



# *Wolastoqiyik Ajemseg*

*The People of the Beautiful River at Jemseg*

*Volume 1: Important Stories and Spoken Histories*

*edited by*

*Karen Perley and Susan Blair*

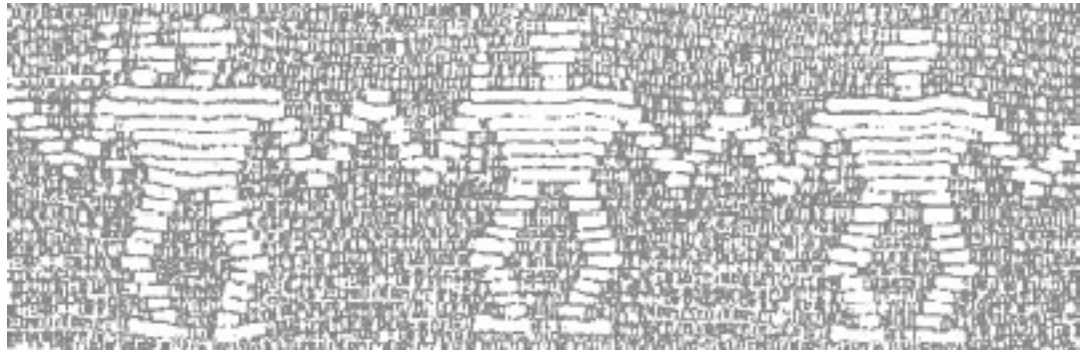
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## **Volume 1 Important Stories and Spoken Histories Jemseg Crossing Archaeology Project**

The final version of this report was compiled with financial support from the Grand Lake Meadows Project Management Committee.

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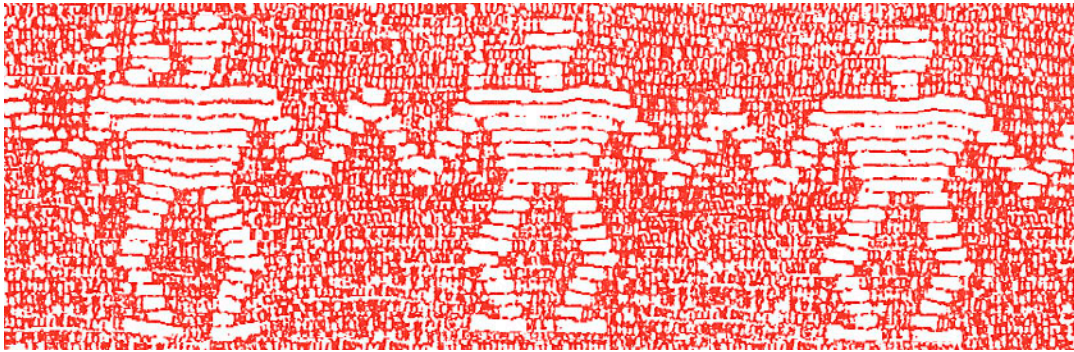
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## **Mawlukhotapun - Working Together**

### **Acknowledgements**

The Jemseg Crossing Archaeology Project was only made possible by the philosophy of “working together”. In business settings, this approach is often called the “team” approach. However, the concept of a “team” is a simplification of how it actually worked at Jemseg. “Teams” are usually formal concrete working groups, usually formed to compete against other teams. Our “working together” was less formal. We were united by our desires to salvage an important site as respectfully and carefully as we could. In a basic way, the project only moved forward through the hard work and contributions of hundreds of individuals. We thank you all for your effort, courage, time, patience, and care. These contributions were often multifaceted, and many gave freely of their expertise and hidden talents in ways not initially envisaged when they came to the site. Many project members, such as John Keenan and Bazil Nash, worked tirelessly to provide information about the project to their communities, and yet were also fundamental in the group approach to solving the archaeological field work problem of working through the winter.

The fieldwork was enabled by a core of archaeological supervisors, including Colin Varley, Chris Blair, Katherine Patton, Sam Gallagher, Bazil Nash, Pamela Dickinson, John Keenan, Darcy Dignam, Vincent Bourgeois, Joel Calabrese, Jason Jeandron, Michael Saunders, Shianne MacDonald, Phillip Atwin, Paul McEachan, Mike Nicholas, and field crew, including Viktoria Kramer, Frank Lewey, Jennifer Butler, Barbara Oldford, Clifton Sacobie, Elvis Sacobie, Mike Smith, Nathan Atwin, Donald Paul, Joe Brooks, the late Gerry Pickles, Philippe McKay, Alexandra Francis-Steward, Ian Steward, Wesley Atwin, Terry Smith, Carol Smith, Fred Masters, Doug Solomon, Ryan Francis, Frank Atwin, Dale Nash. The “Week-enders” filled in for us on Saturdays and Sundays, and included Patricia

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As the educational component of the project grew under the guidance of Karen Perley, project members offered their expertise and interest, so as to bring information about our work and New Brunswick's Wolastoqiyik community to the public and to the large number of young people who came with school or community groups, such as Ramona Nicholas, Valery Monahan, Cynthia Adams, Teana Pickles, Shelly Perley, Tim MacAfee, Pamela Dickenson, Chris Blair, Alice Paul and Erica Bear.

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The project was coordinated by a team consisting of Susan Blair, the field director, Karen Perley, the education coordinator, Patrick Polchies the project manager, and Chris Turnbull the director of Archaeology Branch. Together with Patricia Allen of Archaeology Branch, this group 'liaised' between provincial and aboriginal governments. Pat Allen also provided an important support role in the field and in the main offices of the Archaeology Branch. Further office administration was provided by Amanda Howlett, Crystall Joscak, and Ernest Merasty.

A project of this magnitude benefits from the contribution of many organizations and government offices, and we received a great deal of assistance from the New Brunswick provincial government, especially Louise Gillis, Jennifer Pollock, Marsha Hello, Shirley Phillips, Mike Randall, Sharon Pond, Wayne Burley, Denis Lachappelle, Dan Horseman, Mike Phillips, Brian McEwing, Doug Johnson, Bernard Richard (Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs), Sheldon Lee (Minister of Transportation), and Ann Breault (Minister Municipalities, Culture and Housing), as well as from the Maritime Road Development Corporation, especially Bob Burdette and Bob Hodgins.

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The first Maliseet Advisory Committee on the Jemseg Crossing Project involved a great deal of time and support from a number of individuals, including Irvin Polchies, the late Charlie Paul, David Perley, Karen Perley, Ned Bear, Dick Paul, Robert Bernard, Chris Turnbull, David Keenlyside, Brian McEwing, and Mike Phillips.

Many individuals have continued to provide time and support through the second Maliseet Advisory Committee on Archaeology, including Charles (Diamond) Nicholas, Vincent Nicholas, Patty Paul, Mae Perley, Linda Paul, Marjorie Paul, Rocky Paul, Sharon Paul, Tim Nicholas, Phil Atwin, Ned Bear, Robert Bernard, Dianne Pelletier, Barb Nicholas, Amanda Howlett, Karen Perley and Patricia Allen.

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After the project was officially completed, we continued the analysis. Archaeology Branch found research money whenever it could to enable this process, but a considerable amount of free time and labour were provided by Jason Jeandron, Pam Dickinson, Cynthia Adams and Susan Blair, who independently continued this research whenever they could.

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## Forward: The Road to Jemseg

CHRISTOPHER J. TURNBULL

The Jemseg River in central New Brunswick sustains the Wolastoqiyik, and it has served as a transportation route for generations of their ancestors. It is ironic that the current need for a safe and efficient four-lane highway should jeopardize an ancient place along the same river. But New Brunswick's Environmental Impact Assessment process identified the need for remedial action to balance our society's present desire for a modern transportation system with our society's need to be respectful of the Wolastoqiyik legacy. Thus it was that we undertook an archaeological excavation in 1996 and 1997 on the spot where the proposed Fredericton to Moncton Four Lane Highway crossed the Jemseg River.

The Jemseg Crossing Archaeological Project had many different dimensions. It was certainly an archaeological excavation to rescue information about New Brunswick's past before construction of the

new highway. Although heritage impact assessments for environmentally regulated projects have a comparatively brief history in New Brunswick, this was the first time that they had led to the mitigation of a major archaeological site. The crossing place of the new highway had been fixed through the previous construction of highway segments in the Jemseg area, so salvage of information from the site offered the only cost effective option to prevent its total destruction.

However, the excavation of Aboriginal archaeological sites impinges upon on-going discord between Canada (and New Brunswick) and indigenous societies. In the case of the Jemseg Crossing site, the Wolastoqiyik peoples (more commonly known by their Mi'kmaq-derived name of 'Maliseet') are the descendants of concern. While archaeology does not normally play a prominent role in these struggles, the circumstance of the excavation quickly

brought the site into this realm.

Contemporary Canadian society is divided by the history of relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous society. These relationships are tainted by prejudice and bigotry. Canada has yet to deal satisfactorily with the results of European immigration. In the Maritime Province, land ownership has not yet been ceded by treaty, and this fundamental of relationship over land affects Aboriginal perspectives of Canada. So when an ancestral Wolastoqiyik site is threatened with disturbance, it becomes a part of this on-going disagreement.

Those who have practiced archaeology are not without blame. We intruded into these struggles with narrowly focused academic eyes. Archaeologists have been reluctant or, at least, slow to recognize the role that the Wolastoqiyik of today must play in any excavation of their history. Several incidents during the previous quarter century brought engaged archaeology in the larger struggle between indigenous societies and Canada, compounding the situation. This recent history came to a head at Jemseg.

All of this led to a series of protests and demonstrations over the course of the fall and winter of 1996 and 1997. Although these were created by history, they were fueled by the media. However, through negotiations, and with the full support of the Fredericton to Moncton Highway Project, Department of Transportation, an accord was reached with the Chiefs of a majority of Wolastoqiyik communities in New Brunswick. Despite some misdirected

attempts at consultations, this agreement supported the continuation of the excavation with the provision that impact would cease if evidence of burials were found. This support was predicated on the notion that the highway would have to be re-routed around a site containing burials.

The essence of archaeology is discovery of the unknown. The finding of a burial-like feature in the midst of an ancient settlement was enough to halt the excavations and re-locate the highway away from the site. It was only at this point that a new relationship between the Wolastoqiyik First Nation and Province of New Brunswick began. It is one thing to make a promise and but it is yet another to honour it with all the consequences. To the Province's everlasting credit, it did so in the Spring of 1997. The slight jog in the four-lane highway bridge at Jemseg River was a turning point in the relationship between the Province and the Wolastoqiyik community— at least with regards to archaeology.

The Jemseg Crossing Archaeological Project has achieved some notable results. The excavation was the largest to date on any Aboriginal site in the Maritimes. The site contained a major ancestral Wolastoqiyik settlement dating to between 2000 and 3000 years ago. There is also evidence on the site stretching back to more than 6000 years ago, and continuing to the twentieth century. As a part of the project, many spoken histories and recent stories were recorded from the Wolastoqiyik Community.

The project has also set the tone for an increasingly constructive relationship

between the Province of New Brunswick and the Wolastoqiyik community. To avoid this very situation, both communities have agreed to meet together regularly to cooperate on the management of heritage resources through the Maliseet Advisory Committee on Archaeology. Both communities are dedicated to working together to expand this historic committee beyond a talking place, and to develop a better understanding through cultural development. The committee has produced a major travelling exhibition based on historic Wolastoqiyik photographs, several posters, and caused Gabe Acquin—a nineteenth century leader—to be recognized as Nationally Significant person in Canadian history. The committee is currently working to develop a Wolastoqiyik web site as a place to gather and disseminate information about

Wolastoqiyik culture, so save it for future generations, and ensure that it should become a tangible asset to both communities.

These volumes are filled with Wolastoqiyik stories, both recent and archaeological; it is a testament to the power of working together to find better ways of living together respectfully.

Chris Turnbull  
Keswick Ridge, NB  
November 25, 2002



# 1. Introduction

Karen Perley  
(Neqotkuk/Tobique First Nation, and Archaeological  
Services Unit, Culture and Sport Secretariat)

A collection of audio taped memories of Wolastoqiyik were compiled during the Jemseg Crossing Archaeological Project (JCAP) to record First Nations connection to the site as a counterpart to archaeological interpretations. The management team, myself, Susan Blair (project archaeologist), Patrick Polchies (project manager), and Dr. Christopher Turnbull (manager of Archaeological Services Unit), supported by the Maliseet Advisory Committee on Archaeology were united in their wish to include the stories of Wolastoqiyik in the project, so that we could incorporate many different perspectives on the distant past, the recent past and the present of the cultural landscape of the Jemseg area. These histories are a testament to the strong link Wolastoqiyik have to the Saint John River Valley.

This effort has been historic. While there have been spoken history projects undertaken for individual First Nation

community projects, in most cases this information is community-specific. The scope of the spoken history project had to reflect the scale of JCAP, and the result is this collections of memories and experiences of Elders from all parts of the Wolastoq, transcending community boundaries and weaving together an entire cultural group.

The Jemseg Wolastoqiyik Spoken History component of JCAP focused specifically on life experiences of Maliseet Elders. They talked to us of their lives, from childhood to the present, and the lives of their parents and grandparents. In some cases, this represents a time span of 130 years. These histories are a testimony to Wolastoqiyik's continued relationship with the river and the land. They reveal their cultural, social and economic interactions with each other and with non-Aboriginal individuals and communities. They demon-



strate the contributions of these Elders to the Wolastoq'kew culture, economy and events. Finally, they document the changes wrought upon their lives by the colonial Government, and their ongoing resistance to its influences.

In this volume, Wolastoqiyik terms are used as much as possible. The use of original, natural names for places identify their purposes and contributions to the survival of the people. For example, the St. John River is Wolastoq. This term names, but also describes "the beautiful river". The name Wolastoq describes the river's physical characteristics, its spirit, as well as the resources it provides for the people. We call the people of the Wolastoq, Wolastoqiyik or "people of the beautiful river", avoiding the more common but inaccurate term 'Maliseet'.

### **Methodology**

From the setting of goals to the development of methodology, the Jemseg Wolastoqiyik Spoken History component of JCAP was guided by the management team. We attempted to make this process productive, but more importantly, comfortable and relaxing for the Elders. In this part of the report, I will discuss these methods, with a section where I will address concerns that Elders had in relation to being interviewed and introduce the concept "Weci Apaciawik" or "so it will come back.

The interview process was informal and yet oriented towards the main objective of the spoken history component - to interview as many Elders as time would allow.

Alice Paul from Sitansisk/St. Mary's, a

'language speaker', was hired to make the initial contact with Elders from the six Wolastoqiyik communities, make appointments, carry out and record the interviews and transcribe the resulting tape.

Potential Wolastoqiyik interviewees were contacted by telephone. These were followed up by home visits with a more detailed description of the project's purpose and goal. The Elder's comfort level was assessed by carefully listening to the tone of their voices during conversation. If there was any hint of hesitancy, then there was a call back.

In some cases, visits to the homes were made more than once to accommodate the schedule of the Elder who might cancel because of unexpected family or personal commitments. In most cases refreshments were offered and gladly accepted.

Mrs. Paul began her interviews in February 1997. During this time, she began to travel to Wolastoqiyik First Nation communities. The Elders were encouraged to speak the language in which they were the most comfortable. Their ages ranged from late fifties to late seventies and were selected at random or upon suggestions of others in the communities. Elders from each Wolastoq'kew community were interviewed. Although most were from "on reserve" (Department of Indian Affairs terminology), we interviewed Elders that live "off reserve" as well.

Mrs Paul encouraged them to talk in general about their life experiences, birth-place, and parent's occupation, their occupation, childhood and educational background. There were no structured question-

naires but if the interviewee became quiet then specific questions would be asked to keep the interview process flowing. These included questions relating to lifestyles, spirituality and ceremonies (Traditional and Christian), places, recreational activities, and traditional medicines and their uses.

Twenty-three Elders were interviewed and recorded but only twenty-one tapes were transcribed. The tapes of three interviews were of very poor audio quality, but only one Elder was re-interviewed. Unfortunately, the other two were from Gagetown, New Brunswick. These were not re-taped because of time restraints.

The Wolastoq'kew language was used occasionally by the Elders in the majority of the tapes, but there were two tapes where the language was used in the greater part of the interview.

Choice of reference for translation and spelling of words was based on the availability of material and a writing system on the Wolastoq'kew language. Translations were provided using two sources, the "Kolusuwakonal", Philip LeSourd's dictionary, edited and revised by Robert M. Levitt, University of New Brunswick and David A. Francis, and the "Passamaquoddy/Maliseet Reference Book" produced by Passamaquoddy/Maliseet Bilingual Program. At times, translations were difficult because of the unique character of the language and some minor variance among each Wolastoq'kew community.

### **"Weci Apaciawik" or "So it will come back"**

Most Aboriginal Elders have been

interviewed at least once in their lifetime by academics/researchers(Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) for either small community based projects or larger projects involving outside institutions. For this reason, a number of Wolastoq'kew Elders were apprehensive when asked to be interviewed for the Spoken History component of the Jemseg Archaeological Project. Their concern centered around the intentions the project had for their stories. Some Elders refused for two reasons. They or other community members experienced being interviewed in the past without ever knowing what happened to their information, along with, past practices where the information became known as the property of the academic/researcher or their institution.

The pursuit for First Nations knowledge will undoubtedly continue in the future because of the rising interest in understanding the past, as well as, the realization made by academics/researchers that First Nations knowledge and their interpretation is necessary to complete the study of that past.

For this reason, safeguards need to be put in place. The responsibility falls on the First Nations community supported by other Governments, institutions and agencies to erase the mistrust felt by Elders by discouraging these practices to take place.

This can be achieved by implementing a "weci apaciawik" or "so it will come back" policy whereby First Nations could develop protocols for non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal researchers to follow before they approach our Elders and communities. This policy would guarantee that there is a "give

back” to the community for the information.

The policy could include a permit or licensing system outlining procedures to follow for activities associated with the collection of cultural resources. Direct benefits for the community could be one of the requirements included in the procedure. This could involve a process where proposals are reviewed by a small committee who would monitor and facilitate the project. As well as, hold discussions with the academic/researcher to determine what service or product is reasonable for them to “give back” to the community.

Because most research projects are sponsored by funding agencies or grants, this process could become a financial burden for the First Nations community or the researcher. In this case, I would suggest that these costs be identified in the planning phase of the projects when individuals or institutions are applying to funding sources. Cooperation from funding agencies and key players will be necessary to ensure the success of this concept.

However, there have been successes in promoting “weci apaciyawik” in spite of the fact of its “idea only” status. This concept had its beginning during the Jemseg Crossing Archaeology Project but spilled over to the post Jemseg period due to commitments from individuals, especially, researchers such as archaeologist Susan Blair and archaeologist/administrator Dr. Christopher Turnbull. (Susan discusses her contributions in Volume 2 and Chris in the “Forward” of both Volumes 1 and 2).

Hopefully, others will follow their lead

so eventually “weci apaciyawik” will become an established process which will raise the level of comfort of our Elders whose stories and experiences will increase the level of Wolastoq’kew knowledge.

### **Brief Profiles of the Wolastoqiyik Communities**

All parts of the Wolastoq were traditionally occupied by Wolastoqiyik, and there are still Wolastoqiyik and their communities distributed up and down the river. All communities still have ties to Jemseg, and this connection is confirmed and held by the memories of the Elders, as well as, supported by the archaeological results by Susan Blair in Volume 2. These memories not only illuminate connections to Jemseg itself but weave together all areas along the Wolastoq into a rich cultural tapestry.

I will describe the modern Wolastoq’kew communities, in part to demonstrate that there are still Wolastoqiyik, and their communities distributed up and down the Wolastoq. Wolastoqiyik are not only people of the past but also the present. The data for these profiles was gathered in 1997 and will include the names for each community, location, the date it was established, its political affiliates and population.

New Brunswick has six Wolastoq’kew First Nation communities established as “reserves” by the Federal Government in the 1800’s. There are, however, thousands of sites all along the St. John River Valley where the Ancestors of the present day Wolastoqiyik lived and died. The St. John River Valley is not the only area or territory that Wolastoqiyik were a part of, but will be

the only area that is discussed in this report.

The six Wolastoq'kew First Nations consist of (from north to south along the Wolastoq) Madawaska Maliseet First Nation, Neqotkuk /Tobique First Nation, Woodstock First Nation, Pilick /Kingsclear First Nation, Sitansisk /St. Mary's First Nation and Welmooktuk /Oromocto First Nation. Other Wolastoq'kew communities, such as the Maliseet of Viger at Cacouna, are located in Quebec and in Maine at Houlton. In addition, Gagetown, in southern New Brunswick, quite near to Jemseg has a sizeable Wolastoqiyik population.

These First Nations are members of a number of political organizations. At a national level, these include the Assembly of First Nations, which is made up of Chiefs from all across Canada. At a regional level, the Atlantic Policy Congress encompasses a body of Chiefs from the Atlantic Provinces. The provincially based Union of New Brunswick Indians, represents both Wolastoqiyik and Mi'kmaq First Nations. The Mawiw Council is composed of the three biggest First Nations in New Brunswick, and includes both Wolastoqiyik and Mi'kmaq First Nations. The Saint John River Tribal Council also represents both Wolastoqiyik and Mi'kmaq First Nations. Other groups in which aboriginal individuals could be members include the New Brunswick Native Women's Council, the New Brunswick Native Friendship Centre, and the Aboriginal People's Council. As yet, there is no modern, exclusively Wolastoqiyik political or cultural organizations, however,

there have been three all Maliseet Chiefs meetings called to discuss specific issues. The first modern Wolastoqiyik National Congress has yet to take place to tackle all issues specific to Wolastoqiyik and their territory. There is, however, a joint Wolastoqiyik and Province of New Brunswick committee which is focused on archaeological issues. This committee, the Maliseet Advisory Committee on Archaeology, was formed as a direct result of the Jemseg Crossing Archaeology Project and will be discussed after the profiles.

**Madawaska Maliseet First Nation** was established prior to 1867 and is located in Northern New Brunswick in close proximity to the Province of Quebec and the State of Maine. It is approximately 1.6 km east of Edmundston on Highway 144 and is accessible from the TransCanada Highway. The community is located approximately 300 km north of Fredericton.

Madawaska Maliseet is a political affiliate of the Assembly of First Nations, Union of New Brunswick Indians, Atlantic Policy Congress and the Saint John River Valley Tribal Council. A Chief and two Councillors make up the leadership for the community which has a total population of 213 people of which 101 live "On-Reserve" and 112 live "Off-Reserve".<sup>1</sup>

**Neqotkuk/Tobique First Nation** is the biggest Maliseet First Nation Community in New Brunswick, with a total population of 1643 people with 1047 living "On-Reserve" and 396 living "Off-Reserve".<sup>2</sup> A Chief and 12 Councillors make up the leadership in

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1, 2 Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, B. A. Cleveland, Data and System Analyst.

this community located in northern New Brunswick, 27 km south of Grand Falls, approximately 200 km north of Fredericton, 9.6 km from Perth-Andover and approximately 18 km from the border of Maine.

Neqotkuk/Tobique was established in 1801. It is a member of the Assembly of First Nations, Mawiw Tribal Council and the Atlantic Policy Congress.

**Woodstock First Nation** was established in 1851. It is located 5 km south of the town of Woodstock and has a total population of 696 with 227 living "On-Reserve" and 469 living "Off-Reserve".<sup>3</sup> Woodstock's political leaders includes a Chief and six Councillors and has land mass totalling 92.4 hectares. This First Nation community is the location of the main office of the Saint John River Valley Tribal Council which services one Mi'kmaq and three Maliseet First Nations in the area of Band Government, Financial, Economic Development, Community Planning and Technical Services. These are the five basic services provided through Tribal Councils, but not necessarily the only ones (Eric Paul, Director, personal communication).

**Pilick/Kingsclear First Nation** is located 14.4 km west of Fredericton and was established in 1814. This community has 374.7 Hectares of land and a total population of 714 people, with 521 living "On-Reserve" and 193 living "Off-Reserve".<sup>4</sup> A Chief and six Councillors provide the leadership for the community.

"Pilick" means "the village". Kingsclear is a political affiliate of the Assembly of

First Nations, Atlantic Policy Congress and the Union of New Brunswick Indians.

**Sitansisk /St. Mary's First Nation** is situated adjacent to the city of Fredericton. It was founded by Gabriel Acquin in 1867. Total population is 1080 people with 650 living "On-Reserve" and 430 living "Off-Reserve".<sup>5</sup> A Chief and eleven Councillors make up the political authority at Sitansisk, which is a member of the Assembly of First Nations, Union of New Brunswick Indians and the Atlantic Policy Congress.

**Welmooktuk /Oromocto First Nation** is located within the town limits of Oromocto, 20 km south of Fredericton. Oromocto is the home to the largest military training base in the British Commonwealth, Canada Forces Base Gagetown. Welmooktuk has 29.8 Hectares of land for a total population of 412 people with 172 residing "On-Reserve" and 240 residing "Off-Reserve".<sup>6</sup> Welmooktuk was established in 1895. A Chief and four Councillors currently manage the administration of programs and provide full-time employment to fifteen individuals, and seasonal employment to another twenty.

Political affiliates for Welmooktuk are the Assembly of First Nations, the Atlantic Policy Congress, the Union of New Brunswick Indians and the Saint John River Valley Tribal Council.

### **Maliseet Advisory Committee on Archaeology**

The Jemseg Maliseet Advisory Committee, presently the Maliseet Advisory Com-

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3, 4, 5, 6 Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, B. A. Cleveland, Data and System Analyst.

mittee on Archaeology, was established in the summer of 1996. Dr. Christopher Turnbull, then Director of the Archaeological Services Branch of the Department of Municipalities, Culture and Housing, proposed involving the Maliseet community in facilitating the Jemseg Crossing Archaeological Project. The Committee would provide a forum for discussions regarding the Jemseg Project, guide the consultation process, ensure the Maliseet community was informed, encourage educational use of the Project and participate in the decision making process involving a major archaeological excavation.

The initial Jemseg Maliseet Advisory Committee consisted of representatives from each of the six Maliseet communities, representatives from the New Brunswick Departments of Transportation, Education, and Municipalities, Culture and Housing, and, a representative from Canadian Museum of Civilization. At the Committee's first meeting a decision was made to hold future meetings in First Nation communities to increase the opportunity for flow of information to community members.

Although supported by most Maliseets, the formation of a Committee without involving the elected Maliseet leadership led to a temporary disbanding of the first group. Following consultations and presentations to the Maliseet Chiefs, a new Committee was struck. The new Committee had the support of the majority of Chiefs. Surprisingly, the membership on this revised Committee was, with one exception, identical to that of the original group!

Seven years after it's inception, this

working group is still active. Presently the work of the Maliseet Advisory Committee on Archaeology (MACA) is supported by the Archaeological Services Unit of the New Brunswick Culture and Sport Secretariat. Representatives from that agency work with Chief appointed representatives from each of the six Maliseet communities. MACA is central to the continuation of dialogue between Archaeological Services and the Wolastoqiyik communities. MACA meets on a regular basis and discusses matters of archaeological concern. Through MACA several successful projects promoting Wolastoqiyik culture have been accomplished.

### **Why Include Spoken Histories?**

Spoken Histories are important for many reasons. Information about Wolastoq'kew culture is stored in the language. The traditional process of passing on history is through the spoken word. Elders store information in their memories as opposed to writing them down. For that reason, life experiences and memories of the Elders do not get documented and there is very little information written on Wolastoq'kew culture. The limited information that has been written is often based on historical sources such as the journals of early explorers, missionary accounts and non-native scholars. These writings are often rife with cultural misconceptions and stereotypes.

Shirley Bear, from Neqotkuk /Tobique is one of my teachers. She has taught me that we always possessed this knowledge. She refers to it as "ancient memories" and it

is through words, songs, dreams and ceremonies that these teachings are transmitted.

Another important point for readers to keep in mind is that certain Wolastoq'kew words are truly difficult to translate. Some words have double meanings. Others have true, ancient meanings that can only be understood by a speaker of the language. As an example, the word *leyu*. It means "it is true" and it also means "way it is/was". In the Wolastoq'kew language, the two are not separate. Still another example is the word that addresses "she/he". There is no such word. Pronouns are hidden in all verbs and are not gender specific. The words like *yat* (she/he), *not* (she/he), *nekom* (her/him) in all grammatical tenses are used to address both genders. A person mentioned in conversation is addressed by using their name and not referred to as "she/he". The word *yat* is used by a second speaker when referring to a person, of either gender, who is within sight of the speaker. It gives an indication of an equal level of worth for both genders.

While listening to one tape, I noticed that there was a systematized method used by the Elder to either help her remember the story or quite possibly resulted from her reliving the event over again while repeating the story.

When Elizabeth Paul, of *Welmooktuk* (Oromocto) was first interviewed, the audio on the tape was poor. On this tape she talked about her experiences of being moved from *Welmooktuk* (Oromocto) to *Pilick* (Kingsclear) and how people were collected in army trucks. The interview was

taped over again and she conveyed the same story in the exact same way by using ritualized speech or "rote". These are aural memories (Sara Kennedy, N.B. Choral Federation, personal communication). This can be compared to singing a song where the pitch varies from high to low. It's likely that this practice is a very effective method for remembering personal experiences and recapturing the "feeling" at the time. In her case it was excitement and at the same time shock that such thoughtless treatment could take place towards people. Regretfully, this is the only example I can give at this time because hers was the only story that was re-taped

### **What the Spoken Histories Tell us — The Elders Speak**

The Elders stories give us their accounts of teachings they have received, personal experiences and thoughts about events in their lives and for some, their parents and grandparents lives. These stories will present a better picture of the people and their surroundings, and raise some consciousness about the value that these histories hold. These are pieces of the puzzle. They give us some insight and understanding about a very important part of Wolastoqiyik's recent history in a way that the written record cannot.

The information received from these histories help strengthen and clarify the connection of Wolastoqiyik with the Saint John River Valley. Even the traditional names given by our Ancestors to specific places or sites strengthens and illustrates our connection to them. Traditional names

describe where the place is situated in relation to a body of water or what needs the place provides for the people. Sometimes these names describe where “many favourable conditions for a camp site came together... a good game country, good eel grounds, the end of a portage, an interval flat capable of easy cultivation, a good spring.”<sup>7</sup> Neqotkuk (Tobique) can be translated to mean “under current caused by the force of two rivers meeting”, referring to meeting of the Saint John and the Tobique. Jemseg or Ajemseg which means “gathering place”, a place where people gathered drift wood, food and medicines, and where people grouped together to trade and socialize. Eqpahak, located at the upper margin of the Saint John estuary, means “end of tide”. As these examples show, the spoken histories provide an excellent opportunity for research by supplying raw data to the reader by way of names of places, making evident the connection the people have with these places.

Stories from the Jemseg Project gives the reader the opportunity to associate, actual events in the First Nations history of the Saint John River Valley, with Elders that experienced them.

#### **Government Men and Indian Agents**

The histories document their experiences with Government’s plan to centralize Wolastoqiyik by attempting to move people from Welmooktuk (Oromocto) to Pilick (Kingsclear).

Well, when we moved

away from there I was awful young, that was how many years ago? When we were moved from Oromocto? It was forty-seven years ago when we were moved. Government men from Ottawa came and cheated/lied to the Indians; everything they were told, never happened when they were moved to Pilick, well at first the way they lied to the Indians was when you move to Pilick your houses will be ready to move in, they will be all finished and there is a big farm down the hill with lots of cows and chickens, there are five hundred head of cattle for you and same time five hundred head of goats and each family will have five hundred head chickens and there weren’t any chickens up there.(Royden Sabattis)

Elizabeth Paul from Welmooktuk/

Oromocto remembers:

But that time they moved us to Kingsclear in 1947. Goddamn Army trucks. Army trucks were going around the reserve and they said come on you’re moving... you’re moving up Kingsclear.

And after they were moved to Pilick, she talks about what could have happened if the Government’s plan had succeeded in taking land from Welmooktuk to extend the Gagetown Army base:

... they got those houses up there, if any one of these families stayed here, if they would have moved we would have lost all this land because the army was speaking about

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7 W. D. Hamilton and W. A. Spray, Source Materials Relating to New Brunswick Indians, p. 4



this reserve and they were going to take over it. See, them days there was Ben's father, John Brooks and John Sacobie, them was the ones, that didn't move, but if all them families moved up Kingsclear we'd lose everything. We would be up Kingsclear right now. There was nothing they can do they couldn't force them, they didn't want to move, they stayed right here. Ben's father moved up for awhile he didn't last for two weeks then he moved back.

The Indian agent was a representative of the Colonial government for the management and control of the Maliseet people. His dishonesty and greed resulted in poverty within the communities.

Mr. Polchies:

Whalen thrived off the Indians he made money off of the Indians. He was an ex RCMP officer and he retired a millionaire and all the goods and services that were provided to the Indians along the St. John River went to his personal gain....(Richard Polchies)

An individual from Kingsclear:

It was that agent by the name of Edward Whalen and he lived right here on Indian land, he had a big house over there a little ways from here. Where we live now, there use to be an old road, in front of our house. The agent lived close by, he use to run everything and he had everything too. He had cattle, horses, pigs, cows and chickens. He was suppose to give this to the Indians, but he didn't and it was that man he was starving the Indians here at

Pilick... whatever he planted in the spring, potatoes, oats, turnips everything and cut pulp wood in the woods. Every night we would load on all this stuff until about twelve o'clock at night for him to go sell... we were the only ones hired on and Indians use to get clothes from the Mounties a whole truck load, shoes and we would haul them here and put it in the grain shed so he would pick the best clothes and whatever was left over he would give to the Indians and he would go sell the good stuff. Even blankets, white sheets, pillow cases and the real good stuff, and shoes, we would go with him to the lumber camps to sell the stuff and he would keep the money himself." (Royden Sabattis)

He goes on to say:

He cheated the Indians, not just one but all. Remember when some got an army pension? He use to keep that for them or when a small kid got milk, it was given to the Agent for the kid, but the Agent did not give the milk to the kid, I don't know what he did with the milk, I think he sold it. I know when he raised cows, twenty head of jersey's all jerseys, my wife's father use to work for the Agent, he use to milk the cows by hand every morning, this guy would pick up cream cans of milk. The Agent was the one that would take the money. Whatever he sold that belonged to the Indians, he would pocket the money. He did not give a cent to the Indian.

One Elder when asked if he remem-

bered the Indian Agent said:

Yes, in Kingsclear... the devil. (Pat Sacobie)

Same Devil, different name! There are similar experiences up river in Tobique.

Norval Hartt MacPhail was the Superintendent Tobique Indian Agency, with an office located in Perth, N.B. He was superintendent from 1928-1958 (A History of the Maliseets of the Tobique Indian Reservation Saint John River - Address delivered to the Perth-Andover Historical Society January 30, 1961).

An Elder says:

MacPhail, Norval  
MacPhail. He was the devil man, that one. (Maurice Perley)

Another Tobique elder agrees  
...the Indian Agent up town and his name was Norval MacPhail. He was bad. Tough to get anything from. He let you cut lumber, but he wouldn't give you the full amount. You always had to trade it for material, like for electric wiring or for insulation or windows for your house. Because he owned a hardware store at the time. (Charles Bear)

There are similar experiences as expressed by Ida Paul, Lilly Laporte and Jaunita Perley of Tobique in the publication "Enough is Enough" Aboriginal Women Speak Out as told to Janet Silman.

### **Stories Influenced by Christianity**

The spoken histories also reflect the widespread influence Christianity had over the people's traditional stories and their relationship to the spiritual. Many histories contain the theme of the powerlessness of

traditional beliefs against "evil"; only the power of the church and its doctrine can overcome evil.

One Elder tells about a story that was told to him:

...one night when we were all dancing, in walks Sakomawi Wehnoch [stranger]. He was dressed so nice, and his violin was so shiny. When he started to play, you didn't even know what he was playing, because he was so skilful with the violin. But there was this other older woman, she said, Molly look at his feet. One of his legs is a horse's leg. He is not a person, he is the devil. Well, I'll go get the priest. When the priest got there, he saw the stranger and he went to get holy water and sprinkled it on the stranger. And he went right through the floor. The priest said, you play music too much every night. You finally beckoned the devil, you have to stop playing music. (John Arnold Sacobie)

...and another night, they were playing—I guess, yes, they did play cards. All of a sudden—somebody was sliding with a toboggan most of the night, at this place called Elomakqek. That's what Elizabeth use to call it. A spirit and they didn't see it anywhere. So they stopped playing cards and it never happened again. (John Arnold Sacobie)

...They agreed that there should be a dance, so every night there was a dance. There use to be a hall down the hill, further down from the church.

They started playing music, and again a stranger walked in and he started to play too. They allowed him to play.

And again a man said, look at that stranger's feet. This is a different being. They couldn't tell what his one leg looked like, because it was all hairy. They said someone better get a Motewolon. So they went to get Wey, because he was a Motewolon down there. But his power wasn't strong enough. Well then they said, let's get a priest. So they got a priest, the priest smeared something on his throat. And all they heard was bells. And sure enough, he went right through the floor. The priest said, you are playing cards too much. (John Arnold Sacobie)

Theresa Sacobie, Pilick (Kingsclear) tells about how much the people loved to dance and how the priest tried to discourage it;

One time they couldn't get into the hall, the priest had locked the hall with a padlock", and they asked a young man to go through a small opening, "this person came in all dressed up in a black tuxedo style and he kept going around and somebody noticed that one leg was a horses hoof, and they all screamed and this devil or whoever, went through the wall" and she goes on to say that this happened because "they were told not to". According to Theresa, "they were that scared, and I don't think my father ever played the fiddle again.

Many of these histories reflect unpleasant and unexplained occurrences that

happened to people when they played cards:

Charles Polchies from Woodstock tells a story his father told him about how people would go into the woods and stay almost all winter. He says:

...they wanted to play poker [and] one of the elder gentlemen said hey, we shouldn't play cards, it's thundering and lightening, we should stop". "A knock came at the door of the old camp, in walked a gentleman dressed up like a.. it would be unusual being in a dense wood and all of a sudden a guy comes in all dressed up, top hat" and he goes on to say "this sophisticated gentleman, one of his legs was a hoof of a horse so when he saw that he just freaked.

There have been similar stories repeated in First Nations communities and was an attempt by the church to discredit and discourage First Nations connection to the Spiritual. "The Indian Act provides that all Indian Day schools be operated under the supervision of the church" (MacPhail).

Priests had total control over the education of the children which gave them the opportunity to condition them at a very early age. This no doubt was the origin of the "devil stories" to frighten the people into believing the strength of Christianity.

### **Technology**

In addition to the influence of Christianity, the Elder's stories describe First Nations technologies and their knowledge of the material used. I will list but a few of

them below.

Fred Tomah from Houlton, Maine talks in great detail about the appropriate strength of materials used in basket making which he learned from Jim and Aubrey Tomah:

...the reason they are telling me this is because of the nature of the handles and the rims and the basket wood. To make the basket itself, it requires a different growth for each one. For example: thin grain wood, you couldn't use it for weavers of any large basket. But it would be a choice of wood for rims, because thin growth on a tree will allow you to bend it with relative ease without snapping it... real thick grain stuff would be used for handles... a thin grain will not take it. It will take a gradual arch, but a handle, it won't, it will snap.

... Ash that grows anywhere near cedar or any soft woods will be predominately brittle...

And basket making tools:

Gauges, horses, things like that, ax. Your choice of your tools, you either had to make it or acquire it in some manner. You just didn't use other persons tools, it was considered unaccepted, it was the lazy man's way of making a basket. But they, of course, they showed me how to make my own tools. And what choice wood to use and reason why you use it.

He also shared with us his knowledge regarding the construction of snowshoes:

...the hoop for the

snowshoes. It's done the same way as a handle for a basket or a rim.

Because when the shoes gets cold in the wintertime... If it's really cold like subzero, then the nose of that shoe will crack, break on you when it's not done right...

... the modern ones are sawed out stuff and put it through a steamer... As far as making that, it would freeze.

This also includes differences in the webbing of snowshoes between Wolastoqiyik and Mi'kmaq:

Yes, that's another thing about us that we were known to make. We were known as snowshoe makers, this tribe, the Maliseets [Wolastoqiyik] were in relation to the others. And another tribe would, Micmac (Mi'kmaq), look down and know that a Maliseet went by, because of the webbing. Very fine webbing, that's what Maliseets were known to make. It was even a choice of webbing. The moose hide, the underbelly of a young calf was best to use". (Fred Tomah)

Theresa Sacobie from Pillick/Kingsclear mentions the different weaves:

...So I showed all the students that he had about fancy work, all the different weaves... ...the thistle weave, the twist pattern, the rainbow and the loop design...

She names the countries to which her baskets have been sold.

...I've had people here from Japan, China, Iraq, Iran, Australia, almost every European Country. In the States, right from California to

Maine, Canada, all across  
Canada...

### **Hunting Techniques and Uses for Animal Hides**

Ronald Paul from Sitansisk (St. Mary's) describes hunting techniques and uses for animal hides:

Then I started trapping beavers, muskrats, fox, otters and mink. My father and my grandparents and the rest of the Indians, they use to work all day to get prepared for the trapping season. We use to laugh, they'd split up big maples to make toboggans. The runners curl up and the leather was tied on there. They would have to make that within a day. Now and then, that thing would slap you in the face. Everybody had to get ready for it, prepare for it. This would have been like March weather. It runs on top of the crust. They'd get the snowshoes made, toboggan then they go chase moose or deer. Deer are bad out there. They go through a crust and scrape their shins and the hide would go way up, and you could see the bone. And three or four times, they will jump their legs get sore and then they just stand there. So an Indian will come along and grab him, knock him over the head... ..it was the pelt they were after. With that, they can make snowshoes, hats and gloves. And same with the moose, moose hides. They go out and track moose. Moose hide, they can make moccasins, winter moccasins they're heavy, fur lined.

These excerpts are only a few examples of Wolastoqiyik experience.

Pat Sacobie from Welmoottuk (Oromocto) discusses salting fish and methods for drying food. Charles Solomon Sr. from Pilick (Kingsclear) discusses medicinal plants and their uses.

Contributions to the economy by Wolastoqiyik are outlined in most of the histories.

Fiddleheads, berries, snowshoes, baskets, furs, axe handles provided additional products to be added on to the merchant's list. Wolastoqiyik provided skilled labour for the non-Aboriginal population in the areas of farming, pulping and other industrial employment.

The Elders reveal more experiences and share additional events in their individual stories.

### **Recommendations on the Use of Knowledge from Histories**

It is important that information from the histories be utilized, not stored, once it is in the communities, institutions or in the hands of the researchers. As an example, the following list of suggestions for use of the material could, perhaps, apply to educational institutions:

- stories like the ones concerning the "Little People" could be used to strengthen spoken tradition skills by developing a model for listening and speaking competency in traditional language;
- changes in the recent past in areas such as employment, political system, lifestyles, roles of women, travel patterns, and childhood could be

examined and used as a comparison to the pre-contact and the present living patterns of Wolastoqiyik;

- raw data from the histories could be provided to a curriculum development specialist to formulate a language arts, social studies, language skills program, incorporating the histories with systems already in place;
- appropriate information could be extracted and used to devise story books;
- artists could depict the community as it looked based on dates given or events that have taken place, such as the 1930's, the 1940's, "old Christmas", trapping, and dancing;
- house lots, streams and brooks, and special sites could be located or identified by means of cartography and other related document searches;
- video images of medicinal plants could be used to teach the significance of each and their connection to the people;
- research and language skills could be developed by reintroducing technologies used in the past, such as birch bark canoe building, snowshoes, and fishing and hunting methods; these processes could be explained in the language; and
- theatre arts and vocabulary could be promoted by presenting short plays in the Wolastoq'kew language.

