess that's Wahgoshig's camp.

Community or reserve life in the future

(3) Describe what life might be like in your community or reserve in the future.
You know to tell you the truth I can't see no future. I can't describe how I feel. You know I feel not wanted over there. I feel isolated that's how I feel. I'm not the only one that feels that way. There's other people who feel that way. We don't see no future, nothing.

Do you see any good candidates for leadership?
There's a lot of go getters here, a lot of youths who are strong minded.

Do other people want to join the band membership now?
I think there are people who want to join our band. Yeah, there's some people.

Do you have anything that you might want to add?
OK. Well, in our community, the people on the reserve are sticking together. What keeps us going is our belief in our Creator. He's always with us and even though there's times when we feel down. We just keep on believing that the Creator will help us. Never, never, never forget that our Creator is there for us. That's what keeps us going–our beliefs and our spiritual ways. It could be Catholic. It could be Anglican or our traditional ways. That's what keeps us going is our beliefs and our faith in the Creator, *aykotae*?

"What keeps us going is our belief in our Creator."

Aykotae!

Tom Archibald

(recorded April 27, 2001)

Biographic Information
Name: Tom Archibald
Date of Birth: September 5, 1919
Place of Birth: Frederick House area
Present Address: New Post
Name of Spouse: Mary Rose Sutherland
Number of Children: 8
Grandchildren: 20+
Great-grandchildren: 2
Number of Years Married: 53
Education: Sioux Lookout Residential School (6 years)

Community or reserve life in the past

(1) Describe your life in your community or reserve in the past.

I grew up in Island Falls. In 1960, I went to Moosonee. The only reason I went to Moosonee was that there was no school at Island Falls. My children went to Fort George and Fort Albany. I would not see them for a couple of months. I would not see them again until they had summer holidays. I would not see my children for a couple of months–the four of them. They grew up in Fort Albany. I would not see them for ten months when they were growing up. That's why I moved to Moosonee. There was a school in Moosonee and that's why I went there. I started looking after my children in 1961. We lived across from Luke Wesley's house. He was my next door neighbour. We stayed there for eight years. In 1968, I got a lot in Moosonee. That's when I built a house not too far from the MNR.

It was around 1989 when we came here to New Post. All of my children came here. They all worked here when they made houses. ... [It's] twelve years now since I am here. I hunted. I stopped hunting maybe ten years. I am old now. I am on an Old Age pension. That's what I live on–my Old Age pension. I also got an army pension. I almost have two thousand dollars, just like wages from the army and Canada pension.

I never hunt anymore, maybe about fifteen years. I used to set snares and hunt moose before. I stopped that now. My children are here now. ... They give me things to eat because they [were taught] to help each other. They were told a lot of times to go to school and help each other survive. That's what they look like.

Two of my grandchildren are energetic. They want to live in the bush. One of my grandchildren is Paul's son. He is the one who likes to live off the land. The other one is the one they call James. That's the other one that would be able to survive in the bush. He knows enough not to go wondering around. He looks after himself with

things in the bush. The ones that are living now when they are told something, they don't understand. It's as if they need someone to tell them what to do or not to do. The grandchild I am talking about from Paul. ... I tell him what to do when he does something, even when I think he is not listening to me. It is like him when it seems like he doesn't understand.

I don't know how it is like for the ones who live in towns. ... I lived in the bush just like your father and mother. They lived in the bush. The people never knew when they were poor. For me I don't remember thinking that I was poor a long time ago. I used to hunt every day a long time ago that's why I say that. That's when I knew for sure that there was something to help make things go well for me and for my children.

What did you do before you came here?
During the winter I came back to Island Falls where I grew up. It was in 1936 when I first started living at Island Falls. I was almost a grown man. I was able to walk around by myself. There was nothing yet what was called a road. It was only when you were always walking in the bush. There were only railroad tracks. There was no vehicular road. It was only when you were going to school that you had to know where you were in the bush so that you won't get lost. ... You [had to] make note of where you were walking on the land. All of these things will help you till you are fully grown.

When I was twenty-five years old, I did not care where I was living. I did not give up. I slept out in the open a lot of times. I slept on the top of tree boughs when daylight ran short. I just made a camp out in the bush with an open fire. I met all of those things when I learned to survive on my own and not to give up. I was taught by my uncle also. He was able to survive in the bush. I used little shelters. I did not live in a house when I was in the bush. My wife and I always moved around before we had many children. I pulled sleds all over. We used dogs when we hunted while moving. I never thought that it was [hard] since I was energetic. I never thought [about] that or about getting tired.

"I slept out in the open a lot of times. I slept on the top of tree boughs when daylight ran short."

How did you get involved with New Post?
There was a New Post Reserve a long time ago inland of Fraserdale. There is a New Post Reserve 69. My brother Peter and Tommy Cheno hunted on the land where the dam is near Island Falls. That's how far my jurisdiction was and [to the] south. We had

New Post, Hudson Bay Co., ca. 1905, C275-1-0-3, S7564, Archives of Ontario

jurisdiction over some of the townships when my father was still alive. He drowned in Moosonee in 1948. There were three of us, me, Peter, and Tommy, that looked after the New Post Reserve. That's where it began. I was a chief for the New Post band. When I was there, I did not let the government tell me anything. We always backed each other up. If I would have quit being a chief, there might not have been a New Post. ... We stayed on our own land all the time since 1948. I was a chief for five years.

When my children started to grow that's when I set aside being chief. That's when they came here to New Post Reserve [69A] on the white man's land. Indian Affairs made it a reserve so that vehicle traffic could be there and water and electricity would be available. All of these things implemented were looked into. The white people helped also. There were six university students and they were all engineers. They were told to help build the reserve. This is what you see when you look at what the government started with housing. ... When the reserve was made the government released twenty-five units. The money was there so that houses could be built–the houses you see here. (The old reserve was about ten miles from Fraserdale and inland towards the north).

Is that reserve land?

Yeah, [it's] reserve land, you know where Smooth Rock is, right up to Island Falls, Fraserdale, mileage 52, and that river. That is what we used when we went up river to where we hunted. All of the creeks along the river flow into the Red Sucker River. The government gave us the rights to hunt everywhere there. It is the same for all of those on the Abitibi River. Trapper's Creek is another one of those other rivers that flows into there. ... That is our land. That's what we were told. That's what it says where the logging companies are. It is called traditional land. ...

What things did you face that were hard?
Things were not hard a long time ago. They were easy when you worked and looked at it. We earned twenty-nine cents an hour on the rail road track when we worked as extra men. When you looked at your cheque it was thirteen dollars for two weeks. Things did not seem expensive–twenty-five cents or fifty cents. Sugar was cheap. Flour [was cheap]. Everything was cheap. If you had fifteen dollars for two weeks you would have five dollars left after you bought groceries. It was not expensive. When the rail road tracks went to Moosonee you could buy things that were cheap. Tools were cheap also.

It was not only Native people who ran short of money. Look, [you got] a bag of flour, hundred pounds, for $1.47. You didn't make bread only tea broth. You mixed flour in the tea and that is when you make tea broth. That is what you drink. You didn't make bread. When you make tea broth, it puts you right on track. It makes you feel good, just like when you drink tea. It is the same. ... That's how it was for them. They always had food (fish) and that's why they moved around all the time. When they used a boat by way of the river they went to where the fish were. When all the fish were gone then you set a net.

I did commercial fishing. I lived in a good way when I sold fish in Moosonee. If a net sits for a couple of nights in one place it does not earn its keep in three days when there is only one fish or two fish. It seems like the fish are all killed off. That is why you move around when trying to find where the fish are. When you come back after one month there are fish there again. That's how the people lived when doing commercial fishing in Moosonee.

When you were in the bush did you use the things in the bush as medicines?
No, I don't remember using those things when I was living there myself. I don't remember being sick or touching any medications. I don't remember that. I was always in good health as long as I ate food from the bush. I think that's why I had a healthy life. ... I used a beaver scrotum when I cut myself on my hand a long time ago. I put it on there until it healed. It was as if there had been no cut. You could not even see the scar of where I had been a cut. The beaver scrotum was so strong [at healing].

Another thing used were cedar branches. They rubbed it on mostly children when they could not breathe. When they breathed in the smell it helped heal them. Gum was another thing used. You can get healed if you cut yourself. Gum is dangerous because

it works as a sealant. I saw my old lady when she used a small cone, a tree cone, when she had a sore throat. ...