Needless to say, these few suggestions, are not limited to educational institutions but to all establishments that have an interest in Wolastoq'kew cultural history.

## Conclusion

The spoken histories reveal the strength of the people's connection to Jemseg. They show a broad pattern of similar activities that took place throughout the river valley. The histories give the reader a glimpse of Wolastoqiyik lifeways in the areas of subsistence, activities, events and beliefs surrounding their lives, and their contributions to the fabrication of the province of New Brunswick. However, these activities provide only a glimpse of the rich tapestries of Wolastoqiyik lives. It was never the intention of the project to present the histories as an all-encompassing picture of the entire culture. We need to conduct further research, and we need to integrate earlier recorded interviews, currently held by Museums, archives or by individual researchers. Other pieces such as additional archaeological evidence, are needed to complete the picture.

In conclusion, it is hoped that other archaeological projects will include spoken histories as an essential and valued component of the project. These provide factual information through personal experiences and complements the project with knowledge from people who have a true connection to all pre-contact sites. There have already been two examples in New Brunswick where archaeologists have used histories to verify the location of specific sites - the Bernard Site on the Tobique First Nation (Keenlyside pers. comm.) and the Augustine Mound located on the Red Bank First Nation (Turnbull 1976). However, JCAP has been the first to develop tran-

scribed spoken histories as a perspective complementary to archaeological interpretation.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to Kci Wolastoqiyik for sharing their time, exercising their patience and agreeing to share their personal experiences. The intention for the spoken history component is so the histories will find their way back into our communities and for non-Aboriginal

communities, serve as teaching tools, which will build a better understanding of Wolastoqiyik, the People of the Beautiful River.

I would like to acknowledge:  
Kci Nuhkomosik naka Kci Muhsumsik  
Great Grandmothers and Great  
Grandfathers

## 2. I remember a long time ago...

TINA BROOKS, PAT LAPORTE, AND JOSEPHINE PAUL  
SITANSISK/ST. MARY'S FIRST NATION

*"I remember a long time ago. Molly, Anwall, all kinds of Indian camps along the shore, now known as Molly's Island." Tina*

*"Soldiers came back and they had to live in workshops for about ten years. Every workshop was either occupied by families or a veteran." Pat*

*"...Father Riley came, gave us a half day. But you had to know your Catechism. You had to learn certain words and he'd ask you. But he didn't ask the words you had to learn, so he would ask words that you didn't learn." Josephine*

Alice: Do anyone of you remember anything about Jemseg, or anyone that had lived there?

Tina: No [said in Maliseet].

Alice: Since we don't know anything about Jemseg, let's go on to St. Mary's, talk a little about how we lived back then. What kind of recreation took place for the people, today from back then.

Tina: Do we have to talk Indian [said in Maliseet]?

Alice: You can talk Indian, English or combine both because it's all going to be translated anyway. It's going to be used, probably, for the archives. Okay anyone... In fact I was reading a book the other day about *Koluskap* (Glooscap) their legends right and one of the things that I was reading

was about when *Koluskap* was in Fredericton above river, he left his snowshoes there and called them Snowshoe Islands, is that true?

Josephine: I never heard.

Tina: I've been to Snowshoe Island, but I don't know where the name come from.

Alice: Where is Snowshoe Island?

Tina: It use to be up, where they flood the... Where is that place where we use to pick fiddleheads?

Pat: Bear Island.

Tina: Bear Island, that's where it was. It still is there, only they flooded, but you can see the snowshoe, but I've been on Bear Island. Have you been there?

Josephine: Yes

Alice: Okay, so lets go with St. Mary's,



how things were way back then. I will probably throw in some questions in there, as you go along.

Tina: You're older than I am.

Josephine: Pat you're the oldest.

Alice: Pat, How about we start with you? Give us a little history on St. Mary's.

Pat: Not much I remember. I was seven years old when we moved from that old reserve [Old St. Mary's—down near the water] up to here [St. Mary's now]. That was in 1933 and that was during the depression there were eighteen houses on this reserve, twelve on this side [Right] and six on the other [Left]. Now it's (pause)

Josephine: Don't even know.

Alice: Must be about one hundred and thirty or more, yeah, feel free to jump in at any time [To the two women].

Josephine: I have to think first [Laughter]. I was only six at that time when I lived down there.

Pat: Come on, I'm older than you?

Tina: I must have been about six, because when my mother died I was six, because I could just remember.

Pat: That was 1933.

Tina: It must be because, it was 1933 when the houses were ready. I think it was about 1935 when we moved up, or maybe more. I don't know, because I remember down the hill [Old

*Plate 2.1: Gabe Acquin, believed to be the founder of St. Mary's First Nation community (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, Old Government House Collection).*



Reserve]. Remember Cecilia?  
Josephine: Who was it that lived there?  
Johnny (pause)  
Tina: Johnny Mike.  
Josephine: Their house caught fire, we were living up here.  
Tina: Yeah, we were first. My father and mother was where we lived, and Johnny Mike. Yeah, did they get a house or what?  
Josephine: No, your grandmother's house, where Bobby Brooks' house was.  
Tina: Oh yeah, [And Josephine] Dunstan and your grandfather's.  
Tina: Yes.  
Pat: There are only two houses, there and over Louise's.  
Josephine: Three.  
Pat: Where's the other one?  
Josephine: Qumuci's house.  
Tina and Pat: Oh yeah, Qumuci's old house.  
Pat: Original houses, three.  
Tina: Where the road is now is where I lived [Maliseet Drive]. They took it off.  
Josephine: Moved it up to Elsie's [Paul Street].  
Alice: So who did all the basket making, like, back then?  
Pat and Tina: Everyone.  
Tina: In the morning when you woke up someone would be pounding ash.  
Josephine: Ah ha, it sounded good, someone pounding when you woke up.  
Tina: They worked all the time.  
Alice: So they made baskets all the time then? Did they sell them?  
Josephine and Tina: Oh yeah.  
Alice: Where did they sell them?  
Pat: Tourists.  
Josephine and Tina: Market, Bowlen's [Bowlen's store still exists on St. Mary's Street].  
Pat: Tourists that come from the states to buy baskets.  
Josephine: Yes.  
Tina: And when people went picking [Probably potato picking].  
Josephine: I would take two ax handles, take them to Bowlen's store and get a package of tobacco and molasses.  
Tina: Molasses, me too. I had to take one handle to Bowlen's and get molasses. You got a lot of it.  
Josephine: Ah ha.  
Pat: For Bees Beer.  
Tina: Yes, [To Pat] say it in Indian anyway. [Laughter from all three].  
Alice: So, what else was done back then, besides basket making?  
Josephine: Baskets, ax handles, paddles, hoops, barrel hoops.  
Alice: Were they... ah..?  
Pat: A Micmac (Mi'kmaq) woman—tapestry. What was her name? Chummy's mother.  
Tina: Harriet.  
Pat: Harriet, she was a good worker. Rugs.  
Tina: She knew how to work.  
Josephine: She went with a Chinese man.  
Alice: And Chummy's name would be Donald Paul right?  
All three: Yes.  
Tina: Harriet took up with a Chinese man. What was the name of that

restaurant?  
Josephine: I forgot. Corner of York Street, there was a Chinese Restaurant there. We always use to eat there.  
Tina: Yes  
Josephine: Hot chicken sandwiches, twenty-five cents.  
Tina: Can't beat that.  
Alice: Out of the eighteen houses that were here a long time ago, were there more families than the houses?  
Josephine: Yes.  
Pat: Soldiers came back and they had to live in workshops for about ten years. Every workshop was either occupied by families or a veteran.  
Tina: The houses that we got were in very poor condition. No water.  
Josephine: Yes, Louie Babe [Louie Paul], Dickie, Paul Paul.  
Pat: Joe Dedham, Harry.  
Tina: I lived a long time in a workshop.  
Alice: I need to know a little bit about, Indians were not allowed to buy liquor back then, and how did you acquire that?  
Josephine: Dogs were not allowed either.  
Tina: If you wanted to drink, you had to find a non-native to get it for you.  
Josephine: Non-natives could not live on the reserve after six o'clock.  
Tina: After nine, if they were invited.  
Josephine: Just until six pm.  
Tina: Nine o'clock, if he was allowed. If the head of the household says he could stay until nine, but after nine he has to go.

*Plate 2.2: Alexa Paul of St. Mary's First Nation, picking fiddleheads on Savage Island, between Fredericton and Kingsclear, New Brunswick (University of New Brunswick Archives, 74-17389).*



Pat: Saying something about non-natives, George Wiseman and the Nashes.

Josephine: When Carrie use to come, she would have to stay in a box car.

Alice: Tell us a little about travelling. How did you travel if you had to go anywhere?

Pat: By boat to pick fiddleheads.

Tina: Going to town—we had to work winter time—cross over on the ice.

Josephine: We jumped on Charlie's, behind the back of the horse. He would try to fight us and chase us away. When he would start moving again we would jump on...

Tina: Were you around when we use to tease Leo Hayes? [asking Josephine].

Josephine: Yes

Tina: He was the only policeman and he would be walking.

Alice: So, was there anything else being made besides baskets, ax handles?

Tina: Just seasonal work. Picking fiddleheads and potato picking.

Josephine: We'd be up on the Island for about a month, as long as there was fiddleheads.

Alice: So tell us something about Savage Island. When did you first start going there?

Pat: A lot of Indian people would go to Savage Island.

Tina: I remember a long time ago. Molly, Anwall, all kinds of Indian camps along the shore, now known as Molly's Island.

Josephine: All kinds of paths, if you

*Plate 2.3: From left: Kathleen "Rice" Sappier, Peter L. Paul of Woodstock, Maliya Paul (Mrs. Solomon Polchies) of St. Mary's, ca. 1922; Rice's home was one of three places where they used to hold dances (University of New Brunswick Archives, AC-10276-11).*



wanted to go visit. No one but Indians lived there. [They are all talking at the same time, hard to make out]... all summer.

Tina: Yeah, all summer.

Tina: Bass time there are a lot of people. Men. Just as soon as a fish jumps, boats are in the water.

Pat: Those were the days.

Josephine: They speared them.

Tina: They speared them.

Josephine: They don't know the Indian name for speared.

Pat: Indians had a good time back then. They would dance back then. Every night they would dance, up the hill, either at home or (pause)

Tina: No matter where you went they would ask, could we dance here? [She talks of them moving a stove and it had to be put back after where it was].

Josephine: Sometimes there would be three places where they would be dancing in one night. At Molly's, Josephine's and where Rice [Kathleen] use to live [Paul Street].

Tina: They would go after John Casey [John Paul] and Mynee. These two could dance.

Josephine: She says that she could call the dances. She use to listen to whoever was calling the dances. If they weren't there she would call, but today she does not remember them. They couldn't teach them to do the Boston Fancy Dance.

Tina: How did they know these dances?

Josephine: I don't know.

Tina: They knew how to dance, John Casey and Mynee.

Pat: Oh yeah, John knew how to call.

Tina: When the dancing was done, The boys, put all the stuff back. You ask anyone. There was no alcohol, but the Bees Beer was somewhere brewing.

Pat: And, relief.

Tina: Oh yeah, welfare.

Pat: Indians were given only so much, no sugar or molasses.

Tina: I don't know.

Pat: You don't get what you want. That was the law.

Tina: Indian Agents treated us poorly. Whalen made his home in Pilick [Kingsclear]. His house was way down the bottom of the road, from the money I suppose.

Pat: He steals.

Josephine: McKutchen.

Tina: McKutchen, his home was where the bank is today.

Josephine: Two thousand something for a week.

Tina: Yeah.

Tina: When Whalen was in, at the time I had six children I did not get any help. Dokie [Mark Brooks] was in the hospital, Louise and everyone else helped me (pause)

Pat: Hard times.

Tina: Donnie Solomon was Chief in Pilick [Kingsclear] at the time. Donnie and Dokie were in the hospital at the same time. Dokie told Donnie about how the agent would not help, so Kingsclear helped Tina and Dokie that month. Two hundred dollars for food from Bowlen's and milk. Andrew Paul was Chief at the

time, I went to ask him for (pause)  
Josephine: He was mean.  
Tina: Sixteen dollars. And he went with me to Lean's Store, so that I wouldn't get junk. I never asked him for anything again. I was pleased with what I got. Kerney [Clarence Paul] had a store at the time. Me and Josephine went to the store. We got our welfare, so we went to pick, there was nothing there. So she asked Josephine, what do you want Kleenex? Or..., we'll have to boil Kleenex tomorrow. We had nothing all weekend, so we had to go to Bowlen's.  
Josephine: Jimmy's old house, sitting over their fence. Potatoes, turnips, he'd steal the night before so we could eat the next day. Potatoes and turnips, turnip hash.  
Tina: My sons too, when we were all out of everything.  
Pat: We use to steal chicken, had chicken every week.  
Tina: Harold and Frankie, they went to steal chicken, cut their head off, and me and Martina [Martina Sappier] would cook them. When the girls came around that night, they wanted to know where we got the chicken.  
Pat: Yeah, those were the days.  
Tina: Yes, I guess.  
Alice: Going back to Savage Island, before my time I guess, how many years have people been going up there?  
Tina: Way, way back, as far as I can remember.  
Josephine: Me too.  
Pat: Me too.

Tina: Until I was old enough, when I was six years old. Then I started going up with Arthur.  
Alice: Who was Arthur?  
Josephine: Paul's father [Paul J. Paul]. Arthur Paul.  
Alice: So, Savage Island, is that haunted? Or is there a burial ground there?  
Josephine: Burial ground, in the middle there.  
Pat: It's not haunted.  
Tina: Well, I've seen a black one.  
Josephine: David was telling me one night, that George Nash was telling him about what happened to him. He said that all night long, the ghosts were bothering him.  
Pat: Who was that?  
Josephine: George Nash. He knew how to tell stories.  
Pat: Oh yeah.  
Josephine: Polons [Francis]  
Tina: Ween [Bill] every year he lived right there. Boat or no boat. From Bear Island, just a raft and a basket.  
Alice: So, if there is a burial ground there, people lived there?  
Tina and Josephine: Oh yeah.  
Alice: Constantly?  
Tina and Josephine: Not all year around, not winter just summer and spring. But in the winter time (pause)  
Josephine: There was one, when we were picking fiddleheads—Dokie and you [Tina]—there was a turtle and he must have been at least one hundred years or more. Names were carved on that shell. Even Bobby Brooks, Jack Brooks, their names.

Alice: On the turtle?  
Pat: Do you know why Indians are on this side of the river?  
Alice: No.  
Pat: No fresh water in town, there was a brook running through the reserve.  
Alice: Really.  
Pat: Oh yeah, they wouldn't (pause) river water.  
Tina: Behind that house, there was a well or something there—spring water.  
Pat: So when they settled on this side, well and stream was from Killarney Lake.  
Tina: Yes.  
Pat: Remember that old pump down the old Reserve?  
Alice: Yes, I remember that.  
Pat: We wouldn't drink that river water. Just the white man, they didn't know any better. It's sewer.  
Josephine: Is this still going on [ tape recorder]?  
Alice: Yes.  
Tina: Indians, when they start hunting in early spring, moving away, Muskrat when muskrat season is done they wait for the fiddleheads and fish.  
Josephine: When we use to live on Jack's Island. Mynee was there and, who was it Doc or the other one?  
Tina: **Piyel Suseph** (Peter Joseph).  
Josephine: Yes, Piyel Suseph. My father would come to Fredericton and sell fiddleheads and we would stay up the Island. My father had a pet crow and they gave it Bees Beer [Homemade beer]. My father got mad. The crow was drunk and staggering. My father was so mad.  
Alice: You said Jack's Island?  
Josephine: Jack's Island.  
Alice: Where is that?  
Josephine: There's Savage Island, there are hardly any trees.  
Alice: Is that the one we call Sheep Island?  
Tina: Sheep Island, Molly's Island.  
Josephine: Molly's Island is right across.  
Tina: There's Hartt.  
Josephine: Hartt's Island is on the other side.  
Tina: On the other side near the entertainment (pause)  
Alice: Yes, the Bucket Club.  
Tina: Yeah.  
Alice: There is Savage, Sugar and Sheep?  
Tina: No, there's an Island in between Sheep and Savage.  
Alice: Oh, is there?  
Josephine: Molly's Island, they call it. Molly use to live there.  
Alice: What about Indian Island in Saint John? Or some where down there. Is St. Croix and Indian Island the same place or two different areas?  
Pat: We stayed up there in Indian Island, Saint John one year to take a bunch of logs.  
Tina: We took kids there one time.  
Josephine: I was there, but never went to the Island.  
Tina: Two weeks we went.  
Alice: Did people use to live there?  
Tina: Probably, but not (pause)  
Pat: Belongs to Indians that Island (pause)

Alice: What about St. Croix?

Pat: I have no idea.

Tina: I've been to St. Croix, we use to go there every summer, when Maria use to live

there. She was living with Bill McDonald, and we go there in the summer time. That time Uncle Arthur was building a log cabin, even the kids had Bees Beer—me and Elsie—before he started working.

Alice: What about Brown's Flat?

Tina: I don't know anything about that.

Pat: That's a place where Indians went in summer made baskets.

Alice: So it was just like a gathering place of people to go in the summer time.

Tina: Yes, summer time.

Pat: Just to make money for the summer.

Tina: There was probably something there, like hoops.

Pat: Joe use to go up river, Pokiok.

Tina: Everybody found a place to go.

Alice: So these places, like Brown's Flat, St. Croix, Indian Island, were they owned by Indians?

Pat: No, they're just camping areas.

Tina: Just by the shore way.

Alice: So it's not Indian.

Pat: One time the whole country belonged to us.

Josephine: There was only one Mountie.

Pat: The Indians just wanted a piece of land by the river.

Pat: The white man started putting up stakes. Leo Hayes and....

Tina: Gorley, oh yes.

Pat: Leo Hayes took one side and

Gorley took the other. That's when they built those houses... He made a fortune, that Gorley. This was all Indian land.

Tina: When I think about it, we owned it all.

Pat: They had to buy this land off of Leo Hayes [Where Reserve is now].

That's all we

had was that piece of waterfront.

Alice: So at one time, the old Reserve was just the Reserve.

Josephine: This was all apple orchards [Where Reserve is now].

Pat: It belonged to Leo Hayes, Gorley.

Tina: Yes, there was a great big rock quarry there between Rita's and Helen's old place. Its all rock. There is a house lot there. Josephine and I use to go out after school and with *akomok* (snowshoes), every day we would go into the woods.

Josephine: Looking for dry apples.

Tina: Yeah.

Josephine: That have fallen, frozen, and we'd eat the juice out of them.

They're brown.

Pat: That's right, they were juicy.

Josephine: Ah ha.

Tina: It was fun along time ago. You made your own entertainment when you went out even if it snowed a lot. No-one stuck around in the house. We were out, *kcihkuhsisok* (little wooded area). Toboggans, when we start getting toys.

Josephine: We'd go sliding, Killarney Road.

Tina: Or at the field where I now live [Maliseet Drive] or on the road.



Josephine: You could slide right down the road and pass the tracks.

Pat: See, there was only two cars up here (pause) and John Casey. You didn't see them going around. Driving back and forth maybe once a week.

Tina: They don't even use their (pause) John Casey was trying to teach Charlie about the car, anyway. Told him to get in, when I tell you to step on it you step on it. Step on it [Said in Maliseet]. We all laughed. He kept his cars for a long time, didn't go anywhere.

Josephine: He didn't go anywhere. We'd play inside the car if he wasn't home.

Tina: Today you could sell and get good money for it. If someone owned one.

Josephine: The car had small tires.

Tina: Essex or something...

Josephine: Yes.

Pat: Nemo told Pat that it took two days to get to Fort Fairfield. [Something about a flat

tire. Lots of laughter].

Alice: Everyone shared back then?

All three: Yes

Tina: Any place you went, Native territory, doors were always open. Long time ago Aunt Elizabeth [Pat's Grandmother], she had half-way house. She was a small little old lady.

Josephine: Yes.

Tina: She would cook *piyeskomonyol* (corn soup).

Josephine: Everybody.

Tina: Anyone that came in, night time. She had an organ. Even Bertha, she

would play the organ [Red Wing].

And we would dance.

Josephine: Even Solomon, accordion.

Doc or Pete, the violin.

Tina: Ned Landry would come and play the violin and we would dance. The old lady had a good time just sitting there.

Josephine: We would play poison. And even Dr. Wright played, and he ate the corn too.

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE ONE; TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

Tina: Houses were open and you were welcome. No matter where you went.

Pat: You were welcome.

Alice: Let's go back, to when you said you were lucky. Who adopted you? [Laughter].

Pat: My father couldn't support us, so my mother went to Saint John. He went up to Tobique. We were left, Louie, Nick, Mart, myself and Rena. In those days she [Mother] was getting a one hundred thirty-five a month, which was a lot of money.

Tina and Josephine: Yes it is.

Pat: People would work all day, ten hour work. Labour for one dollar, for one day. If you were lucky to get a job. I've seen Nemo and my brother Louie [noise in the background]. They would work six in the morning until six at night for one buck. They worked hard.

Tina: Until I got married, Dokie went to work in town for the Jews. Five dollars a day.

Pat: How many kids did you have Tina? Six kids?

Alice: You could buy a lot back then with what you made.

Tina: Well you could, but (pause)

Pat: But we just managed to get through one day at a time. There's a song about that, 'One day at a time'. That was the way you had to live, just to survive.

Tina: Yeah. And you didn't worry about tomorrow. You just live for today.

Alice: That's how it should be today too.

Tina: Everybody had a good time.

Pat: We just started getting electricity not too long ago.

Tina: That time Dokie was in the hospital, that's the first time I ever got (pause) I had to save my family allowance so I could get one light put in.

Josephine: And me too, one light.

Pat: Just in the last ten years Indians (pause)

Tina: We'd get very cold.

Pat: I use to haul wood everyday. If we had an extra log we'd raffle it off, but it wasn't much, two dollars.

Tina: Two dollars. Dokie, all week would haul back and forth, so he could play raffle on Sundays.

Pat: Turn a switch, your laughing.

Josephine: We started getting wood, the whole yard was full. Presto logs and afterwards those nubits. My father use to go to the market on Saturdays to buy pork.

Pat: It wasn't too long ago, relief was a voucher, now you get cash.

Tina: Market on Sunday to buy meat at a reasonable price or Brown's. Five

pounds for a dollar, hamburger.

Josephine: Tuswey said, go to the store for me. Watson's, go buy meat. Flank. I said I want a pound of flank. Plank, he said, you're in the wrong place, you should go to the Devon Lumber Co. It was flank, but I said plank.

Tina: We would steal pulp out of box cars.

Josephine: Carrying logs.

Tina: Myrtle, she had a toboggan.

Josephine: Poor thing. Percy and Jerry would just be sitting there.

Tina: Yeah.

Pat: She worked hard, Myrtle, I wouldn't doubt that. She is as strong as a man.

Tina: You can tell just by the way she walks. Every night she had to go steal. Charlie, after school, he had to walk to the Queen hotel across the ice.

Pat: When she brought the basket back she would only get one cookie out of it. Percy and all of them (pause)

Tina: They would eat everything up. When there was bad weather, still had to walk after school. We didn't have holidays at school.

Josephine: Unless Father Riley came, gave us a half day. But you had to know your Catechism. You had to learn certain words and he'd ask you. But he didn't ask the words you had to learn, so he would ask words that you didn't learn.

Tina: Not the same words. Whalen would come and bring his son with him.

Josephine: Yeah.

Tina: Bobby Whalen.

Alice: Is that the Bobby Whalen that's been walking around here. That's his son and he use to be the Indian agent. His Father?

All three: Yes

Tina: He treated us poorly. They must have a lot of the Indian money now.

Josephine: Yes. They were well off.

Tina: Whalen had a house in Kingsclear.

Pat: Esty Brooks and I—he's dead now—we were in jail. Whalen gave us thirty days, no fine. So we were in there. The guy, a trustee, came in there. 'A chap is going out tomorrow,' he said, 'he has no clothes'. A white guy, it was no Indian. And Whalen got a clothing order for that guy: rubbers, pants, underwear, jacket. So when Isaac came—we were allowed one phone call— so I told Isaac that Whalen gave this white man our clothing. Then when we got out, there were two bundles of clothing for us. Brand new clothes.

Alice: If you think back, them helping white man is almost the same thing today. Well?

Pat: Things haven't changed too much. Take this reserve, no offence to anybody, but a lot of white people. I don't even know my family, don't know half of them. But eventually the white man will be taking over.

Josephine: There are more white than Indian.

Tina: I told Nancy one day, no offence, but someday they are all going to be whites up on this hill.

Alice: Richard told me the same the

other day.

Pat: Nancy is white also.

Tina: Yes.

Alice: We're slowly being pushed out.

Pat: But they will carry on as Indians. But they're trying to buy the Indians out.

Tina: They should buy a piece of land somewhere and all the Indians go and leave the whites behind, to start all over.

Josephine: They wanted us to live in Kingsclear.

Tina: That was so (pause)

Pat: You know inter-marriages. That woman from Tobique, What was her name? Nicholas girl?

Tina: Andrea Nicholas, could be.

Pat: Remember, she won a court case.

Alice: No, wasn't that Sandra Lovelace or someone like that.

All three: That's the one Lovelace.

Pat: She's the one that started. Maybe she had a point, but I don't know.

Alice: Back then they gained status, today they don't.

Tina: Well, the thing is, the white man, they're taking over.

Alice: No white should have any say on this reserve. We're suppose to be stronger than them.

Josephine: It's suppose to be that way.

Tina: It's suppose to be that way.

Alice: Religion for Indian people. Let's talk about religion for a couple of minutes. Or who taught or if anybody did teach religion to Indians.

Josephine: We had to go to church in the school.

Tina: We would go every lent.

Plate 2.4: Children from St. Mary's, photo ca. 1890 (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, P5-81).



Josephine: Forty days.

Tina: Forty days, every morning.

Josephine: Six o'clock, every morning.

Tina: No matter what the weather, we still had to go.

Pat: The priest use to give us half a day.

Josephine: Father Donahue.

Pat: From the North Shore.

Josephine: Dr. Bailey, Father Bailey, I mean.

Tina: Father Bailey.

Pat: Father Bailey use to give us half a day. He come in the morning and get half a holiday.

Josephine: That was Father Ryan, he comes from Saint John.

Pat: Gave us half holiday.

Josephine: Yes.

Tina: We only got that once a year.

Josephine: He only came once a year.

Pat: There wasn't that many holidays.

Tina: It was fun a long time ago. Now I don't even want to go out. Long time ago, Indians play poker, didn't care what day it was. Dinner time, poker game.

Josephine: Even out on the lawn, they'd spread a blanket out. Right on the ground penny ante.

Pat: We use to play with marbles.

Tina: Gardens were open, there was no fence. Aunt Elizabeth, she let us have cucumbers, small ones.

Pat: No one had to steal.

Tina: You didn't have to steal. If you wanted anything, all you had to do was ask. If you didn't want something, then you didn't bother it.

Pat: That's right.

Josephine: Children were not destructive.

Tina: No.

Josephine: We'd just tease.

Tina: Yeah, that was fun. Until you got someone angry. But next day, it blew over.

Alice: The way we eat today is not the way we ate back then.

Pat: No way.

Tina: Don't think so.

Pat: If you got a slice of white man's bread a week you were lucky. It was all Indian bread.

Tina: Home made bread.

Josephine: We would go buy bread at Graham's. Sale bread.

Tina: Sale bread.

Josephine: Eight cents.

Tina: Once I sent Shawnee to John Casey's store, my last thirty cents to buy bread. We lived in Workshop then. Go buy me bread. She took a long time. I went to look for her, she was sitting on the step eating candy. There goes my bread money. I didn't even have any flour. Just sitting there. Bread was fifteen cents then. To go buy bread.

Pat: Those were the days.

Josephine: One time ago, Rice lived in the workshop in Sylvia's house. She was making alterations to my coat. My father hired her and paid her twenty-five cents to make me a winter coat. We were sitting on the couch and I found twenty-five cents. So I went to hide it and she lost it.

She came and told on me, so I had to go and find the quarter that I hid. I was so happy that I found it. I got blamed when Rice told my father.

Tina: Dokie and Charlie, they made ax handles and sold them at Hull's, where the black people lived. Next day this man came and he wanted his money back because his ax came off the ax handle. They made him another one, but I don't know how they made them, but that's pretty bad when you give back the money.

Alice: How much did they sell them ax handles for.

Tina: Fifty cents, fifty-five cents or a dollar.

Josephine: Whatever another person could afford, I guess. It was very cold where they had the stands.

Tina: Where city hall is now, that use to be the market. You could walk across the ice.

Josephine: A long time ago, there was a fire at (pause)

Josephine: Willard Fruit, right down the hill, burnt. There was a lot of apples. We ate apples all winter, or we'd go buy (pause)

Tina: Alexanders.

Josephine: Alexanders. I would sneak a bite in school (pause)

Pat: At school you use to get warm milk. It didn't taste very good. They didn't cool it off. It came right from the cow to the school. Warm milk was a help and you had one teaspoon of cod liver oil.

Josephine: I always had to take two teaspoons of cod liver oil.

Tina: Yeah, you were more anaemic than the rest of us. I could hardly stand to take one. Milk and cod liver oil is not a good mixture, really.

Josephine: No.

Pat: We had to brush our own teeth down there with what they gave you.

Tina: Powder.

Josephine: Yes. Standing here, Charlie must have had his hand up, but the teacher didn't see. So he just peed himself. And one time again at school, I was sitting in back, Becka in front and Teddy and Warren in between. A louse. He was a live one, playing with his bug on his desk. The teacher was way over with her pointer. I told him that the teacher was coming and he picked up the louse and threw it, and I took to laughing hard. I don't know who was in front, no wonder we had lice.

Pat: Philip Nash. The first day in school, told him to go on up to the board and draw something, he drew a cow that was pooping.

Tina: Do you remember Mrs. M. Elliott? She only had one dress.

Josephine: Just one?

Tina: Everyday.

Pat: That's right.

Josephine: Yeah, greyish blue.

Pat: I remember that.

Tina: All those years teaching.

Josephine: She didn't dress any different.

Tina: Night time she would wash the dress and then iron it.

Pat: One year I remember Mary O's.

Tina: I don't remember her.

Josephine: I do.

Alice: Who is she?

All three: Teacher.

Pat: She had that tree, orange tree.

Tina and Josephine: Ah ha.

Pat: She cut it up. Lost her job.

Josephine: I would go for dinner. We would run on top of desks. One would watch out the window for the teacher.

Tina: You couldn't talk Indian. We would be in a corner talking Indian.

Alice: So, the nuns taught you also?

Pat and Josephine: No.

Tina: They taught me.

Alice: So, were you punished if you talked Indian.

All three: Yes.

Alice: And how were you punished?

Tina: Stay after school or get hit with the pointer.

Pat: Hit on the back of the wrist.

Josephine: We're standing in the lineup, we didn't know, and then the pointer. You bring out you're hand and if you pulled it back, you would get it twice as much.

Tina: The Sisters, on my knuckles, because I was wearing nail polish. I still think about that today, all the time. Knuckles, pointer, you know nice girls. How do you know I'm nice? Nice girls don't go around wearing nail polish.

Alice: Were they trying to do things their way?

Tina: Well, basically, I guess. White man's rules.

Pat: We'd take our books home, I never even studied or anything. Morning

you tried to make up for it.

Josephine: Only four years I went to school, because I was sickly when I was young. I was suppose to study at home for two years. I did have grade six books, but that was it.

Tina: I jumped from one class to another, in a day. I go to school in grade four, I come out, I'm in grade six.

Alice: Why was that?

Tina: I was smart. When I got to be thirteen we were too young to quit, we couldn't get in high school. We would just sit around until we were fifteen. We would teach the kids Catechism every morning. I'll take the Nuns lunch, boil two eggs and cook two slices of bacon. But we did take Home Economics.

Pat: In '33 our teacher was telling us, if that man gets in power, there's going to be a lot of people killed. World War (pause) that's when Hitler got in power.

Tina: Do you remember Queen Elizabeth when she was around?

Josephine: That's the time my eyes were bothering me.

Tina: We had new outfits. Everyone had a new dress. They were old fashioned, ruffles.

Pat: That was in '38.

Tina: That was '39. She looked so good. Queen Mother now.

Josephine: Ah, ha. She was ten years old. Queen Elizabeth not Queen Mother. Because I was ten. We're the same age.

Pat: Is she that old?

Josephine: She is seventy-two and I'm going on seventy-two.

Pat: I saw her in Korea.

Tina: It was no big deal when you think about it now. She just waves. We were busy with the flags.

Josephine: Yes.

Pat: Who put the sign across the road, 'Welcome Devon Indians'?

Josephine: I don't know.

Pat: I don't know, it should have been welcome Queen Elizabeth! Times have really changed.

Tina: I guess they're changed, not for the better either. When I think about it, I would sooner be back there than where I am today.

Alice: Do you know of any other places where Indian people went besides Brown's Flat, St. Croix, Indian Island?

Tina: Just when we went picking potatoes in the fall.

Josephine: Truck loads. Maybe one or two families on reserve, the rest went picking.

END OF TAPE

### 3. Money off the Indians

RICHARD POLCHIES JUNIOR  
SITANSISK/ST. MARY'S FIRST NATION

*...Whalen thrived off the Indians. He made money off the Indians. He was an ex-RCMP officer and he retired a millionaire. And all the goods and services that were provided to the Indians along the Saint John River, went to his personal gain. All the farm produce, the animals, the farm supplies, lumber supplies, army, air force, navy, RCMP supplies, the surplus, he got them, gave them to the Indians and paid himself for services rendered. Vegetables, beef, sheep, all them things, he paid himself for services.*

Alice: Could you tell me something about Jemseg? If people had lived there?

Richard: Grand Lake, because that's where Indian Point is.

Alice: No, I'm not talking about Grand Lake. I'm talking Jemseg. Just as soon

as you get off that high bridge, there's an area there that Indians occupied at one time. Probably seasonal, basket making and stuff like that, but I don't know for sure.

Richard: First, if I go back like to the late 50's, fifty-nine and sixty. Down

Plate 3.1: Grand Lake, looking West, South of Princess Park (photo by Karen Perley)





in Grand Lake, Cow Point, there was a settlement of Indians there, like years past in the 20's and 30's. And there was two graveyards down there and then you came up along the banks of the Grand Lake. Then you came into *Quapit* (Maquapit Lake) and French Lakes. There was a little island between the two bridges at Lakeville Corner. That island, there's reserve; there's burial grounds there too. Then you come up around that point, which is the out skirts of Grand Lake, coming into the Saint John River, which takes you up along the Jemseg. So Indians occupied that whole lake area, from Indian Point, right around to Jemseg, right up to the Saint John River. And then you come up river just before you get to Oromocto. And they occupied land and there's seven graves down there of Indians, which is known as Portabello. Portabello Drive in there, see. And there was a lot of fights that went on in there amongst the rich people. Like from Saint John, bringing in the Americans. People that owned that sugar refinery that fought with the Indians for the right to use the river, like the passage. And the Indians occupied it so bad, that the white people couldn't get up through there and they started fighting. But the Indians won out, they won over the white people. And a lot of them that didn't move, that stayed home, were mostly your hunters and trappers and basket makers. They owned all the way from, mostly from Tobique, Woodstock, Kingsclear—Kingsclear not so much. Kingsclear wasn't really settled on until later. It was during the late 30's and 40's that,

that was settled. You know, like more occupants. Because Kingsclear as we know it today, wasn't Kingsclear as it is today. It was up river, where (pause)

Alice: So what was it known as?

Richard: It was Kingsclear, but it wasn't located there, is what I'm trying to say. It was located up river, up by Kelly Creek. Up in that area where the dam is washed over, like now, right around Wolastoq Park. Around that area is where Kingsclear use to be and their Church was, is still standing there today. It's St. Anne's. And there was a lot of stories told to me about Kingsclear by Louise Polchies and her husband, Arthur Polchies, about Kingsclear. The legend is that, did you ever go up there where the big rock is up at Taber's field?

Alice: No.

Richard: Okay. There's a rock there and as God is my witness—this spring or this summer you come and get me, I'll take you there. There's a rock there, as big as this table, and there's a footprint in it. And you take the gun, like when you hold up to your shoulder, that end of it. And like this white man kept moving his marker over, all the time, for the boundary, like his line, for the marker. So the Indian got mad and something to the effect of 'This be the last damn time you move this marker, and I'm putting my mark on it here now.' And he stomped his foot on the rock, and he butted his gun barrel on the rock. And the mark is still there today. And to this day, he put a curse on that land. As long as white man owned it, nothing will ever grow on

it and nothing has and nothing will.  
Alice: So, white man is still on it?  
Richard: They're on it. But nothing has ever grown on it and some people believe it's haunted. I've heard of at least five people that's been haunted by that piece of land and they see (pause)  
Alice: Indians?  
Richard: Yeah.  
Alice: Why would the Indians be haunted if white man is occupying the land?  
Richard: Well, because it's spirits. Spirits, they don't discriminate.  
Alice: I guess not.  
Richard: It could be a good spirit or a bad spirit, I don't know. One never knows, you'd have the experience of one. Getting back down to around Jemseg, people occupied all sorts of land down through there. But as far as owning any land, they didn't own any land down through there. They owned it all, at one time. And Indians never ever gave up the right to this land, in New Brunswick and down through the New England states.  
Alice: Actually, they didn't own land. They weren't on land anyway, they were using waterfront.  
Richard: Not really, they hunted inland.  
Alice: But I mean for basket making, fishing. They camped around the waterfront.  
Richard: They also hunted too, you see. And they had to go to a source. Say like deer, moose, beaver and any inland game that wasn't next to water. Like beaver, you had beaver dams. Muskrat, like they didn't just stay around rivers. Like muskrat, you never know where you're going to find them darn things. And say, your ash for ax handles, making baskets. They had to travel the woods to find all this stuff. And, of course, when they found good crop of ash somewhere, they repeatedly go back there every spring of the year. And their

Plate 3.2: Grand Lake, looking West, South of Princess Park (photo by Karen Perley)



fare was going to Saint John to the market. And selling their baskets and trading, like for different stuff, like for vegetables or whatever. And a lot of people carried it by back. I know old Noel Moulton from Tobique, he use to walk from Tobique to Woodstock. And he'd stop at every farmer carrying baskets, to see if they wanted to buy baskets. And by the time he made a one way trip, he would be loaded right down with a whole bunch of stuff. So it wasn't everybody that did it. My Grandfather did it in Woodstock. He hunted all the way from Woodstock, clear out to Canterbury, Skiff Lake and back into where that Indian trail is in Meductic.

Alice: So who was your grandfather? What was his name?

Richard: John Paul, and he done that close to forty years and he knew that woods like the back of his hand.

Alice: Okay, if Indians didn't own any land, they had to hunt inland?

Richard: They did own it. But you see the misconception is always been that the Indians gave up the land. We never gave it up; it was taken away from us.

Alice: But didn't non-Indians give them a hard time for hunting back then?

Richard: No, not really. In my life time, I can't ever recall anybody ever giving me a hard time. No, what my Grandfather use to say is that you went to ask somebody. If somebody owned the land, say like a farmer, and that was a stick of ash on their land and you wanted that stick of ash, they always gave it to them. You never had any problems. It was when people went around with the premise

of stealing on other peoples land. Okay, then people accuse that person or whoever that person might be, of stealing and wanting him charged. That's what gave a lot of people bad names. And offer to say just for argument purposes, just go ask the person, whoever occupied the land if it's all right to cut a piece of ash. And usually they didn't give you no hassle, no problem. Especially if they knew that your livelihood depended on it. And same thing really applied all over the place When you start misusing something (pause) Like say today, like under that Supreme Court case decision, that Sparrow. You know, even if that didn't materialize and as long as it was maintained. What I'm trying to say here is that, once you start misusing something, like if you start getting too many deer or too many moose, whatever. You're going to do away with that stock and then you're not going to have nothing. Now we have been falsely accused and I wrote letters to Ottawa. I wrote letters to Halifax, Regional Director D.F.O.'s [Department of Fisheries and Oceans] office down there, criticizing the data and the scientific information that their biologist had to deal with the rivers of New Brunswick and the fish counts of Salmon. And I asked a question of how many high sea fishing trollers there were in the oceans that were run by Indians and questions like that. Lobster traps and all sorts of things and the response I got was none. Yet you're looking at television and hearing on the radio, and you read in the papers that Indians were depleting the salmon

stock of our rivers. You know, that information, that was unfounded, and really was critical towards all of us across the country, you know. It's happening now in the states of Washington and Oregon in the United States. Now they are feeling the same pressure. And the squeeze has been put on by British Columbia and Alaska, you know, on the salmon stocks there. It's not, again, the Native people, you know. They're only getting... hell for every million fish, they're getting less than ten percent of it. And it's hardly for the numbers of people. They far outnumber us out west, than here in the east, in the sizes of their communities and the number of reserves. And so if you take and divide that into their allocation, they get less than ten salmon per family, and that's hardly any. Then people have to pay big bucks for their licenses, especially commercial fisherman. And it's not like it was years ago. But then again, if you look at, and pointing the finger, you know, it certainly shouldn't be directed towards us, you know. Like we always try to preserve and maintain. Just take what we can utilize and leave the rest for when you need it. It's almost like you'd have to go back to the 20's and 30's, when there was no electricity and refrigerator. People couldn't put it in a new refrigerator or freezer, they just could hang out and dry the meat. By hanging it out and cook it when you need it. Or in the wintertime you hide it in the snow bank and hope the animals don't get at it, and that's the way you ate. But today, you know, there's so much variance. THERE'S more motor

vehicles, there's ATVs and everything. And all the back roads are, that use to be all woods, is only visible by airplane or by helicopter. And now you can get to any part, anywhere you want to go. Like I can go just go outside of Fredericton Junction and end up in St. Stephen, And not hit a road of pavement, they're all dirt road.

Alice: Let's go back to Jemseg and them places, let's talk about them.

Richard: Well, you take from the Jemseg bridge to Saint John, there was a lot of, mostly Nashes and Sacobies that occupied the rivers down through them areas. Which would be the village of Gagetown and Upper Gagetown, which is almost three miles, I suppose From the Jemseg Bridge in the western and southern direction from the bridge itself. Now and then you went down river to Brown's Flat, Indian Point and (pause)

Alice: Okay, Brown's Flat and Indian Point are not the same place?

Richard: No, they're two different places.

Alice: But are they on the same area? Same island?

Richard: They are in the same, like a dog foot, I suppose. One is to the left hand side and one is to the right hand side. Here back about fifteen, sixteen years ago, there was a doctor and a nurse killed down there in the lake—aircraft. And Jeffrey was down there and Melvin's young fellow, Richard. And they phoned up and they were scared, because they witnessed a plane crash, you see. No, that was longer than that, because we lived in Marysville.

Alice: But Brown's Flat, what I'm trying to say is, Brown's Flat and Public Landing—is that what I said?

Richard: No, you said (pause)

Alice: Indian Point

Richard: Indian Point and Brown's Flat.

Alice: Okay. Brown's Flat and Public Landing, are they the same place? But two different areas in the same area?

Richard: They are close in proximity. Opposite each other.

Alice: But not the same place?

Richard: They are two different places.

Alice: Brown's flat and Public Landing, Indians also occupied them places. Also, what did they do there?

Richard: Made baskets, because they got all their ash just from up over the hill, what is now Base Gagetown. That all use to be all farm land up through there And you could take and drive right from Oromocto on the old highway and you would end up right there at Brown's Flat. It's right up over the big hill there.

Alice: I've never heard about that until I started doing this.

Richard: Oh yeah, I've driven it several times, but you can drive on it on the fall of the year during hunting season. But like now, the roads are closed, the military is doing their training there and what not.

Alice: So, they only occupied this in the summer time, these areas?

Richard: No, spring and summer.

Alice: Spring and summer. What about the fall?

Richard: Fall, they start moving back up, toward where their homes were for the winter. And they hunted on the way back, like moose and deer and earlier, at the turn of the century,

there was caribou too. But, the deer chased the caribou out, and the moose, you see. They chased them up towards Quebec. That's why you see caribou now in Quebec and Labrador, because they all took off, across the ice. But they were all chased, right from down to Nova Scotia, right up to Quebec. The Province of Quebec and Labrador, that's why you see an over abundance of them.

Alice: What about Indian Island?

Richard: Indian Island?

Alice: Is there an Indian Island, over there in Saint John somewhere?

Richard: Yeah, Brother's Island.

Alice: Is there an Indian Island?

Richard: No, there's Brother's Islands.

They are right across from the marina, right in the city of Saint John.

Alice: So, did Indians occupy that place too?

Richard: Oh yeah, there's even a silver mine. There's a silver mine there, yes, but it's not, it was never ever mined. I shouldn't say it wasn't mined, because it was mined. But they couldn't mine it, if that makes any sense, because it's surrounded by water, okay, and it's surrounded by two rivers. One goes up towards Sussex and the other one is the Saint John River. I forget the name of that one, I think it's Kennebecasis. And anyway, they join together right at Brother's Islands. Now if you're going to Saint John, like the East end, instead of going across the toll gate bridge, you come into Saint John, go across the Reversing Falls Bridge. Okay, and you come down through that street, where the museum is, and then you come to an intersection like

a 'y' and you turn left. And that's the old way of going down to the hospital, to the new hospital. Okay, that's one way of getting there. If you take that route, then there's a park down there and on the left hand side is a ball park. We use to play fast ball down there, like seniors fast ball. And now I'm going back to the late 60's now, and there was a... Harold brought down a bunch of kids down there and I drove the bus down for him. This one trip and he brought the van down. I was suppose to pick the bus up that weekend, which I did. Anyway back to the story. He had to lead the way, because I had never gone there before and I didn't have a clue where it was. But after I went there once... like I could find it now with no problem. And the marina was here, and right straight across was the islands. Well, Harold got to know this policeman, he was the Deputy Chief of Police in Saint John and he watched the camp for Harold. It was the Band's Camp you see. But skidoosers went there this one winter night and they didn't know that this place, that this policeman was watching it. Well, it just so happened the night him and his wife went out, it was around Christmas or New Years, somebody went and burned the building down. So nobody ever went camping there again. But when Harold use to take kids down there, kids use to like to swim, but the water was cold. And when they jump in the water, they would feel something around their feet and scared them. It was seals, baby seals. And anyway, they searched around that island and they found this shaft. And

they got asking the fellow that owned the marina what all this meant, because it was all new to them. Nobody knows, there's no history behind it or anything. And when Harold came back, he asked me to look into the Lands Registry, if them lands were still registered as Reserve. And they were and still are today.

Alice: Really, Brother's Islands?

Richard: And at one time, there were silver on them. But you couldn't mine it, because of the water. There was no way blocking out the water and the silver is deep within the mine shaft. And I don't know how big the mine shaft is, but I never (pause) I went on the island once, just to the camp but didn't walk around. And there's one good sized island and two small ones, so there's three. They're called Brother's Islands. And on a map—I have a map somewhere and it has the name of them. But to name them, if you refer them as Brother's Islands to anybody in that area, they'll tell you where they're at. And they're just across from the marina. It's something that more people should know. Same as St. Croix and Canoose. Hardly any people know about that. And we done a search on that in 1974. And six of us went out there. And the first time I ever went to St. Croix, I couldn't believe when I seen that land, it was beautiful. Canoose on the other hand was "yucky" looking. All grown up with alders, a lot of old dead trees. No camps, you know, it was just over grown with old under brush and stuff.

Alice: Canoose. Is that owned by the

*Plate 3.3: Village scene at Brown's Flats; the woman seated at the centre of the photo is making and is surrounded by hand-woven baskets and trade items (University of Pennsylvania, 139042).*



Passamaquoddy Indians? Right up to Point Lepreau?

Richard: No, it was owned by the last residents. On the St. Croix and Canoose were Elsie, Josephine, Dan and Joe Sakpi, from here. And Peda [Peter Paul] from Woodstock and one of his sons. That's what that old man told us in St. Stephen. What's the name of that, across from McAdam?

Alice: Vanceboro, Maine.

Richard: Yes, Vanceboro Maine. We went right to the school house there. There was a caretaker there and he remembered them. And he remembered, he called him 'white Pete'. So, that had to be Peda. And Charlie Paul. And the only Charlie Paul I know would be Charlie from up Tobique, And he said they were the

last people to live on them two reserves. So when we got that information... And he showed us a coin that had an Indian head on it. That was given to him by a six year old, back in the 20's. So he still had that and we went to his house for coffee. I forgot his name, but I know where he lives, if he's still alive. I doubt if he's alive today, he would be in his late 80's.

Alice: So, there was reserves on St. Croix and Canoose.

Richard: Oh yeah. The St. Croix, that was unofficially declared a 'reserve'. I believe it was 1947. And there was an opening on recovery for that property, if somebody choose to go ahead and do it. Now the only way you could do it, is you have to know the

last known residents of that reserve to put a claim in. And nobody wanted to do it.

Alice: Why?

Richard: I don't know, I don't know.

Now as I mentioned, them people, they were the only seven people that were known, okay. And Indian Affairs' contention was it was surplus land, unoccupied. And when the Province applied for it, in their letter of Patents, they gave it to the Province. But they didn't order a 'Order-in-Council' nor did they give them a privy number. So it's still reserve and it's still gathering assets as a reserve. So it's still a status reserve. Now the Governor of Maine and the Premier of New Brunswick, just before Louis Robichaud time. I think it was VanWart. VanWart, he was the Premier of the day. Anyway the Governor and the Premier of that day, they decided to take both sides of that lake front and declare them National Historic Monuments. Parks, on both American and Canadian sides.

Alice: And that would be St. Croix? And Canoose?

Richard: Well, Canoose is just down river. But in order for anybody to get that land, the other Bands have to give up their interest. Their interest, what they might have had and that's not about to happen. It didn't happen the last twenty years, it's certainly not going to happen in the next two, that's for darn sure. I remember back in 1966, they said that Ring Road was coming through here. Well, here it is now 1997, do you see a Ring Road up there yet?

Alice: Are they going to put it through?

Richard: I doubt it. I doubt it.

Alice: Didn't they already settle that?

Richard: I appealed, because of the proper fiduciary responsibility of the Federal Government has towards Indian People. The Indian People were notified of what that agreement entailed. You know all we were asked to do was to vote on a referendum for that. Did you realize there are over fourteen pages attached to the referendum on the conditions of the reserve? And nobody mentioned nothing about that Bingo Complex up there. And so I asked for copies of that from Amherst and I got it. So when I got them, I appealed it, but I never got no response. I sent it right to the Minister's office in Ottawa. So something like that, they have to research it. Especially when you accuse them of their fiduciary responsibility. Because it's not your fault, it's not my fault, it's not Chief and Councils fault. It's the fault of Indian Affairs, where they have the responsibility of advising you and me as band members, as to what this referendum entails in its entirety, and they can't. Like if you take a book and take some pages off. You know what I'm saying? Like they're deleting information from us, and that's illegal to do that.

Alice: Let's go back to Canoose then. I would like to know a little more about that.

Richard: Well, it was a reserve that was basically set up by the Indians. That I just told you, that their families, last known ones. Now I'm going back to the late 20's and 30's, when they were there. But this old fellow, he remembered back 1910, when he was told by his father and grandfather of



Indians always occupying them lands. Now, this is the guy in Vanceboro, this old fellow. And he stated that the Indians like Elsie, Josephine, Dan and Joe walked from St. Croix on the ice to school. It was quite a ways. And walking on the ice would be a lot shorter, but dangerous for little kids. They must have been small back in them days. And they used roads in the spring of the year, and they'd be muddy. So I would imagine it would be hard trekking for little kids, walking that distance. I'd say it would be a good eight to ten miles return. That's something. They had to walk, there was no school buses in them days. Winter time was twice as hard. But that's how they had to grow up and they survived. On Mother Nature, just what the land provided. That was the bare essentials. And there was no fat to be given there and there was no such thing as welfare back in them days. And housing was what you made of it, it wasn't like that today. You didn't get nothing and you didn't want for anything. Anything you had, you got it on your own, Like you worked for it, you bartered for it. And that's how people survived, you know, they traded. They traded their furs, their baskets, their handles, ax handles. All sorts of things for vegetables, clothes and different tools that was required. And a lot of their tools was handmade, that's why you see a lot of Indian tools. The best selection I've ever seen of hand tools is Louie Paul's. Joe's brother, up in Woodstock. And he's got almost every conceivable tool an Indian ever had.

Alice: Yes, he does, I've seen them.

Richard: And I was surprised, when I went up there quite a few years ago, that he had that much selection. And he got them all over the United States. And he has an automatic ash pounder up there. First time I ever seen one of them. He got that from down the States somewhere and he brought it home. Of course Louie was always mechanically inclined and he modified it, got it working. And he shook the whole house, vibrated the ground. Kept the Indians half awake all night long, when that thing was thrashing and going on. But I'll tell you, she done the job and it was quite the thing to see it operate. I didn't think he'd ever get it off the ground. But Louie, I'll tell you, he's very passive. I'd guess I would have to say, when he sets his mind on something, it's going to get done.

Alice: Tell us a little bit about St.

Mary's. Tell me about down the old Reserve there. Is that Indian land or was it squatters land?

Richard: No, no, there was squatters living on it but it was always Indian land. There is a misconception about *Sitansisk*, which is St. Mary's. At one time, we use to be over across the river, where the Sheraton and the Old Mountie Barracks are. That's where the original St. Mary's Indians were settled. Now we're going back to the mid 1800's, right up to the 1950's. So you're looking at a 100 years just right there. Indians occupied that land, what's known as the Devon Indian Reserve. And this is the St. Mary's. There's two reserves and they get two different numbers.

Alice: Those would be the lot numbers.  
Richard: Yes. And that one down there, back in 1953, the City of Fredericton (pause) And it was peculiar how it went about. I've always challenged all the past Chiefs on how that land, a portion of that land, got into the possession of the City of Fredericton. Along with a portion of Dedham Street. And people always was told to keep quiet about it. And I sort of got peed off, how land transaction transpired the way referendums were held, and what not. People seem to be content. For example, when I was elected Chief in 1984, I had been working on negotiating prior to that with the Province. They wanted access to come across the reserve with the two hydro lines up here. And also, they didn't have no easements for telephone poles on the reserve. So I went out and I counted the poles. And I got the land surveyed and got an approximate estimate of how much land use they were using. So I took about ten houses and I multiplied what the annual cost was for lights on them houses. And I figured out a half a cent per kilowatt an hour. A half a cent. Then I multiplied by the number of houses on the reserve. And the figures were astronomical. I couldn't believe it, what I was looking at on a piece of paper. So I presented that to the Chief, then Harold, and the Council and they thought it was far fetched. They couldn't believe we'd get that kind of settlement. So we didn't dicker with them. Well, the year that I was elected Chief, there was two things in the back of my mind. That certainly was one and

the other was the land that the old vets. That they always professed that they owned, and this was one of them, this piece of land here. The late Dan Paul claimed, that when he came back from the war, all the veterans that had served in World War II were assured by the D.V.A. that they had to have a minimum of two acres of land to get V.L.A. assistance. Like for their land act. And that's how the houses were established on Paul Street. Them old houses, like Aunt Evangeline's house there.

Alice: I think we have about four. Louie, not Louie, but Louise Paul's house.

Richard: No, that was not a veteran's house. That was under Indian Affairs.

Alice: What about Qumuci's? No? Your father's also?

Richard: That old house was. But anyway, they were all assured. And what they did is rather than have a Certificate of Possession granted to these veterans, they were assured by the agent that day that... he pointed up this direction and said, well that's your property and this is my property. That's how it was done. Everybody just assumed this was their property and that was theirs and so on and so forth. So we got that out of the way back in '84 or '85. It was in the fall of the year. And then after we got that out of the way, Tony and Gobby, if I'm not mistaken, but I could be wrong. I got them searching for documents in Halifax through the Archives and also in Ottawa at the National Archives. And we wanted to ascertain whether or not the information that we're getting from Re-

gional Office in Amherst, whether it's accurate or not. And it was far outdated and it had been tampered with. Now I don't want to get into mentioning names, but there was a lot of irregularities, a hell of a lot. And for example, where ordinarily something would be typed in, it would be crossed out with pencil and something written in. That's the kind of thing that's going on. Numbers were changed. For example, the width of the area was changed from two hundred feet to four hundred feet, that sort of thing. So when I compiled all the data. I compiled the information from the boys, from their research work. I took that information and I met with the Corporate Office here in Fredericton, the Solicitor and the Vice President and finally the Chairman, Mr. Doucette. And they thought that I was crazier than hell. And I said, if you think that I'm crazier than hell, get your ass off reserve property. I give you 48 hours notice, at which time, I'll serve you with an injunction. So the following day, I got a phone call from the chairman. He wanted to talk and wanted to sit down. So the price went up from half a million dollars to 750 thousand in one day. He said, well it was half a million dollars yesterday, how did the price jump up so? I said the longer you talk, it's going to cost you more. He said, well I'll have to take it back to the—they have a committee like the Premier's office right, like all the ministers—Intergovernmental committee. So he came back to me before the 48 hours was up again, the following day. He said yeah, I guess we could raise that

750 thousand dollars. And I said that was yesterday. Oh my God, he said, what is it today? And I said well, there's four pieces of land that we're looking at. It's close to 400 acres. And he said, we better sign the agreement today. Before, he said, you want the whole Province back. And that's the God's honest truth. So it went from—they were only getting 200 dollars. Shawn. And for five years, they never got five cents. So they were getting 200 dollars a year. That's all they were getting. And that time went back since from 1957 to 1984. That's all they were getting on a yearly basis. And I couldn't believe it. And you remember how they use to have Christmas treats at Christmas time? Well, that's where the money came from. See that and that little road that went behind that Irving garage. Down there at the old (pause)

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

Alice: I went to see Norma one day and she gave me a map dated 1912. And it said that St. Mary's was established probably around 1857, the old reserve. And there was a bunch of names on it.

Richard: That was established then. There was also established the same time, across the river up by the Sheraton and the Mounties, like where that helicopter pad was, right there.

Alice: But it showed me a map of down the reserve.

Richard: But it also should have quoted that, because at the same time.

Alice: It didn't see that.

Richard: Peter and Louise—Peter Paul from Woodstock and Louise Polchies

from Kingsclear—told me that a long time ago. And the same as Franklin's father. Now his story is a little different from that story, I believe. Franklin told me before he passed on. His mother, his late mother had the papers. And while Joe was alive, he came up and got them off of her. And Joe got them and gave them to Peda [Peter Paul]. And Peda was suppose to do the research. Now up to when Franklin died, he asked Harold to look for them, to bring them down. And he was going to give them to me to work on. Now that land is owned by eight people. And he was one of them. And his two sisters and his brother. And there was Carl, there was Annette, Sylvia, my father, me, Norma and that's it, that owned that land. Because that land (pause)

Alice: The old Reserve?

Richard: Yes, that went from Kapin's, Morrison plot. Morrison owned to where that ditch use to be, down there by Sullivans' Bostonian Pizza is. Okay, George Hayes, he claimed he owned that land, right there by the liquor store is right now. Use to call it (pause) And that property was all Indian land. But how the Hayes got it was Homers uncle, Mokin.

Alice: And what was his real name?

Richard: Mokin? It's Frank Nash.

Alice: Frank Nash?

Richard: He had a sister. I don't know what her name was. Homer might know it. Jim did tell me. Jim told me the whole story about all his family. Like long before he died, we talked all the time. And he'd tell me stories, when he was a young boy. Anyway, I was telling you about this daughter, she was deaf. She wasn't all there.

She was slow. And she lived with Mokin up in this field, up here, orchard. Did you ever go up there by the reservoir? There's an old foundation there, like rocks. You know, where you go in to the reservoir road. There's two roads and a field. There use to be a house there. Well before all them trees grew up, you could see up and around the Saint John River. And as far as way up Keswick, to way down the Experimental Farm. These Hayes brothers, there were three of them. They wanted that property. Well they couldn't get it. They wouldn't sell. So they got Mokin drinking and the sister drinking. And got him to make up some kind of paper, that if he married his sister, he would give him land. So after, he—I don't know how much he had to drink. He certainly was incapacitated, because he turned around and he reneged on his promise to marry this girl, for the land. He ended up getting the land without having to marry the girl. And after he got the land, he kicked them the hell off there. You see, and that's—and that was Jim's brother. Is Mokin, Junior's brother or not?

Alice: Frank Nash?

Richard: Yes. Yes it was. Homer and Junior were first cousins, because Jim and Junior's father were brothers.

Alice: Because there was Jim, Steven, Bobby.

Richard: No, they're his sons.

Alice: Are they his sons, Steven Nash?

They're his sons? Another mother?

Richard: This Junior's father, and Marjorie. Like Wendall Nash's mother, her father. They were brothers. There was Tom and old Steve—

that would be Junior's father. They were his brothers, Jim's. Jim's brothers, everybody down, Burton down, was all Jim's sons and daughters. He had thirteen. See, he was married twice. Fourteen with the woman in Chipman and thirteen with (pause) And he committed bigamy and nobody knew about it. He was married to two women at the same time. That went on for years and years...

Alice: So anyway, going back to the old reserve, back in 1912. The map that I seen, there was like Tom Brooks there, Sam Brooks. There was like twenty-seven, twenty-eight homes down there.

Richard: First off, Tom's house was right next to the river. And next to that was George Wiseman's house, that was the biggest.

Alice: Where did the Wiseman's come from?

Richard: Germany.

Alice: Germany? And they were Indians?

Richard: The woman he married was.

Alice: So they were squatters?

Richard: Yes.

Alice: The houses that I remember was: Steve Nash, Robert Saulis, Marjorie Sheppard, the Wiseman's and Natolin Jimmy. They are the only ones that I remember. The map that I seen from 1912, there was more people there.

Richard: Yes, I remember. Okay, first off, down by the river there's Marjorie and her mother—but I barely remember her father. The year he died was the last I seen his boat. He had a good size boat in the water. That was the year fifty, fifty-one. And right across from them was Tom Brooks.

And his first wife was Mabel, she died. Tom moved out of there, he moved up the hill. Then that house was vacant for a good number of years. It was vacant, just stood there, nobody lived there. Okay, so up the road where Marjorie's house was. Right here next to the river was Wiseman's and Sammy's house was beside the Wisemans—side of the road like.

Alice: I can remember the... like Marjorie was here by the water. Okay, Wisemans were right here and I remember Saulis right here. Robert Saulis over here, Steve Nash over here, as you were coming in from the Irving, that road. And Natolin was over here and the old school was over here.

Richard: Sammy lived there. Sammy lived right in the corner. Sammy and Bessie and there was, ah. I know all the names that was there. I would have to see that map myself. I can go back. I remember the Nashes, Saulises, Sappiers, Sheppards...

Alice: Was there an Acquin down there too? I'm pretty sure I seen the name Acquin on that map.

Richard: Acquins lived with her father, your mother's...

Alice: That was my mother's grandfather.

Richard: Don't know if it's her grandfather or father?

Alice: No, Charlie Meuse was her father.

Richard: Ben was her grandfather. That's Larry's natural mother.

Alice: Was Virginia?

Richard: Yes, they lived with Ben and Mime. And that was right there, where they took that house. Where

they took that house, where Elsie use to live in.

Alice: Right where Maliseet Drive is sitting now? That house was there?

Richard: That the one that Professor and Maggie had when they first got married. They moved that out of there to build Maliseet Drive and they got that new house. Okay, so that's where they were brought up and then moved out of here in 1952. And she married that guy from Connecticut. And a year after Norma married that McLean down Connecticut somewhere, they moved. There was Sheppards, and the Nashes, Brooks, Wisemans, Brooks, Saulis, Nash, Sappier, and Punchin [Saul Polchies] lived there too, before he moved up the hill. They built them houses. Older houses, like my grandmother's. This reserve was established in 1937, this one up here. But it wasn't declared officially on the record as a reserve 'till 1948.

Alice: I think I heard my mother saying that. They didn't move up here until 1935 or 1932 or '33. Because I did a tape on my mother and Josephine, Pat. And when they come back from the war it was 1933. This reserve had already twelve or eighteen houses already. I forgot which number now.

Richard: Well the first house was Ron's father and his brother. There were only four houses.

Alice: And Pat said when the men came back from overseas, they were given workshops that they had to live in.

Richard: What they were, there was workshops in behind the old houses. When the government disbanded the Burpee campsite, which is on the Minto Road. Did you ever see that cement, that great big cement slab out in 'no man's land' on the way to Minto? Half way down, on the left hand side. Melvin had a picture of that. It's a big picture. It's an aerial photo of that whole area. And it was almost like a small village or small town. That's where they kept prisoners of war. Germans. And they shipped them in there by railroad. And that's where they kept all the prisoners. Not to many people know that. And that's where we got the mostly predominantly German and Jewish settlers, in Fredericton, Saint John and Moncton. They were from them families that were at that prison camp then. They were rescued. But I'm not disputing what Josephine, Elsie, Pat and your mother, as to what they have said. I'm just saying that the records that I have seen, that this reserve was acquired for reserve purposes in 1937. And there was strong objection to that. Now preceding that, it could have been 1932 or 1933. I'm not excluding that. Because what happened was the people that are suppose to be our neighbours, strongly opposed this area being designated as a reserve. And all it was, was rock. It was nothing but rock quarry. Mr. Howe, here—God rest his soul, he died three winter's ago—use to tell me all about this place. That was pure, genuine, solid slate. And we had Forbes and Sloat come in and they couldn't dynamite for risk of blowing up foundations on the old houses. Because rock, if you dynamite it, it vibrates where ever. It is like earthquake, it just falls like a channel. Say like so. That's the way basically dynamite goes. Like it goes

to where ever it's the hardest. And that's all. We had a (pause) it cost one hundred fifty dollars an hour. And this was back in the sixties, when we got that done. Today it would be three or four hundred dollars per hour. We had a ripper. I was talking to John McKinney, who was our engineer. He owned a project engineering. When they were surveying this land up here. Because we were going to go in what is now Bear Lane. And come back down and join up way down there by either your mother's or where Betty Jean built. We were going to come out there and we were going to put in one hundred and ten lots there. When they surveyed that land and they done soil test. See soil test, they don't go down this way, they go down in an angle. That way they can cover more soil. When they went around that reservoir, there was nobody. And nobody would touch them for one million dollars liability insurance. Like brokers, insurance companies, and they wouldn't even look at that. And even if they did proceed with that subdivision plan. It was only a preliminary plan and if had they done it, nobody, no contractor would have taken it.

Alice: Anyway, we're off track here.

Richard: Going back to the old reserve. When the first batch of houses were established on this reserve, there was four houses. And the following year there were eight.

Alice: What were the houses like? Were they solid?

Richard: Yes, they were solid, but they weren't insulated. They didn't have indoor toilets. They had indoor

plumbing, but didn't have indoor toilets. They didn't have no insulation.

Alice: Did they have electricity?

Richard: Yes, but it was that cheap wire. Rats would eat it. And if your house didn't burn before the rat got electrocuted, you were either left with two things. The rat would get electrocuted and stunk up your house or your house would burn down.

Alice: What about Indian Agent, they talk about Whalen, what was he like?

Richard: An asshole. And the one before him was twice as bad.

Alice: Who was Gorley?

Richard: He was after Whalen. Whalen thrived off the Indians. He made money off the Indians. He was an ex-RCMP officer and he retired a millionaire. And all the goods and services that were provided to the Indians along the Saint John River, went to his personal gain. All the farm produce, the animals, the farm supplies, lumber supplies, army, air force, navy, RCMP supplies, the surplus, he got them, gave them to the Indians and paid himself for services rendered. Vegetables, beef, sheep, all them things, he paid himself for services.

Alice: He built himself a house up Kingsclear.

Richard: He built a house right there where—band eventually bought the Lewis estate—where the Lewis' parents (pause)

Alice: And Gorley, he built a house where the bank is now, down the hill?

Richard: No, he built a house up Skyline Acres.

Alice: Skyline? I thought my mother

- mentioned that he had built a house where the bank is sitting now.
- Richard: No, it might have been McKinnon. His office was over corner of Regent and George.
- Alice: How much money did people get when Whalen was in?
- Richard: Didn't get nothing.
- Alice: Wasn't there any welfare back then? Didn't you have an Indian Chief here?
- Richard: Yes, but the first Chief I remember was a toss up—because I asked a lot of people over the years, how come they use to have clam chowder—between Andrew Brooks and Paul Paul's father, Arthur Paul. And in summer they would have clam chowder. And everybody would bring their bowl and spoon and they'd have clam chowder out in the yard. We use to wonder what that was. I'd ask somebody and they wouldn't know. It was election and back in them days (pause) One time Oromocto and St. Mary's had the same Chief. And then another time St. Mary's and Kingsclear had the same Chief. And that's what they call custom, or traditional elections. They done away with that and they went to elected. And when they first enacted election of Chiefs, it was for a four year period. Well people complained that's too long a period of time. They didn't want somebody in there. For the most part, it was too much heat for any one man to handle.
- Alice: I was reading in one of those papers I have at home—a hand out or whatever you want to call it. It stated that who was Chief, if the Chief couldn't take it, he would resign and somebody else would be voted in. And the counsellors also, if the Chief resigned, the councillor resigned to.
- Richard: It was unreal, like over my life span. Like I basically got acquainted with all of them. And I always said if I had ten years to serve as Chief, if I couldn't do for this community in ten years, what I liked to have done. And the only thing I had left on my agenda was, I wanted to have a school house. If I go back to what I campaigned for, back in '84. There are three things that you have to have in any community to have viability of self-sufficiency. Number one is education, number two is economic development and three is employment. If you have them three components, then you'll survive in any community. You can be self-sufficient. And they're doing it in other parts of the country, throughout Canada.
- Alice: When you were growing up, did your father tell you stories?
- Richard: Oh yeah, he use to tell me stories. But not as much as we use to hear at Frank's. That's where the older stories—and then of course when I spent most of year and a half up in Tobique and I heard a lot of stories there. And all my summers, when I was growing up, we spent up in Woodstock. That's where my grandparents were. And we got to hear a lot of stories from different sources there. Because there was a lot more older Indians there than there was here, back when we were growing up. And then over the years, it would reverse. We'd have more here then up there. Now it's back to about



even. But you know there's so many old stories, tales and folklore. The main thing I always say is people... what I noticed the most of is, is our language and our culture. It's not where I would like to see it. We're losing it, and we're losing it fast. Every time somebody passes away, mark another 'x' beside his or her name. And then you say, like who's the next going to be to go. 'Cause every time somebody dies, the language (pause) I talk it good and I understand it good, but there's nobody to talk it to.

Alice: That's the same with me. If you were talking all Indian, I could understand every word pretty well. Ronald Paul talks Indian in his tape and I translated it. Just like my mother, the same thing. I laughed.

Richard: It depends on how they tell it, like a lot of them. The stories I hear Notlin and Punchin and Pete talking about, they are not meant to be funny.

Alice: Sometimes it's how they are said.

Richard: Graydon Nicholas use to say that, growing up as a kid in Tobique. They would all get together up there and see who could tell the best story. And every time I listened to them tapes or I hear old stories it reminds me of what he use to say. About how people use to communicate and how they use to socialize. That would be socially acceptable to tell the biggest story. I guess like, that's what people lived for. The most common one is about a rabbit. That somebody died and sent a messenger and the messenger was a rabbit. And it went from Portabello to Grand Lake and back, in a matter of two or three

hours. No way humanly possible, but it was done. And there was another one that Tom Brooks told me. Tom and I use to be real good friends. And he was saying that Punchin's [Saul's] old house—that would be Goalie's mother and father's house. They were all playing cards late at night, playing poker. And Tom said—well, he lost his first wife Mabel, he hadn't been married to Geraldine. Anyway they were playing cards this one night, this knock came on the door. And Punchin [Saul]—he hadn't lost his eye sight, because he was playing poker too. And he said come in. He always sold a little beer and wine. If he didn't drink it he sold it. So anyway, they just assumed that somebody was just coming to get a bottle of wine or a bottle of beer. Tom was telling this story and he said someone spoke up and said, *Ckuwye ksaha* (Come in). And this person came in and nobody recognized him. And Tom said, I don't know if it was *Kolel* (Clara) or Mary Guiggey—be Franklin's mother—and Melvin's mother. One of them had their cards like this, and was going to take—say they have three of a kind and throw two away, keep the cards here—one fell on the floor. And she went to pick it up and when she looked, this guy that had come in was sitting there. One leg was a horse's leg. Well, they looked at this person and nobody knew who it was. He didn't look like a white man. They didn't know if he was an Indian or not. Certainly he understood when they said *Ksaha* (Come in). And they kept on playing. And somebody offered him tea,

*Kotuwapu ti* (Would you like some tea)? And apparently he just nodded his head [yes]. And when this person wasn't looking, someone went like that [pointed at him]. And two other people looked at it. They got up and apparently they went into the bedroom. And they came out with a crucifix and a rosary and that person just got up and left. Another time (pause) Did you ever hear this story of the chopped off horseman? Well Carol-Ann seen him twice. Peter seen him once, right here in this corner. We been here twenty years this coming June. And Carol-Ann was going to High School. This use to be her room right here [indicating across from the kitchen]. And the door use to come in through that way. And our bedroom was over there and the boys bedroom was in the corner. So she got up this morning—and we didn't have the basement fixed up then—and she was brushing her hair in the living room and she looked out down there and she seen this man walking down by the school yard. John-John's house, Sonya's house and Christine's house, they weren't there then. Only Francis and Pauline. So she told us about it, when Homer told her what it was, she got scared. But then I told her about Melvin's father. One night he couldn't sleep, restless. He was sitting at the window—like I use to sit right there myself—and anyway, Pete was looking out the window. He had the stove going—this was one, two o'clock in the morning and it was wintertime. And he seen this man come up on a horse. It was all black, didn't have no head. So he put his

head back, like this [away from the window], so that man or thing couldn't see him. So he said, if that thing tries to do something to me, I'm gonna fix him. So he took the poker and stuck the poker in the stove. And he's saying to himself (pause) he tells the story like he's telling it for real. Then this person disappears. So in the meantime, Pete is watching this iron and its red hot. And as soon as he takes it out and looks at it—it was shining orange, just flaming red, heat eh—a knock comes at the window. He looks and there's this headless man, and he goes to go poke it with the iron. And apparently ghosts are suppose to be scared of fire, but I don't know. I don't know how the heck that's suppose to be. If Satan is the devil, and he lives in Hell—it's suppose to be a fire of eternity—why he'd be scared of fire. But apparently that was his thought [Pete's]. I asked a question one time, how come he always wore this thing on his hand. He wore this great, big, leather, double buckle thing on his hand. And his wife Mary told me, she said, Sonny, if he took that off you can see an imprint of a hand. She called him 'go-go man'. She was a white woman, and she called him 'go-go man'. And that's where he grabbed him and he couldn't use that hand. And I asked him one time in Indian, tell me the story of what the devil did to you. And he told me, just like what I said. Today you don't hear stories like that. The same as Faye [his sister]. We thought she was going crazy one time. I was about thirteen, she must have been about—she

would be 51 or 52 now—she must have been about ten or eleven. And she woke up early in the morning, around four o'clock and she was screaming Mom, Mom, like that. She said (pause) well where our house was—to the right of us was Robert and to the left was Evangeline. Next to her was Sam and Bessie and then your mother and father, and then Eugene and Elizabeth. There was no Maliseet Drive then and there was like woods back there and toilets. And Faye was looking at these little men. And they were taking my mother's clothes and putting braids on all the sleeves, on the clothesline. And my mother told her, in Indian, to go to sleep and not to talk crazy like that. She thought that Faye was dreaming. She got up the next morning, my mother, she came in screaming. And she started laughing, she said, Faye must have been right. My father said, why? Go out back and look at the clothes. Of course they were frozen, because it was in the wintertime. But those clothes were all knotted up so tight, that they had to be brought in the house and unthawed and undone. But Faye seen them little men.

Now here one day, she was sitting by the window, there was a Lazy-Boy [Chair] in that corner. And one day she was sitting there. I don't know where I was. But I came home, she said you'll never guess what I seen. And I said no, probably not. You know this elm tree down here by that brook, and there's two big rocks there and the only water that surfaces is over there where Peter use to have his house. Its underground like

surface water and it comes through the rocks from that old rock quarry, in back of old Mr. Howes' Kennels. Its underground and it comes up over here. There's none that come up over there, because it's too high. Water don't run uphill, it's got to come down hill. Well she was getting there and she said you'd swear to God that someone was between them rocks smoking a cigarette. Because there was lots of smoke coming from there. And she said, do you suppose there is little people there. And I said it wouldn't be the first time that I heard that story. Now she seen the smoke puffs, and that's the first thing that came to her mind. Because she said her grandmother talked about them down in Gagetown. Now Faye, you could ask Faye and she could tell you she remembers it. But Glen, Alan, Claudie and Betty don't remember it. But I remember it and I bet you my old man would remember it. And there was somebody else who seen them one time, was it Norma or Sylvia...

Alice: That's why I want to see your father. I bet he's got a bunch of good stories.

Richard: Well, there's a lot of good stories and there's a lot of sad stories too. Like you take Whalen and Gorley. Dave Gorley was an honest and sincere man, but the guy he had working for him, George somebody, he was an asshole. But Gorley, if he could help you, he'd help you. Whalen—the only store that you could go to was Bowlen's. And you couldn't get no sugar, you couldn't get any molasses and couldn't get yeast cake. If you owned a dog, you

had to get rid of it. And if you owned a cat, you had to get rid of it. If you had a car, you had to get rid of it. And the reason for that is, the car took money for gas, the dog ate left over food or the cat. And sugar, molasses and yeast were for making homemade beer, and you weren't allowed that. You were allowed to get pork, potatoes, flour. And you were only allowed, the least I seen that you could get was two dollars and thirty-five cents.

Alice: I remember my mother saying when I was taping her, Josephine and Pat. That Andrew Paul was Chief at the time. And my father got burnt in Houlton at that time. And I remember that and he was in the hospital for about a year. And Donald, Donnie Solomon was Chief at the time in Kingsclear. And my father told him that there was no help from the Agent, because they had six kids at that time. My father told Donnie this, my father got help from Kingsclear. Two hundred dollars a month, plus milk. I couldn't believe that, because Andrew Paul was Chief at the time. And my mother said they only got like sixteen dollars. And he had to go with her to make sure that she got what she was suppose to get, instead of buying junk stuff. That was sad.

Richard: Look at Harold, a lot of people like said a lot of bad things about him. I've never said nothing bad about Harold. I had no intentions of running against him. If he had just stopped and listened to the people, as to what people were saying. Harold went out of his way. Nobody had telephones and there were probably only four television sets on reserve. He phoned up Woodstock to help someone on reserve that needed help. It had to come out of his own pocket. He'd lend a family fifteen or twenty dollars until the welfare cheque come in and you could pay it. And I know he got stuck a lot of money over the years being a good Samaritan. And I've always said Harold could have been Chief up to the day he died if he wanted to. I really do because of all (pause) He was doing a good job and he was always listening to people. Paul and I got into a fight and I told Harold about it. And I said either he goes or I go. And he gave Paul hell and said, leave Sonny alone, he is doing a good job, I am the Chief and you take it up with me. He would try to run the show when he was drinking and he never come back after that.

Alice: Anyway this is the end of my tape here Son, for now.  
END OF TAPE



#### 4. Sliced apples on a thread

THERESA SACOBIE PILICK/KINGSCLEAR FIRST NATION

*...way back then, I remember Mom use to mention that there was a flu epidemic going on. And it killed a lot of people and a lot of people died.*

*...But I'll tell you, with that generation back then, they preserved a lot of this stuff, berries, apples. I remember stringing apples, the sliced apples on a thread and they would hang them up to dry. And when they wanted to make apple sauce or pies, they soaked them over night and they would be just as fresh. And berries they use to lay papers in an area, you know to dry them out. So they really had to struggle a lot in them times, because money was really not that plentiful years back.*

Theresa: Now the first thing that my parents told me, that rock was right there. By the road, as you go down the hill, past the old cemetery. And every time this person drove by in a sled or wagon, he would almost upset. Because years ago, they use to travel by horse and buggy in those days. And so one time he got so mad. He told his wife don't look at me, I'm gonna get rid of this rock. That woman looked the other way, and well, he did get rid of that rock. And when he threw it, that's where it landed. He said wherever this rock lands, the property there will never prosper.

Alice: And who was this man?

Theresa: I couldn't even tell you who it was. I've asked my mother, but years back they use to have mostly nick-names. But he was one of the people

that had a lot of powers, you know. You know, witches powers. And that's what he did. So after he threw that rock away, that's what he said, wherever this lands, the land will never prosper for anybody. And there's been, there was a house there, and an orchard, and a farmer. And Taber was the name of that family that lived in that house, the time that he threw that rock there. And sure enough, nothing ever grew on his property. And his trees never had any apples or anything growing on them trees. Everything just didn't prosper at all. But you know it seems so strange now. Indians, years ago, we always believed in trying to do good to others. They shared a lot of their food or whatever they had, you know, in abundance. Like, if a hunter went and killed a deer or a moose,

*Plate 4.1: Theresa Sacobie (photo courtesy of Edith Paul).*



they shared that meat among family. And that's the way we were brought up too. You know, if we knew of anyone that needed any kind of help or services, we always had to go and help them in some way or another. I remember when my parents use to buy a lot of things. You know, like a whole pig, you know, or a half of one. And if any one of our family members needed it, like his sisters or brothers, whoever. He would share that food with him. Or fish, whatever they had a lot of. But you don't see that today. And another story I should tell you too. Now this happened when we use to live in Westfield. I was small then at the time. And my grandparents use to

spend summers there in Westfield, just on the outskirts of Saint John. And there was a family that owned that property where my grandparents had built a little shack. You know, just for the summer months. And he hated Indians. And when my grandparents left in the fall to come before the school opened, you know again, he burned that building down and he didn't want no Indians on his property at all.

Alice: So it didn't belong to the Indians then.

Theresa: No. So anyway, what happened before the following year, when my grandparents moved back again. They didn't know anything about it, that little shack was burned

*Plate 4.2: Taber's Field (photo by Viktoria Kramer).*





down. And that summer—and all he had was one son [the landowner]. And when that boy—I don't know how old he was—and he got struck by a car and he died. And when he planted—he was a farmer too. And there was another farmer that lived right, you know, just like a driveway and when he planted his seeds they grew up so much. And his wouldn't grow at all.

Alice: Because of him burning that building?

Theresa: Because of him hurting another, you know, an Indian. So anyhow, after that, that man couldn't do enough for my grandparents. He would take them to church every Sunday.

Alice: So did anything change for him by doing that?

Theresa: Yes.

Alice: I guess he just had to show a little good. I guess.

Theresa: And it wasn't because my grandparents cursed them or anything. But it just proves to some people, you can not hurt another person. It only comes back on yourself. I've heard that so many times and I've seen it. Sort of experience it, you know, in some way or another. No matter who you try to hurt, you only get it back or another one in your family.

Alice: Or you're the one that hurts in the end. I believe that also.

Theresa: Well another one, this is my mother's mother, Grammy Tomah. Her name was Catherine and her husband's name was Frank Tomah. Years ago they use to help one another. Like if you or I got a big order of something, you would help one

another out. Okay, you see, that was their policy a long time ago, they'd help one another. So this man, he had powers, because a lot of them really believed in witchcraft years ago. And he told my grandmother, he said, Kate, would you come and help me fill in the heel and toe of the snowshoe. He said, I have a rush order. He said, would you help me. Kate said, well I can't, because I have a rush order of baskets to do as well. He said, as she was leaving the house to go home, and he said, well you will never get your order done either. And sure enough... grammy Tomah use to tell that story to us. And when I got home Grammy said, my eyes started failing. And she said, I could not work and I couldn't get my work done up.

Alice: So what year would that have been?

Theresa: It was quite a while ago. That was when they were still living down the hill. This was where most of the reserve was, down in that little area. And so that was all right. So that man had a sore throat. Because in Grammy's dream that night she dreamt of this man that cursed her, and she said it seemed that I was falling down a hill. And she said there was no trees or nothing, just a tiny little bush. And where I grabbed it, as I was tumbling down and it broke. And so when it broke, she said, I could see that man's face laughing at me. So I just threw that twig and it landed on his neck. That's how he happened to have a sore throat. Anyhow, the following day he sent his wife to go ask Grammy Tomah to cure him. So she told that

woman, on one condition, I'll go and cure him if he doesn't do anymore witchcraft on me too. So she went over and asked him and told him. He said okay. So Grammy went over, she gave him a glass of water. Told him to drink this and this will cure you. But don't think if you try anything like that again at me...

Alice: So they both had powers?

Theresa: Yes.

Alice: Working against one another?

Theresa: See, that's what you got to do.

People try to curse you on some-

thing.

Alice: So is that witchcraft? Is that still here?

Theresa: I think that some are still practising it. According to what I've heard, they have them seances. And according to some of them (pause)

Alice: Right here in Kingsclear?

Theresa: Yes.

Alice: Band members?

Theresa: It's the same way, like in spirits. I still feel that they do return to your home, because we have experienced that as well.

*Plate 4.3: Mrs. Kate Tomah. Kate was Theresa's grandmother. She was noted for her hospitality and for her stamina in "peddling" baskets throughout the countryside in the dead of winter (University of New Brunswick Archives, 75-1879).*



Alice: What do you mean by spirits?

Theresa: Well, any person that died, you know, in the family. Now one day here, I think it was last summer.

When Fred and Liz, we were all talking in the kitchen and as they were leaving—I had my chesterfield on that side of the room. And when Liz went by, she seen Bill laying down there.