I heard that a skunk gland was used also. The skunk gland was dangerous. It was used with what they call asthma. That's what my father did when he had asthma. The sickness he had was very dangerous. When he was snaring and killing a rabbit that's when he started to have blood inside his eyes. That's when he used the skunk's gland. He smelled it a little bit and it cleansed him. I heard a lot of people did that with the skunk's gland. That's all I heard about those things that were used as medicines.

Community or reserve life today

(2) Describe your life in your community today.

I raised all my children. They are energetic when they wanted to look after themselves by hunting. They know how to do that, but you don't have any wages until you work. ... They know how to live off rabbit, partridge, geese, moose, and all of those things. They know how to dress a hide. When some of them skinned a moose they didn't know that it would be easy on one side. You can only take out the moose intestine on one side. If you take it out the wrong way, the intestine will break open. When you pull it that's what happens and it goes into the hide and the meat. When it comes out easy you take it off of where the intestine is connected. It is only when you teach a child and shown [them]. You can't just tell him. It is only when you stand there and tell him what to do that he will know. Once he knows, he can probably clean it and not to break the intestines. That's what I knew when I was young. ... I had a rope in my pocket. I cleaned it out and when I grabbed the tube. I tied it to the intestine so that it doesn't leak. The intestine is sour. Maybe if you take a picture how it is done you can do it. You won't be able to do it just by telling them verbally. It is only when taking pictures of those things that the Native lifestyle will be seen.

Community or reserve life in the future

(3) Describe what life might be like in your community or reserve in the future.

There are going to be houses here. You will also be able to go wherever you want to work by vehicle. There is one person who works at the sawmill. He has to be at work by 8:00 a.m.. Sometimes he leaves by vehicle at 3:30 in the morning to go work at Kapuskasing. It looks like there will be no employment here–only houses. There is no

"For work there will only be the ones that look after the offices, that's all."

place for the children to play in towns such as Timmins. It is only when you keep an eye on them that they won't get hit by a vehicle. There is a place here where they can play. Look at that playground over there. That is where you will see them playing and riding back and forth with their bikes. It is always like that. You don't pay them any mind as long as there is lots of room for them to play. That is the way I look at it. There will only be houses here. For work there will only be the ones that look after the offices, that's all.

Playground

Do you think this community is going to get bigger?

They are talking about making eight more houses. This is what's happening. Peter Sutherland's grandchildren, the ones who are in Moosonee, are here for ten years now. It is time now [to build houses, so] when they want to have a place to live the houses will be here, but their jobs will be in town. There is nothing to hold you back as long as you go to school and do what is required of you where you work. It is only the people that bring it upon themselves. We were like that when we were in Moosonee. I was suddenly a chief there and there were fourteen men that I looked after. All of a sudden some of my people were gone when they left to go hunting in the fall and in the late spring when there were a lot of Canada geese. They would not say anything that they were going hunting. ...

Do the children learn to hunt during the March break?
Yes, it is only now that this is happening with the people who are councillors. They appear to be white people. They don't know when their children are old enough to hunt. A child going into the bush should be taught even though they are not going to school. [They should be taught] not to get wet, to dress properly, and to dress warm in the morning when there is no one to look after them. When they wake up at eight or nine and there is no elder they should prepare themselves when they do that sort of thing. ... There should be money at the school to pay for that kind of work. That kind of thing should be there for all the children.

How do think you are going to be when you are here?
The way we handle things here now, for example, when Peter and someone else was given enough things to hunt in the late spring they go half and half with the Canada geese. The thing that comes out of that is you teach them not to be greedy and to let things go. He did not go without paying for something. He learned how to hunt, not to be cheap, and to behave. He behaves when he is being taught, when he is in the bush, to look after [him]self. That is how I look at it.

That's how it is for us who are here, but I don't know how it is in Timmins. It is only when they go to the lake where we go when ... they are taught to look after themselves and to get wood. They are being taught all of these things. That's the way I see it.

Do people still set nets here?
Yes. This is the way it happens at that lake. Once the water starts following, pike at one end of the lake start to go inland. You put a net along where the water goes through by the tracks and soon you're catching something. A long time ago when my old lady was still alive, we had twenty in one day. We took the big ones. The ones that were this size [motions], we threw back in.