Alice: But it wasn't a bad spirit though?

Theresa: No. I think, myself, I think they do return to see how the family is if their troubled or something. I think they come and warn you.

Alice: When I was working for Gignoo after Joe died, I had to work night time. So I sleep on the couch during the night. So in my dream, I'm there, laying there on the couch. And Joe is laying there with me and Richard is at the end of our feet. But it was like a good feeling. So he must have come back to make sure we were all right. And we were all there together, you know, the three of us. I was even telling my mother about that.

Theresa: Now Laurie and him were sleeping in Bill's room after he died, because Laurie stayed here. It was just before Bill died, he asked Laurie to move back home. He said, I don't want to see my grandson having a hard time living somewhere else, so ask her to come home. So I did. And after he died, Laurie fixed up that room for him [Hank] and her. So one night she said, I was reading a story for him and all of a sudden this book flew over. I looked back and I didn't see anything. But he did. He said, look, look who's standing in there. He said, don't be scared, he's only here to see that you're all right.

Same way with Erica, she goes upstairs and has a room up there next to Karen's. And one night she woke up at two in the morning she seen Bill standing there in the room. Talk about a kid coming in to my bedroom. He said, Grampy was in my room Mom. She said, you don't have to worry, he's just making sure that you're okay.

Alice: I believe that.

Theresa: Yes. I believe that too. Now it's the same thing that happened to me when I was in the hospital. When I first went in there, Bill was already in the hospital and I was only about four doors away from him on the same floor. And Sheila and Randy came in to the hospital with me. And Sheila said, I'm going to stay with you until you get your room, so that you will know where you are. Anyway, whatever stuff they gave me, Shawn, it made me sick. It made my stomach feel oozy. So anyway, I wanted to throw up. And just as soon as I laid on the bed, I started to throw up. And it just seem to lodge in my throat, and I could start to feel my eyes going bulgy. And I heard this voice calling me, my name is George and I'm here to tell you you're not ready to come here yet and you're going back. And when he said back, all that stuff came out and I was all right after.

Alice: Really. That's something.

Theresa: Yes. You know we often think, like me, I often think how some people will know if they're going to die. You know a lot of times, a member of the family will tell you, I'm not going to live very long and this must happen to them too.

Alice: It must.

Theresa: I know another time, when I was in there. I was down on the third floor and God, Shawn, I woke up at three in the morning. I had to go use the bathroom and I had to carry that thing with me, that I.V. After I got out from the washroom, I went and got in bed again. And all of a sudden I heard this voice, and it said, how do you feel now? And I looked around, and this woman next to me was sleeping and she was even snoring. And I thought at first the nurse came in. Sometimes, you know how your curtains are drawn. So I grabbed a curtain and looked behind it, the nurse wasn't there. Well at three in the morning, well anyway, that was all right. One night again, that happened to me again. And this was around 4:30 in the morning. I just got back in bed and somebody said, how about your beadwork, and I thought, gee, who would know about my beadwork except for my mother, and it was a woman's voice.

Alice: Oh, really.

Theresa: Both times.

Alice: So do you believe that was your mother?

Theresa: Yes. So she just more or less checked to see how I was. Every time now, I go to the hospital, I fear that.

Alice: You fear that?

Theresa: Yes. I fear it now, going to the hospital. One time there, when I was taken there, this last time, I was in there. I think it was in July. They were taking a tour to St. Anne de Beaupres, our crowd here. And they were leaving on the eleventh and I didn't come out until the twelfth. And I was in the same room, same

bed, for two or three nights. There was nobody in the room with me. It was scary, because I expected any time, for me to see something.

Alice: So tell me about the 'little people'?

Theresa: Well, the only thing is, only what I hear from others. Now Rodney was one of them and Sy was another one that went down to the brook. Just about to where that school (pause) Do you know where the school is?

Alice: Yes.

Theresa: They use to have a little path where Frank—her father use to be the one to look after the school, you know, to do the maintenance work—and he use to go back and forth across that brook. And he seen them first and he mentioned it to the family. I imagine and that's how we happen to know about these little green men. But you know what boys are like. You know, they were younger. Rodney, he was only about seven or eight years old when he use to go down the brook for fishing. Along that little brook, Sy and a whole bunch of them.

Alice: Is it sometimes like what children see, that a grownup can't?

Theresa: Well, that has a lot to do with it as well. Like an animal as well, they can sense things. So anyway, they have a funny lingo [green men], according to what Rodney was telling me. He said they jibber-jabber. And he said, they got mad at us for going close to them. He said, we tried to catch them. And he said, they just picked the twigs in the bushes there and they kept throwing them at us. I told him, well you better be careful,

when one of them hits you. Because they must have a little curse or something to hurt you in some way. So don't get too close to them.

Alice: I've heard a little bit about them, but not much. To me, I thought they looked

After (pause)

Theresa: And they're only about twelve inches high. They're not very big. And he said they were green in colour and we seen them eating leaves. And I said that is probably why they are green.

Alice: It's strange, everybody has their own interpretation of it, like these 'little people'. I'm working on a tape right now and I haven't got to his part yet, but he tells me that they're there. Even down our way.

Theresa: I don't know, I've never heard. Now Cyril goes down a lot in that area, he's always fishing. And he said, Mom, I haven't seen them around last summer. I use to go down in that brook, he said, whether they got scared away or what, I don't know I haven't seen them since. They just disappear maybe or they move on further somewhere, I don't know. It seems strange to have this appear to a person. But as I say, you got to watch. Even if they do attack you, that little twig might cause a little damage.

Alice: I don't think I want to see things like that.

Theresa: I'll tell you who has powers are twins, twins have a lot of power.

Alice: Really?

Theresa: Yes. I use to listen to my grandmother, my dad's mother, and they had twins. That was a set of twins. They're in Woodstock and

Tobique and (pause) Where else do they have twins? We use to watch them play. And she said years ago the houses were not completed. And there would be little holes where the sun would shine through, the rays, the sun rays. And she said when they play, they hang these little doll clothes on these sun rays.

Alice: Well, I think they do, twins, when I stop and think about it.

Theresa: I remember when Cheryl's kids were small, they had powers. They use to like Conrad, but they never cared too much for Trevor. They'd go stand by the stairway, Trevor would come tumbling down. But he wouldn't get hurt, but every time they'd go stand by the stairway and Trevor would tumble down. So Cheryl said one time, Mom—I'll never forget this. I was always scared of Kenny. Years back, no matter what Kenny wanted, she said. So one time she said that little Shawna was in they're living room. She said to Kenny, you are not going to ruin our Christmas this year. And she just took her hand and swiped it like that. And he couldn't move his head and he couldn't speak, he couldn't move.

Alice: That was one of the twins?

Theresa: Yes.

Alice: Really?

Theresa: One time I went down there. Cheryl always asked me down there, to help her with her knitting or whatever she was working on. And she was making a pair of socks. Anyway, she said, Mom why don't you come down this afternoon and bring your knitting with you. So anyway this was about one o'clock or so. She asked if I had any lunch yet

and I said, no I never, I didn't feel hungry. What if I make you a sandwich? I said, if you got peanut butter, I'll have a sandwich with you.

Anyway, in Woodstock, I don't know whose kids they were, but anyway, Bill said this door kept blowing open every time the wind blew. And he said they'd get one of those twins to close it. He said—so anyway I suppose that little girl got tired of running back and forth. She said if I close this now, you'll never open it. And sure enough, they had to take the frame right off to open that door. So this is the powers that they have. But I think that power is worked through the mind with twins, really anybody. You know every person has that ability, if you only develop it through the mind.

Alice: Yes. I think I have to agree with that.

Theresa: Another time, Bill use to drink a lot. And so one time, he went down to the basement, he had a bottle and he seen Don Solomon walking.

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE ONE  
TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

Theresa: So anyway, Bill came upstairs and he said, you know something funny happened. And I said, what. He said that bottle just slipped through my hands. And I just thought of that, in my mind.

Alice: That's what you were thinking.

Theresa: I was just thinking, I hope he drops it.

Alice: And he did?

Theresa: He did, these are just some of the mind powers that you can develop.

Alice: Yes. I think it's how we think.

Theresa: You can develop that. There's times when I'm working in the kitchen and I'd go stand by the phone and it would ring. You just have that feeling, that it's going to happen. And another time, one time, I woke up about 2:30 in the morning. Bill was in a rush to get some of my material ready for me, ash material. He said, why don't you go to bed for a while, until I get some of this material shaved and split for you and then you can gauge it out. I said okay and came and laid down. I woke up, and Shawn, I started crying. And I didn't know what I was crying for. When I went into the kitchen he said, what happened to you. I said, I don't know Bill, I just woke up crying and something is going to happen today. I said something is going to break. Something that makes me want to cry, something is going to happen. And sure enough, when the kids came back from school—because Anita's kids use to stay here with us. And there was Sy, Krista and Rodney playing by the stairway here. And I had a shelf there and I had all my ceramic pieces there on that shelf. So anyway, this great big swan that I had bought from the lady where I was learning ceramics, it broke, and it broke into a thousand pieces. And there I was, crying, picking it up. There was other thing that broke too. I just threw them out.

So this is what happens to me when something is going to go wrong. Now before Glen got into an accident, I tossed and turned. I knew something was going to go wrong, I had that feeling. It's just a warning, that's all it is. Now I could always detect if it's my father's side of the

family, or my mother's side of the family, if anybody is to die. Like on my father's side, I smell roses. And it's so strong, you could smell that fragrance. But if it was my mother's side, it was lilacs. So I could almost tell who was going to pass away.

Alice: It's funny, when I was talking to Charles Solomon, he said when he smelled roses or incense, there is a presence there and it's the Lord.

That's what he told me. Is that true?

Theresa: Yes. I think that each person has their own intuition, and you really go by them.

Alice: Intuition, beliefs, whatever you want to call them. So what other stories do you know?

Theresa: The only story that I know, that happened years back. See my father use to play violin and they use to have dances down the hill there. They had a hall there.

Alice: What kind of dances?

Theresa: Well, I suppose any kind of dance.

Alice: Square dances?

Theresa: Square dances.

Alice: It wasn't Indian dancing was it?

Theresa: Well, it could have been Indian dancing too. Because they use to do a lot of that years back. One time they couldn't get into the hall, the priest had locked the hall with a padlock. And Amos was one of twins, the other twin died when it was a baby. He only weighed about a pound and a half when he was born. They even had to pack a shoe box with cotton batten, because they never had to go to hospitals. So anyway, when they couldn't get in—and he was just small—they told Amos, we can't open it with this ruler, this lock. He

just pushed it up with his hand, it opened right up. So they went in and they had their dance. Henry Solomon was another one that was very talented. He was a beautiful singer, he sounded exactly as that Vaughn Monroe. Henry could play any string instrument, the organ or the piano, he was talented. So he was among in that band or whatever they called themselves back then. While they were dancing, this person came in all dressed up in a black tuxedo style. And he kept going around and somebody noticed that one leg was a horse's hoof. And they all screamed and this devil or whoever—because they can go into different forms. And when he went through that wall, he left a hole right in the wall.

Alice: Why would anything like that appear if they were just having a dance?

Theresa: Well, I suppose they were told not to. So they had to quit right there, they were that scared. And I don't think my father ever played the fiddle again. When we were growing up we never seen Dad play the fiddle.

Alice: It must have scared him so bad.

Theresa: I suppose he got scared.

Alice: Tell me a little about Kingsclear. Was Kingsclear, back then, way back then, was it here or was it somewhere else?

Theresa: No. It was, as I mentioned before, all the Indian people use to live down past the old graveyard.

Alice: Where would that be, the old graveyard? Is it down by the river?

Theresa: You know where Reggie Solomon lives? It's between the Church and Reggie's. That's where

- that graveyard is.
- Alice: Did the people from Kingsclear use to occupy *Wolastoq* area and did they move down here later on?
- Theresa: They could have, I've never heard that. There's an old Burial Ground near Nelsons.
- Alice: In front of Nelson's, where he's at now?
- Theresa: You know, as you go down the hill, where that alcohol and drug building is. Well, there is a hill there, that's where that old graveyard is. And that people always mention, never to do any excavations on that.
- Alice: But haven't they?
- Theresa: No.
- Alice: No?
- Theresa: Because at that time, way back then, I remember Mom use to mention that there was a flu epidemic going on. And it killed a lot of people and a lot of people died.
- Alice: Now just here, or was it all over?
- Theresa: Mostly, I think, it was on this Reserve that they had it.
- Alice: Because one of the men I was talking to, Ronald Paul, he mentions an epidemic. He calls it the Black Plague, Small Pox. And it wiped out a lot of Indians. Not just like St. Mary's, but Gagetown, Kingsclear, Woodstock.
- Theresa: Well Really those people all live up here in that small area, down where the old Reserve was. And a lot of the houses were right back to where that fence is, you know, them buildings. And a lot of them, when they did move, because they had no means of work and they moved away. A lot of people moved from here to Tobique, Woodstock, St. Mary's and Oromocto. So that's how you have all those different Reserves in this area.
- Alice: So everybody settled some place else because of lack of work?
- Theresa: Because years back, people didn't have the chance to work off the reserves.
- Alice: Did Kingsclear and St. Mary's have the same Chief at one time? Do you know anything about that?
- Theresa: No, I don't know anything about that.
- Alice: Someone had mentioned that, or St. Mary's and Oromocto. One of them anyway, might have had the same Chief for a while.
- Theresa: If I knew you were coming, I would have looked over my photo album. Like I have all the priests that have been here and all the school teachers way back in the 1800's. Whenever I find that book, I'll have to show you, because I have them in my album. I save everything.
- Alice: Do you have old pictures? Were you around St. Mary's like when you were younger?
- Theresa: No.
- Alice: You stayed right up here?
- Theresa: Because I tell you, we were never allowed off the reserve.
- Alice: Is it because of the parents?
- Theresa: It was just the parents, I think, being that strict. And they always told us, like if we ever went up the hill, that someone would take us.
- Alice: More protective than anything else?
- Theresa: There was hardly anyone that had a car back then. Until my Uncle Ben, that would be Madeline Solomon's husband. See Uncle Ben married twice. He was married to Lizzy Nash's daughter, and Florence was



her name—that's her picture there [on the wall], in that dark skirt. See that's a picture of my mother, way on that end. Then the second one is Frank Sappier's sister. The third one, there with the dark skirt, that was Florence, that was Ben Tomah's first wife. That would be Connie's mother, married to Joe. And that's my mother's sister Sarah, she died when she was (pause) Everybody tells me I look like my mother. It was sad really to think of how the Indians had to survive. You really wouldn't believe it, when you hear stories about years and years back. Now I can remember when I was just young, that was when my father built a house up here. His was the only one here and we weren't even allowed to go down the hill.

Alice: Why?

Theresa: I don't know. So anyway when that big fire happened here, it must have been way back in the 30's. Because I can remember going down the hill with my mother and seeing all them houses on fire. There was only about five houses left, the rest all burned.

Alice: How did they burn?

Theresa: I really don't know. I don't know if somebody had upset a lamp. Remember when they use to have kerosene lamps? I think that's really how it started.

Alice: But five houses?

Theresa: That was pretty well all that was left. There was only Uncle Willy's house and Leo Tomah's. My grandmother's house, which was right next to Leo's, and that burnt. And the house next to that was Sarah Solomon and John Solomon's mother

and Henry Solomon, that would be Sarah's children. So they lived in that house next door to my grandmother's and Molly *Polonsis (Francis)*, and their house burnt down. And Frank Sappier's and Leo Solomon's were the other two in that area that didn't get burnt. Because all they had was the pump at that time and people kept pumping water. Finally they couldn't get anymore, it went dry. You could even see some of the cats and dogs on fire.

Alice: Did it kill people?

Theresa: No. But they lost everything. They didn't have much.

Alice: You must have made, I guess to live, a lot of baskets?

Theresa: You know, every house that you use to go to, they always did crafts. Either baskets, snowshoes or ax handles. Beading, because there was beading done way back then. Because you could tell, like a lot of the clothing in some of them old pictures, that probably you have seen too. They done a lot of beadwork on them. If you ever go down to Saint John, to that museum, you would see a lot of these costumes, with the embroidery of moose hair and quill work. I know Grammy Polchies use to make little quill baskets.

Alice: So there is a lot of stuff down there?

Theresa: There should be, I haven't been down there for a long time. Kim got work down there and I have work down there and I think Veronica has too.

Alice: So, all the baskets you have made, and I know you made a lot, where are they? Have you kept any?

Theresa: Well, I didn't keep anything.

- Well as any other craftsmen will do, they would sooner sell.
- Alice: So when was it when you made your first basket, what year was it?
- Theresa: It was way back in '39. We were spending summers down there in Westfield. And I use to make them little bracelets and have little baskets and them Easter baskets. Like what you see today, you know, them little ones, little round shape ones. And I use to make them and I'd sell them and make money. And you save all your money, until you want to go to town and go spend it. I never saved, no way, I'm going to enjoy what I do have.
- Alice: Yes, that's what it's for.
- Theresa: So, they use to, like my grandmother especially, on my mother's side. She use to go and sell baskets. She would fix her sled and haul it over the river and she would go sell her baskets. And lots of times way back then, them white people hardly had any money then too. But they would give things to my grandmother, like in exchange. Vegetables, chicken, fruit, that's really how they survived. But I'll tell you, with that generation back then, they preserved a lot of this stuff, berries, apples. I remember stringing apples, the sliced apples on a thread and they would hang them up to dry. And when they wanted to make apple sauce or pies, they soaked them over night and they would be just as fresh. And berries they use to lay papers in an area, you know to dry them out. So they really had to struggle a lot in them times, because money was really not that plentiful years back.
- Alice: But it didn't have to be, did it?
- Theresa: Well no, I guess not. But today they're crying for baskets.
- Alice: There is hardly anyone that makes baskets anymore.
- Theresa: Well, most of the people have died. The ones that did all that stuff.
- Alice: I remember Evangeline, Louie, Dickie. Mike Sacobie, he still makes them the odd time.
- Theresa: But you know, it's sad where all this craft is disappearing. Hopefully, I wouldn't mind to teach, if I could. But I can't now, because I'm getting allergic to a lot of things which never bothered me before, and it don't take much.
- Alice: But you have done a lot of stuff yourself.
- Theresa: I have some work in Philadelphia Museum and way down in Louisiana, Toronto and here at Mactaquac. Then I sold a lot to the craft shops in Fredericton. I don't know if that was the Union [Union of New Brunswick Indians], but they use to have them craft places there and I sold a lot of my work there.
- Alice: So your baskets are all over the place?
- Theresa: All over. You know, a few years ago, say around ten years anyway, a man came up here and ordered three large work baskets. And put a lot of braided sweet hay on them and I made them. So when he picked them up, he said would like to know where these are going. And I said I sure would. He said Russia. Yes I have work pretty well all over.
- Alice: Do you mark your work?
- Theresa: Yes, I use to put a little stamp on the bottom. I've had people here from Japan, China, Iraq, Iran, Aus-

*Plate 4.4: Katherine Tomah and Frank Tomah from Kingsclear; the child is Winston Solomon (University of New Brunswick Archives, 6-20).*



tralia, almost every European Country. In the States, right from California to Maine, Canada, all across Canada. I've had three or four come here to buy crafts. They tell me where they are from.

Alice: I think I referred you to a couple of people regarding baskets. Hardly anyone makes them anymore. You come to mind when I think about

baskets, I don't know if Charles [Whimpy] still makes them or not.

Theresa: Well, he makes rough work, like the bigger baskets, that's what I call rough work. But I don't think there is anybody else that does fine work, fancy baskets.

Alice: I don't think so.

Theresa: I'll tell you who is good at baskets is your brother Shack.

Alice: Shack makes baskets?

Theresa: Yes, he was in that group, when Richard had it there at Norma's.

Alice: That's right.

Theresa: He took sick one time, and two weeks I filled in for him. So I showed all the students that he had about fancy work, all the different weaves. He made a great big work basket. It was really nice.

Alice: I made a basket one time and it was a fish basket, that was the only basket I ever made.

Theresa: What they were making mostly is them little heart shaped ones. They made them when I was there. And I showed them how to make a cradle and I showed them

how to do the fancy baskets and the different weaves to it. The thistle weave, the twist pattern, the rainbow and the loop design. I don't have that. The girls have each shopping basket that I gave them. I had a lot of celebrities come here. There was an Italian star that came here and he didn't speak English, he had an interpreter with him. And the other group that come here one time was the, you know that group that sings that, they're from Ontario. I can't think of that song. Well, anyway, they come here, two van loads. They were on tour and they stopped here. And they even lined up in my yard there and started singing.

END OF TAPE



## 5. We lived on the river...

RONALD PAUL

SITANSISK/ST. MARY'S FIRST NATION

*...When we use to live down Gagetown, we lived down there for ten years on the river boat. My grandparents lived up the shore, we lived on the river, houseboat. We were just young fellows, playing in ice water, bare footed. We use to catch smelts. Spring of the year, Grandmother would bring us great big tubs and everything that could hold fish. We use to go out there in ice floats. If you turn the ice floats, the fish come on top of the canoes. We'd rake them in the tubs and they were eight or nine inches long, by the thousands, and rake them in. We didn't mind the water. Evenings she'd fried them and we would all eat. She use to sit down there and sing Indian songs... They're telling a story in Maliseet Language, but it's a dying tradition. You don't hear it, but your mother did it too. So did my father...*

*...How they cheated Indians a long time ago, but they're not going to get all of it. They are not going to get what we have left. Just like medicine. White man will take anything from an Indian and make money out of it. They take everything away from us, why would you want to give them that. They can't find a cure for cancer, they can't find a cure for a cold,... The Indians have it, the white man don't. That's what they say too, the people from Tobique, don't be a fool, don't let them have it. They got everything from us for nothing, cheated us. Don't let them have our medicine ...*

Ronald: Indian Point, my grandparents use to go by there and they use to watch them Indians at night along the shores, campfires. They would be dancing. Why were they dancing? Well, they were sick, they were dying. That white man's bad disease, plague.

Alice: Was this at Jemseg, Ron?

Ronald: Yes. It spread like fire, Gagetown, Oromocto, the old Reserve [St. Mary's]. Natolin [Matilda], her house was turned into a hospital, that big house of hers. They turned that into a part-time hospital. Because people are coming in there and they quarantined the whole Reserve.

And they put a bunch of soldiers, so that nobody can get in and nobody can get out. They had to transport groceries and everything as far as the gate, and they had to put them over. They were dying just like flies. It almost wiped out all the Indians, only a handful survived. That's a bad thing. It wiped out all them Indians down Grand Lake and Jemseg and all that.

Alice: So, what were they doing in Jemseg? What you called Indian Point?

Ronald: They [Indians] use to travel back and forth, up and down the river. Indian Point was like this old

Reserve, where they came and stopped and maybe spent a summer. Like a camping ground.

Alice: They made baskets?

Ronald: Yes, everything. Just like they go from here to Public Landing.

Brown's Flat they called it, they stopped there. Oh God, they made baskets, bows and arrows, everything for the white people, chairs.

Alice: Anybody make birch bark canoes?

Ronald: Yes, they made birch bark canoes. I have pictures. They made birch bark canoes right down here [old St. Mary's Reserve].

Alice: Who made them?

Ronald: I don't know, but I had a picture of them. My uncle was one of them standing there, Ed Paul. They had driven stakes right in the ground there. They had bark laying there. And they had to use poles to brace it while they are wetting it down, so they can put it together. I had the picture and everything, and I use to watch them doing that. That's one trade we'll never get back, as how they made birch bark canoes a long time ago. Jim Paul said, they come to cheat us [said Maliseet]. We'll make a canoe, birch bark canoe [Masqewuloq] the white man wants to buy it. One hundred and fifty dollars a birch bark canoe. You know who bought it?

Alice: Who?

Ronald: Mary Chestnut, Chestnut Canoe Company. Make me the very best she said. So they made a birch bark, paid one hundred and fifty dollars way back then.

Alice: What year was this?

Ronald: 1927. They made a canoe.

That's when Jim Paul said they came to cheat us. They sold canoes to Mary Chestnut and her husband. So they took it over to the factory and they dismantled it, they wanted to see how it was made. After they measured everything and they turned around and got their own people to build a mold. And it became Chestnut Canoes, and they became millionaires. But instead of putting the bark on it, they put canvas on it.

Alice: Does anyone make them today?

Ronald: They were going to pay me ten thousand dollars to put a couple or three together. I told them no way, no way. I would never do it. How they cheated Indians a long time ago, but they're not going to get all of it. They are not going to get what we have left. Just like medicine. White man will take anything from an Indian and make money out of it. They take everything away from us, why would you want to give them that. They can't find a cure for cancer, they can't find a cure for a cold, but I laugh in the spring of the year. It's funny you know, white man looks hard, looking for a cure for cancer. Every where you look, it's there. A common cold, as simple as sneezing. The Indians have it, the white man don't. That's what they say too, the people from Tobique, don't be a fool, don't let them have it. They got everything from us for nothing, cheated us. Don't let them have our medicine. They said, you know it and I know it. Guard it with you life. Sure, there's all kinds of cure for it. Too many have big mouths. When we use to live down Gagetown, we lived down there for ten years on the

river boat. My grandparents lived up the shore, we lived on the river, houseboat. We were just young fellows, playing in ice water, bare footed. We use to catch smelts. Spring of the year, Grandmother would bring us great big tubs and everything that could hold fish. We use to go out there in ice floats. If you turn the ice floats, the fish come on top of the canoes. We'd rake them in the tubs and they were eight or nine inches long, by the thousands, and rake them in. We didn't mind the water. Evenings she'd fried them and we would all eat. She use to sit down there and sing Indian songs. They're telling a story. They're telling a story in Maliseet Language, but it's a dying tradition. You don't hear it, but your mother did it too. So did my father. And I use to sing it to my children, when they were small, to put them to sleep. Indian songs.

Alice: Like what songs, Ron?

Ronald: About the rabbits, about the sky and even death. When you're married, when your happy, when you're travelling around in the canoe. The other day I told Julie, can you still sing it Jul. She said she tried, but couldn't do it. I use to go up to Anna's house. Anna's grandchildren came in, I bounced them on my knee [He sang a song]. They all started laughing, wanted to know what he was singing. Singing like them old Indians. It was like that. We were down Public Landing, Brown's Flat, one summer. Your mother [referring to Tina Brooks], your mother's father [Charlie Meuse], that's your grandfather, and my father and my uncles. And it was summer time, when all

the tourists came. Now they wanted Indians to put on a show for them.

That was a laugh and a half.

Alice: What did you do?

Ronald: What did we do! They all got drunk. They put on the Indian clothes and dressed up like real Indians and painted themselves. They were feeling good. They didn't care. And the tourists were there and this guy said, can you make it look real. They had axes, hatchets and knives, without any warning or anything like that, it was not planned. They just went over there, grabbed a white woman and hauled her right out of the crowd. And she was screaming her head off. And they took her over there to a post, they tied her there. They wanted reality. And then they started dancing around her. Look that poor woman cried, scared. Dancing around singing in Indian, after a while it was all over and they untied her. All in a show. Your grandfather said that Ed, we put on the show. Not very many can dance that now. I almost forget how to do that myself. I told John, do you know how to dance? He says that he can't do it. Walter Brooks, I asked him if he can still dance that. Said he couldn't, that he was too heavy, not like he use to. Dancing is something else. You don't dance like the white people, it's like you are bouncing right off the floor. We do it a lot of times up at the camp, when we're fooling around. Bridgie's children—when you peel alders in the summer time, that stuff on the ground, the sun bakes it and makes it crispy like cornflakes, when you walk on it and walking around



there barefooted—he's about five years old. Hey Grampy look, he's doing the Indian dance. He likes to hear that crunching sound. Alder was used for chairs. Maple, willow, and bark, birch bark, a lot easy to work with when they're green. And baskets, chair bottoms and backs. You know, black ash is, you can use it for almost anything. I mean everything. Just like string, you tie things with it, make baskets, put the chairs together and hold everything, it braces.

Alice: Why do they use hoops?

Ronald: People getting lazy now. Old women, I use to watch them, they use to cut narrow strips. Just about the size of a shoelace in long strands. And they hook it on and they get a basket hoop and they would lace it all the way around. The basket never contained any nails, where were nails three hundred years ago?

Alice: That's why I say, when did they use the hoops?

Ronald: And see, they just rolled it around. They take two sticks and they put them together and they roll it all the way around. And they get the handle, they put the handle down and they lace it back and forth. And then they go around it again. The higher baskets always had a double bottom, because they had a lot more wear and tear on it. And it makes them hard to work with. They had baskets for everything. They had baskets the size of this table, three or four feet wide big handles and they had straps under, so that you could slide them around the baskets for fruits and vegetables. It's just like the barrels today. And then they had

them melon baskets for cucumbers, tomatoes and everything. They're shaped like watermelons.

Alice: They don't have them anymore?

Ronald: No. But what I use to hate, in the afternoons in the summertime, you want to go swimming. And they say, you do it after supper. Right now you go out there and chop down a poplar tree, make sure it's clear. We'd go out there and look for poplar tree, ten to twelve inches, about eight feet. There were no chainsaws, just homemade saws. We had to chop it all down and split it. Split the top and right down the middle. And then we had to hew it out and put them all to one side, my work is done. Them butter trays, they weren't worth very much in those days. But five dollars was five dollars. Today the same butter trays I'm talking about, you go out and pay seventy-five to eighty dollars for them now.

Alice: When they made baskets a long time ago, where did they go? Who did they sell them to?

Ronald: You don't take them out. My grandparents worked all week, because we had to go out and pound ash for them. We had to go look for it. Old people, old women they get together and they strip them and shave them. They made small baskets, they made fancy baskets. And the men made big baskets, pack baskets, fishing and potato baskets, clothes baskets. They were for the farmers when they got done. They worked all week. They put them on a boat and paddled them up Jemseg, way up inside Grand Lake, all in Grand lake along the river. Every farmhouse they see or store, they

would stop. They don't sell baskets, everything was for trade. This was in the early thirties, the depression. When everything was the hardest, even the money and the gasoline. Because the depression was the hardest thing. People were hungry. I use to go with them, they'd trade goods. If they can't spare a little gas or fuel for the motor, that was okay. They'd give them a couple of gallons, potatoes, meat flour. Because farmers had a lot of that stuff, butter, milk, pancake flour. So they'd trade. Now and then the stores would give you, maybe a few change, money. And all that clothing, it was all trade, there was hardly any money exchanged. It's how they survived and it's how they got along. Indians never had any money from the white man, just trade goods.

Alice: Did you ever have any trouble with white man?

Ronald: No. They use to come along with horse and buggy. Now and then, you might see a car. Nobody could afford a car back then. I remember after the war started, people were so scared of it. The war and Germans. We were down Brown's Flat and we were making baskets. We were playing in the yard in the tents and these planes landed on the big lake. Everybody was screaming. They grabbed us and put us in the great big culvert. Germans, Germans. Everybody ran hiding. I often wonder what they were talking about, Germans, Germans, the war. But all my life time, there were mainly muskrats. Muskrats every way you can get them. They were five dollars apiece. Five dollars apiece and they

didn't trap them, they went out and shot them. Some of them would have a canoe full. And a women, girls, anybody that could skin, they would just bring them, dump them, and go back again. Everybody along the Saint John River, anybody that wanted to hunt. Indians. Muskrats, muskrats by the truck loads. They were making a lot of money. They didn't have traps until lately, when they started settling down. Calming down, without shooting any animals. Then I started trapping beavers, muskrats, fox, otters and mink. My father and my grandparents and the rest of the Indians, they use to work all day to get prepared for the trapping season. We use to laugh, they'd split up big maples to make toboggans. The runners curl up and the leather was tied on there. They would have to make that within a day. Now and then, that thing would slap you in the face. Everybody had to get ready for it, prepare for it. This would have been like March weather. It runs on top of the crust. They'd get the snowshoes made, toboggan then they go chase moose or deer. Deer are bad out there. They go through a crust and scrape their shins and the hide would go way up, and you could see the bone. And three or four times, they will jump their legs get sore and then they just stand there. So an Indian will come along and grab him, knock him over the head, slit its throat. And just have him right there and go right on. Five or six, they were not so much after the meat, it was the pelt they were after. With that, they can make snowshoes, hats and gloves. And same with the

moose, moose hides. They go out and track moose. Moose hide, they can make moccasins, winter moccasins they're heavy, fur lined. Moose nose, it's shaped like a foot.

Alice: Who made all this stuff?

Ronald: My father and my uncle.

Alice: Your father Ed Paul and Tom Nash?

Ronald: My father and Tom Nash

Ronald: It's shaped like a foot [moose nose]. Have you ever seen a moose?

Alice: Ugly looking things, I say.

Ronald: They were out there waiting for a moose. My father sat there behind a stump. You go over there Ed, then we'll chase it around. Dad went the other way and Tom, they chased it. Old Levi Sabattis from Oromocto, he said I'll stay right over here Ed, okay? My father was sitting there waiting for it with a shotgun. He [Levi] was sitting there didn't hear nothing. [Ron imitating a moose call]. There was a moose standing over him looking at him. Levi said, '*Peskalikewon*' (shoot him). He [Ron's father] shot him, got him right in the chest, knocked him flat on his butt. He told Levi, take an ax and cut his gambit out. He told him, the heck with you. We use to have fun. You'd see a moose laying there, up there in the bog, he'd lay there and go after him in the moonlight. They'd get drunk and they'd go out there. Bears are the same way. They never shot bears, they would hardly shoot any animals at all. They had more fun. You hit it with a hatchet or an ax, clubbing it to death. This one bear, my grandfather Isaac and old John Brooks, that would be Sam Brooks' brother. John Brooks was a great big

man, old John, they called him. They were out there snaring rabbits. They went up there one day and there was this bear standing there. Couldn't go around him, you had to go through the path. If they climbed a tree, it would go after them. He took out a little ax or hatchet, he cut a tree. He told John, see this tree, I'm going to throw that right in his face, you hit him. The bear stood up with his arms wide open. If you threw a tree in front of a bear, he'd grab it and hug it. John hit the bear and knocked him flat on his behind.

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

Ronald: After, we moved up to Fredericton. After my mother died, we moved up here. My grandparents were down here, so then we moved up here. We didn't do very much after that. Found a little place to live. We went over one day to the crown land office, they were doing beavers. They asked us if we would help and do some beavers. We said sure. Skin the beavers for us. Well we worked that year for them people. They had a time limit for beavers. There were no Indians that trapped, just white people. They were only allowed to trap eight beavers apiece. So after that my father worked for them on and off. And then after the war in 1946, wages were going higher, so they had no more time limit. They started slaughtering animals. The white people, not Indians. There were only a few Indians that did trapping.

Alice: You did a lot of it didn't you?

Trapping muskrat?

Ronald: Well, Oromocto trapped. John

*Plate 5.1: Ronald Paul, St. Mary's First Nation skinning beaver using a drawknife (photo courtesy of Ronald Paul)*



Atwin, Pat Sacobie, Charlie Sark, Clarence Tomah, Clarence Atwin, Willard Paul, they use to trap the Oromocto Island. My father would go down to Lincoln, they would have a line from there, to the outskirts of Fredericton City limits. They trapped that. Me and the other ones, we trapped from right there by the Save Easy, all the way to York Manor, to Sugar Island. We were on a trap line on both sides of the river. John Casey had the other side of the river, him and Louie Babe [Louis Paul]. On this side, me and Benedict. Warren, Maurice and Amos, stayed up on Keswick Ridge, where George Nash, Ween [William Nash] and Levi Brooks, they stayed up there in

Keswick. Everybody trapped. Good money, a lot of them got drunk on that. But when the beaver season comes in the fall of the year, I'd go into it heavy. People were poor back then, it was hard. Do you remember that? Half the reserve, I raised half the reserve during the hard times. There wasn't one family on the reserve that didn't eat beaver.

Alice: I've eaten beaver, it tasted like chicken. I liked it.

Ronald: It's not just you, it's everybody on the reserve. When we get a fresh beaver, I always wait for a real good one, I always had the first meal. And after that I didn't do them because my parents always say get one for yourself before you start out that way

*Plate 5.2: Ronald Paul, St. Mary's First Nation using drawknife to scrape fat off beaver fur (photo courtesy of Ronald Paul)*



you won't be wondering. When you eat something first they said, then you can work with it. So I did, beaver, nice and white, fat.

Alice: Best for me was muskrat.

Ronald: Well it's all right too. When they start coming in, muskrats and beaver. I had to crate down to Oromocto. They called from Kingsclear, I couldn't keep the people in Beaver and muskrats. Just like the spring of the year when the muskrat season opens up, they wanted muskrats. I use to handle Tom Brooks' people up here for muskrats. They're big river rats. We'd put fifty or sixty in a freezer, maybe I'd have five or six beaver for the winter in there. Roast pork and steaks, liver. Liver is

the very best, they're just like calf liver. Fry it.

Alice: It's been almost twenty years since I've had a muskrat.

Ronald: When we go up to the camp in the spring of the year, me and John, when we start trapping. The freshest one we get, nice white fat. First two, I'd tell John, well John, I'll clean these out for you, get the frying pan ready. He'd say okay. You take bacon grease or pork, put the muskrat in with that, Indian bread. Oh God!

Alice: I remember my mother use to cook stew or bake it.

Ronald: My grandparents use to make fun of white people, they'd do this a lot back then, in the old days. I'll tell you who pulled a cute one, George

Nash and Levi, they were up in Keswick, at an old camping ground they had up there, they were trapping Muskrats. This was Easter Sunday, they went out to catch a whole bunch of them and they came home. Let's cook some for supper. They cooked three of them. See when you cook a muskrat, you skin it and clean it out. You just cut it in half, you don't chop off the legs or anything. Put it right in there, put potatoes in there, a little flour to make gravy. Before it was done, these women came over and asking about baskets. What are you cooking? They said stay for supper, we have some stew on. Oh no, the women said, you go ahead and have your supper, we'll just wait for you, and make our baskets. So when the stew was done, they took the pot and set it on the table, put the plates on. They said, what about knives and forks? They, the men said, no we're Indians. One of the men took the cover off the pot of stew and stuck his hand right in it. With his hand he put food on their plates. The white women just stared with their mouths wide open. They ate, it was good. They would probably tell this when they go back home, about how these Indians live like dogs. I told Andrea about that and she said really that happened right up Sugar Island, Keswick. Well, where did the Indians get knives and forks a long time ago. Maybe wooden spoons, but they didn't have no forks. Use your hands, that's what they're for. Jim Paul and Atwin—they went trapping for otters—said let's go eat on the Island. And they only had a handful of tea and milk.

Atwin tells Jim, whenever you cook tea, when the water has boiled, you take the tea and just throw it in the pot. The harder you throw it, the stronger it gets. And he said, yeah. So he threw the tea as hard as he could, but missed the pot. Many times whites came up to the Island just to see how the Indians live. They would say show us how the Indians worked. He wouldn't do that, but would teach them instead. Baskets, how do you start baskets Ron? When I was growing up my grandparents—gave me six pieces of ash and I had to put them together. This is what is called the key. We only have six strips of ash and I have to do this and if you can't do this, you're no good. When the whites come a lot of time—and Indians too—I tell them, I will show you how it was taught to me a long time ago. So they try it, it's nothing hard, only six little pieces. Okay, see, did you see how I put them together? Yes, well here, take it apart and you try it. They couldn't do it. I'm sitting right there, showing you how to do it. Then I'll do it again, I put them together again. Take it apart and try it again. Three hours they tried, the whites, they couldn't do it. Can't you see that it's not that hard to put together, that's why you would think that it's easy. Them six little pieces. I tell them it's simple, but you can't do it, why? I'll tell you a secret, once you learn it's no more fun. I said come here, put two together, and these other ones. [Explaining how it is done, then gets them to try it again]. One of them says, look I done it, I put it together. I said if you don't get the key you

won't be able to make a basket. There are different kinds of bottom baskets all different. They are like weaving snowshoes. A long time ago, do you remember Lean Brother's meat market? Well, Polons [Frank Sacobie], myself, Dick and other Indians, Sammy, Levi Brooks, Ween [William Nash], Artie. Every Saturday morning—Tom Brooks, Frank's family, Ben Brooks, all them old Indians, they are all dead—we use to go down there and sell clothes baskets. Two dollars and fifty cents apiece. We work hard all week, apple baskets and potato baskets, clothes and fishing baskets. Fishing baskets were ninety cents, apple baskets were seventy-five cents. If a basket had a swivel handle on it, it was worth a dollar. Potato baskets, small and big ones, they had to be double bottomed before you could get a dollar for them, or a dollar ten. Ax handles, four dollars and fifty cents for a dozen and this was in the forty's.

They use to take them over to HS Neil's hardware store and EM Young Ltd. And they had an apple exchange out there on Regent Street. Indians from Oromocto and Kingsclear, Andover, Fredericton, they were making ax handles, apple baskets, potato baskets, by the truck loads. Ten, fifteen baskets at a time. I told my father, well, there's only two of us, you make the ax handles and I'll make the baskets. That was the saddest time, how could my brothers be so stupid? My father and me worked so hard and they'd just sit there looking at us. They'd never try to learn, they never tried to do anything. My father made five dozen ax handles for

twenty-five dollars, eighteen dollars for eighteen baskets. I don't know how much those people made. But the people that supply those companies, they were paid seven dollars and fifty cents a basket. All we got was one dollar apiece. But then lately, after that, when everything had blown over, I surprised myself. This man had asked me, he said, you want to make me a big basket, a garden basket. And I told him, yeah. You remember that. I said yes, big turnip basket. How many do you want, I ask. He said a couple, if you can. And I told him, sure. And he also wanted a potato basket. Ron asks the man if it's a half bushel, a bushel or three quarters. I made them up in two weeks and I met this man at the old city market. I was surprised. When I told him I wanted forty-five dollars apiece, twenty-five dollars for the potato basket and he paid me right there. No backing out, no nothing.

I told this man there's a lot of difference. He said yes. These baskets would last me ten years the man said. I told him, I was taught a long time ago, when I make baskets for white man, I better be sure they only use it for a month, so they come back and buy another one. He said, do you remember that. And I said yes, but I'll tell you one thing, we don't make cedar baskets. We're not Micmacs (Mi'kmaq). I told this man that Micmacs (Mi'kmaq) made cedar baskets it would fall apart. Why do you do that he asks. Because we make them come back to buy more baskets. Cedar is green and you can work with it. It dries, like an egg shell, it will crumble. I made a lot of

baskets. Three baby cradles before Bertha died. I made that cradle, seventy-five dollars and I coloured the splints. When this women took a look at it, she said I want that one, one hundred and twenty-five dollars.

Alice: Evangeline use to make cradles.

Ronald: Yes. Someone asked, do you make rocking chairs? And I said, yeah, but they take a lot of time to make. How many can you make? I don't know, what did you want? Can you make five this week? And I said yes. How do you want them done? What do you mean? I can make them anyway you want. With slabs, I can weave them in. Whatever you want me to put on it, for the back and bottom. What do you think would be best, he asks. I said, life time? Then I said that I would weave them in for him. Okay, said the man, weave them in, forty-five dollars. Then the man never said anything. Do you remember old Pete and Doc? When the three of us use to work all week?

Alice: Do you know anything about Indian Point, St. Croix, those kind of places?

Ronald: Yes.

Alice: I don't hear too much of anyone talking about them.

Ronald: No, they only, maybe, go there to work. Roger's father [Arthur Paul] use to go up there, St. Croix.

Alice: Indian Island is not the same place?

Ronald: *Menahqesk* (Saint John), Indian Island all rock, have you ever been there?

Alice: I've never been there. My mother and father went there one year, took kids to summer camp.

Ronald: Summer camp is different. My uncle lived there on that island. He looked like a white man. I use to make fun of him when I visited him. My father and my mother said, I'm going to see Uncle Pete. Okay. I was about seven years old, he was sitting there, that white man, putting tar on his boat. I told my father, what the heck does he want to put that black stuff on there for? Why don't he just make another one? He won't have to put that on every year. He never said nothing, he just kept on working. Then after he said, my wife will be out after while. He speaks English, okay. We had some supper, before we had to go back. We were working on his boat. My father and them were talking about the day and what they were doing. So the time came when he sat down and looked at me. And he laughed, he said something in Indian. And I could have crawled in a little hole. The white man speaking Indian! He had the bluest eyes, white face. That's who you call 'White Pete'.

Alice: Did you ever hear about Oromocto Pete? Who was he?

Ronald: I don't know.

Alice: Someone told me that he was a short man and he always went to Oromocto, for what?

Ronald: I don't remember him. But it's only an Indian name. They never said anything about Pete. *Piyel Kansuhs*, that's what he went by. He was no bigger than Juniorsis [Fred] and Tuahdie [Fred Sr.]. He was about the same size. Mae was his daughter, they are all short people. They lived along the shore, there was no reservation. It's just a landing place where people stopped off. Oromocto, what



*Plate 5.3: Walter Joseph Paul Sr. of St. Mary's, picking fiddleheads at Savage Island (University of New Brunswick Archives, 74-17388).*



you see now, was not there. Our places were along the shoreline, just about twenty or thirty feet from the water. They built little tar paper shacks. That's where they lived. We use to stop in there and spend maybe a week along the shore there.

Grandpa and uncles use to go up there. Grandmother Bear, that's 109 years old.

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

TAPE TWO SIDE ONE

Ronald: Older Indians in Oromocto, they didn't speak English. They didn't understand English hardly. It's best if you're an Indian or they won't talk. They speak their own language. My grandparents and great grandparents, it was all Indian. My great grandmother, old Bear, Grandma Bear, just like a bear. She was short little thing. *Piyel Kansuhs'* wife, that's what we call him. But we didn't call him Pete, but that was his name *Piyel. Kahsuhswicik* [*Kansuhs* Family] on my grandmother's side.

See that bean pork. When they fry it, two frying pans and that grease on there—this was a Saturday night. Indian women were cooking bean pork and beans, molasses. The men folk were along the shore drinking that home brew [Bees Beer]. I don't know what happened, but they all started fighting... White man don't come on the reserve for anything. They come on there for a purpose. That's probably why they did that. They had something else in mind. John [Coon] Sacobie said Indians are always going bare footed, summer and winter. And that's true; bare-footed summer and winter. Their feet and their heels are callused, just like

them army boots, shoe leather... This was a Micmac (Mi'kmaq) woman from the Newcastle area. Charlie's mother. My great grandmother use to go down there and visit them. My family, we'd go down, come a long way. We'd go in and sit down there. And give you big molasses cake and them old golden rod cans, full of tea. Give me lunch, but wouldn't give any to my brothers.

Alice: How come?

Ronald: The difference was—I couldn't understand it until I got a little older—I worked hard. I had my parents. I can make things that the Indians make... The only time then, is if they went fiddleheading. They would pick fiddleheads all week and they'd work, work, work. Fredericton, Oromocto, and Gagetown, people they'd work, pick fiddleheads. There was no sale for fiddleheads here. They didn't sell them here. Saturday mornings, everybody, all the canoes of the Indians that had fiddleheads. They'd go out in the middle of the river and sit right there. Wait for that river boat to come along, load their goodies and go down with it to Saint John. And stop in Oromocto, load the fiddleheads and go to Gagetown. I went with them on that big boat. Forty-five bags of fiddleheads. I put my little bags of fiddleheads in there, about eighty-five pounds. I worked hard, I never forgot, even today. Captain Belding asked me if I had my fiddleheads. And I said, yeah right here. My father went down with the fiddleheads and came back, all I got was a chocolate bar out of that. I worked hard all week for a

chocolate bar. I never forgot that. I still don't know today what he got for them. But I bet you about fifty, sixty tons of fiddleheads went to Saint John at the Market Square. They were going all over Canada, all over the Province. And they're still doing it today. But I made more than that chocolate bar today.

Alice: Yes

Ronald: But back then, I couldn't figure out what happened. Chocolate bar, I worked hard all week. Fiddleheads use to be a big, big business back then for Indians, before the white man butted in. But they're still buying fiddleheads, but nobody takes them. They're buying fiddleheads in the 'States'. The 'States' want fiddleheads. But the Indians go to the States and bring them back here.

Why don't they sell them over there.

Alice: They would get better money for them over there.

Ronald: I stopped at the border there, coming home, I went down there riding around. I stopped in Eastport, the white man stores there, I got some ice cream and pop. The manager said, are you from around here? No, I'm from Canada. Are you bringing in fiddleheads? I said, no, why. I'd like to have five bags, if you could bring them to us. I stopped at the gas bar and got some gas, the woman asked me, She wanted 150 pounds of fiddleheads. When we got to the Canadian border, they didn't ask what we were taking over. They come over and asked, do you have any fiddleheads? Please, could you bring some for us. I said, well I'm on my way back home now, but if I get some fiddleheads—see my brother—

I'll see that you get some. I told John, oh my God, crazy people selling fiddleheads around here. But they don't think about the other stores out there. McAdam, McAdam Supermarkets, Harvey Station, all them stores. All stores on the outside areas, Fredericton Junction, Geary and all them. Nobody handles them stores. Stores out here, Minto, Chipman and all that area, Boisetown, Millville, said think about us now and then. We live out here too. We like to buy Indian crafts, baskets and ax handles. Come out and sell to us too. We need them just as well as Fredericton, but nobody comes out. I gave up trying to tell Indians, to coach them making baskets. Tom Brooks was alive then. Walter. I had an order, an order from New York. A man came over, he wants to buy some baskets off you guys. I asked him, how many? And he said, just as many as you can make. He said, you go and tell the other Indians everywhere. I went to Oromocto, and here [St. Mary's] and I went to Woodstock and then to Tobique and Kingsclear. And I told Tom Brooks and the other Indians up here, make me baskets, any kind of baskets, as many as you can make. How many would you want? I told them 1500 to 2000 and I had to have them in three or four months. I'll give you all the time. They never said yes or they never said no. Nobody made baskets. So how can you help them? I said no more, no more, from now on. If I want to do something, I'll think about myself and the heck with them. They don't want to learn, they just want to sit on their behinds and have everything handed to them, for

nothing. And that's just what they'll be.

Alice: And that's the way they are, most of them.

Ronald: They use the reservation today as a crutch, and they have to lean on it. I grew up hard and this is where I am today. I know what it's like out there. I can't sit back and do nothing. It's not the money, it's not the money. It's just that it's your tradition, and you have to do it. It's an everyday thing. Follow the seasons from one season to another, everything changes with the season, but they don't understand this. They think it's all same thing, it's not the same thing. You have to know your animals, your birds, you have to know your trees and the material that you work with. You just can't jump in there and get anything right away. The trees, in the certain time of the year, they lose their bark. That's for you to work with. Now you can take the tree and chop it down and peel the bark. Even with the bark alone, you can make baskets, different coloured baskets. The bark off of the tree is just like leather. We use to make belts out of them. We use to make shoulder straps, baskets, sewing baskets, all different kinds. Because they are green and you can work with it. When it dries up, it's solid and then you take varnish and paint them. They're solid. Ash is the same way. After the ash there's the fiddleheads. You see muskrats, muskrats come first and then right on top of that—muskrats and gaspereau come together. When the gaspereau comes, just before that, the fiddleheads come. The fiddleheads

are there, then when the fiddleheads are done, there is the rustic chairs and your baskets. And you go right on through all summer. And when you get to July, you turn over and make apple baskets and potato baskets. When you get to August, there is blueberry season. You see, then there's your potato season, six weeks of each. And when you get to the end of October, then your trapping season starts again and your hunting seasons. And that's when everyone starts thinking about the hard, cold winter. And everything has to be made, your snowshoes, your skis, your sleds, your harnesses, your pack baskets. Then you go trapping. Animals are so plentiful.

Alice: Where do you trap?

Ronald: Wherever you want to go. River, when you can paddle. When it's frozen and can walk on it. Foxes. Back woods, there's only wild cats, martins. But on the river side it's otter, mink, muskrats, weasels, everything. Seals, yuk! seals stink, seals and sea dogs. I don't mind nailing and scraping them, but I wouldn't scrape them today. They are about four feet long and about three feet wide, that's when they are skinned out. And then you scrape them, you stretch them out and they are about nine feet long. They're dirty and greasy, just like shortening, they stink. I've skinned nine polar bears and fifty seals. Polar bears are nine feet long and 1500 pounds apiece. That's a floor rug, enough to cover a living room, they're big. Then you save the gall, the gall is one hundred and fifty dollars an ounce. That's just about a tablespoon and

*Plate 5.4: Edward Isaac Paul of St. Mary's; Ron's father, working furs (Canadian Museum of Civilization, 23222).*



that little gall alone, about half a cup is worth about 1000 to 1500 dollars. You take it when you cut it out, you take a string and tie it so that it don't leak. Then hang them up to dry and then when they are dry, you take them and wrap them up. And put them in a bottle and tie them in there and they are shipped to Japan. They

make medicine out of that. I get ten dollars apiece for them little things. I get ten dollars apiece for them sacks, and the white man gets five hundred dollars apiece for them. And in Japan they get five or six thousand for them. The Indian always gets the rotten end. The same thing as muskrats. They need fur, the mink. You sell

a mink today, you go out trapping, you get a mink. A good big mink, twenty-seven to thirty inches long, four to five inches wide, get it all set and dry, then turn around and sell it. All they pay you is five to eight dollars. When the man sells it, he gets fifty-two dollars apiece. When he sells in an auction, the auction takes it to the fur people, one hundred and twenty-five to one hundred and twenty-seven dollars, at least. That's rotten. And then the furrier takes it and makes a coat out of it, then he makes 25,000 dollars on a coat. It's a process that never, never ends and we get the rotten end of it. The weasel and the skunk. A weasel is the simplest thing to catch. You can use one of them little mouse traps, bend them back and set it out. A weasel is five dollars apiece. But how many Indians up here do it? The skunk another easy thing, hit a skunk over the head with a hammer, skin it out. It has black and white stripes, the fanciest and loveliest coat you'll ever see. The skunk pelt is worth five dollars, but when they sell it, it's fifty-five dollars. The skunk coat, it's just like silk. The hats are beautiful. They make them with the stripes, they are decorated. The mink, it takes one thousand pieces of mink to make a coat. Each slice is different, each colour. Each part of the mink, even the paws. Fox tails, same thing. They're even buying dogs now and house cats. When you go around stores, you see multicoloured things there, they're cats.

Alice: Who sets prices on these?

Ronald: Auction people do. I have all the names of the people in my shop,

auctioneers.

Alice: Do they bring all of them to you to skin, Ron?

Ronald: Yes. I have my customers that come to me.

Alice: Isn't it up to you to set a price, as to how much you want for them.

Ronald: They are my prices. I set the price myself, I set the price for them to pay me. If they don't pay me. They go somewhere else. Anyway, they can't take it no place else, because no one else does it. When my girls were living down at the old house, where Connie's house is, we were all sitting up there on Savage Island. The Government men came that day, talking about a deal they had for the Indians. Got a sale, I want all the Indians to work together. Everything comes out when there is good money. They had five white people in front, just like we have up here right now. The Indians were back here, listening to the white man talk. George Wiseman and that other one said, what you say is okay, but us Indians don't stand a chance against you people when you start dealing. And the Indians started laughing. What do you mean us Indians, us Indians, George Wiseman is from Illinois.

Frederick Bourgoin [Tuahdiesis]

Alice: Where did he get the name Paul?

Ronald: His name is Bourgoin, he's from the Geary area, toward Fredericton Junction. Where did you get the name Bourgoin? My father he grew up on the reserve, that's why. When I married my wife, she had four children, the same thing. When they went to school here, I told them take your own names, Meadows.

END TAPE TWO SIDE ONE

TAPE TWO SIDE TWO

Ronald: The season in the spring. It use to be people from Bangor, Indians from Old Town, Saint John, Indian Point, Saint John Indians. They use to all come up to Oromocto from Fort Fairfield, Andover, Woodstock, Kingsclear, even white people from the 'States'. Apple blossom time, Indians come down, they going to chase fish. About four hundred canoes. The Indians gather along the shoreline on Jack's Island, Sheep Island, Savage Island, they would be just packed. Tents, tents, tents, campfires, campfires.

Alice: What year would that have been?

Ronald: 1938 from '38 to '43. There was a lot of white people, just to come and see the Indians. Nobody, nobody, they don't go up there for nothing. It's share, it's sharing. Can you imagine, all them Indians in there. If you put them all together, you would have about two to three thousand Indians. But yet, when the evening starts, around seven in the evening or 7:30 pm when the fish start playing, everybody would be out there. Poor old Molly and her husband, Peter. That woman, you could hear her down the Saint John River. My uncle use to say that's why they call you Pauls. Hollering for Pete, I could hear that from Woodstock to Oromocto, over here!. She use to tell that Pete where to go, she didn't need no bull horn. She was very loud and she was an old lady, she carried a long ways.

Alice: What's the island up there, that's shaped like a snowshoe? Gilbert's Island?

Ronald: There use to be Snowshoe Islands, you can't see them now.

They are way passed Kingsclear. Islandview, right up between Islandview and Woodstock, there's five Islands. They're under water. There also was a falls there, Pokiok Falls and Stone Rapids. I know, I went through them. I went through them in a summer regatta one year, in a canoe race. The longest race, one hundred and fifty canoes.

Alice: Were they just Indians?

Ronald: No, white people. I held a championship for eleven years in canoe racing. Everybody was after my hide. I was out there and I was number one. I had a hardwood paddle, six and half feet tall and twelve inch blades. And an extra set, cedar paddles. It was a sixty-three mile run. Woodstock, Island Park to Fredericton. Twenty-thousand people, all along the river bank. I had fun. I had just come out of the woods. I was in there from April to August. I was prime, I was all muscled up. I come in there and Birch, George Birch, Chestnut Canoe Company, I have a couple of canoes entering a race, I'll put two whites guy in there and you and your uncle take the other one. How much money I asked. One hundred and fifty dollars apiece, it would be for advertisement. I said okay. We went up there. You had to have your water and your lunch right there. Sunday morning, people from the States and all around the areas, some down, Island Park was full. We were the top priority, everything was done for us, we didn't have to lift a finger. Okay guys, lift your numbers up. We got our numbers and stuck them on. I took number one along the shoreline,

at the shoreline and from there, they just lined out. Just like steps going across the water. On your marks! The current is bad. The man held the gun and when the gun went off, my canoe jumped about ten feet and took off. Them paddles really moved that canoe. Harold Sappier was one of them, George, Jack Waterbury, Harold and William [Ween] Nash. Charles Solomon and then a fellow from Tobique and his wife. I made comedy. I made people laugh, I was like a clown on the river. I chased them guys. I chased Charles, they'd butt their canoe against me. And he turned around and said, don't do that, if you want to go by, go by, don't fool around. When I got to Woodstock—and Woodstock was from here [his house] to the Devon Park Save Easy—and the reservation, you could see the Indians along the shore there, cheering for their guy. 'White Pete', Peter Paul from Woodstock and his son, and Gregory and the other one, we went right between them. We were right beside them and they were going fast, I got right to the reserve and I went right by them. Ah Ron, they said, what you want to do that for? They went for lunch and didn't come back. We came down through the rapids slower. Harold Sappier, Georgie, five Indian canoes hit them rapids and they went swimming. Our canoe hit it, jumped in the air, had a half boat full of water. I told John to bail the water out. Bail the water out and keep it going, bail the water out. I was number one all the way. I made a mistake when I switched places and my partner. How did I know he

couldn't steer? We went around the other island instead of going with the current. He went this way. By the time I got out, they were way ahead of us. I told him, oh my God, we're not going to catch up. I told him, work! And this was out here in Pokiok, we were twenty-seven miles from Fredericton. I told him we have to change places. If we're going to catch up, we have to change places. I told him, see that rock way up in front, in the middle of the river. Yeah. I told him you jump on that, jump on the rock so that we can switch. The canoe don't stop, we switch and keep on going. He looked like an otter jumping the boat. We had a hard time, but our canoe came in. The Chestnut Canoe Company, the people that represented us, came in number one. And I caught them right on the end and I come in number two. But I chased them twenty-seven miles to get number two. And there were only three canoes that came in there, sixty-three miles, the rest of them all gave up. We got our prize. We had a silver cup, we had our money we had a bag of flour and silver pillows. Big cushions, fancy cushions. And they said, you guys have won prizes. Yeah. We laid right out on that deck when they were interviewing us. He said, Ron. And I said yeah. He said, can we ask you a question. And I told him, yeah, what is it. For the double the money, would you go back? I told him, no way. Coming down is easy, but you're not going to get me to paddle back up there. No way would I paddle back up. Nine hours and eighteen minutes, it's a long time. I



told him, paddling up against the current is something else, might take you two days. It's the hardest thing. But then that same week they called us over town, and they had passage tickets, airline tickets, the longest regatta in the world 450 miles. Lake of Mississippi, fifteen thousand dollar purse. I said, no way. I'm not going to be crocodile bait, no. You start from Illinois and down to Baton Rouge. Yeah, I'd be one fish bait too, crocodiles. I told them no. I know them waters, they're bad. No, not with a canoe, maybe something else, but not with a canoe. I want to live a little longer. Fifteen thousand dollar purse. I didn't care about the purse, it's fighting the current. You got dead posts coming out of the water, turning your canoe over and swim for your life. And them crocs, make a lunch out of you. When I was a young fellow and going to school, I came home one evening after supper. I walked in there, on the floor in my father's house there was seventy-eight raccoon carcasses. And in the basement, he had one hundred and twenty-two beaver carcasses, seventeen red foxes. He was all alone. And I told him, I want to learn how to do this. He looked at me and he said, you want to learn. And I said, yes, I want to learn so that I can help you, okay. When I was growing up and learning, a lot of times, I regret them words. But a lot of times, I felt the rawhide on my back if I made a mistake. But I done pretty good.

Alice: It paid off?

Ronald: Yes, but once I mastered it. I became the best, number one. And all he did was help me out. Money

flowed just like water. Do you know how long it takes to make a thousand dollars?

Alice: No.

Ronald: Two days. And I said you know how long it takes to make ten thousand dollars? Almost a, better than a month. Everything comes easy after that.

Alice: So that was how you got in the fur business.

Ronald: I've been in the fur business ever since I was sixteen. That's fifty years ago. Fifty years, and I became the best in New Brunswick. I built a name for myself and a legend. People know me from everywhere. And I met a lot of people, in fisheries, game wardens everywhere, even the RCMP. I quit that one year, because I was working and had a steady job. Get this, I was working, I didn't do the beavers for five years. That's when I got married, Phyllis and them were born. When Phyllis and them were about ten, twelve years old, I still had hard times. I have a hard time to eat from one day to another. Didn't know where the next meal would be coming from. One day we had to—in the summer time—we had to paddle from one island to another fishing for something to eat. We'd go pick raspberries and make pies. Apples, when the fall of the year came. I dreaded winter coming, hard winters. So that the next year, I told my father, what's wrong with me? I'm not stupid. What do you mean, he said. Why am I struggling so hard for? So I turned around. And he said, what are you going to do? I told him, I'm going to the Crown land office. I'm going to call the Chief game

warden and tell him what I am going to do. So I called him up, ordered him right around. I ordered him right around. He said, you get over here then. So I go over there. He said, there's a truck there, those two guys will help you. Stretchers. I went upstairs and get my stretchers down and all my fox stretchers, otters, mink, muskrats and beaver stretchers, my tools. And I brought them over and I opened up a fur business. I took over my fur business and my father's. And I told the game wardens. I told them, there, I'm going to start my own business. From now on, from this day on, wherever you go, you tell the people I'm open for business. You tell them trappers. Okay. And he did too. We were knee deep and we had about over fifty, sixty customers. And beavers flowed like water. That's that time when I started feeding the Indian reserves, every where. I started feeding everybody and everybody came. Benedict would come along with his big sled. Give me five of them, Ron, he would say. I would say, Dick, go pick them out yourself. Dick would come around and get two or three. Tina is hungry, she wants some more. Roger and Rita, Roger would come down there. Artie, his father, would come down there too. And then Tony Gabriel's father, he took two. Give him a couple of them small ones. Raccoons are good to eat, but I didn't see any Indians take them. Walter Brooks and Tom Brooks and Paul and Frank, Pete and Robert, Clarence, Hubert's father, they wanted raccoons, beaver and muskrat. I told Walter, when you get that raccoon

cooked, could you bring me a piece. I want to see what it's like. Sure Shawnee. When that raccoon was cooked, you take that heavy fat, you take it all off, skin it off and then all you have is meat. It's a hundred times better than a chicken and it's crispy.

Alice: Have you had it recently?

Ronald: Yes.

Alice: Let me know when you have it again, I want to try it.

Ronald: My uncle Frank said, you missed a lot. I told him yes, nobody ever told me. It tastes pretty good, yeah, that's just like a little chicken. A lot crispier, no taste, no smell, it's crispy. And he told me, you throw them away for nothing. But nobody cooks them. And he said, yeah, they're nice. They took five, Walter Brooks. My father cooks some, he cooked three for us. And after that I said, I'll never make fun of more raccoons again.

Alice: I guess everybody has their own preference of meat.

Ronald: Yeah, whatever. But I'll tell you another thing, what the people up here don't know. Or what the white people out there don't know, not just the Indians. I had black people, but I'll tell you something else. Chinese, came over to see me. I had five Chinese people come over. He said, Ronald I hear from people that you give meat away. People that are needy, hard up. I get paid for this carcass by the pound. I told him the fat and everything I do, I sell it. I told him carcasses I sell, they go to the fertilizer and they go for making detergents, soap, and talcum. Why, what did you want? He wants to buy

all the wildcats off of you. I told him I don't know how many are there. Took them out, they're all frozen, so we took them all out and piled them over there.

Wildcats are this long, just like a dog, no fat on them, it's all white meat. I'll give you five dollars apiece for them. Paid for them, put them on there. I said, people come here for meat to eat. He said yes, we're the same thing here. I said, what are you going to do with them? What are you going to make out of them? He looked at me and started laughing. Chow mein. I told him, oh God. Seven Seas, those

Chinese restaurants. Chop Suey and all that. He said Ron, what people don't know, won't hurt them. He said, I'll guarantee you, when we use these, they won't know any different. And they have been coming back and forth after that. Wolastoq Park also comes to see me. The ranchers, they come over to see me, Saint John, Halifax, Truro, Sackville, Moncton. So you don't know what you're eating when you're out there. And they say that Indians eat bad. There's everything, more, then just Indian bread.

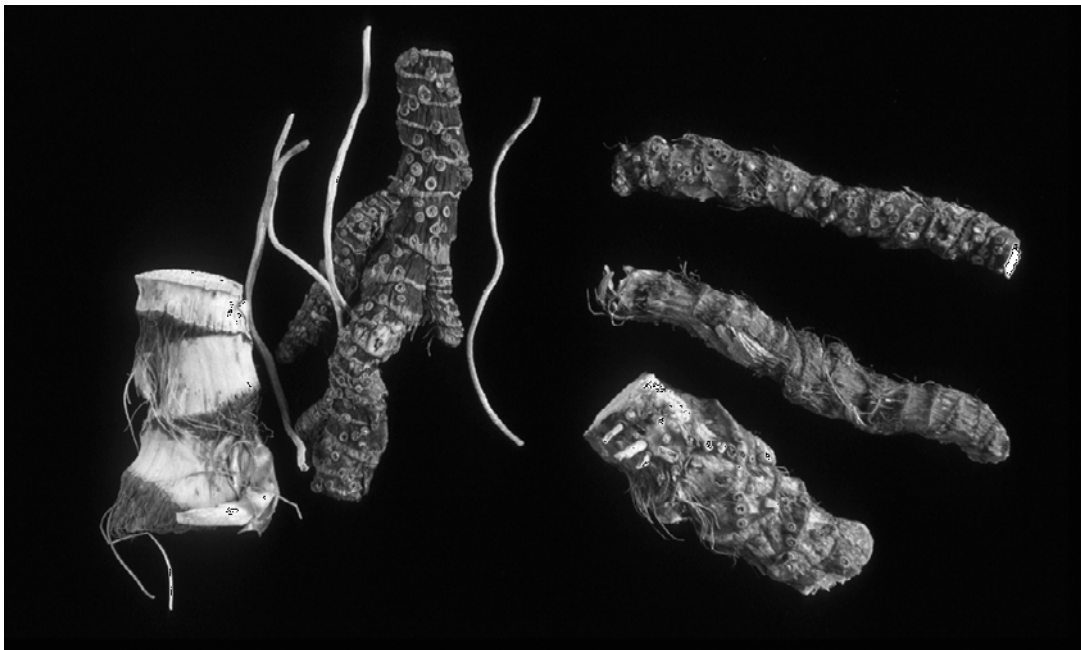
END OF TAPE TWO

## 6. Leaving the seeds for next year

CHARLES SOLOMON SR.  
PILICK/KINGSCLEAR FIRST NATION

*“What made it good as far as medicine is concerned, she had all kinds of them. And she would always like to take me, because I always helped her with different kinds of medicine. And then explaining to me what it’s good for, and the time to get it, you know. You take like calamus root, we get that in the fall, before the frost hits the ground. And it’s very, very important, because another thing that you do is have a knife when your digging up Calamus Root. Calamus Root almost grows on top of the ground. You take the knife on each side and clear away Mother Earth, and then right on the knees, you take a knife and cut all them little roots. The reason why you do that, you’re leaving the seeds like for next year, that way you don’t kill the plant at all. You know, you take the root..”.*

Plate 6.1: Kiwhosuwasq or Calamus Root (photo by Viktoria Kramer)



Alice: I would like to know something about Jemseg, to begin with.

Charles: Jemseg. A lot of our people, lived along the Saint John River, as far as Jemseg is concerned. Where they're going to put that bridge, I noticed that they have been digging up a lot of things, but not the bones. And this is one thing, when I went down there, I was telling them, if you find any bones, for them to stop.

Alice: Yes.

Charles: It was agreeable. This is one thing that I was telling Pat. And I said, well, it's all right to dig. Just as long as they don't find bones.

Alice: What was that place called, where they're digging, was it called Indian Point?

Charles: Well, yeah. Another thing, there was a lot of settlers that settled along there, white people. This is one thing, that a lot of things they are finding really don't mean that they belong to us. The white settlers were really the ones settling along there.

Alice: But they find a lot of like beads and arrowheads.

Charles: Well, this is where, I think, where we always like to join our brother, white people. We take them in just like our brothers.

Alice: Did Indian people use to settle there?

Charles: Along there and along the Saint John River Valley and I could remember down below that, Gagetown. And a lot of Indians are still there, some. And coming up we have Oromocto. And there again, as we come right straight up the Saint John River, you know, just like St. Mary's. It use to be down the old reserve, down next to the river.

Indians always liked to settle close to the river. And this is where they use to get their food. You always had canoes, they travelled by canoes.

And there was a lot of people there in St. Mary's. They use to go, take summer, they use to go way down Brown's Flat, Westfield, Grand Bay. All them places, especially when the tourists use to come. Summertime, they go there and sell their baskets or crafts that they made.

Alice: Did they make much money back then?

Charles: The money wasn't all that. It wasn't really that much. You see, what you can buy for a dollar then, it was just like two hundred dollar bills today.

Alice: Yes.

Charles: You can buy bread, eggs. And I could remember my father and mother—you know, when they were making baskets—here during the winter months. This was something that they were doing during winter months. And they make baskets all winter. And then they just sell for whatever they put on the table. And they have a great, big box, where they put fancy baskets. These are the ones that they take during the summer months, because my father and mother use to go down Brown's Flat, on this side of Westfield. And they seem to take sections really. My aunt, my grandfather and my grandmother, they use to go to Westfield, where they use to sell their baskets and whatever. They had a lot of ash really, they made baskets right there. And that's another thing people were doing.

Another thing they were doing quite a

bit of, was to sell a basket. It's when you make a basket, that's when the white people would like to have that. And sometimes they wait until the basket is finished, and they want to buy that right off. And because they see how it was made, when it was finished. And this is one thing that they...

Alice: This is probably a learning process for them.

Charles: Yeah. And right there, *Eqpahak*—that's Springhill—where a lot of Indians use to live. That's where they have the driving range, right there. And on the island, you know. Savage Island is another place, where the Indians use to gather there quite a bit. There even use to be a track.

Alice: On the island?

Charles: Yeah, Savage Island. They use to gather there quite a bit. That use to be where they run, you know, race track. This is where they use to compete. A lot of Indians were good runners. I could remember my father and my uncle and a lot of other names, that they use to go there and compete. And then they use to live there.

Alice: Is there a burial ground on that island?

Charles: Yeah, there was a lot of them then. What they use to do—take round about May around June—they were after fish. They use to spear them. It's funny too, how them fish use to come up the current. Quite a heavy current right there. The fish would go up and then they'd roll right down over the rips. And that's when people use to go and spear them. And they use to have a spear

about so long—metal—that had a little hook. And when they hit the fish, they pull that hook out, and it opens up. It's like a... well it's sharp. That way the fish can't get away. It's like this. Their shells were hard and good eating. But I remember, I was just young, my father use to get them and it was good food, really.

Alice: What year was this?

Charles: Well, what year? Well, I must have been five or six years old, I'm seventy-six, it must be seventy years ago [about 1927-1928]. I remember my father bringing fish home. Another thing that they use to spear was Salmon. They use to spear salmon at night. And they always had it right down here at the bar, good place [Kingsclear] for salmon. And my father was the one that always hit two, there was two that always go together. They go in a canoe and they have another big pole they put up in front. And that's where they put birch bark and they light that. They're heading down stream, the light seems to draw the fish. It would draw the animals to the light and at that time it was fish, salmon.

Frank Francis, my father's buddy there, they always go together. Frank Francis told him, he said, well brother, my turn to hit the salmon tonight. Okay. They were heading down stream, down river and my father saw a big splash. He told him, you want to be ready, pretty good size one coming. So when the salmon came along by the canoe, along side of the canoe, the old man hit the salmon. Naturally he let go of the pole and it went underneath the canoe. And he went overboard, ten or

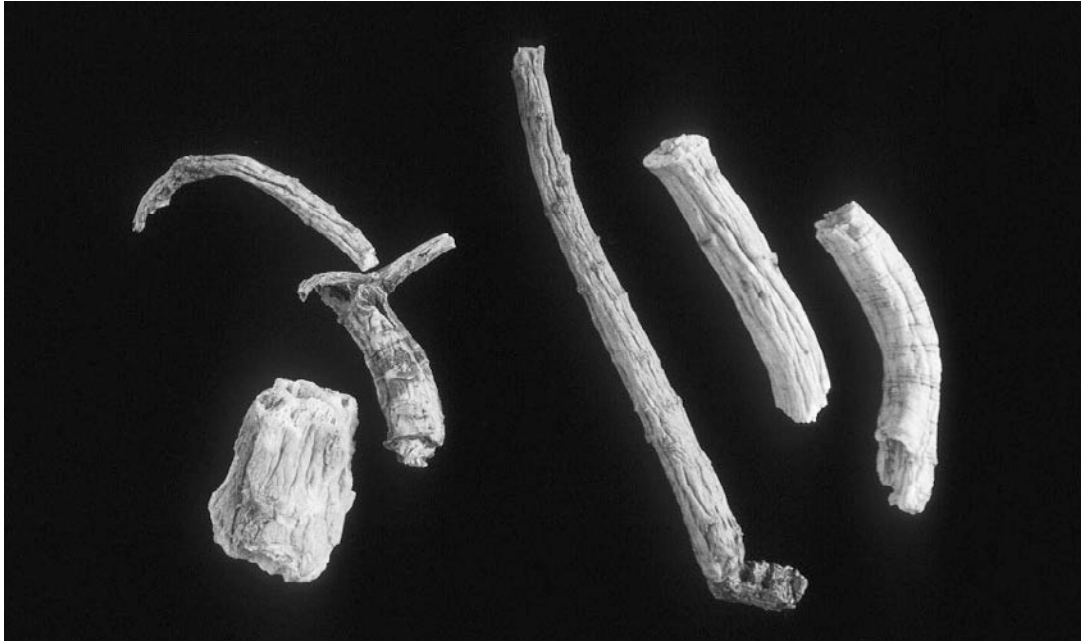
*Plate 6.2: Salmon fishing by torchlight, New Brunswick, in a scene similar to what Mr. Solomon describes (Public Archives of Canada, C-30873).*



twelve feet away from the canoe. My father had to get him. This is one thing you never lose, the salmon, because the spear that you made is just like (pause) I have one small one here that I use when I go to a lot of schools. And it's the same principle that speared for salmon, just like a claw. They use to use a bone, for like killing salmon. Then they bind that, it's a long pole about ten feet long. And then they used raw hide—raw hide will stretch you know. Just as soon as you hit the salmon, well then like jaws, they just seem to open up. And then when the salmon gets inside there, it seems to pull in. And then you're sure of your salmon, when you hit them. And this is one thing that—another thing that they never done, they never killed any

more than what they wanted to eat. Probably two salmon a night. And if there's some more that are not so successful in going after salmon; my father and his buddy will go get a couple extra more. You know and give them to the people. Oh, take years back, anything that you receive from the water or Mother Earth—well you always like to say that you receive. And there again, that's the reason why we use tobacco. When we are successful in hunting or fishing—well, when we get fish, we put tobacco right in the water. We thank the Great Spirit that we received food, you know. And we have to give something back. And it comes from—well, the tobacco is Red Willow, that we use. And that's the tobacco that I use now and I make a

Plate 6.3: Paqlous or Angelica (photo by Viktoria Kramer)



lot of it. Then I carry it with me all the time. And lots of times too, whenever, like going after like medicine, there again. Indian medicine is a (pause) That's where I learned, was from my grandmother. I'm a medicine man and my grandmother was a medicine woman. And she was, she was really good. She use to deliver babies here on this reserve. And the women didn't have to go to the hospital at all. My aunt was another one, she was really a midwife. And I know between my grandmother and my aunt, they delivered all the babies that were born on this reserve. What made it good as far as medicine is concerned, she had all kinds of them. And she would always like to take me, because I always helped her with different kinds of medicine. And then explaining to me what it's good for, and the time to get it, you know. You

take like calamus root, we get that in the fall, before the frost hits the ground. And it's very, very important, because another thing that you do is have a knife when your digging up Calamus Root. CALAMUS Root almost grows on top of the ground. You take the knife on each side and clear away Mother Earth, and then right on the knees, you take a knife and cut all them little roots. The reason why you do that, you're leaving the seeds like for next year, that way you don't kill the plant at all. You know, you take the root. Once you get that, well you naturally bring it home, you wash it and scrape the dirt. And then after you clean it, you break it off about two to three inches long. Your darn needle and string, and put in right through the centre of that medicine, and you hang it up to dry for the winter



months. And that Calamus Root is just like penicillin, it's good for any kind of sickness. And this is one thing (pause) Oh, they have so many roots that we hang. Just like a Bone Set, which is very, very important as far as our system is concerned. Bone Set will harden your bones in your body. And then, it's very, very good as for the cold. If you have a cold, the best thing you can have is Sarsaparilla. You put them together with the Calamus Root. And what Sarsaparilla does is the one that makes you sweat. You come to a sweat when you have a cold or flu, you take them together, then cover up. Just when you go to bed at night, so you will sweat it right up, and then the next day you feel good. Now, I was telling the doctor—and she was even saying, you know, you don't come and see me anymore. And I said, well, I'm a doctor too. And I said, ever since—well thinking back to what my grandmother taught me. And she was pretty happy. And she was saying, she said, you know, I know your medicine is powerful. It's a 100 percent pure. Their medicine, they dilute their medicine, so it's not pure. So you have to go back to them, it's the money that they're thinking about. But with us, you know, we never think about money. Anybody gives medicine to anybody, they give you tobacco, just in place for that medicine. Then baskets again, they're very important you know. That's how my father and mother put bread on the table. Take the winter months, there use to be a lot of farmers here, across the river. And by making baskets—at times, we didn't get no

money. But you've got to get food. That's what my father was even saying, he said, that's what you want, to put food on the table. And my brother and I use to go—and have a whole load of baskets, both of us—go across the river and go to farmers over there. They use to get a lot of pork, pig heads and they never charge you nothing. We use to get them and my mother liked them—made head-cheese. This was one thing that put food on the table. And years ago, they had no welfare here. No, whatever you put on the table, you had to earn yourself. Everyone learned to make baskets when we were young. I use to make bottoms, you know, just like handle baskets. I'd weave the bottom and just put it aside and somebody else would take it and shape it, weave it up. So it was important. And this is one thing that I'm thinking about. A lot of young people today, anybody that wants to learn to make a basket. Like summertime, the past few years, they use to gather over at Mactaquac Park. And then they use to have, like sometimes the whole day—some people camping over there. They come over here in the morning, then we show them how to make the basket and they make the basket themselves.

Alice: Oh really, are these white kids?

Charles: No, our children.

Alice: Our children?

Charles: And this is important, because we're just handing it down to our people.

Alice: We don't see too much of that anymore, do we?

Charles: Well, that's one thing I've been doing.

Alice: I mean up here, that's good. But in other places, other reserves.

Charles: No, not that many people now.

Alice: No.

Charles: There's only one or two in St. Mary's, that can really sit down and make a basket. Richard Polchies, he's about the only one.

Alice: I think Mike Sacobie too. I ran into him at the store the other night and he was making baskets in his basement.

Charles: Yeah, this is one thing, if we don't pass it on to ours.

Alice Paul; Yes, we'll lose it.

Charles: And it's important really. And then we use to go across the river to sell the baskets and we'd bring home—lots of times, Joe and I use to—all we could haul. Potatoes, and carrots, turnip and eggs, chicken, beets and pork. You name it, we had everything, what we trade for our baskets. And my uncle, well, every one of them on the reserve were making baskets then. You take like this time of the year, you know, and there again, you don't hear anybody pounding ash. It's really too bad, because we're losing that. Not only that, but as far as ash is concerned, there is so much acid rain and killing a lot of ash, right today. Not only ash, even maple. The farmer over across the river, every spring he use to make sap. And he gathers the sap to make candy or whatever, sugar or whatever he was making. And he was saying, it kind of hurt, because the trees look good, but they're drying up and they are dying and that's not good. And a lot of people have asked me what can you do to avoid that, I said, well. This was one thing some-

body asked me, they want to give the country back to me. And I said, I wouldn't want it now, because the white man has spoiled our country. And no way that you could bring it back. In order, the way, to bring it back by doing away with the factory. All that sort. Corruption going in the air. Just like the Saint John River, my grandfather had told me—I was just young—he said we use to go up river here, get water and make tea. And he was telling me, that you'll see the time that you will not be able to use the water, which is now. I wouldn't want to drink that water. All them towns up river, all them factories, all that soot going in the Saint John River. How can you purify that? By purifying that, you would have to eliminate all the sewers that flow in the Saint John River. What my grandfather had told me. And he said the same way with fish, salmon would be the same way. In just a few years, that salmon here, we won't be able to eat it from the corruption from the river. Hurting, well it would be hurting everybody. So, if we look at it all the corruption that the white person had done makes you wonder. Because about three years ago, Fredericton, they asked me if I could take part in purifying water in the Saint John River. And I said, I can't. I said, I can't do it. And they asked me, why? He said, the Native people should be involved in this. I said, Native people would look at you and think you are crazy, trying to purify the water. Look at all they would have to do, by eliminating sewer that's been dumped into the Saint John River. And how do you purify

the water? That's the reason why I wouldn't take part. They were put out. And I said, I'm put out too. And this is why I think I don't want no part, as far as I'm concerned. Look at our air, the air is the same way. And I was just thinking, all the capsules that they put in space. This is something I have been watching for (pause) since they started. Every time a capsule goes outer space—the ozone is open at the Arctic and Antarctic—and every time a capsule goes out look, how much pressure is put on earth? Sickness on this planet earth today. Cancer, there was hardly any known before they started doing that, and everybody has cancer. And the air that we are breathing, it's not good. And there again, as I look at it, and I said, ever since they put capsules in space, there's always corruption on this planet earth. Volcano eruption, earthquakes, severe thunder storms, tornadoes.

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

Alice: So, what did you do up here for entertainment and stuff like that, a long time ago?

Charles: What?

Alice: What did you do for recreation?

Charles: We had all kinds of recreation, like playing hockey, it was very strenuous and it was for fun. The way we played, was not how many goals that each side had, it's exercise we get from that. You never tried to out play anybody, it's a game. It was a game of fun. The same way with Jack Stones. You know, take summer-time, big stones, five stones. We would play and then what you do, you throw them up and start picking

them up, one by one. And when you are done, you start all over again. Hide and seek was another one. You had like a goal that you had to go to and the one that you caught last has to be there for a little while. Ready or not, I'm coming. It was all fun. Indian wrestling. Indian wrestling was just getting someone off balance. You put your hand out like this and you haul them towards you. Just as soon as you step out of line, then you win. Really you had to be quite clever, you had to be quick. Then they use to have little sticks. They use to cut sticks, that looked like a gun or a little rolling pin. Or then they use to hold them in their hand, like this [straight up]. And then just open them up on the table. And then we use to put like, single stick was just like one penny, then like a little gun would be like five. And then double gun, they use to call it, double gun, that could mark for ten, like ten points. Once you go all the way around and pick up all them sticks, it was a lot of fun. Then you had to use a splint, make a little hook, that's why all these sticks are like this. And just as soon as the pile moves, you had to stop and you do the same thing.

Alice: It's just like those sticks that they sell in the stores now, them pick up sticks.

Charles: Then after it's all finished, then you put out how many one's you have. And the one that has the most, well, was the winner. It was fun, really. Another thing was bones, that's they called it [Altetakon] They use to have a wooden dish, use to paint red on top and white on the

Plate 6.4: Jack Solomon, uncle of Charles Solomon, paddling a canoe (Canadian Museum of Civilization, 16448).



other. They use to put a blanket on the bench and then if it flips over then (pause) it's quite a game. There again, they used sticks and the one that has the most was the winner. They use to go along time. I could remember checkers, they make their own checkers. Little square ones, out of wood, they marked them. And they were all good carvers anyway. And all these were carved, little blocks were carved. One thing you want to see, carving. My uncle was one of them that has a paddle down

at the exhibit, down by the post office, upstairs. Carving on that paddle is something out of this world. It's there and these are the things that they use to do. I remember Dave, when he use to carve quite a bit. He use to make Indian heads, about that big. They use them for door stoppers. And he would have it so all the feathers and face (Pause) Veronica use to do all the painting. Dave would do the carving. Joe and I use to go get cedar for Dave, so he could be working. That put bread on

the table. See by working together. Now, different games again, just like tug-of-war. It was a lot of fun.