How about sturgeon?
They say they are there. The lake is twenty-five miles long–the one they call the big Abitibi River. That's how long it is, but it is dry and maybe eight feet deep. They say it is dangerous on this side. We were there a long time ago–five years ago. All of my children were in the bush. That's when I saw my wife cooling the fish. She used the muskeg moss. She wet it and would put the fish on top of it. Then she would put more moss on top of it. The flies would not bother them as long as they were cool. That's

what was done to the fish. We were there for three days and the fish did not spoil. There were many people that lived at Low Bush. That is their land (Wahgoshig Reserve).

Did you see action in the war?
I was there maybe nine months of the time. I managed to survive though. I am thankful that I made it through

There is no one to tell legends from the elders who are living now. There were elders who told legends before. There was no radio in Island Falls in 1938. There was a French man named Louis General there. He was working on the tracks. He was the only one who had a radio of the people who lived there. When we went to see him, he would call us and say come and listen to the radio.

There was nothing of that sort here for the youth or the teenagers. We went to see [an old man] and we asked him to tell a legend about *Wee-sa-kee-jak*. These are the ones he mostly tells legends about.

I never heard other than a Native to talk about *Wee-sa-kee-jak*. He was amazing and dangerous. You will not hear anyone talking about him today.

Who was telling the legend?
Harvey Small, the old man.

Who told the children to come and listen to the radio?
It was a French man. He didn't have any children.

What was his name?
Louis General. He lived at Island Falls. There were two of them that were there all the time. The other one was called Fred, his older brother. When I saw him the last time, he was old. He was a good man.

There is another kind of medicine that you rub on yourself when you have rheumatism. It was apparent that it made me better. This is what the otter's grease did. I went to see Matthew's brother–my mother's younger sibling. I told him I was sick. He said that he

had some otter's grease that I could use. It took him one year of hoarding otter's grease. He gave me that medicine.

I went to see the doctor also. He gave me a needle. After he gave me the needle I rubbed on the grease that Matthew gave me. After three days I was able to chop wood. I was not able to do that before. It was those medicines that were given to me. I was not sure which one ... had made me better. I never felt bad in anyway after that. They say it makes you better ninety-nine percent as long as you think you will be healed. It is the same when you pray. It helps you.

Jordan Echum

(recorded December 13, 2002)

Biographic Information
Name:Jordan Lee Charles Echum
Date of Birth: June 20, 1985
Place of Birth: Moose Factory
Present Address: New Post
Education: Grade 12
Interests/Hobbies: Guitar, Hunting, Fishing, Hockey

Community or reserve life in the past

(1) Describe your life in your community or reserve in the past.
Um, well, my parents used to drink a lot when I was small. They used to fight when we living here. We used to move around a lot to different towns, places, and schools. Once my parents got into traditional healing they started to be better people. My mom quit drinking. ...

Where did you go to school?
Different places. I went to school in Moosonee, Moose Factory, Matheson, Timmins, North Bay, and here in Cochrane.

When did you start going to high school?
I started high school in Timmins in '99, I think.

Are you presently in Grade twelve?
Yeah.

When will you be finished?
Possibly next year.

How do you get back and forth from school?
Um, I take a bus [to Cochrane].

What kind of things were you doing when you were growing up?
Um, I was getting into trouble. I was starting to drink. I started to do drugs when I entered high school in Timmins. Then I started getting into trouble with the law when I was here. I got charged for trespassing and had to pay a fine. Then I finally quit getting into trouble.

Did you do any hunting or fishing?
Yeah, I snared rabbits. I still do. Me and my friend there shot his first moose in October. ... I also go partridge hunting and fishing sometimes.

What are your parents' names?
My mom's name is Charlene Echum and my step father that lives here is John Archibald.

Is he the one that taught you how to hunt and all that?
Yeah, some yeah. It was mostly my uncle who taught me how to hunt.

What kind of traditional things did you do?
We'd go into sweats. Sometimes I go down to Moose Factory for goose hunting with my uncles and my family.

What was your uncle's name?
Sam Echum.

Is that where you learned about hunting?
Yeah, and how to clean geese and cook them.

Did he show you anything about trapping?
Yeah, he taught me how to set marten traps, connibears, traplines, and [traps] for foxes.

Did he show you how to trap beaver?
No, but my grandpa showed me a long time ago. I only remember when I was younger.
Did he show you how to skin a moose?
Um, yeah he showed me how to skin a moose.