Alice: Did you have any dances?

Charles: My father was real good, and my uncle was another one that was. Jack Solomon would get the people together and dancing, Indian dancing. My father was a chanter, well, my uncle was a chanter too. It was really fun getting together in the evenings. And another thing that they use to do a lot was, when anybody was building a house, one didn't have to build a house by himself. All the men would get together and go and help. Everyone of them would go and help to build his house. Now the women all got together and cooked together, and they all eat together. Oh, it was really nice having people working together like that. Another thing that I could remember, we didn't have no running water. The women use to go

down by the brook. And they take the tub down there and build fire and they wash clothes. They'd be there all day. Everybody would go down there and take their clothes. And you just put your clothes on the bush or on a limb or wherever you can. And a line, a clothesline made, they string it out and they're there all day. Once the clothes are washed and dried, they fold them up and put them back in the pan that they took. By getting together like this, they use to take their food, so they could cook it right there and a (pause)

Alice: It's not like that today.

Charles: No, people not getting together. It's a darn shame, because to see that we can do and helping one another. This is one thing that we are lacking, if you don't have this [indicating money], nobody wants to look at you. It's a real, darn shame. You take the old people, they suffer a lot. Because you take young people, they

*Plate 6.5: Kingsclear, celebrating Corpus Christi day, ca. 1887 (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, P5-170).*



laugh at them, when they see them trying to bring in some groceries from the store, going into the house. You know, instead of them going over there and picking up that package. I can remember when I was living in Old Town, they were always helping the old people. When you see someone driving in or sometimes they come in a taxi, they have about ten to twelve bags. My grandson would go and help, you tell him, you go right inside and I'll bring these in for you. These are the things that the young people are not doing today. You know, we're not getting together enough. It's a darn shame really. Because as I see it, you take an old person, even just to help him across the street, across the road, it means a lot, means a lot. Even right now, with me, anybody want to give me a hand walking down an icy road, gee, I'm

glad. If you fall, you could break a hip. It could happen so easy. And the young people, I don't know what they're thinking about. Thinking about all right, wherever they can get liquor and smoking up. These are the things. And we are still trying to reach our young people, as far as that is concerned. You tell a person that it's going to hurt, they still do it. The doctor tells you that if you drink more, that you are going to die, they don't listen. Like my niece now, I told her three years ago, and I said, you know what's going to happen, your going to kill yourself by drinking. That's just what's happening now. She's in Saint John, burned herself out. You know, it's alcohol, it's not good. It's a darn shame really, because I don't know, a lot of us can't seem to wake up.  
Alice: I don't know. I have children, I

Plate 6.6: Kingsclear First Nation on Corpus Christi day, ca. 1887 (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, P5-379).



have three of them, and they drink and drug. You can't tell them anything, they have all the answers.

How was it for you? I know I drank for about seven years, somebody came along and helped me.

Charles: Well, with me. I have thirty-six years [sobriety].

Alice: I'm going on twenty-four years [sobriety].

Charles: There are the things that was important. I just had to go to one meeting and I could see how it was going to help me. Maynard is my sponsor and he—I use to pick him up when I was down Connecticut. He was so low.

Alice: Maynard from, Houlton.

Charles: No, from Tobique. Boy, and now ever since he went into AA, he helped a lot of people. He helped my brother, him and Dave worked together in Niagara Falls, New York. Maynard kept after him, kept after him. And what happened there was (pause) Dave even on the job, you know. Even get a taxi and bring him home a fifth of whiskey. And on the weekend, when he was coming home, he bought two fifths of whiskey. He finished one and he was starting on the second one, before he got to the Merritt Parkway. And he was going to pass this car and then this other car passed one that was in front of him. He had to take the centre strip. And he was saying, if there was any trees there, then I could have killed myself. So, just when he pulled over, saw a place where he could stop. He went by this abutment thing and smashed his bottle. He said, I almost had to kill myself before I woke up. It's just

something I see, a lot of people don't see, until one step to your grave. This is one thing that—so it's really funny too—I could remember my grandparents. My parents, my uncle, none of them use to have dances, you know.

And you take it on the feast day, Corpus Christi, there would be so many people here. There use to be tents where we lived, you know, setting up tents. And at that time you know, really, the worshipping was a lot different than today. This is where you're not seeing Corpus Christi and now St. Anne's Day. It's not the way we use to celebrate St. Anne's Day. Well, it's still going on, but not the way we use to celebrate St. Anne's Day. We would celebrate right from the highway and go all the way down. We'd sing and pray, you say the Rosary.

Alice: So, when did all of that change?

Charles: I don't know who. Father Coghlan was about the last one that was here.

Alice: Father Hogan?

Charles: Coghlan. That was quite a few years back, I was quite old then. So these are the things that are passing us, you know, make you wonder. So the young people, I don't know. There's something about that, that I know is getting away from church. And it makes you wonder really, there's going to be the time and the time isn't too far away either. Look at when they see the Blessed Mother in Halifax and she was weeping, crying. Just like I was telling Natalie, just this past Sunday. I seen our Lord, you know, I seen our Lord appear in the fire, when the fire was burning. And this is giving us a sign and this is one

thing, I have a gift of vision. And this is one thing that I've been trying to tell the people, the vision that I see. This is one thing that's important. Well, some of our young people may listen.

Alice: There's a lot of destruction, corruption and all that stuff going on.

Charles: This is why I say there's so many things going on. Alice: It's not for the good either. Charles: No, it's not. You wonder what's going to become of us, because the signs that we are getting. And just like when I was living in Old Town, we use to say the rosary every night. In the summertime there was about eighteen of us saying the rosary. We were in a big circle, like this. We had the Blessed Mother, a statue that I have, in there and had a little small rosary that they had in the hand. We were busy talking and when I looked, I seen the little rosary swaying back and forth, you know. And I said, I get the message, the Blessed Mother wants us to pray. And that's when Ernestine was saying, I wonder if our prayers are being answered. And I said, yeah. You can't prove it by me. Just where she was sitting, sitting right across from me, and the Blessed Mother appeared. And she was holding the rosary and she was smiling. And after we said the rosary and I shared with everyone then. I tell them I got the message, that's when we started. And this is one thing, our prayers are being answered. There again, she was wondering if our Lord was on earth, and I told her, yeah.

Alice: People question that. Well, we can't see him, where is he?

Charles: Like tonight, would be like New Years Eve. Gerri and I went to the store and bought a lot of groceries and the store was going to close about nine or nine-thirty. After we got all the groceries and we came home. Gerri said we forgot the most important thing, forgot the bread. So I hurried up and went back to the store. Theresa or Chugger always chased me, but they didn't. I got to catch that store before it closed. You know, there was a piece of meat that I didn't pay for when we came through. And I took the label off and I took it back and I bought the bread. I told this young man, I said, I just went through here about fifteen minutes ago and I didn't pay for this. He said, you're very honest, very few people would do that. So, after I paid for the bread and I paid for that meat, I just drove out on Stillwater Avenue. Right on the corner there was this man standing, he looked cold, there was snow on the ground. I stopped, just as soon as he stepped in the car, my dome light wouldn't come on. And I never thought about nothing, I'm thinking that it might have been frozen. After he got in he said, I've been waiting for you for a long time. I didn't know how to take it. And just as soon as he stepped in and closed the door, that's what he told me. He said, I've been waiting for a long time and he said that he was cold. I figured when I got to Old Town, I would buy him some coffee. I never went no more than two hundred feet and he said, this is as far as I go. It struck me funny again, you know, if he was cold he could walk that distance. And just when he was



going to leave, I put my hand out and I said, Happy New Year to you. He said, God Bless You. Oh, the shock went right in my hand. It's as if I wasn't touching nothing. So, when he stepped out, my light didn't come on again, he closed the door and when I looked he was gone. Now I was telling them, Our Lord is on Earth. After I got home Gerri said, what happen, what happened. My eyes were just dancing. She thought I hit somebody or somebody hit me, and I told her what had happened. I know that's our Lord. I told the priest, and the priest told me, don't hold that, give it to the people. He said a lot of people are not going to believe, but it's worth while sharing. And it felt so good. And after that, quite a few times, I have encountered the Lord. Another time Alberta and I—they had a mission down around Waterville. And I had no money and I wanted to go down there. So after mass, eight o'clock mass in the morning, I went in the other part. There was the front part of the house. And a knock came on the door and one of our men that play guitar, he came to the door. And said, how would you like to go to a meeting in Waterville? He said, I'll share gas with you, that's all I wanted you know. I said, well. Gerri said she didn't feel too good, she said, you'll be going coming alone. I said, I never travel alone, I always pray. And this man said, my wife is going to take a couple of girls down to Augusta. Be down at four o'clock when the mass is over. And that's when we went. And I said, that's great. And when Gerri said that I'd be coming alone, so I went

and asked Alberta. Alberta, that's what she was praying for. She was wishing that she have a chance to go down. I said, I'll be right back. I went after our buddy there, so she got ready, so then we went. That afternoon after mass, we started out down there. Well, at Communion time we sang 'I am the Bread of Life', everybody sings. Coming back, there was all these cars ahead of us. We were about Pittsfield, when I looked, I saw this man walking. He was hitchhiking and he was just looking where he was going and just pointing up like this. And I told Alberta, I'm going to give him a ride. He didn't see nobody, so when we got right to where he was at, I stopped. He said, I came from the sky, came from the sky. And the way she saw him was a little differently than me. She told me that he had like a brief case, that he had, it was like a little tool box. And when I stopped, he look tired. And he asked us if we were going to Bangor, he wanted to go as far as Bangor. Yeah, so he got in and he looked pretty tired. I had my Bible on the dash, that's when he stepped in and his eyes pierced right on that. And we started out and I was asking him where he wanted to go. He wanted to go to the YMCA or the Salvation Army. And I asked Alberta, I said we are going right through there, well before we got there, we were talking Maliseet. He opened his eyes, listening, he looked kind or pale. He was just looking and listening, you know. And Alberta said, you know the one that we have here is somebody special. And she could smell roses.

Alice: Oh, really.

Charles: When our Lord is handy, you can smell roses or incense. And then I started singing that, 'I am Bread of Life'. He opened his eyes and was smiling. And I asked Alberta just where the Salvation Army was. And that's what she told him, anybody that's travelling, the Salvation Army always takes in people that are travelling, that don't have hardly any money. His clothes were like burlap bags. Those are the kind of clothes that he had on and he had a beard, you know.

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE TWO  
TAPE TWO SIDE ONE

Charles: Just before we got to Bangor, on the other end, I was asking her where the Salvation Army was. She said Exit 48 Broadway. It was just a little ways, where that Salvation Army is. When we got there and when we stopped, I shook hands with him again. I noticed that he had gloves, homemade ones, you know. And it's what he said again, God Bless You, and I got a shock again. He never shook hands with Alberta at all, just me. And then when he got out, Alberta even swung around and he was gone. Disappeared right there. So, these are the things that's important, because telling the people you know, that our Lord is here on Earth. And it means so much to a lot of us. It means much to me, because I'd like to see our young people come back. You go to a church and what do you see? Nothing but old people. What's going to happen in years to come? Another thing in our beliefs, I had a chance to talk to all the different denominations that came from

overseas there. Monsignor from the Vatican, and the Bishop from England, and there was quite a few. So I had a chance to tell them about our people. Then one thing that they asked me was, what kind of religion did the Indians have before Jesuit Priest came? And I said, they had a very strong religion. Their belief was talking to a tree. You take a man that he figured that he committed sin. And he goes in the woods all by himself and walk up to a birch tree, white birch. Take his knife out and cut a slit in the bark and open it up and talk to that tree. Just like going to a confession to a priest. And after he gets all done, he folds it back and he feels good after. So, that's the reason why I say our Religion is so strong, we use Mother Nature, that's helping us. Lots of times, we go by the brook. It's not to pray, you do meditating, thinking about our Great Spirit, which means a lot, really. That Monsignor from the Vatican was even saying, that's really great, you know. This is something to look at. Something that the Indians believe and it's so powerful. And these are the things that I was even telling them. We talked to the Great Spirit, very first thing in the morning when you wake up. We thank the Great Spirit that we're able to open our eyes, move our hands, that we are able to speak to our brothers and sisters. And we talk to Mother Earth, just like it means so much for all of us. Mother Earth is where everything comes from, even the animals, what we eat. We thank the Great Spirit for that, when we kill a deer. That's why I was saying, a while ago, to have tobacco.

You put back to Mother Earth, because you're giving thanks for receiving that food. That Jesuit Priest was even saying—well, that Monsignor was saying—that's really something to think about, what's so powerful. Like the trees, we look at the trees, they don't mean nothing to us. With an Indian, it means everything. I was even telling them too. And I said, you take like a lumber company, that comes in now and cuts all the trees. They don't stop and realize what they are doing to us. A good size tree produces enough oxygen for four people. And I said, if you cut all the trees down, where would we get our oxygen? And look at that way the air is now. That purifies us, you know. Then I was even telling them, when we speak of being purified, we use sweetgrass, tobacco, cedar and sage. This is something that comes from Mother Earth. Those are the things that we use when we open our programs. We smudge ourselves and this is one thing that's so powerful that it helps us. But every meeting that we do go, there is always somebody doing the smudging. Which they should really, because it means so much to us.

Alice: But they don't do that, like when you go outside to meetings that don't smudge.

Charles: No.

Alice: Not any meeting that I've gone to anyway.

Charles: Imelda and I went out 'west' and we were the guest of honour out there. That was last year. There were story tellers from across Canada. Well, when we opened the meeting we done our smudging that's the first

thing we done. And I said it in Maliseet and Imelda was praying in English. They were so pleased at that when we were all done. They were even saying that this was the first meeting that they ever went to, that opened with a prayer. So great, you know, and it's so meaningful. This was where Imelda could explain about the meaning of the smudging. And we thank the Great Spirit, that we are getting together with our brothers and sisters and they were all in a circle. This circle again is unity, being close together with your brothers and sisters. And there again, it kind of opened their eyes. They were even saying that the first meeting that they ever went to, it was so meaningful. But all the meetings they do go to, they just have meetings.

Well, this is how I found it too.

Alice: Well, this is how I found it too, I went out to Calgary last year in May, for Intervention, Crisis Intervention. And the Indian people, I didn't see no smudging. And they were coming from all over Canada, pretty well. I think I only seen it the one time and that was when they were having the closing. They had Elders there saying the prayer, but I didn't see any smudging.

Charles: There again, it's so meaningful for us. That's the reason why a lot of meetings are not successful, because they don't have that. They're not working out as far as the plans are concerned. And this is something that really is with us, it means so much, and you feel so good too.

Alice: Well, when I was done on site, down Jemseg a couple of weeks ago, Karen did smudging. She came

- around to everybody, and it felt good doing that.
- Charles: Last fall, when I went down there, that's what I done. We were able to give thanks. And that's the reason why I ask if they find any bones, that the digging should cease.
- Alice: I started there about a month ago and they told me the same thing, that if they found human bones, everything would stop.
- Charles: Well, this is it. The Indians use to be right close to the main river. It's not where they're digging and that's the reason why I say—well, just like Meductic and our people are all under water, and that's not good. That's the reason why my father was even saying—just like *Koluskap* (Glooscap) has snowshoes. And he was even saying that when anybody tampers with his snowshoes, they were going to have bad luck.
- That's what's been happening every year, ever since they built the dam. Look at all the destruction, in Woodstock and Hartland and them places.
- Alice: There was never any flooding before the dam?
- Charles: No, and these are the things that my father was even saying, even the 'little men' that use to live in *kiwolatomuhsisihkuk* (where little people live). That's a name of a brook, that's above *Elmucktahqek* [Mactaquac] and that's where they use to live. They flooded that. Well naturally, it's bringing them bad luck. There again, them little men use to be there. The reason why they were there is there's a lot of clay there. And this is something that they use to make all different things, tables, little chairs, little wheelbarrows. My father had some of them tables and chairs little wheelbarrows. Duplisea was always buying antiques and he was the one that bought all them. My father just let them go.
- Alice: So, what's the story behind the 'little men'?
- Charles: Well, 'little men'... just like my father, my father kept one for a while, stayed with my father.
- Alice: Did he give him good luck? Did he watch over him?
- Charles: Oh yeah, oh yeah. He was busy. But he wouldn't talk, not with my father. They talked in their own language, they just chirped.
- Alice: Is it true that they look after Indian people?
- Charles: Yeah. And what they use to do, they use to go across the river and they could hear them singing, a happy song. Be like a wedding, or a child being born. But when it was sad, that meant somebody was going to die. And another thing, take years ago, what they used to see a lot was *wesqotewik* (ball of fire). They use to come opposite here and then it would burst. They'd know very well that someone from down river was going to die. It's how they use to get their messages. And from up river, well, either Tobique or Woodstock, next day they'd hear somebody had passed away. You haven't seen them for quite a while.
- Alice: What about Pokiok?
- Charles: Pokiok, Nackawic.
- Alice: Okay, Nackawic.
- Charles: That's where that mill is. And that point there, they use to gather too. My father use to call that *Nelkwawekek*, that's Nackawic, just

like your arm pit. Pokiok, they used that a lot, they use to get a lot of fish there. And then going out in the woods, that's where they use to hunt. And that seems to be the place where the moose would come. And I could remember my uncle, when he use to take guides and guiding them out there. And he was telling this warden, he said, 'I'll take this with me'. The moose horn. He said, 'I'll call the moose right to you.' And he didn't believe him, he just laughed at him. My uncle had a rifle and this sportsman had a rifle. He asked him to come up where he was, on a rock. 'Oh, I'll be all right.' Then the moose came over, because my uncle made a call. And he could hear the moose that was coming. When he came out in the clearing, his ears were straight up like this and hair standing right up on his back. And it came right directly towards them. And my uncle—lucky he had a rifle—when he shot the moose, it couldn't have been any farther from here to the floor [which wasn't very far]. When the moose fell, that man standing below, was just shaking, he couldn't bring his rifle up. That's where they use to go a lot. Wherever you make a call, even if you are on the water, on a lake, they'll go right out. And that's what they use to use, like hatchets, killing a moose. Hit him over the head with a hatchet. And bow and arrow is one thing they use to have. And these are the things that are important, because once you get them in the water, well, the moose can't get away. They go right directly where they're called. And this is one thing. Well, a couple of years ago,

Brian and I went out there and it was early in the morning. I told them, I'll take this with me and call a moose. One call and the moose came right out. Brian shot it, just like that.

Alice: What about birch bark canoes?

Charles: Birch bark canoes. I can remember my father, he had two canoes, and they could really hold. And this is where you have to be good or you wouldn't have a birch bark canoe. Just like a feather really, it goes right on top the water. And the way it was made, well, cedar and they use ash for gunwhales. And they use to use splints to bind it and it was all bark. And then they use to get pitch from spruce, spruce gum, they patch the seams. So this is where it's very, very important, as far as canoes are concerned. They use canoes wherever they travel. Funny too, when they go from one place to another, they don't take hardly anything, just a frying pan. When night comes, you just make a lean-to, just crawl right in. They have a spear and they get their fish. You wonder, really, because the things was plentiful. The food was plentiful. There was a lot of fish, there was a lot of game. Take in the fall of the year, when they go after deer. Sometimes they wait for a lot of snow and there's always two hunters that always go together.

Alice: Ronnie Paul was telling me when they chase moose or deer, either one, that it would go in the snow sometimes. It would not move too fast and the hide would come up on the legs of the deer.

Charles: Oh yeah, this is where lots of times—well, snowshoes was another

Plate 6.7: Snow shoes (photo by Viktoria Kramer)



thing that was important to us. Snowshoes, I have a pair of snowshoes that were made in 1828. They were made right here.

Alice: Who made them?

Charles: My great grandmother's husband, Andrew Paul. And how I got them, Ruth Mills, they use to live up here. And I remember she was living down Island View. And she was even saying that—well, she asked me if I could make a belt for her grandson, a motorcycle belt. And I made it nice and wide, made it fancy, had a lot of brass. After I finished it and I took it down. She said I haven't got any money, but I have something that's important to you. And she starts telling me the story about these snowshoes. And they were handed down to them too. When I received them—oh, nice

looking shoes and they were made pretty fancy, pretty fine. And they were women's snowshoes. The women, they used yarn to weave the lacing, so that made them different from the men. Men's snowshoes, they have lacing that are quite wide, because the men are heavier. But the ladies snowshoes are woven pretty fine and the woman is light. So that's the difference between the men and the women's snowshoes. And when I received them, I had two pair, I had men's too. But a rat must have got in, I have quite a hole in one. I didn't try to repair nothing, I just left it as it is. But I take these with me all the time, I go to a lot of schools.

Alice: Yes, for show and tell?

Charles: Just to explain what our people use in the winter time, when they go after game for their food.

Alice: They also made sleds.

Charles: Oh yeah, there again, our people walked, they were good walkers. I could remember going with my father. Take winter time, right to the woods, to go to Fredericton. Then when you came back, there use to be a lot of teams that use to haul wood, a lot of groceries, a lot of potatoes, wood. What they carry and sell downtown. So, when they came back, their sleds are empty. We'd jump on, and we'd come up with them. Then they had a train, they had a train at that time. There use to be a lot of people traveling by train then. There was no roads. Even this road here. I could remember when we had gravel road. And it was just like a snake, the road was so crooked down here. And just to think of it, there use to be... Well, my father had a horse later on, was able to take the horse and go downtown and they got some groceries, it would take all day really. Going in, you have some baskets that you sell at the market. Well, you trade for food with the farmer, and that made it pretty handy. The road was rough. In the spring of the year, the road was so soft and it was so muddy. Even them hubs on the wheel, they're quite high. They drag on some places, you know, where the mud was soaked. Just to think of it, you skate right to Fredericton and that was a lot of fun. You can see everybody down here. I can remember my father having them long, reachers they call them, they are about this long [indicating about one foot]. The top piece was wood and they had one screw on the back. This is the one

that you screw in your boot, just strap the front. Once you get downtown, you just unhook it. Whoever does it was tubular skates. There again, it's not tubular, some of them, it was just an open skate and you use screws to screw on the boots. And these are the kind of skates we use to have.

Alice: Would anyone have a picture of them?

Charles: Oh dear, I don't think so. It's really too bad. And I had it, wasn't too long ago that I had them the old fashion skates [indicating how they were worn]. They even had a little wrench, they hook right on your boots, inside your boot. I got a pair of them reachers and old fashion ones, I still have them. And this is one thing that somebody should take a picture of, and it would be important now.

Alice: Maybe I could mention it to Karen. And we have a photographer too, that will come and take pictures of what you have.

Charles: Yes, I have snowshoes, moose horn and baskets. I got old baskets that we made quite a while ago.

Alice: So, that would be okay with you?

Charles: Yes, and these are things that we kept (pause) And to see these things now, you know. Just like my sister, my sister she made a lot of baskets. And I don't have too many, I just have about two to three baskets that she made. But Bob Atwin has all kinds of baskets that Veronica made. Bob has all kinds of baskets.

Alice: Probably have to check with him too. We don't see these things hardly any more.

Charles: No.

Alice: I have one basket at home that

George Nash made one time. Well, Joey is twenty-four going on twenty-five, so, I've had that basket that long. There is even colour on it and I still have it.

Charles: I have a basket that Noel Francis made. That's old, round. I even repaired some of it. I have it down the shop [behind his home]. I'm keeping it, it's a memory.

Alice: Somebody wanted my basket. And I loaned it out to my sister one time, when she had her baby. Because I used it myself, for my three kids when they were babies. So when I got it back, it was damaged a little bit. And I said no one is ever going to get it again, and nobody has. So I just use it for clothes.

Charles: The same way, I made one down Old Town. I made a clothes basket or baby basket, with a hood on it.

Alice: Oh really, I've seen them.

Charles: I put rockers on that. And that man, offered him five hundred dollars. And he wouldn't take it. He said, no way.

Alice: Evangeline use to make them little ones. I remember her making them little cradles. It had the hood on it and the rockers on the bottom. She made pretty baskets for dolls, they were beautiful.

Charles: I made one basket for a girl down here. I even put a hood on it. But I should make one (pause)

Alice: You should have one for yourself.

Charles: Yes.

END OF TAPE TWO SIDE ONE  
TAPE TWO SIDE TWO

Charles: My mother and father was a good story teller. All different places. Just like he use to talk about, quite a bit of Springhill. They use to live in Meductic, then from there, they went to *Eqpahak*. Is what they called it, that's that Springhill. So that's where they use to live there. They moved up to here. I don't know, I may have writing, what Veronica wrote since this reserve started.

Alice: When did this start, this reserve?

Charles: Well, this is one thing that I'm—must been about 1611.

Alice: Really?

Charles: Yes, because I could remember Jesuit Priests, when they talked about Jesuit Priests. Father Baird, I think was the one that use to stay with Indians. And they wanted to find out just how they lived. Wintertime, that's how they were able to (pause) They had to live with the Indians in order to survive the winter months. What they do—and this is one thing that was important, because Indians always know just what to look out for. I had to laugh when I was down Willimantic [Connecticut]. When Billy and Butch was in the scouts. Tony, that's my brother-in-law, and him and boy. And there was five of them Indian boys, that were in the scouting. And this doctor that was living right there, he always tried to out guess me, as scouting was concerned. I was even telling him, I've got more that you'll ever know. And I told him that scouting came from us. I said, how can you tell me anything (pause) you know. And I said, Powell was the one that wrote about scouting. He was smart enough when he stayed with the Indians. And they went back to England and was able to write about the scouting, about how everything came from us. That's



how we lived and he wrote it all down and passed it on to the scouts. Everything that they are doing, right this very day, you know. And different ways that I made him look, as if he didn't know nothing. First of all, we had to help the boys make their own sled. There was five of them, they had to stay out in the coldest part of the winter. That was in Quebec, I mean Connecticut and it snowed. Now, I was telling the boys, when you set up a tent. And I said, be sure and bank snow right around the tent, so the wind will not get under. And I said, you'll be nice and warm, they had sleeping bags. And another thing I said, be sure and gather your wood and put it inside. And I said, generally during the night, sometimes we get snow. And your wood is going to be all wet. You'll have a hard time building a fire in the morning. I said, another thing is birch bark, get a lot of birch bark and dry twigs, like fir and spruce. I said, these are nice and dry and these are the ones that you can start fire with. Once you are able to do that, then you cut up your wood and then you're all set. So, this doctor (pause) we had to help make their own sleds and our sled didn't break, but the other did. And that doctor even said, just because you're father is a carpenter, you know, he knows all about, as far as sleds are concerned. Another thing was when they had a movie on, as far as safety was concerned. And there again, I got a head of them, as far as safety is concerned. They showed a movie, so this man, a warden, coming in the shore. And what he do, he put his

paddle right inside his canoe and start walking to shore. Right at the end of the film they asked a question about it after. Did you see anything that was unsafe, what this man had done? Nobody didn't see nothing, everything was perfect. I put my hand up and I told them I saw something that wasn't safe. Then they asked me what was it. And I said, you would have noticed, when he was coming in to shore, that he put his paddle inside his canoe. And I said, with us, we have our paddle to guide us to walk to shore, so as to not fall into the water. So they turned the film back. No, there was about four hundred scouts and none of them could see this, you know. And when they turned it back, they saw this man coming in, the warden, and that's what he done put the paddle inside the canoe. This is one thing that they didn't see it. And another leader there, he said, well, it takes an Indian to know, to see all the mistakes, as far as the canoe is concerned.

Alice: Did they ever ask you who taught you all this stuff?

Charles: Yes. Well, they asked me and I said my father and grandfather, my father and my grandfather was always telling us different things.

Alice: From generation to generation?

Charles: Well, yes. We were living in the woods, you know. And even when they made their homes out of logs, there again, just like a log cabin.

What they use to use in between. But they had nothing, you know, to work with. But they had a lot of natural, like moss. What they use to use to chink between poles. With that, the

wind will not blow in. So these are the things that was important. Then they lived right on the Mother Earth. They made beds, everything, on the Mother Earth. That's for as the first house that you made, made out of bark, wigwam. There again, was on Mother Earth. But in the centre part of that, they dug up Mother Earth. Then they put stones on the bottom, put stones all the way around. That's where they build their fire. And this is why they always have an opening on the very top, so smoke will escape, but the heat will still stay.

Alice: Is there an Indian word for ceiling?

Charles: *Ewepikan* (ceiling), that's all you can call it.

Alice: What about floor?

Charles: *Pemsokhasik* (floor), that's it, yes. So these are the things that was important, because right on the Mother Earth. When they made their bed, they get long poles and then they made bunk bed. Enough for two people, as wide as this [about size of the table]. The reason why they have two, because their bodies are nice and warm, to keep warm from one another. And then, take years ago, when they had no blankets. But they had a lot of buckskin and moosehide and deerhide, you know. And they tanned them. When they tanned them, just like a cloth, after they get all done with them. Then by putting one on the bottom (pause) Then another thing, when they get their own poles, they get cedar, they fill all them poles with cedar and just like a mattress. Then they put hide on the bottom, then just cover over. Then they always had a fire going inside.

Even when the fire burns down, the stones that you put around that fire place is still hot. But there's always somebody that would wake up and put some more wood in the fire.

Alice: So it never burns out?

Charles: No. This is one thing that they always had there, fire. And then they were asking me about that fire, as far as that's concerned. And I said, well, with an Indian when they build a fire, it's just a small fire. And I said, you can step right over your fire and you can warm yourself all over. And I said, white man's fire is big as this [huge]. You have to stand way back and freeze your back and you're cooking in the front. So, they got a big kick out of that, you know. So these are the things that our people used a lot, was nature you know.

Everything is looked at.

Alice: Did they ever make a fire like this [with sticks], without a match?

Charles: Yes. We made one, we had to give fire to the scouts. We got a pole, a long pole. And then everyone of them had a rope on there. Then some of them would go around them [around the pole], like this. Then we have it like a hexagon and come to a point and put it on another cedar. And on that cedar, you put your bark and twigs. By working the friction from that, you start a fire. What I'm going to do is, I'm going to be making one and use like a bow and do the same thing. I'll make one, so I'll have it to show. This is something that somebody wanted, just wanted to know if we could start a fire.

Alice: Well, by watching TV, I guess you see the stick and the scouts trying to start a fire.

Charles: Yes. What they have, what you have to do, you have to have a piece and put a hole then. This one here, have your cedar here, you take the centre out. Then you take a bowl, wrap it around the piece that's standing up. And you have this one on the very top, you just make a shoulder. See, when you start using, it's just like a bow, one they use for shooting. You have a string and wrap it around this. Put it over on this side and you work that, then you're fire will start. I'll make one so I'll be able to show some people this summer. It's nice to know.

Alice: Yes, I've often wondered.

Charles: Yes, this is one thing that they use to use. And then once they got the fire going, they kept it going. Then as far as flint was concerned, there again, they use to go to Moosehead Lake, Rockwood, Mount Kineo. That's where they use to get their flint, from there to bring here.

Alice: So how far, where is that?

Charles: Well, you know, Greenville, over Maine. Moosehead Lake, that's where Gerri use to live. There again, there is rocks that they used. I have some rock that came from there. We went and gave a talk there three years ago. And even Gerri's brother, was still alive, Noel. And he was the one that, he could really play, violin, mouth organ, and he was old. We went up, quite a ways up. But we didn't go all the way up to the top, just as far as the trucks could go. And we gave a talk there [Mount Kineo]. Put on a dance, quite a few of us went there. So it was really nice to be able to take part in that. Even this, a woman asked, what do you know

about this place? You know. And just because they have it in writing, all about Kineo and they know the history, and that's what they're wondering about. But Noel, he was brought up right there and he done guiding. And his father was the one that was the main guide on that lake. So this all fitted in, like a book, and he spoke about when he use to guide. He was only just a young fellow, twelve or fourteen years old, he started guiding. Well, it was handed down.

Alice: Yes.

Charles: That's the reason why we hand it down, everything we know, to our children. And that woman she was surprised, because they know I came from Canada. You know, what does he know about this place? This is where I listened to Gerri's mother, she was brought up, up there too. She use to tell us all about Moosehead Lake. She use to fish, they use to fish everyday, Gerri's mother and father. That's what they lived on, fish. That's the reason why I say these are the things that we do, as far as Indians are concerned, they are never stuck. You tell all the white people all of that, they think you're talking through your hat, but it's all facts. I had to laugh when I was working on the railroad. This young man goes to the University of Maine, then he was asking all kinds of questions. And I told him, and I was even telling him, if they put us in the woods. And I said, you would starve, because you haven't got your book. And I said, you put me out there and I could make a living and I could make my home. I said, I was brought

up and I was taught the hard way. These are the things we have to do. And that fellow's eyes were that big, he didn't know what to think. He said, you know, that is true. What my grandparents had told me (pause) My grandmother, she was another one. My mother, she worked hard. And everyone of us. Well you take a large family, they helped one another. Our family was so close together. You're older brothers and sisters helped the younger ones.

Alice: It isn't like that today.

Charles: Well, this is where, when you don't have money. Money, money, money, it's all that people think about. Our family is pretty close.

Alice: When you try to help someone out, don't expect anything in return.

Charles: Well, this is it. My mother always helped anyone that was travelling. And she was even saying, she said, you don't know when your going to feed our Lord. And that's just what happened, when the railroad was down the hill. And there was an old man who came to the house, he even had a staff [cane]. A knock came on the door and one of my sisters, Mary Madeline went to the door and opened the door. She told my mother there was a man out here and he wants something to eat. Come in. So when he came in, my mother said, we ain't got too much. We always had tea on the stove. We always had homemade bread and my mother always had a lot of preserves. And that man said, oh, that's great. Butter, homemade bread. And after he got all done, he told my mother, he said, you'll never go hungry. And there was twelve of us in our family.

Then one day she looked—we didn't have a refrigerator—and she looked in the cupboard, there was nothing. My father went out in the woods, going after wood, when he came back around dinner time. And my mother happened to look in the cupboard, that was before dinner, found a roast, this big. And she was wondering where it came from. She fixed it up, put it in the oven with potatoes, carrots, whatever. After it got all done my father came, came for dinner. And he always blessed himself, you know, and says pray. And he said, where did you get the meat? My mother said, I though you got it. No. And you know, my mother thought about that man that told her that you'll never be hungry. Great big roast. And there again, from there, my father was making all kinds of baskets. And he was able to go sell the baskets, bring a lot of food. Take years ago, everything was so scarce, food, you know. And everything that you do was so important. Just like Joe and I. I could remember we were working for a farmer across the river, we only got a twenty-five cents a day. That's right from morning to late at night. That was haying time. They gave us food and my father was so happy, because we are able to put food on the table. And that's why he was saying, he said, we don't have no money, our Lord looked after us. And he was a good Catholic. And this was one thing, he was strict, as far as our religion was concerned.

Alice: Was everybody Catholic, all the Indians?

Charles: Yes.

Alice: Some of them turn their religion?

Charles: I don't know, I don't know what happened, this is where I am puzzled. I was just thinking about Nelson, when he was living up here. And that's where them Bahi'i, they use to come here and they tried everything to try to get our people to join them. So Nelson was just about ready to turn, but he came here and talked to us, Gerri and I. Gerri told him, how can you do good with another religion, when you can't on your own. And Nelson, and I was telling him, you'll see a sign. Two days later, he was sitting reading a Bible. And there was a serpent that came, it was ugly. Its head was big, like a pig's nose and he had wings like a bat. His tongue was like this, and he just had three fingers on each hand. His finger nails, it was licking them, they were all bloody. You know that kind of scared him. Then after that, he went back to church. Everything was all there, just to give you a sign. It makes you stop and

think, because as far as our religion is concerned, it's so powerful. Lots of times we say a prayer and our Lord don't hear us.

Alice: But that's not so.

Charles: Lot's of time our Lord gives you time.

Alice: We just can't have anything just like that, just because we ask.

Charles: Well, this is it.

Alice: It happens later, not instantly. I can't see anything like that happening.

Charles: Well, there again, when I was working on the railroad. I came out of service, in the army. About twenty years and I was working on the railroad then. And I lost my balance, on account of my ear. I'm totally deaf in my right ear. It never bothered me until about twenty years, after I was working, my feet wouldn't hold me up.

[Not enough tape to complete the story].

## 7. Big catch

ROSE ATWIN  
PILICK/KINGSCLEAR FIRST NATION

*When they got big game or big catch, they celebrated. Like the time they first started catching salmon, that spring. You talk about people coming.*

*When my grandfather moved from Quebec, all his family were on dog sleds. And his mother had a baby along the way and he even had to help deliver that baby. They say he even got under the blankets and helped my grandmother. They travelled from Quebec all the way on foot. And when they got here some stayed and some went on. Every now and then they would run into each other. They were living all over the place.*

Alice: Are you originally from Kingsclear?

Rose: I was born and brought up in Oromocto.

Alice: Do you know anything about Jemseg?

Rose: Yes.

Alice: Could you tell me a little about Jemseg?

Rose: There was a lot of people camping along the rivers from here to Saint John and all the way to Blissfield, Chipman, Jemseg, Grand Lake. I remember a lot of them camping on the shores.

Alice: Do you know some of the Indian names to some of these places? Is there an Indian Point?

Rose: They have some places, but I don't know.

Alice: Brown's Flat?

Rose: *Pemotonek* (side of a hill). That's

the name they gave it, that's a side of a hill.

Alice: What did they do there?

Rose: That's where Indians use to live, up there.

Alice: Where is that at?

Rose: *Pemotonek*, that's on this side of Saint John. Another place would be Quispamsis. Indians use to go there too, a long time ago. My grandfather use to tell us that, that's where a lot of his people were, and they went as far as Saint John.

Alice: Who is your grandfather?

Rose: Solomon Paul.

Alice: Was he from Oromocto also?

Rose: No, he was from here. Actually, he was farther up river, he was from Quebec. My grandfather's mother was an Indian woman and his father was half French. So where they come from in Quebec—even Paul use to

tell my mother, don't ever ask me to go and look for our roots. He said, we could be off of the reserve in no time.

Alice: Do you know anything about the Jemseg area? Was it just a place where Indians just went and did their basket making?

Rose: Oh yes, there use to be a lot of Indians down there. There use to be people from Gagetown, just to see the Indians working around them places, all the way down along the shores. That's where they camped all the time. I remember when we were in Sheffield, right before that Wasson's store use to be. My father use to work there and my uncle Suwahsin. They use to hay, make hoops and baskets. I remember Molly Louise, my little sister, she was a little older than I am. They were working and we wandered off. There was something like quick sand, but there was sawdust. Just like, well, it was like rubber. And my father said, get away from there, you're going to sink or fall in there [said in Maliseet]. Louise and I walked up and she said, we're lost. This is Kingsclear don't be afraid. It was just like a dream when I think about it and that was about sixty years ago.

Alice: Did your father or your grandfather ever tell you about red ochre and what it was used for?

Rose: It was used for ceremonies.

Alice: What kind of ceremonies? Burials?

Rose: Yes, like if there was any weddings, they would use that.

Alice: How did they use it?

Rose: I don't know, but I heard about it. I never got into it too much, because

my father, he wasn't down there all the time. He died when we were young. There was a lot of Indians down that way though. Mostly from Gagetown, Oromocto and Devon. Not too much from up this way.

Alice: What year was that?

Rose: When I left Oromocto I was eighteen or nineteen years old.

Alice: That's a long time ago.

Rose: Yes. It was forty-eight years ago.

Alice: Did they pick fiddleheads down that way also?

Rose: All over the place. It's amazing to see the life now, from then. Money is so easy to come by now. Where was it all that time? Depression time was something else. You look at TV now and you see that World Vision, that reminds me of us when we were kids. It was so bad once in a while, if we were lucky enough the Indian Agent would bring us something to eat. Food or clothing or whatever.

Alice: Didn't they trade their baskets for food?

Rose: They had to, yes. Fishing and hunting. Money was not easy to come by, but they made their ways of getting food from their work.

Alice: What about canoe making, did anyone make canoes back then? Birch bark?

Rose: Yes.

Alice: Who made them?

Rose: There was some old fellows that made them, one from Gagetown. Jim Nash knew how to make them, I guess. My grandfather, he was one of them, he could make canoes. But making baskets was the big thing for him. Making ax handles and everything else. And he was so good at his work, he was a regular basket maker.

- Everyday, all except for Sundays. He worked half days on Saturday and Sunday, all day off.
- Alice: I've heard that before, that people would work all week long. But on Sundays, no one did anything.
- Rose: In the morning they start working at nine am. and they worked until five pm. And after five o'clock, you wouldn't even lift a dish cloth to wipe a cup or you wouldn't even grab a broom to sweep the floor. That's how the rules were when I was growing up.
- Alice: Do you remember anything about moose hide? If they had used it for anything?
- Rose: They did, but they sold it.
- Alice: They didn't use it for putting canoes together like when they made birch bark to sew them up or anything?
- Rose: They did that.
- Alice: Spruce fir, bark or pitch, when they made these canoes, did they use this pitch to patch and then sew up with moose (pause)
- Rose: Yeah, I seen that up in Montreal too, at Kanahwake, when I went to visit. There was a place where they made canoes exactly how they did it in Oromocto. There was no nails on the canoes, when they made them, and the same as the snowshoes. We use to make money on them, making moccasins. You know, the way the kids were dressed in them days, you wouldn't dress a child like that today, but they were warm. I'll tell you the way things are, it's so (pause) I heard something a long time ago. When I was in school, the teacher said that someday, there's going to be a plane that's going to take a man to the moon. And we asked the teacher, how long that's going to be. She said in the 80's. I didn't think I was going to see eighty. And I think it was earlier than 80's, when that man landed on the moon. But it must have meant in the 1980's, not eighty years. I've seen so much happening, from what I heard when I was a kid. It was just like a dream, like a plan. You've got everything planned out for the future, but you got to wait until you get there in order to see it. That's what—it was getting different all the time.
- Alice: How was life like being in Gagetown, Oromocto, or any place down that area for you? Was it hard growing up?
- Rose: I didn't think it was that hard, when I was staying with my grandfather. When my mother and my father died, I stayed with my grandparents after. I went to school, but there was a lot of work, a lot of work. We had to help him clean fish, set up a place to do his net, and help my grandmother. And everyone had time for fun, but there was nobody drinking like it is today. There was no drugs, there was nothing like that. When I got married, it was celebrated for three to four days. And Everett, he played the violin for the wedding. I was dancing and he was playing.
- Alice: And you just got married?
- Rose: Yes.
- Alice: Did the Indians all get along?
- Rose: They got along, yes.
- Alice: They were happy?
- Rose: Yes. When they got big game or big catch, they celebrated. Like the time they first started catching salmon, that spring. You talk about



*Plate 7.1: Everette Atwin (husband of Rosie Polchies, Kingsclear), Louise Atwin, and Everette's brother John; Everette learned fiddle playing from Joe Paul of Oromocto (University of New Brunswick Archives, 75-1905).*



people coming.  
Alice: How did they catch the salmon?  
Rose: My grandfather caught them with a net.  
Alice: Do you remember anyone spear-fishing?  
Rose: Not that I know of. They might have done it somewhere else, but I only remember what my grandfather did. He was fishing, but he used a net.  
Alice: Were you ever on Savage Island when you were younger? Were you ever on that island?

Rose: Once, when they had the fiddlehead festival.  
Alice: They had a nice one there.  
Rose: That's the only time I've ever been there.  
Alice: What about Snowshoe Island, I know they're under water now, but?  
Rose: I could remember when we use to pick fiddleheads like they use to. It's pathetic today about the fiddleheads. The way we used to pick them, we used to make good money. I have to laugh at the white people, when they get fiddleheads, they are greedy [said

- in Maliseet]. At Sobeys, they charge three dollars and something and at Fredericton Superstore they are one dollar and forty-nine cents.
- Alice: Some are more expensive than others. Do you know anything about Oromocto Pete?
- Rose: That was my uncle.
- Alice: Could you tell me a little about him?
- Rose: He and my father use to pick fiddleheads and make baskets. All you'd hear when they made baskets was the spitting, because they chewed tobacco.
- Alice: Why did they call him Oromocto Pete?
- Rose: Because there was two Petes, Oromocto Pete and White Pete.
- Alice: White Pete would be the one from Woodstock? Is he originally from Oromocto or from Kingsclear?
- Rose: From Oromocto.
- Alice: Oromocto Pete.
- Rose: Yes. Billy's father, Joe Polchies, my uncle and Frank Atwin's mother Mae, John Coon's mother Sadie Sacobie, they are all brother and sisters. And I have a little cousin, she's taller than me. She is my second cousin, Stephanie from Woodstock. I was telling her not too long ago, do you know what Stephanie, I said, do you realize that you're my second cousin. She said, how is that. I said, well, your grandfather and my daddy were brothers. She said, what was his name. I said, Mitchell Polchies. And I said, Uncle Pete was your grandfather, right. She said, yeah.
- Alice: Uncle Pete (pause)
- Rose: That was our uncle.
- Alice: Oromocto Pete?
- Rose: Yes, Oromocto Pete. That was my dad's brother. And they use to work together and they use to make Bees Beer.
- Alice: I remember that.
- Rose: Just about everybody had that in Oromocto. But you would never see anybody drunk, or half killing somebody.
- Alice: So, the people in Oromocto, did they do any of these things, hunting, fishing; like the one's that are there today?
- Rose: There might be some today that are doing that, but not too darn many times. He use to do all of that.
- Alice: I spoke to Timer one day, when I was down to Oromocto. And I asked him if he would speak with me. And I thought I could get some stories from him, but he said no, because it brings back too many memories for him.
- Rose: Well, it's been rough for him. I could remember, because his mother and father had it rough when he was growing up. They use to fight a lot in Oromocto. Nothing but big trouble all the time. I don't know why they had to fight like that all the time. People worked hard when they worked together, and they got along. It's not only when the drinking starts that they fight. When Everett and I got married, he use to trap muskrat and mink. He use to help his father.
- Alice: Who was his father?
- Rose: Peter Atwin. That's Clarence's father too. Everett and Clarence [Timer] are brothers. And when they hunted and trapped together, picking fiddleheads, fishing, first thing I know, they would get into a brawl and Everett would come home.

Everett went into the army. And he went twice, Second World war and the Korean war.

Alice: When you moved up here to Kingsclear from Oromocto, how was it like here? Was there any hunting, fishing, fiddleheading going on, basket making?

Rose: There was quite a bit going on when we got here, but it diminished right down to nothing.

Alice: We are losing our culture and our language. And it's a shame that we are.

Rose: That time, when my mother died. Debbie's mother from Kanahwake, she wanted baskets. My mother said, Rosie, I'm going to have to stop making baskets. She said I was to finish making them baskets. And I said, why mom? She said, I think I had enough, I done enough. She said, I'll tell you what, you finish them and I'll show you. And I said, how could I finish them. And she said, you're going to do it. She said, with my supervision you'll make it. She said, come with me in my bedroom, I have to go lay down. She had sweetgrass that she had washed and sorted. That smell from the sweetgrass was so strong, that it made her dizzy. I don't know what was in the fumes from the sweetgrass, but it sure made her sick. My mother said, Nelson and Clarence, they have to come and get their sweetgrass, because I can't handle this. And I said, Mom you're going to have to stop right now. She said, I'm going to stop all together. So we went into the bedroom, and she showed me what kind of baskets. The splints. She showed me what I

was going to use, what colours.

There is all different colours here, colour them, all different sizes. And now when you make baskets, you can design them anyway you want and any colours.

Alice: Where did the colours come from? What did you use for colour?

Rose: Well, that time she was buying it from the stores. But years ago when Indians use to make baskets, they use to use berries for colour.

Alice: Did they ever use onion skins for yellow colour?

Rose: I don't know, they might have. But I know that red alder, it's orange colour, they use to use that too. And that's medicine on top of that.

Alice: Do you know about medicine?

Rose: You steep that like tea [red alder], let it boil for a little while. It's good for the runs. And then calamus roots on top of that, you can use that for anything. Calamus root is something like aspirin. It has something in it, you can take it for anything. But years ago, Indians they even used tobacco for, if anybody had a bad cut. Chewing tobacco. They wash it off with tobacco juice and it keeps that cut clean, so there would be no infection setting in. They use to treat the people when they ran high fevers. They use to say that when they put raw fish on the bottom of ones feet, that it sucks all the fever from the body. When that fish is cooked, then you are all better.

Alice: I haven't heard that before.

Rose: Honest. My mother, in Oromocto at that time, when she was down Willard's. She told Willard, you know something, I could make a hundred dollars a day if I wanted to. And he

said, where Auntie? My mother said, right around your yard. Where Willard and Cecilia were living, they had bushes around their house. And my mother said, you just watch me, I have someone coming from Fredericton. I got to pick out some stuff for him, he is going to name them and tell what it is. She got a hundred dollars just picking herbs, all that day, from the ground. Willard just looked at my mother and he said, Auntie I didn't know that I was living around the money.

Alice: Who was it that came from Fredericton?

Rose: Professor Szabo. That's the one that wanted to know about Indian medicine. My mother was telling stories to him too.

Alice: What kind of stories?

Rose: Everything, all the Indian stories, legends.

Alice: Do you know any legends?

Rose: When my grandfather moved from Quebec, all his family were on dog sleds. And his mother had a baby along the way and he even had

*Plate 7.2: Rose's mother, Margaret Polchies, and Rose's daughter, Darlene Atwin, 1970; Margaret was an interviewee for Lazlo Szabo and Vincent Erickson (University of New Brunswick Archives, 74-17380).*



to help deliver that baby. They say he even got under the blankets and helped my grandmother. They travelled from Quebec all the way on foot. And when they got here some stayed and some went on. Every now and then they would run into each other. They were living all over the place. They use to live in McAdam, that's where my mother was born.

Alice: Do you know anything about St. Croix and Canoose?

Rose: No.

Alice: Do you know anything about Brother's Island in Saint John?

Rose: No.

Alice: Brown's Flat?

Rose: I know that they use to live in Brown's Flat. A lot of Indians, even the ones from Woodstock, because there was a lot of them. I use to hear about, Oak Point, Brown's Flat and all them other places. I use to hear my grandfather, he use to go there and make baskets. Indians use to be able to pitch a tent anywhere.

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

Rose: They could go anywhere. When they go picking fiddleheads or cutting ash, they would stay right there, camping. And they use to camp all through the summer and some places they lived through the winter too.

Alice: Like where?

Rose: Up in Bear Island. My grandfather and grandmother—so they say—they were invited up there for Christmas at one time. I don't know who was all living there, but they went for Christmas. The kids were all dressed in fur clothes, from buckskins. And they were living in a tent. And my grandmother said that

woman was cooking something and she was using a shovel. Frying fish or meat, or they cooked right in the fire. They said there was so many times they went to these places. My grandmother was so young when she got married and she learned a lot from my grandfather. And my grandfather just watched her until she was old enough, then she had a baby. They got married when she was young.

Alice: People that got married along time ago, were they arranged?

Rose: Not with me, but Molly-dell did.

Alice: Can you tell me about that?

Rose: Molly-dell, a long time ago. When Jack's wife died, they had four kids. Jack and Nastas, Jack's first wife, when she died, she left Royden, Annie, Molly, Ambrose. Jack went and told my grandfather, he said, do you think I could marry one of your grand daughters. My grandfather said, why don't you ask the father, ask her father. Jack went up to see the Priest, my grandfather meant for him to go and see her father, not the Priest. He came to see my father too. Father told him, I don't know, you will have to ask two or three different people before I let her get married, because she wasn't old enough. She was only sixteen or seventeen, when Molly-dell got married and she was going to have a baby already.

Alice: And how old was Jack?

Rose: He was in his twenty's or thirty's. He already had a wife and four kids. And Molly-dell, the Priest came down and told my mother. He said, Margaret, you better let Mary marry John, because there is a sure sign that she would be a good mother for them kids. I guess, good mother, baby after

baby, twins.

Alice: How many kids all together?

Rose: My sister, she had—three died—she had about eight or nine children.

Alice: From Jack?

Rose: Yes.

Alice: This was after she married him?

Rose: Yes. That was something else, when she got married, Molly-dell, that woman never complained about nothing. She was so poor, but she was always so happy. And there was women that come and asked her, why was she always so happy, you're so poor. They'd say they wish they could be so happy. They'd eat good, but for Molly-dell, she would have to ask for food. So Molly-dell says, if you got so much food, bring it to me and I'll show you how to eat. The women were jealous of her, because she had so many children. She has Ambrose and Annie, no, Royden and Annie are the only two that are living from Jack's first wife and two died. Molly-dell, her children are still alive. Me, I had to beg my mother to let me get married. I had to, I guess I was too young to know. But I was thinking about something, I was after something. I wanted to get married and have lots of kids. I thought I was going to do what my sister did, but I was lucky to have two kids. What would I do with a dozen? I guess the future for me, I was going to live a life alone. I've been alone since 1964, well, even before that. In 1956 or 1957, I was all alone and when Everett died, we were separated for six years.

Alice: Was there a reserve here already, when you moved here?

Rose: It was a small reserve, just up that way, by the church.

Alice: How many families were there?

Rose: About seven or eight families. When we came up from Oromocto. A lot of them were on that side, older part of the reserve.

Alice: Where is *Eqpahak*?

Rose: I don't know.

Alice: Or what does it mean?

Rose: It's a flood, that sounds familiar.

Alice: Is it up Springhill area, or is it a piece of land? Where Indians use to dwell?

Rose: It sounds familiar. When Jack use to work in Portabello, I use to hear that. Molly-dell, she use to travel around with Jack quite a bit, if they worked over Maine picking potatoes. And when they use to work in Burton or Gagetown. Or when they use to camp all over them places, right up until 1948, when a lot of people moved from Oromocto.

Alice: Were they forced to move up here?

Rose: They said they had a nice place for us around here, than what we had in Oromocto.

Alice: Who said this?

Rose: The Indian Agent.

Alice: Did they make promises to Indians?

Rose: They made all kinds of promises.

Alice: Like.

Rose: Each and everyone of us. Everett and I, we had our place. There was a lot of people that had homes. There was no electricity, no plumbing. It was no better than this place, when we moved up here. We were situated in better housing when we were living in Oromocto, than when we moved up here. People were living in houses that were built by old lumber,

that they got from the old army camp in Ripples. When they tear down those old army camps and they brought them up here for houses for people. The windows were big and them houses were full of bed bugs. And Whalen said everybody will have cows and sheep and pigs and chickens.

Alice: Did anyone ever get any of that stuff?

Rose: Maybe a goat.

Alice: So, when did welfare come out? Or how much did you get when you started receiving welfare?

Rose: When we were living in Oromocto, my mother and father never got much welfare. Maybe fifteen or twenty dollars a month.

Alice: How many children was there to feed?

Rose: There was four or five of us. After Molly-dell got married, there was me, Neil, Pat, Ritchie and my mother and my father. When my father died, we had to move because we weren't getting enough help. It's a good thing my mother had some helping ways to work with her grandfather making baskets, knitting, sewing. They use to make Indian costumes. Like, when there was a parade and anything goes on, they had to dress in their costume.

Alice: That must have been pretty.

Rose: Yes, that time when the Queen came to Fredericton—it was that year that Pat was born—that was 1939. They were even showing pictures on TV, they brought them to the bingo one night. They had old pictures from 1939, taken in Fredericton. My grandfather, my grandmother were in that, my mother and my sister. But

I couldn't hold the picture very long, Edie was showing it. And I wanted to see it again, but I never got to see it again. I told Fred, where is that Molly-dell and Neil. And Neil was only about twelve or thirteen, they were all dressed in Indian. My grandfather—he was Chief—Uncle Lawrence, Uncle Joseph, Jack, Jack's brother, Andy. All of them, they were all dressed in costume. We use to have that in Oromocto, like on January 6th, the Epiphany. We use to have that 'Old Christmas'. All the Kings, they had a big gathering. People, they would have to pick the King and the Queen by cake. You had to make them cake. They'd make crowns and everything to get everybody ready and they set up a place. And there would be so many people and they would party, like, for two or three days. They use to have violin players, guitars. Joe Shaker, and my uncle Joseph, Levi Sabattis. Joe Shaker was playing the guitar and honest to God, they had their own band on the reserve. I have never seen such a get-together.

Alice: Do you remember when they had square dances in homes?

Rose: Yeah. In Oromocto, when we use to have different places, where we use to dance for a wedding. Stella and John Coon when they got married. Me and Annie—I was about ten or eleven—we were baby-sitting Jimmy Sark and Jerry, when they had a big dance in Oromocto. Molly and Annabell and Babe, she was involved with them all the time. Babe would start something to get everyone going, making head dresses, making crowns, making robes. Those women

Plate 7.3: Theresa Gabriel (left) with Rosie Atwin (right) (University of New Brunswick Archives, 75-1903).



in those days knew how to make everything. No one had a sewing machine. And my mother use to make clothes for us too. And she use to make clothes for everyone down there. When anyone wanted a skirt or a sweater, she could knit and sew and she would make moccasins too.

Alice: Like, the clothing back then, when they were made for you, and what you have today, they are a lot different, aren't they?

Rose: It was all cotton and wool in them days. Nothing fancy about that. The

clothes, they were warm and they were good clothes. Like flannel and cotton, make dresses out of printed cloth.

Alice: Did any of the women down in Oromocto, did they ever work outside of the reserve for anyone? Like house cleaning?

Rose: Oh yeah. That's where my mother caught cold in her knee. She worked *wenuhcikwamihkuk* (white peoples homes) in Oromocto. And arthritis set in her knee and her knee was bent and it never straightened until 1964.



*Plate 7.4: The 1939 royal visit to Fredericton by King George and Queen Mary (University of New Brunswick Archives, 6-16).*



All them years, she was about twelve or thirteen when she started working out.

Alice: Who did she work for down there?

Rose: All over the place in Oromocto. Just like me, I use to go to every house. Especially before Christmas, I was trying to get some money to buy this and that. Or in the springtime, we would go to work over in Maugerville, weeding, thinning out. We use to pick vegetables, berries. You know where we use to pick berries, I wouldn't want to go there now.

Alice: Why?

Rose: It's all grown up with woods now. I use to go pick strawberries down by the old railway tracks, down below Oromocto. I was picking strawberries there and I was laying

up on a hill. And all of a sudden I saw this coil thing, it was a snake looking at me. I fell backwards and never went back.

Alice: The material for your clothing, where did it come from? Was it bought?

Rose: Yes.

Alice: Was it cheap?

Rose: It was a bit cheaper. Well my mother use to make our dresses and make boys clothes too. They use to give her army clothes or mountie clothes and what the Indian Agent would bring to the reserve. And there were some men's pants, fixed them and make nice dress pants. And we get some boys that need pants and she would use them and cut them up. She made a suit for Neil, at that time when he made his confirmation. And when I had my confirmation,

- my mother made my dress. I remember that.
- Alice: What about food? What kind of food did you eat back then?
- Rose: Them days isn't very fancy either, you never heard tell of cookies. We never bought any pies or anything like that. Canned stuff. Like, what we grow in a garden, like vegetables, all vegetables or any vegetables that you could think of. And mostly meat, you didn't have to buy that. Milk and eggs. Sometimes there would be someone who had chickens on the reserve.
- Alice: And back then, you didn't have any fridges right?
- Rose: No.
- Alice: How did the meat keep? How was it stored?
- Rose: It was dried or pickled. Just like fish.
- Alice: Deer meat, moose meat?
- Rose: Yes.
- Alice: How long did it keep?
- Rose: Over the winter.
- Alice: What about come springtime?
- Rose: Well, by that time it could be all gone. There was nothing fancy, if you could make your pies and cakes you're all right. Because them days (pause)
- Alice: What about Indian bread or *lakuci*[sliced potatoes, boiled in water with salt pork]?
- Rose: Indians made all that. Corn, beans. And they use to have chickens, pigs, horses. I know my grandfather, my dad's father, we had a farm. Right now where Sapet's house is [Elizabeth Paul] in Oromocto. That's almost the same spot right where Freddy lives now, that's where our house was. That's where my grand-
- parents had a farm. There was a whole bunch of apple trees there. When we first left Oromocto, there was still apple trees there. There was so many berries, every time I go on the field, I would come back with a bowl full. Blueberries, raspberries, strawberries.
- Alice: Did they ever use blueberries for dye?
- Rose: Yes, blueberries, strawberries and raspberries.
- Alice: What about cherries? Did they use those also?
- Rose: They used them. They made jellies.
- Alice: Did they use them for colouring?
- Rose: Yes.
- Alice: Cherries?
- Rose: Yeah. Cranberries. There was a lot they used for colouring.
- Alice: That's amazing, you don't see anyone using them today.
- Rose: Just like this purple pencil they use to have it. Some kind of lead pencil, when it gets wet, it turns purple. My mother and grandmother, when they were making baskets, my grandfather would bring dye and there was a bottle of red ocher in there. And my grandmother said, I can't use that with baskets. Put that aside, she said, and put it away. I just want dye for my ash. And he made the dyes, purple. And she mixed colours with everything. She made her own colours and that purple, my mother always had it, that purple lead pencil. Oranges, the skins, they were used for colour too. I tell you it's amazing where the colour comes from. And all the herbs and medicine, we use to go in the woods and dig for golden roots, gold threads—

and that's good for babies, when they have sores in their mouths. My mother, one time, she said, Rosie I am going to show you how to help people when they are sick. And I said, Mom, I can help you right now. She had sprained her ankle when she went to church. I didn't know until she came back, they carried her in. And I said, what happened to Mama. She said she sprained her ankle outside, when she was going out to church. Poor thing, her ankle was so swollen, she was laying down. They took her to the hospital and they gave her something for pain, but her ankle still bothered her. It was so swollen. I went and got oatmeal and I cooked it, just boiled it, then I put it in a cloth and I put it on her foot. About ten minutes time, my mother had a smile on her face. And she said, *ktowsihpilahs kil, tus* (you are a good healer, my daughter). And she said, you have that in your mind to do that. And I said, yes, and I elevated her leg. And the next day she was walking around and it never both-

ered her again. She said, Rosie, you're good that way. I do things sometimes without me realizing what I am doing. That time I was in Tobique, kids came to play in Rex's yard. One of the young fellows—he's a priest now, Curtis—he came there and he came with Darlene, Victor and Leon, Rex's boy. He had an earache and Darlene asked me if I could help this young fellow [Curtis]. And I said, I'll help him. I put him on the couch. You sit still there. And I going to melt some butter. I put a couple of drops in his ear, then I took cotton batten and I put a little bit of grease on it from the butter. And I put it in his ear and I told him to take a couple of aspirin, cover yourself and go to sleep, you'll be all right. About a half hours time, they were making so much noise from them playing. Rex said, *kikaha* (you healed) Curtis. I even mentioned that to him when he came here last summer. He said, I remember you from somewhere. And I said, yes, a long time ago at Rex's.

## 8. Kincemossuwin (King Time)

GINA (JEANNA) POLCHIES  
WOODSTOCK FIRST NATION

*I remember. I don't know what they called it, they called it Kincemossuwin (King time). They would bake a cake and put two corns inside. And whoever got the corn would be the king and the queen. And they would dance with them all the evening. I remember that. And I remember the other part, like some sick man, a sick family. This man can't look out for getting wood and water for the wife. These people would come and they'd all gathered the food from the neighbourhoods, whatever one could give. And put it in a big basket and they'd go to this man's house. And they'd chant this, but I could never remember this song. But it went something like, Npeciptun, Nitap (I bring to you, my friend). And they had those rattles from cow horns. And they had little rocks in it. And they would rattle it and they'd dance around. They'd put this basket in the middle of the floor and they'd dance around it and then they'd dance right out.*

Alice: Were you born here in  
Woodstock?

Gina: No, I was born in Oromocto.

Alice: Who was your mom and dad?

Gina: Gabe Sacobie and Margaret, they called her *Moliahkat* in Indian. It would be Margaret Sacobie. Either call her Maggie or *Moliahkat* and Ole Gab.

Alice: Could you tell me what it was like for you growing up in Oromocto? How things were back then.

Gina: Well it, well it wasn't very good. And I guess that's the way it was and I wouldn't know any different. There was no welfare back then. They planted their gardens, they fished and they hunted. And they would fry the

meat and salt the fish and smoke them. That's how it was—and of course potatoes. And working was the same thing, they had a mill there and they use to work at the mill. At that time, there was very few Indians that was hired, for any kind of labour. They would hire them for weeding gardens or hoeing or work at the mill to pile lumber up. This is what I remember of them doing. Most of them hunted. Like summertime, when the school closed, they all travelled down to Maugerville, where the farms are. And this is where they would weed and hoe and whatever they could. And pick bog-berries and sell them and whatever they could

sell. In that time, there was no money exchanged, you get paid by food, bread, potatoes. And the farmers use to smoke their own pork, salt their pork, ham and whatever. And this is

what you would get for your pay, and eggs and stuff like that. So that was how it was, what I remember, a little bit of it, you know.

Alice: What kind of activities went on

*Plate 8.1: From left; John Sacobie and Gabe Sacobie; Gabe was Gina's father (University of New Brunswick Archives, 74-17370).*



- there?
- Gina: Well, they had a (pause) I remember the men they use to play quite a bit of marbles. Marbles and pennies. And they use to play ball and the ball field was right on the reserve. And of course they had canoe races and they made their own, not canoes, but skiffs. See they use to have, they travelled by water quite a bit. Like when they wanted to go to Fredericton, they get on the boat and paddle up.
- Alice: Oh, really.
- Gina: Oh, yes. Or to Gagetown. And a couple of them had the motor boats and sometimes you could get a ride to go to Fredericton.
- Alice: What about ceremonies?
- Gina: Well, them ceremonies, there's a few that I remember that I was telling you about the other day. About the death, when a person is dying. There was this old man and his name was Ole John and I can't think of his last name. I think he was Sabattis. And there was a couple of Sabattis boys, *Ahtuwen* (Anthony) and Andy. And they would come and *kahsahtuwenon*, that's what they call it in Indian. They light the candle and hold the candle and they would chant this Indian prayer. I would imagine, because I was quite young then, until this person passes away. And they'll sing this hymn or whatever. And it was all done in Indian and not one word of English, and that was it. And another thing. After this person passes away, see they use to have prayers at night. I would say about 9:30. And this man, his name was Raccoon—his name was Andy, but they called him Raccoon. He use to go up on a hill and he would holler like *Imiyan* (Prayer time). And he would go to another spot and then he would do the same thing. It echoes and each time it gets longer and louder. And down over the hill, almost by the river, and he would go there by the railroad track. There use to be a railroad track there. And that's where he would call again and then the people all get together and pray, *Imiyan* (prayer time).
- Alice: Where did they get together?
- Gina: Well, where this person is laid out. See, there was no funeral homes then. And that's how they would be. They'd get together and cook a meal, each one, whatever they had.
- Alice: What kind of food did they have?
- Gina: Well, they would have beans and if there is moose, they would have moose stew and rice and raisins. That was the main (pause) you know, whenever someone dies, that you would expect rice and raisin pudding. And Indian bread of course, the one that cooks in the oven. And that's about it, the meal was simple.
- Alice: How long did you live in Oromocto?
- Gina: Until I was about eight or nine years old.
- Alice: Where did you go from there?
- Gina: I went to St. Mary's. They called *Sitansisk* then. I stayed with whoever kept me. I stayed

with *Molye* (Maria). I stayed with Louise and I stayed with *Sapiye* (Xavier). I stayed with my aunt *Tuswey* and I stayed with Julia, remember her? And I can't remember his name, but he was a Nash anyway, John Casey's brother. I can't think of his name, I think it was *Pihel* (Peter) Paul. It was John Casey's brother anyway.

Alice: It might have been him.

Gina: And I stayed with them for a while and I stayed with *Tuahti* and Aunt Clara.

Alice: Did you go to school there?

Gina: I never went to school. I went to

school just a little bit, here and there.

I left school when I was in grade four.

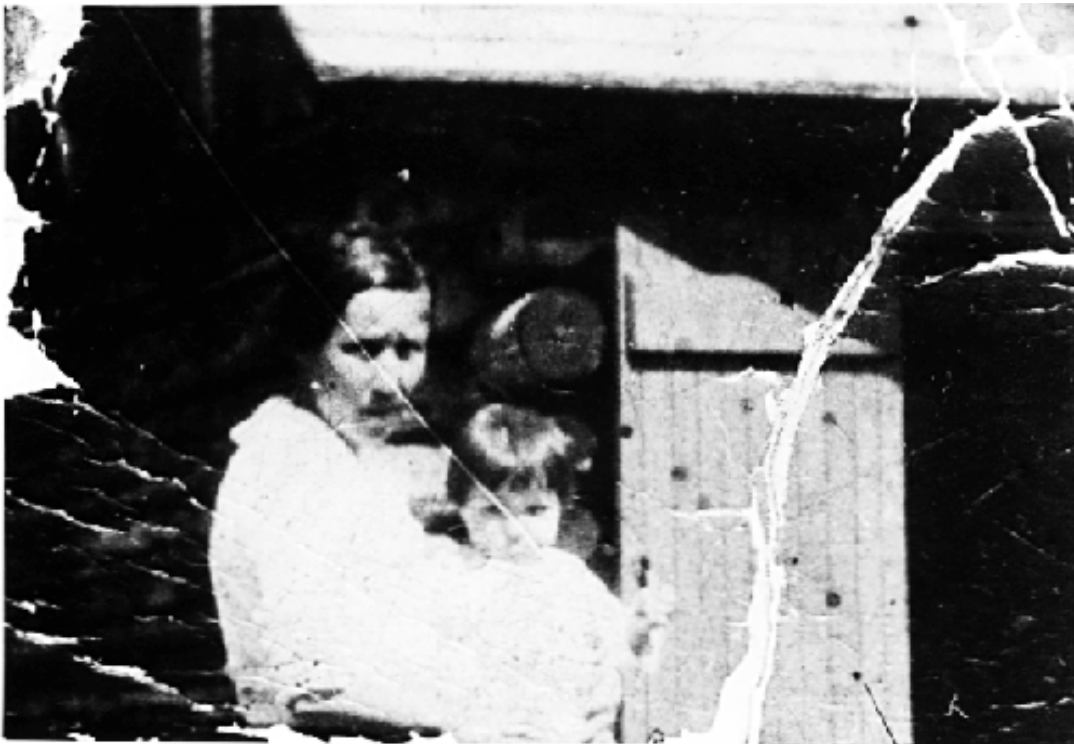
Alice: What were you doing in St. Mary's then?

Gina: I was just around, I guess, wherever anyone wants to keep me or feed me. When you're left alone and the family scatters and the parents died (pause) There was so much alcoholism there and I just kept wandering here and there.

Alice: How long did you stay in St. Mary's?

Gina: Until my sister met the guy up here, Oliver, and we came up together.

*Plate 8.2: Gina's mother Margaret (Moliahkat), daughter of Mike Paul (Kingsclear), wife of Gabe (ole Gabe) Sacobie of Oromocto; with Gina's sister Ruth (University of New Brunswick Archives, 75-1900).*



Alice: Marie was you're sister, is that who you are talking about?

Gina: Oh no. Louisa, that would have been Annette's, Annette Poole, that's her mother. And Ronnie and Theodore, those are her kids. And she died in 1943, I think, when her husband was over seas, and she died of hepatitis. So in those days, they didn't know what hepatitis, *Wisawiye* (turn yellow) was. You were hardly attended to by doctors in those days. I remember when I was home, it was shortly after my mother died. And I stayed with my brother there for a while with his wife, *Pokan*. And they had a baby. I don't know what happened, I was really young. But I know the baby bled to death, because the doctor came from Fredericton to Oromocto, and it was wintertime, so it took a long, long time.

Alice: Who was the doctor?

Gina: Doctor Sterling. By the time the doctor came the baby died, because it bled to death.

Alice: What happened to the mother, was she all right?

Gina: Yeah, she was all right. The reason why the baby died it, was from the navel, they didn't tie the cord tight enough or something. And that's where the bleeding was coming from. That's one part and there are a few things that I don't even want to remember.

Alice: That's okay. Do you remember anybody that made baskets there?

Gina: Oh yes, that's all they'd do was make baskets, ax handles. There was

a lot of things they had to, because there was no welfare.

*Wenuhchikuwamkan*, which means 'go sell for potatoes, turnips, meat and all that. But I could never understand why they never got money for it, the baskets. They would go trade, that was their Indian way.

Alice: It was probably more important to trade for food then it was to get money.

Gina: They always traded, I don't care what it was, they always traded.

Alice: So how long did you live in St. Mary's?

Gina: About three or four years.

Alice: How did you like it there?

Gina: Like I said, I was quite young, and Louisa kept me the longest. She was like a second mother to me. And they lived right next to my sister and that's how I came to be staying there. When they took my aunt away, she asked them if I could stay there. I stayed for about three weeks, after they took my aunt to the hospital in Saint John.

Alice: Would you know anything about Jemseg or any of those places?

Gina: No, but we use to camp there, but I was really too young to remember. It was just camping there, Indians in the summertime. You would hardly find anyone at the village. They'd take their canoes, tents and they go along, they'd camp here and there along the river.

Alice: Did you ever go to Savage Island and those other islands when you were in St. Mary's?



Gina: No, I didn't. After I got to St. Mary's, that's when the boating stopped. I never went out too much, but down home we did quite a bit, we would go to town with skates.

Alice: Do you remember celebrating Epiphany? It would have been 'Old Christmas' down there.

Gina: I remember. I don't know what they called it, they called it *Kincemossuwin* (King time). They would bake a cake and put two corns inside. And whoever got the corn would be the king and the queen. And they would dance with them all the evening. I remember that. And I remember the other part, like some sick man, a sick family. This man can't look out for getting wood and water for the wife. These people would come and they'd all gathered the food from the neighbourhood, whatever one could give. And put it in a big basket and they'd go to this man's house. And they'd chant this, but I could never remember this song. But it went something like, *Npeciptun, Nitap* (I bring to you, my friend). And they had those rattles from cow horns. And they had little rocks in it. And they would rattle it and they'd dance around. They'd put this basket in the middle of the floor and they'd dance around it and then they'd dance right out.

And the next day, maybe a couple of men would come and chop wood for this man and get some water for the woman, until that man is well. They use to help each other quite a bit, but

that's not so anymore. And they were friendly, everybody was. I know they had their differences, but nothing serious.

Alice: So, you must have a lot of relatives?

Gina: What I know of.

Alice: Yes, you had relatives in St. Mary's, well you still do.

Gina: My aunts and uncles and cousins.

Alice: Could you name a few of them?

Gina: I don't even know, I left St.

Mary's, I was quite young.

Alice: You said Sandy Sacobie was one of them.

Gina: Sandy, yes.

Alice: There's Sandy, there's Raymond.

Gina: I haven't even seen Raymond.

The reason why I know Sandy, he came to the door. They had a ball game up here, and he came down here. That's how I came to know Sandy.

Alice: There is Percy, Rita, Dolly.

Gina: I don't know them at all. Those aren't my relatives.

Alice: They must be, they're all related to Sandy.

Gina: Well that's through the marriage.

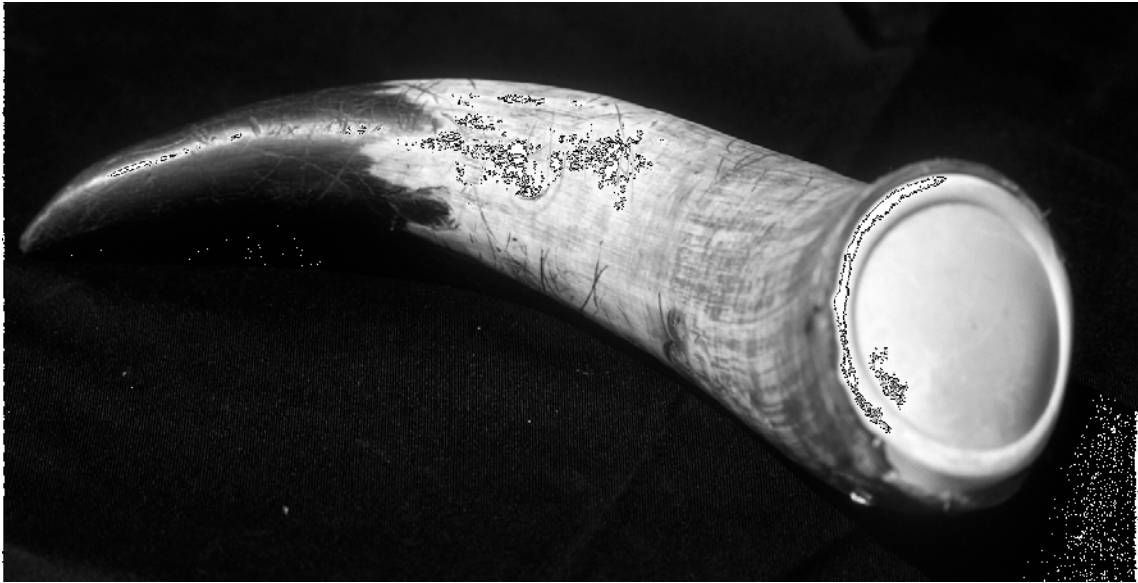
*Pokan*, I think, their half sister. The man was married twice. Isaac was married twice. This John Casy, Josephine, *Pokan* and the other one, *Pihel*. Those are his kids from the first marriage.

Alice: Okay, I see.

Gina: And the second marriage was Ruby, Percy and Dolly, Rita, those were from the second marriage.

Alice: So after St. Mary's, where did

Plate 8.3: A cow horn shaker (photo by Viktoria Kramer).



- you go?  
Gina: Woodstock.  
Alice: You were never in Kingsclear?  
Gina: No.  
Alice: When you got married, what year did you get married?  
Gina: I got married in 1937.  
Alice: How did you get to be up here?  
Gina: My sister met Oliver Polchies. And she didn't want to leave me down there and I didn't want to come up here. So she said if I didn't come up, she wouldn't either. So, Oliver talked me into coming up here, so I came up. So like again, I stayed here and there.  
Alice: In your travels, when you were younger, have you ever heard of marriages being arranged for Indian people?  
Gina: Well, I guess, mine was arranged. Yes, it was arranged. Well I was threatened, if I didn't marry this man.
- I married an old man, and if I didn't I was going to be sent out of this reserve.  
Alice: How old was this old man?  
Gina: He was in his thirties and I was in my teens. He was a widower then, also he was about thirty-four or thirty-five.  
Alice: Do you remember anymore of the arranged marriages?  
Gina: Well mostly. In those days you respect your Elders and whatever your Elders say, you think that's right. Almost everyone was your grandmother, because that's what you call them, *Nuhkum* (grandmother). I don't care who it is, if you were related to them or not you call them *Nuhkum* (grandmother) or *Muhsumi* (grandfather). And if they tell you some thing, like well, *Nipuwamon not ntus* (marry him, my daughter). He'll give you a good home or he'll be good to

you. Or, *Koleyaq oc* (he/she will be good to you), since you don't have any parents. So that's how things were. It's just like arranging it. Like if you were younger and I said, well. And you met somebody and this guy asked you. And you tell this Elder, he asked me to marry him. Well I could tell you to marry him, he'll be good to you. And that's how it was.

Alice: Gina had five children from her first marriage, which she does not want to remember. Her second marriage, no children.

Gina: Living here in Woodstock hasn't been too bad, I am sort of a loner anyway. I don't mix around too much. I'm friendly with everyone here. I have no grievances with anyone.

Alice: You mentioned to me that you use to visit Peta (Dr. Peter Paul).

Gina: Yes, I use to, because I was interested and I wanted to find my grandmother. But all the old people are gone and down home, there is no one. My sister Ruth has been trying to find out and of course, I did to. I had a hard time finding my birth certificate. In those days we had, like a visiting Priest. A rotating Priest, they would come maybe, like once a month to Oromocto. And this is why there was no birth certificate, sometimes just a Baptismal. I was born in December, but not Baptized until February, and I think this is why. I remember the Priest and he was Father Allen, that was long time ago.

Alice: What Parish?

Gina: St. Vincent de Paul, Oromocto Church.

Alice: They kept church records back then?

Gina: No. The record—when I tried to find out, at that time, for my old age. I tried to find the records at birth and I went to the rectory there. He said the records that were there burnt at the Burton Court House. You see, all the records were there. But he had an old ledger there for the confirmation and that's how I know. And it was aged, I guess, from way back, and he said this was all he had.

Alice: Tell me something of what Peta had told you about traditional Indians.

Gina: Well, what he use to say about what they did, you know there is so much to be said that. We use to talk about the Indians, how when they had big families. I didn't know that they abandoned their kids sometimes, when there is too many of them and they can't feed them.

Alice: I never heard of that.

Gina: I didn't either until Peta told me. He said, like they would abandon like a new born baby. Like this man would have like four or six kids and he couldn't feed them. So if the new born baby, they would move to another camp and leave that to another. And I didn't know that. And this is what he said, he said that way back then, white people use to do that, they'd give them away.

Alice: Tell me about the traditional dress.

Gina: Oh, that. I don't know what it's

called. A bonnet, it looks like a Dutch hat and a cloth that looks like a bib. And they have a coat and it looks like it's three quarter length. And it's beaded or whatever it's made of. I've only seen a picture of it. And then the long petticoat and your shoes, well moccasins, they come up almost to the knee. The pictures that he showed me, there was not one feather. Men like, if there was a ceremony, they would have a feather. Like if there's certain—I imagine, like you said—they have this Indian ceremonies. Because they use to—I don't know what they called it. I use to hear them say it, *Altestakonol* (shakers). Like I said before, they had them horns. Cow horns, stuffed with stones or pebbles. And this is what they would do, they would chant and that's what I remember. They had their dances at the houses, somebody's house, or like your house. And there really wasn't that much drinking either. There was a little, they made their own brew. Everyone had a jug. I think anyone with Indian Ancestry remembers Bees Beer. That's what they use to call it, Bees Beer. I remember when there was dances, there was kids sitting around there, watching the old folks dance. But like I said, there was not too much drinking. And you couldn't buy liquor back then anywhere, anyway.

Alice: Did you find, like when you were growing up like in Oromocto, St. Mary's, Woodstock, the men back then were talented? They could play

violin?

Gina: Oh, I guess. When I was home, when I was a little girl, they would gather every night. There was Levi Brooks, he use to play the Jew's harp or the spoons. And Charlie Sark use to play the accordion, the mouth organ. And the Sabattis boys use to play the violin. You must have heard of Noel By. His name was Noel Paul and he use to, when the guy was playing the fiddle, he would hit the back ends of the neck of the violin. It sounded like the bass violin, that's what it sounded like. And they had a jam every night and they would sing. And it was the same thing at St. Mary's. There was always two or three guys with guitars. They would always get together every night and there use to be a lot of people, elders, would sit outside and listen. It's so different now. Too bad that, that is gone. When I first came up here Minnie was down at the old Reserve. And Minnie, when she was putting the kids to sleep, she would be rocking by the window. And she would be singing loud, no one would laugh at her, she would be rocking her baby.

Alice: Ronnie Paul mentioned the same thing, with his children, and he would make up his own Indian songs.

Gina: Sometimes things came to me, but I think I'm forgetting all my Indian. And every once in a while it comes to me, but when I want to tell somebody, I forget again. It's a hard language to spell.

Alice: Write it the way it sounds to you.

Gina: We talk differently, like Oromocto Indian. And when I came to St. Mary's, some words are different. And then when I came up here, it was different.

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

Gina: *Pilick* [Kingsclear] is the same too. We would take Jenny for a ride and she spoke all Indian. And the next time we went down—but we haven't gone down for three or four years—and they couldn't understand one word of it. That's how fast they forget it.

Alice: I like to talk Indian, and my mother does too.

Gina: I can't speak it in full tongue. *Neqotkukyik* (people from Tobique) can. My sister Theresa, she can speak it.

Alice: I went to see Royden and that's all he spoke was Indian. I know what his talking about. I understand it.

Gina: And they have different pronunciations.

Alice: Yes. He told me that there was no swear words in Indian.

Gina: No.

Alice: There is not suppose to be any he told me. I guess through the years, they came up with them anyway. I asked him what *lahkihikon* (garden hoe) means, he said, Because *lahkihikon*, right away, we assume it's a whore, eh? He said that is not true, *lahkihikon* is a hoe, when you are working in your garden. I said, yeah. And I was thinking, gee, that's right. Because my mother told me

one time, there are no swear words in Indian.

Gina: Well, *sqehsomuhs wi wasis*. Bitch is *sqehsomuhs* or *pokutnunse* [bastard]. But that was not a swear word. Bastard is in the dictionary, so it's not really a swear word. You are not able to say really filthy words.

Somebody was saying we should get together and talk Indian, just Indian. I said, what little we remember.

Alice: Joe and I went to Princeton, not Princeton, but *sipayik*, one year. And they had—well, we are both AA members—and they have AA meetings over there on Saturdays. I think it was Dianne that was telling us that they only speak Passamaquoddy, when they are in the meeting.

Gina: It should be like that with us too. But there are too many white women and nobody wants to speak Indian.

Alice: Even the Indians here, don't want to talk Indian. I like to talk Indian, you know.

Gina: Me too. It's coming back to me now. But I can't carry a whole conversation in Indian, but I wish I could speak it fluently. It's strange, I could never speak a word of English when I first came up here. I could say 'yes' or 'I don't know' and that was it. And now I don't remember my Indian. I use to be able to name all the trees, all the animals, river. My prayers was in Indian, the Our Father, Hail Mary, it was all Indian and now nothing. I can't, I don't think I could even bless myself in Indian. Skiff Lake, they have that Indian Prayer in Maliseet.