How was it?
It was alright I guess. He showed me how to gut it, skin it, and cut it up.

What kind of wild game did you eat?
I ate rabbit, partridge, ducks, and geese?

Where did you do the hunting for geese?
Um, I went to Moose Factory to my uncle's cabin. He has a camp across from the Moose Factory gravel pit. That's where his camp is and that's where we went to go to hunt geese and ducks.

How far would it be from Moose Factory?
Eight miles, I'm not sure.

Do you think there's a difference eating wild meat compared to food in the stores?
Yeah, wild meat is different than other meats in the stores. They cook it differently.

Do you know if wild meat makes you more energetic or stronger?
I think so, yeah.

Did you ever go fishing?
Yeah, I used to go fishing at my uncle's (Eddie Trapper's cabin) in Kenogami Lake.

What kind of fish did you catch?
Pike, mostly pike. We catch them in nets and sometimes if we go on the boat, we fish from there.

Did they teach you how to prepare the fish?
Yeah.

Who taught you?
My uncle and my granny.

When was the first time you did a sweat?
The first time was when I was seven or eight when my parents stayed at a healing lodge with other people. They taught us stuff about tobacco, eagle feathers, and sage. We went to sweats all time. They had feasts and ceremonies.

What did you think about the first time you did a sweat lodge?
I didn't know what to think at first. It was something that I didn't know anything about before. When I first went to a sweat I was a bit scared.

Do your parents know the language?
Ah, my mom knows a little bit, but my step dad knows it.

What language does your mom speak?
Well, she doesn't really speak it, but she knows a little bit of Cree.

Did they teach you the language?
No.

Do you know anything about the language?
Just a little bit.

Do you understand it?
A little bit, yeah, just some words.

Do you think the language is important?
Yeah.

What could be done if somebody wanted to learn the language? What do you think a person could do to learn the language?
Um, maybe just try it and ask other relatives to teach you–relatives like elders, grandfathers, and grandparents.

Did you ever do any part time work?
Yes. Well it was not really part time [work, but] summer time [work].

What kind of work would you be mostly doing?
Cutting grass, taking out garbage, cleaning the gym, putting salt in the pump house, cleaning out stuff, and moving stuff.

When did you move here?
When I was two years old in eighty-seven.

Do you remember when you first moved here?
Yeah, there were a few houses. There was more bush and we didn't have a complex. We didn't have a play ground area and a rink.

What did you do for excitement or entertainment?
We would go play in the bush, make cabins, play games in the bush, or play hide and seek.

Did you know any traditional games that the Native people played a long time ago?
No.

Community or reserve life today

(2) Describe your life in your community today.
Today, it is mostly boring on the reserve. Most of the time [there is] nothing to do, but sometimes we just go snaring or hunting or play hockey.

Today, everybody is kind of sad. We get mad at each other because of the new council. Everybody doesn't like it. Everybody is always fighting. Nothing is getting [done] around here. We're supposed to have a rec centre and rink a long time ago. Actually, they're supposed to put up the rink, but they never did.

"Most of the time [there is] nothing to do... ."

Was there fighting like that all the time?
No. It was all right before, but since new chief and council everybody's been fighting.

Do you think having a police service in the community is good?
Yeah, because they had a headquarters here. They got a building and more offices and vehicles.

Do you remember what it was like before NAPS was here?
[There] used to be more parties and drinking. The OPP used to come over here when something happened.

Community or reserve life in the future

(3) Describe what life might be like in your community or reserve in the future.
In the future ay, I can't really say. I don't know.

Do you think the community is going to get bigger?
Possibly yeah.

I think there are going to be probably more houses and more roads. Maybe they might have a Northern store or something.

Do you think there's a chance for other developments here on the reserve?
Um, I don't think so. We don't have much land here. We don't have many resources.

Economic Development Office

People say that the youth will be our future leaders, what's your perspective on that?
Yeah, I think so, [it will] probably be better in the future.

Do you think you'll be involved with politics?
Ah, probably, yeah.

Do you think they'll ever have a youth council here?
Yes.

Are you trying to get a youth council going here?
Yeah, we're already trying to set up something with the council. We're trying to get a youth council here. ... I don't see anything happening yet.

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