- Last year, they said it in different languages, Dutch, French.
- Alice: Do a lot of our people go there, to Skiff Lake?
- Gina: Oh yes, quite a few. There is quite a picnic there. That's in the second week in August. It's for everybody, there are two or three priests there. It's a big gathering.
- Alice: How did you find Religion with the Indian people back then?
- Gina: They were very religious. Religion, it would put all these modern Catholics to shame the way the Indians were, they believed in it so much. I remember *Kci Skehewahtoq* (Good Friday). And I remember we use to get up at three am. in the morning. I don't think you remember that little brook, down there in Oromocto, and a little bridge. And that's where the Indians in Oromocto use to get their water from, this little brook. They had a hole there. And they would get us out of bed, whoever we were staying with, and they would get us up and go out to pray by this little brook. We didn't care if it was cold or stormy, we'd get out of bed and go pray by that little brook. You'd drink that water and bless yourself.
- Alice: Almost like Holy Water?
- Gina: That's what they use it for, they use it for Holy Water. And you get a bottle of it and that's how they used it, you bless yourself and drink the water. And then on Easter Sunday and Good Friday, all day Good Friday, you hardly say a word. You don't try to shed blood anywhere. They use to look through the hair for nits and lice everyday, but on this day it wasn't done, didn't want to shed blood by busting the nits [said in Maliseet]. Yes, that's the truth, that's how they use to be. Indians use to be very, very religious. They held Good Friday, so (pause)
- Alice: What I can remember, we had to go to church every Sunday. We had to go to confession. We couldn't eat meat on Friday. We had to wear a hat in church. Everybody was like that, everybody use to go to church back then. Now, you are lucky if you can get anybody there I guess.
- Gina: But old Indians were very, very religious. That priest, you would think that he was God himself, they worshipped him so much, they respected him so much. It's sad, they don't carry the tradition about that death and the calling, when it was time to pray. Of course, we have the funeral homes now, we don't keep our dead at home.
- Alice: Some people do.
- Gina: Well, I think it's wise to keep them in the funeral home, it's kind of sad to have somebody at home.
- Alice: Yeah, I found it kind of sad when Joe died. Like I had him over here, and that was sad, but he wanted to be up here when he died.
- Gina: I can understand that, his home is there. I always thought where you married. It's your home. I know I like to be home, but this is my home.
- Alice: Well, he wanted to come home,

so I brought him up and that's where he died. That was sad, his mother passing away two months before him, but anyway. Do you know about Indian medicine?

Gina: *Kiwosuwos* [calamus root] and *Kakskutkwesik* [cedar]. I wouldn't try it now, because I use to see them mix the cedar and some kind of bark. They use to mix it for cough medicine. I remember that, but I've never tried it, because I wasn't sure. I don't know. And they use to call them Labradors, *Pahsi Pokaskil*. I don't know why they call them. They are smooth on the outside and like a velvet on the bottom and they use to use that for kidneys. Like I said, I've never tried them. I use to see them do it, and I don't know what else they put in it. I remember Eugene. Eugene came up here and I was living down the old house then. My first husband had gone to the Sanitarium. His aunt had made some of this kidney medicine for my husband, but he left before he finished it. And there was two bottles and in those days we had

pails for water. And I had a shed and I had a little stand for my water. There was two of these wine bottles behind the water pail and Eugene came along and I wanted my kitchen stove moved out to the shed. And Eugene said, what is that behind the pail. I told him it was brew. He said, I'll take your stove out to the shed if you let me have that. I said, go ahead take it out. And he got another guy and they took that stove out, they set it all up for me. And they took them two bottles, they shoved them into their pants, around the waist and took off to the graveyard. When he came back he said they drank it all, but it didn't give them any kick. It was that medicine, I could have poisoned those two guys. I didn't know they thought it was wine. It was in green bottles and the liquid was kind of brown. And I got hell from Eugene, he said, your brew was not any good.

Eugene use to hang around here quite a bit. And Dickie and Gabe use to come up every once in a while.

END OF TAPE

## 9. Wintertime trading

BOB NASH  
GAGETOWN

*They traded. Like in the wintertime, Dad used to take a team of horses over to Jemseg. He'd take a whole day, go there with a great big bunch of baskets, clothes baskets, ax handles. I went with him once. It was a long day for me, but we had lots of groceries when we got back. Salt pork, beef, oh everything, ham, that's what the people liked.*



*Plate 9.1: Nash family Houseboat, on the left is Mr. Jim Nash (photo courtesy of William Nash)*



Alice: Bob, were you born and brought up here in Gagetown?

Bob: Yes, I was born March 5th, 1930, in Gagetown, down by Dingy Shore. From then on Dad had two scows.

Alice: Who was your mother and father?

Bob: Jim and Lena.

Alice: Jim and Lena Nash?

Bob: Well, she was a Sabattis from Oromocto.

Alice: Where was your dad from?

Bob: We don't know. He never told us. His brothers were from Fredericton and I know them all.

Alice: Are you related to everyone around here?

Bob: Yes, all but the next door neighbours. Donovans, not related to them at all. Mostly all Nashes down here.

Alice: Could you tell me about your growing up here?

Bob: When we were in Gagetown, Dad used to work for Reids. Towing scows from Fredericton to Gagetown, and load them on the schooners that they used to have. And I can just still remember them, that was 1938, I was about eight years old. And then we used to travel back and forth. And we used tug boats and scows with our house boat.

Alice: Could you tell me about the house boat?

Bob: It was just like a home. Everything was in it, bunkbeds. And Dad's tug boat had bunkbeds in that too. Dad and Mom, we stayed in the house boat. Once in a while Henry would come with us. Jenny Lee Dan and

Tom, they would come with us. They generally stayed in the tugboat until feeding time and then they would get out of the tugboat, get in the row boats and go have their lunch. The boat never stops until the time we get to Fredericton in the morning. By the time we get to Gagetown, it would be the next day and it took days unloading. And then we'd head back up again.

Alice: What were you unloading?

Bob: Lumber. Buy lumber from the Reid's store. Put it in the ships and send them down Saint John and overseas I guess. Yes, and Dad had a little farm down here, near the shore. And we lived there, I think until 1949. And they moved to Gagetown, moved their house down below.

Alice: Did your Dad teach you everything you know about fiddleheading, trapping hunting?

Bob: Trapping yes, he did. I went with my brothers more. Dad, Dan, Tom and I would go and trap with them, but I was just young. Him and Tom had a nice little cabin over there. Reid's cabin they used. And they were getting a lot of rats. Once they get over the spring, before the ice moves. You have to stay over there until, pretty well all the ice moves. Because years ago, the ice would pile up to eight to ten feet high. There was no dams or nothing, came from way up country and we had to stay over there. Of course we had lots to eat, muskrats. I used to get three cents for a mouse. Dingy's fox farm, that's

Plate 9.2: Bob's grandfather, Joe Sabattis (Kansos) and mother, Lena (Mrs. Jim Nash) of Gagetown, New Brunswick (University of New Brunswick Archives, 75-12124).



- what they used to pay me, that old man.
- Alice: What was the old man's name?
- Bob: George Dingy.
- Alice: How many brothers do you have?
- Bob: I had seven brothers.
- Alice: And sisters?
- Bob: I had six of them.
- Alice: You had a big family too.
- Bob: Thirteen, that's a lot, I guess.
- Alice: Were they born in Fredericton, in the hospital?
- Bob: No. They were born in my father's farmhouse. I was born down there. I don't remember anybody born in the doctor's down here.
- Alice: Was your aunt or your mother a midwife that delivered babies?
- Bob: My mother used to and Mrs. Louie Paul, she used to live at Upper Gagetown. She used to come down and help mom.
- Alice: The trapping, you do that every year?
- Bob: Yes.
- Alice: Is that all you do, you don't

fiddlehead?

Bob: Well, I used to a long time ago, I used to go help Sam. He showed me all these places and after he quit fiddleheading, he wanted me to take over, so I did. Molly, my sister, used to help me and Norma and a few more people, but I wouldn't know their names now.

Alice: Do you know anything about the Jemseg area?

Bob: I never did fiddlehead down here. We used to go up Sugar Island and out to Durham way. And way up, before they built the Mactaquac [dam], we used to go up there Prince William, that's where Sam showed me years ago.

Alice: Was Bessie your sister?

Bob: Yes.

Alice: I used to live next door to Bessie. How many people used to live down there, do you remember?

Bob: Tom Brooks used to live next to the river side. Over here was Dad's brother, it was Tom, Tom Nash. And then up toward front way, towards the road, I think was Steve's daughter. And Steve was next to that small woman that used to teach school—used to be a schoolhouse here, eh. And there was a big white house, and then there was Sam Brooks, and Mike's father used to live over here. *Polons* (Frank Sacobie) used to live there and then Wisemans used to live just about the middle of that. I went to school up there when I was staying with my sister. And I had to come down here and do the haying with the

Dingys, help them hay. That's a long, long time ago.

Alice: What year would that have been?

Bob: That would have been 1942-43, war was on. We moved down here, we wasn't allowed to go on white man's premises, down here at the school. Until I snuck in there, I was the first one that went to school in Gagetown. I used to go down there and play ball with the kids and they snuck me in the school in grade 12 room. After a while the teacher found out I didn't belong there, I wasn't supposed to be there.

Alice: Did you graduate?

Bob: No. I went a couple of years later. The sheriff down here, George Brown, and they told Dad that I'd always go down to the school and play ball. And they would like me to go to school and start grade one.

Alice: How old were you?

Bob: I was thirteen or fourteen.

Alice: And you never went to school before that?

Bob: Well, I did in Fredericton there. I must have went for about a year, close to a year anyway. And I went down here for four years. My sisters Molly and Viola, they went. After they knew I was going to school, they went with me. I think Molly was nineteen or twenty and Viola (pause) when they started. I think Molly stayed a little longer, she stayed to grade nine. I think she was twenty-seven.

Alice: Molly passed away.

Bob: Yes.

Alice: Viola is still alive?

Bob: Yes.

Alice: Where is she at?

Bob: Cape Breton.

Alice: Bill is still alive?

Bob: Yes. I have one brother and two sisters left.

Alice: Jemseg area do you know anything about that?

Bob: Like what?

Alice: Where they were digging.

Bob: Quite a few years ago, Jack Waterberry when he first moved up from Saint John and with his wife, Alma's mother, and I think she was only quite small. We used to go to Portobello, a whole month or so or maybe six weeks. We'd spend the whole summer anyway and they used to show us all of those Indian Places, Indian Point, up to the Maquapit Lake and up to that French Lake, the other side of Douglas Harbour. Indian Point, that's a bad place, I wouldn't want to live there.

Alice: Why? What's so bad about it?

Bob: We spent one night there and I was glad to get out of there.

Alice: Spooked?

Bob: Oh yeah, you can hear people night-time. And Dad said ignore them, if you don't want to listen, you won't hear them. But he said, the more you listen to them, the more you hear them.

Alice: What were they talking?

Bob: Indian, Indian in different language than ours.

Alice: Really?

Bob: Yeah.

Alice: I think someone else told me that too. I forget who, but they heard different languages on one of those islands.

Bob: So we came in from there and hit the mouth of Grand Lake. And that Point, that's where we used to camp and we used to go up there and there's butternut trees. In September, we used to go up there on this white man's land and they could see us from the house. We'd sneak up and they chase us away from there. So one time he was there behind a tree, we got up to it and he stepped out. He said, why don't you fellows stay on your land down there and don't bother coming up and bothering my butternuts. So we went and told the old man and we never went back since.

Alice: Who was this man?

Bob: I think his name was Gunter, he was an old, old farm man. Well, now, Jim, Dad and Jack they made baskets, ax handles and they go visit him. They don't get no money, they just trade for vegetables and stuff like that.

Alice: It was okay for them to trade, but it wasn't okay for you to take butternuts?

Bob: Yes.

Alice: That's strange.

Bob: Them days, those nuts were hard to get. Years ago, down below, there used to be a bridge there that opens up all along there. Mom and Dad said, we're all right from the bridge on up to the point. On down below,

he said, it was different and we generally don't camp there. But that's all I know about those rivers and Jemseg.

Alice: Do you know anything about Brown's Flat?

Bob: No, I don't.

Alice: What about Sheffield?

Bob: No. We never did go up that way.

But there was only one place there Dad used to tell me, right there before you get to that Country Pumpkin, up there by Burton Bridge. He told us that's Indian land that runs from the Saint John River. The streams run in the backside, come out below Burt's Corner, next to the railway tracks. He said in there, there's a strip of land that belongs to Indians. And that fellow that drowned, he used to trap down here, Buck Nash. Buck Nash used to live there one time, we used to stop in there. When Dad goes up with, had an empty boat, going up to get a load of scows, and walk up over the hill, he used to have a bungalow.

Alice: This place where you are all at, like all the Nashes along here, is this Indian land?

Bob: No. I bought all this land in 1973, when I was working for Cooper. And I bought it clear to the hill. I bought land and sold to housing down here. In front here I have 38 acres and 104 acres from the corner of the army line. I bought another lot down there just before you get to Bill's on the opposite side of the road. There is another place down here, I don't know if you are going to believe me or not. If you ask some of the boys

down here, just young fellows—like the young fellow that just left. We were down here one night, we generally go bonfiring down there and spend most of our summers down the beach. And across from the beach—where they have that girl guide camp, all along there—I'm pretty sure that the Indians lived there before. It's haunted.

We were sitting there one night and they had these fire crackers, the kids were putting out. And it must have been eleven pm., it was nice and calm and all of a sudden on the other side of the river was a great big bonfire. And you could hear the people hollering to this side and the kids would holler back at them. And we thought it was the people along the camp shore. The next morning I told the boys take a boat and run over to see who was over there. They went over there and there wasn't a thing where we seen the fire, not even ashes.

Alice: When was this?

Bob: It was about three years ago.

Alice: And nothing like that occurred again?

Bob: Well, before that. I don't know if Beaver mentioned to you or not. I guess they were down there, I wasn't. And they thought they seen canoes going in the moonlit night.

Alice: Yes, I think he did mention that.

Bob: And so, but they stay pretty well on that side.

Alice: They don't bother you at all?

Bob: No. But if there's any Indian land, it will be on the Girl Camp shore.

Alice: So what does that mean to you?

Is it to protect the land?

Bob: I'm pretty sure. I mentioned this to Beaver one time and I mentioned it to my older sister. Well they said, Dad never mentioned nothing. But it would have to be years ago. That's the highest side, this side was the low side, and there was a lot of timber in that land. So, they must have stayed and hunted years ago.

Alice: Do you know of any burial grounds?

Bob: I wouldn't know.

Alice: Do you know anything about red ochre?

Bob: No.

Alice: What about canoes, birch bark canoes?

Bob: No.

Alice: So your father made baskets?

Bob: Yes.

Alice: Your mother also?

Bob: They traded. Like in the winter-time, Dad used to take a team of horses over to Jemseg. He'd take a whole day, go there with a great big bunch of baskets, clothes baskets, ax handles. I went with him once. It was a long day for me, but we had lots of groceries when we got back. Salt pork, beef, oh everything, ham, that's what the people liked.

Alice: Did you eat a lot of Indian Bread?

Bob: Oh yeah, lots.

Alice: Do you eat a lot of it today?

Bob: I make my own down at the beach. Sharon comes down. The white men, they love it.

Alice: A lot of people like that.

Bob: Any time we have a big fire on.

Alice: How often do you have a fire?

Bob: Pretty near every night, and pretty near every day, we cook down there.

Alice: Did your father ever tell you anything about the 'little people'?

Bob: Yes. Mom and Dad, they even took us over there, they call Mound House, great big house over there made out of brick. Yes, they seen them down there. They took us there, but we never seen of course, we was too young.

Alice: What did they do, did they ever say?

Bob: Well, Mom said they live in that old building. And they were small, but you would only see them in moonlit nights, didn't see them any other time.

Alice: Would they be harmful to you?

Bob: I don't think so, because Dad and them said they were just people. One time you could draw a big boat in there and there was a beautiful house in there, now it's all falling down. And I was in there with people from the United States, this last summer I took them in there. They wanted to see what it was like in the inside. It had three fireplaces—I don't think there was any stoves in them days—and they come out like a furnace and big flat rocks, probably how they cooked on it. It's always worth to see, before the house falls down you should go down and tape it, like the people down the States did. They heard about that clear down the other

side of Boston.

Alice: About the 'little people'?

Bob: About the 'little people' and the house.

Alice: And they lived there, the 'little people'?

Bob: As far as Dad said, they used to live there years ago. But how could they build a big monster of a building? That was a long, long time ago.

Alice: Did you hang out with people from St. Mary's?

Bob: I used to, when I lived with my sister. Like the old boy, Estey, used to play the fiddle and I would go and visit him all the time. That's how I learned to play the fiddle. I used to play.

Alice: People that I have talked to, that I interviewed, they mention a lot of, like Indian men, that can play fiddle, organ, guitar. Back then they were talented.

Bob: They were. Eddie Paul used to live just above him [Estey]. Eddie Paul, Isaac.

Alice: Isaac Paul, who was his wife? Do you remember Ruby?

Bob: Yes.

Alice: Would it have been her sister?

Bob: Johnny Paul married my mother's sister. Johnny Paul used to live up Kingsclear. My sister Julie married Eddie Paul.

Alice: That would be Ronnie Paul's father Eddie right?

Bob: Yes. Isaac, that's his son, Eddie's. And John Cassey lived across from, right across the road there. Next door neighbour was that girl that burnt.

Andy and Louise, the other side of Isaac was Andrew Paul. And Josephine and Elsie and then Dedam, Joe Dedam and Gabe and Freddie and Claire...

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE ONE  
TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

Bob: Qumuci and that's as far as the houses used to be. And after the war, Paul Paul, they started building houses up, up that way. And then the schoolhouse and then back there. And clear back down to Sam's, next to your father's and Meme.

Alice: We lived right between them. I remember them.

Bob: Then I remember Roger Paul, across the road from us and after that was Tom Brooks and Geraldine. And then the next one was Becca Bear and Eddie. There was only one street up the hill before the war. Where George lives now, there used to be that well house, brick. We used to hang around a great big, high concrete, for the water. We used to hang around there a lot, down the foot of the hill there. There was a lot of rock there. It was right next to the road. Down below there used to be a ball-field. Then the road runs in like that, across the tracks. Where that old railway track is where them new people moved in, just before the tracks it was all wood. I can still picture all that.

Alice: What year would that be, when they had the ball-field?

Bob: In 1959.

Alice: The way things are today and the

- way things were back then, what would you prefer, now or then?
- Bob: I would rather be back then.
- Alice: You know, a lot of them, like my mother and them, my mother said she would like to be back then too.
- Bob: We lived a better life. It is a better life. Now, it's a faster life and you got to keep up. Everything has changed so bad, even the law. Right now, they can even come in and make you cut your lawn, if it's six or seven inches high. Years ago, there was nothing like that.
- Alice: Melvin Nash, that would be your nephew, eh? Are they trying to form like an Indian reserve down here?
- Bob: Not that I know of.
- Alice: I heard someone saying that, I don't know how true it was. Have you been reinstated Bob?
- Bob: For what?
- Alice: Indian status, do you have Indian status?
- Bob: Yeah, from Oromocto.
- Alice: Like a lot of them have been reinstated, eh. How come when we got our band numbers back, then how come you guys were not included? Because back then, you lived at the old reserve, didn't you?
- Bob: No, never lived there at all. They, one time, when Isaac was the Chief and Paul Paul, they almost had us in there. A lot of people want us go on reservation, like Tom Nash. And Steve Nash lived down below the hill, so Dad wanted a place down there, somewhere, but they turned us down.
- On account that dad had too much business going on, he had his own tug boats, farm houses.
- Alice: But why would that make any difference?
- Bob: Well, as far as we could tell, they were jealous, because Dad had stuff he wanted. He learned by himself how to get things going, and from then on that was it. Every time we tried to go on reservation, they wouldn't accept us. Right now, they still don't want us on reservation in Oromocto.
- Alice: Well, Junior Nash, like his family, like, they are members of our band.
- Bob: Yeah, was he ever on reservation? Lived.
- Alice: No, not that I know of.
- Bob: Same as us, they are getting the money off us. They get thirty-two thousand dollars a year, each family. When we fought for that last summer, that time they lost big money up there, bankrupt. That guy from Ottawa told us that there's lots of money in there.
- Alice: I think there was suppose to be so many houses built for Bill C-31 and then the other. Would you live there now?
- Bob: No. It's too boxed in. I like the open, freedom. And you don't own the house, here what is here, is mine. A lot of money for tax, around twelve hundred for my area here, but you have to keep paying it up. It's so quiet. That's the only thing I use here [wood stove]. I have no base heater,



- nothing. I built my house on a slab. I have never lost any flowers. It's well insulated, I have about a foot upstairs and here. When Boy Nash built it for me, he insulated it good.
- Alice: Boy Nash ever come see you?
- Bob: He used to come down, lately he hasn't, since his wife had an operation. Last fall sometime.
- [Discussion about young people on reserve.]
- Alice: Did you ever make baskets?
- Bob: I used to. I used to make ax handles if I wasn't working, a past time. I make my own for my own use. And still trapping. I just like to go out and boat around. The birds make you think and the geese and the ducks, wherever you're paddling to.
- Alice: Sometimes we don't see what is around us, how pretty and beautiful everything is.
- Bob: I was just a young fellow, running gas pumps up there and I was talking to him. He said, now, I'm starting fishing, I like to go out in the country do a little fishing. He said, I've never done this before and I like it. So he's picking up something, things he should have been doing when he was young. Sam and I used to go to Boisetown fiddleheading, we would stay there for a week and come back home.
- Alice: You mentioned Sugar Island. Did you ever go on Savage Island?
- Bob: Yes, Warren used to have a camp there and who was the other one.
- Alice: There was Warren and Evangeline and Louie, I remember them. My mother and father [Dokie and Tina] and Uncle Dick [Richard Brooks].
- Bob: Sam and I used to paddle up, way up to that bridge by McKinnley Ferry. We'd go way up in there and fiddlehead all the way down. We'd stop and visit them for a while, we'd drink the bees beer.
- Alice: That must have been the going thing, *amuwesey* [bees beer].
- Bob: It was. Everybody had them.
- Alice: I don't think anybody has that anymore.
- Bob: No, it's scarce. I pretty near made enough. My fault was I left it too long and it got so strong. They would start to grow good, but I left them outside and they froze on me.
- Alice: I thought they had to be kept warm.
- Bob: I forgot, I was away hunting.  
[Talking about home brew.]
- Alice: Life was good for you when you were growing up?
- Bob: Yes. I started work when I was fourteen.
- Alice: What did you do?
- Bob: Drive a truck.
- Alice: What kind of truck?
- Bob: Gravel truck.
- Alice: You did that for how long?
- Bob: Until I got to be sixty-five, two years ago. I bought my own in 1974, I had two trucks one time.
- Alice: How many children do you have?
- Bob: Two children and one adopted boy, he was six months old when we got him.
- Alice: How old is he today?

Bob: Forty-three years old. He is out west, in Ontario.

Alice: The other children, they are right here?

Bob: Yes and our grandchildren, all but James. Staying up there with his grandmother [Joan] in St. Mary's. He is a smart little fellow, he moved in with me in 1988. He was going to school down here and went to Oromocto. Of course I shoved him. I told him, I said, you go up there and go to school. And when you get old enough and you can drive, I'll get you a car. That's what I did. He kept at it, he still at it. He's willing to do anything and he is trying to. He said, I won't quit school until I graduate, I might go to college, I might not. I said, why go to college, no jobs. He wants to either join Army or go to RCMP. RCMP too dangerous, Army not too bad. I said if there is any war at all, we are not going to last anyway. Pete my other grandson, he wanted to be a mechanic, he is now.

Alice: You do a lot of things around your home, because I've seen you with the animals, your workshop.

Bob: I love mechanic work, same as Pete. Him and I work together. What he doesn't know, he'll come and ask me. And now next fall, when he goes back to school, he's going to take up for that. I'd like to see him move ahead instead of working in the woods.

Alice: That's what I did, I was thirty-one and I went back to school. I said, I don't want to sit here and depend on

welfare rest of my life. And I don't want to do that, I'd sooner being doing something. And right now, I am doing this work and I enjoy it. Going to see the older people, talking about a long time ago, how things were. And you learn a lot from it.

Bob: You see there is not enough of this Indian talk with children. I like to talk Indian. Andy, some person was learning him in Oromocto, talking Indian. He come down here pronouncing names. I said, no, that is not how you say it. So this young person up there, he doesn't know much about language, eh, but they put him in there for (pause)

Alice: Who is it?

Bob: He said he is some relation to us. I wouldn't know which one, so many up there. Myself, I like to talk Indian. Royden used to come down, from Kingsclear. Mike. We sit here half a day talking, like Indian, eh. And I don't want to forget none of it, what little I know of.

Alice: Well, if we don't use it, we could lose it.

Bob: Yes.

Alice: My mother, when I go see her, that's all she does is talk Indian. And I try myself to talk Indian.

Bob: Pat Sacobie used to come down a lot before his wife died, wife's name was Grace. Now he don't hardly come at all. Jim Sark used to bring Pat down.

Alice: How do you say duck in Indian?

Bob: *Motehehsim*. Donna's youngest daughter is trying to pick up the

*Plate 9.3: the late Christina Nash (photo by Karen Perley).*



language too. But I keep telling her that, I'll just tell you one word at a time.

Years ago, Bill Nash, all he used to do was work on the farm. Him and George. George was really the muskrat, when it was muskrat time.

Alice: George Nash, that's one that was

in Fredericton?

Bob: No, my brother. That was Christina's husband. He was the muskrat man, not a hunter. Like Bill, worked the farm all his life.

Alice: Bill never trapped or hunted?

Bob: Not until after Dingy died. Then he moved down there, that's when he

started trapping. He must have been in his forties or fifties when he started trapping.

Alice: He owned a pet crow didn't he?

Bob: Yes, and he talked bad.

Alice: Me and my sister came down one day, because she told me about this crow and it could talk, but I didn't believe her. So one Sunday, I wasn't doing anything, I went up and got her.

I said, Dorothy, let's go down and see Bill and Mildred. I want to see this crow that can talk. When I got in that driveway Bobby, I could hear it already... And it swore at me after I got in the house. And his name was Charlie, I couldn't believe that.

Bob: They used to keep it down in the basement. That's a raven.

END OF TAPE



## 10. Digging holes in the brooks

### NOEL FRANCIS JUNIOR WITH KATHLEEN FRANCIS MADAWASKA MALISEET FIRST NATION

*My father was a fly fisherman. There is a story that he told us. When he was young, around ten or twelve years old, his father used to bring him along, especially in the fall, when they gathered food for the winter. And he would go up river with bows and if they saw a caribou or—because at the time, I think the deer was limited. That was only something that was introduced, it was mainly caribou. And they would take the meat and where there was brooks. They used to dig holes in the brooks and put the meat there, so it would keep fresh. And on their way down from the river, they would gather all the food and bring it back for the winter. That's what they were doing in the fall. Dad remembered, he was telling us when his father did that.*

*Plate 10.1: Noel's father and mother, Noel Francis Sr. and Kate Francis, Madawaska Maliseet First Nation, (photo courtesy of Kathleen Francis).*



Alice: Noel could you give me a brief history of St. Basile?

Noel: As far as I can find out, the St. Basile Reserve was established in 1867, at the time of Confederation. And for a number of years, we didn't have a Chief here. The Chief was the one at Tobique, that was responsible for our Reserve. In 1955, we had an election for a Chief on the St. Basile Reserve and from that time on, we have been electing Council every two years. At the time that the reserve was established, it was a good part of the city, the city of Edmundston. And during some years, it was kind of a shrink to the size of it today. And when it was in the city of Edmundston, it used to be the village, where it is pretty well the centre of Edmundston. And the burial ground was in front of the Cathedral. There was records that we heard was burnt. But as far as we can get information, this is what took place. Today, we have seven hundred, a little bit over seven hundred acres. But at the time, it was over two thousand acres, it shrunk.

Alice: What is the population here today?

Noel: Today there is a one hundred on the reserve and there is about a hundred living off the reserve. A total of two hundred members.

Alice: Back in 1955, when whatever was going on here, had to answer to Tobique, what population did you have here?

Noel: Oh, we had probably around fifty

or fifty-five.

Alice: Do you remember any of the old Indians that were here?

Noel: Well the oldest I remember would be Joe Wallace, Noel Bernard. There used to be, like my aunt, two of my aunts, Aunt Alice and Aunt Carrie.

Alice: What was your father name?

Noel: Noel.

Alice: Noel Francis, the same as yours. Was he Indian?

Noel: Yes.

Alice: Did he talk the language?

Noel: A little bit, a few words, but it was very limited.

Alice: Does anybody make baskets here today?

Noel: Today nobody is making baskets that I know of. I used to make a little bit. In my generation there was probably, there was a few. My father's generation there was more. Like two of my father's sisters made baskets. And Joe Wallace made baskets and Noel Bernard.

Alice: Two of your aunts, Alice and Carrie, were they from Tobique?

Noel: They're from here.

Alice: They're from here and they made baskets, what kind of baskets?

Noel: Potato baskets and fancy baskets.

Alice: I hear a lot about fancy baskets.

And I've seen some pictures of them and they are beautiful. What about hunting and fishing, does anybody hunt and fish here?

Noel: At that time, in my father's generation, we were limited to fishing and hunting only on the Reserve.

Outside of the reserve, we had to buy

*Plate 10.2: Noel's aunt, Carrie Francis, of Madawaska Maliseet First Nation, (photo courtesy of Kathleen Francis).*





licenses. But since a few years ago, these laws they were changed. It's only that we weren't aware that we had the right to fish and hunt anywhere, at any time. But now we do hunt and fish. I would say out of the families, there is (pause) and even women do hunt and fish. I'd say more than 75% of us now.

Alice: In your father's generation, like back then, when they fished or hunted, did your father ever tell you how they fished?

Noel: My father was a fly fisherman. There is a story that he told us. When he was young, around ten or twelve years old, his father used to bring him along, especially in the fall, when they gathered food for the winter. And he would go up river with bows and if they saw a caribou or—because at the time, I think the deer was limited. That was only something that was introduced, it was mainly caribou. And they would take the meat and where there was brooks. They used to dig holes in the brooks and put the meat there, so it would keep fresh. And on their way down from the river, they would gather all the food and bring it back for the winter. That's what they were doing in the fall. Dad remembered, he was telling us when his father did that.

Alice: Did your father ever mention anything about spear fishing for salmon?

Noel: Not to us, no.

Alice: What about nets?

Noel: If he did, I can't remember. Because sometimes, you know, he

probably tell us stories, but when you are young, you forget them.

Alice: What about fiddleheading? Did the older people fiddlehead around here?

Noel: Yes.

Alice: Where did they get them?

Noel: Along the Saint John River. We got all kinds, every spring it's a, I would say it's a big feast, but we do get the fiddleheads.

Alice: Every year?

Noel: Every year.

Alice: Do they have islands here?

Noel: There is an island in between the reserve and the United States, Madawaska. I think it's Madawaska Island. That again, we were told it's not part of the reserve. It was granted to a guy named Martin at one time, but it's something that needs to be researched. I know we had some research done on the reserve, but it comes to a point that the funds are limited. And then you go farther and farther, there's no funds available. This is a big problem.

Alice: Let's go back to your father. Back then, did they ever go out to other reserves to go fiddleheading and hunting and meet other Indian people?

Noel: I know we used to go down to Tobique. We had relatives in Tobique and pretty well each year, my father would go down there and Aunt (pause) festival there, there's a feast there. I think St. Anne's, every year.

Alice: Yes, St. Anne's, every year in Tobique.

Noel: I remember my father going down

there, my Aunt Alice and Aunt Carrie.

Alice: So, was that as far as they went?

Noel: Well, they were limited as far as travel.

Alice: Yes.

Noel: So, my father had a sister in Eastport, Maine. There is a reserve there. I don't recall seeing her.

Alice: Do you know her name?

Noel: Who is my father's sister that lives in Eastport, Maine [asking his mother]?

Kathleen: I don't remember her name.

Noel: Who was Madeline?

Kathleen: I couldn't say, I don't remember her name. I know they had a sister there, but I don't know. She died before I came into the family and I never questioned them.

Alice: How many of you were there?

Noel: You mean?

Alice: You have sisters and brothers?

Noel: I got two sisters and four brothers.

Alice: Are they all here in St. Basile, on the reserve?

Noel: I got a brother that died last winter. I got a brother in St. Basile, here. I got a brother in Buctouche, he retired also last winter, he worked for CNR. I got a sister that lives on the reserve. The oldest sister lives in Edmundston, she's also retired.

Alice: It's not a big reserve is it? But it's growing.

Noel: It's one of the smallest reserves.

Alice: It's got to be the smallest.

Noel: There is Fort Folly.

Alice: Fort Folly has got to be the smallest. Did you father ever tell you about Indian medicine?

Noel: No. Alice would be the person

who knew about the medicine, Indian medicine. She was well known to cure all kinds of diseases, many kinds of diseases. Even, she saved a man's hand. Where the doctor was prepared to cut it, he said there was no choice. But with her medicine, she saved that man. And he was a non-Indian and he was a farmer and she saved the man's hand. But nobody knew how to write it at that time and we have got no records. I guess the Indians, the way they had that everything was transferred from one generation to another by mouth. And hardly anything was kept.

Alice: I don't believe there was anything written. Only what the non-native writes on how they see us. I've never seen anything written, something passed on generation to generation. But I hear a lot of when I travel, about hunting and fishing, that may have been passed on. About basket-making and all these things that we do.

Noel: The little bit I know about basket-making, is what I seen my aunt, both my Aunt Carrie and Alice, when they were making some. And it's only a memory.

Alice: Can you remember them using colour on ash, or did they not colour it.

Noel: Some of it was coloured.

Alice: Did they make their own dye or did they buy it?

Noel: I think one colour they used was alders bark.

Alice: When Indian people were having children back then, did women go to

Plate10.3: Noel's grandparents, Madeline Desrosier and Gabriel Francis, (photo courtesy of Kathleen Francis).



- the hospital or were there midwives?
- Noel: There were midwives, my generation was with midwives. The only one in the family, my mother went to the hospital with, was with the last one and we lost her. She was young, only a baby at the time. It was the time that they had, like people were dying left and right, it was big disease.
- Alice: Was it a plague?
- Noel: It was some kind. What do you call the sickness, your last daughter that died at the hospital, you're last baby that you had [asking his mother]?
- Kathleen: She died of diarrhea, she was only five months old. It was the year that the babies were dying left and right of diarrhea.
- Noel: And she was the only one that you went to the hospital with?
- Kathleen: Yes.
- Alice: Who delivered your children?
- Kathleen: My husband's mother delivered my babies.
- Alice: What was her name?
- Kathleen: Madeline Dorosca, she came from Drummond.
- Alice: Marriages on this reserve, back then, do you recall anyone mentioning arranging a marriage?
- Noel: No, I don't recall.
- Alice: Do you know anything about birch bark canoes? Do you remember anyone making or speaking about canoes?
- Kathleen: No. When I came here, some made baskets, ax handles.
- Alice: What kind of tools did they use for ax handles?
- Kathleen: Women would come up from Tobique with fancy baskets and sell them up here.
- Alice: What kind of tools did they use for ax handles?
- Kathleen: Ax handles.
- Noel: Crooked knife.
- Kathleen: Drawing knife. Billy Ellis used to make some.
- Noel: Billy Ellis, there was an old man.
- Kathleen: I remember him making some.

Alice: Did anyone ever use glass?  
Noel: Yes, to smooth them out. I remember that.  
Alice: Could you tell me a bit about that and who did it.  
Noel: Billy Ellis did some and Noel Bernard made ax handles. How about Mark Bernard [asking his mother]?  
Kathleen: Mark used to make rolling pins and doughnut turners. I still have that.  
Alice: How old are they?  
Kathleen: Forty-five or forty-six years.  
Noel: Well, I'm sixty-one.  
Kathleen: Well, I'm eighty-one.  
Alice: They have to be quite old.  
Kathleen: Alice, my husband's sister, she gave me the rolling pin.  
Alice: Did they ever make hoops?  
Kathleen: He made benches, nice benches to sit on. He had a little shop out back and he could work with wood [her husband Noel].  
Alice: Was life hard here, on the reserve, when you were growing up?  
Noel: Depends on what you mean by hard.  
Alice: Like food, was there enough?  
Noel: We had a little bit to eat, we didn't have big quantities, like at supper. We didn't have running water or electricity, but that was pretty well mostly everywhere. I remember when I was six or seven years, the old city dump was on the reserve, so a bunch of us children were always going to the dump. My father's generation had it hard. We had it better. And our generation, if only they take advantage of what is available to them, they could make a good life.  
Alice: No one speaks the Maliseet language?  
Noel: Nobody and that's a real shame. There used to be a school here on the reserve, my father went to school.  
Alice: What year was that?  
Noel: It would have been in the '40s I guess. Dad was born in 1907 and that he would have gone to school in 1915.  
Alice: That school must have been there for quite a while then?  
Kathleen: They had a picnic at that school and had pictures of that. I look at old pictures that you have then. I had some that Carrie left when she died. I always kept that. I wanted to show Ruth and O'neal to see if they remember somebody in that picture. But every time they come, I don't think about that.  
Noel: See that's one thing about the school, we don't have records. I heard there was a big fire one time and all the records were burned, like records of this reserve. I asked the Indian agent one time, like for information for this reserve. When it was established and so on. And I got a letter from him saying that the time the reserve was established in 1867, but there are no records.  
Alice: Do you have your own church on this reserve?  
Noel: No.  
Alice: So, usually churches hold records of Indian people.  
Noel: I did get a hold of old records

from the St. Basile Parish. The priest that was there... I got a photocopy of records that the church had as far as population. People—like records that the priest at that time came up with. And he said, well there was a ‘x’ number of Indians around and a certain ‘x’ number the next year. I don’t know what year the St. Basile Church was established.

Alice: It must go back quite a ways if it’s holding records of Indian people. What was the religion like here, were people very religious?

Noel: Mostly Catholic.

Alice: Were they strong believers?

Noel: Pretty well, yes. My generation, I remember that the Cathedral was the church that we were going. But, I can’t recall exactly the date, but there was another parish that was formed, the Sacred Heart. I think it was the early 50’s type of thing, but they closed the church. Now we are going back to the Cathedral. So the church is also having problems.

END OF TAPE

## 11. Goddamn army trucks

ELIZABETH PAUL  
WELMOOKTUK/OROMOCTO FIRST NATION

*Any kind of glass you see around here on the windows. They had to shape them and smooth your ax handle or hammer handle, pick ax handle. They smooth the glass, then they smooth the wood. I used to like to watch them. Especially when they said, come on over and get your suhpin, a great big cup with handle on it. You have to pour water on that stone and then turn the wheel on. When they do the drawknife and jackknife, they have to sharpen it, and then you have to pour water on that stone. And then a crank and have to crank it real slow, until that stone is all wet. Then sharpen drawknife and crooked knife and jackknife.*

*...But that time they moved us to Kingsclear in 1947. Goddamn army trucks. Army trucks were going around the reserve and they said, come on, you're moving, you're moving up Kingsclear.*

Alice: Elizabeth, you are known as  
*Sapet* right?

Elizabeth: Yes.

Alice: Where were you born?

Elizabeth: I was born in St. Mary's in  
1930.

Alice: Who was your mom and dad?

Elizabeth: Bessie Meuse and Sylvester  
Sabattis

Alice: Where were they from?

Elizabeth: One was from Oromocto and  
the other one was from the States.

Alice: Your father was from the States?

Elizabeth: No, from Oromocto.

Alice: And your mother?

Elizabeth: I don't know where they're  
really from. But after my grandfather  
died, my grandmother went back to  
Maine, somewhere.

Alice: Who were you're grandmother  
and grandfather?

Elizabeth: Stephen Meuse and Lolly, her  
first name, was it Sarah?

Alice: It sounds like Sarah.

Elizabeth: I don't know what was her  
right name.

Alice: I remember her, she lived in  
Becca's old house, long time ago.

Elizabeth: And I don't know how long  
we stayed in St. Mary's. I just barely  
remember when we moved from St.  
Mary's to Gagetown.

Alice: How long did you live in  
Gagetown?

Elizabeth: For a long time. I remember  
when we moved from Gagetown. I  
think that was where my grandparents  
lived, in Gagetown. I remember when

*Plate 11.1: Elizabeth's grandmother and grandfather, Mornie Lolly Paul (sitting), and Steve Meuse (standing) (University of New Brunswick Archives, 3-54).*



we moved down to Gagetown, my grandmother was already living down there. Then we moved back here when I was six or seven.

Alice: Here in Oromocto?

Elizabeth: Here in Oromocto.

Alice: How was life here, when you were growing up?

Elizabeth: Well, it was real good. The reason we moved from Gagetown, my father used to work in the mill and he fell off the board pile. Then he hurt his arm and his elbow.

Alice: What did he do at the mill?

Elizabeth: He was piling lumber.

Alice: What did your mother do?

Elizabeth: She stayed home with us.

Alice: How many of you were there?

Elizabeth: There was me, Steve and Robert. There was three of us. And then when we came up here, there was Pete and Jessie. I think two of them were born here in Oromocto and two of them in Gagetown.

Alice: When you were growing up, do you remember anyone making baskets?

Elizabeth: The only people I remember making baskets are Ben's grandparents.

Alice: Ben is your husband?

Elizabeth: Solomon Paul and Sarah Paul, those were his grandparents.

Alice: Who were his parents?

Elizabeth: Who?

Alice: Ben.

Elizabeth: Ben's parents is John Paul [*Suwahsin*] and his mother Mary Augdon.

Alice: Where were they from?

Elizabeth: Mary Augdon, I think she was from Norton.

Alice: Where is his father from?

Elizabeth: I couldn't tell you. We tried to find out. Ben's people came down a couple of weeks ago. I have papers with names on there, but we haven't got around to it yet. We have an invitation to a gathering with those people on the fourth of August. Some where in Maine. They were down about two or three weeks ago.

Alice: How many children did you have?

Elizabeth: I had twelve.

Alice: The people on the Oromocto reserve, when you were growing up, what did they do for entertainment?

Elizabeth: A lot of them made baskets, like on Ben's side [referring to his family]. But on my side, my father used to work on a farm across the river. I remember, that's where he worked. And Ben's parents, they always made baskets, ax handles, hammer handles. And some of those men—when Margaret Polchies, when she left, her house was condemned. So she moved back down the hill with her mother and father. And then those men—this big house, here where Gloria lives now [her daughter], there was a big big house there. Auntie Margaret, her house. That's where they used to cut pulp.

Alice: A lot of the people that were here before, moved back to Kingsclear?

Elizabeth: Yes. I remember that time.

Alice: Tell me about it.



*Plate 11.2: Ben's grandmother, Sarah "Selapic" Sacobie, 1894. (University of New Brunswick Archives, 74-17358).*



Elizabeth: That time when we were picking fiddleheads in the springtime. And then everybody, after we picked fiddleheads, and then we go farther down Maugerville. We would be there all summer long and our husbands will be working in the farms.

And then in September, then we move back on the reserve. That was good fun.

Alice: Do you know anything about those islands?

Elizabeth: That was where we used to live.

Plate 11.3: From left back; Benjamin Paul, husband of Elizabeth Paul, Alfred Neil Polchies; middle row left to right; Richard Gilbert (Robert) Polchies, Beatrice Paul (wife of John Sabattis), daughter of Johnny Paul, and Leona Paul; Front; Imalda Paul, ca. 1940 (University of New Brunswick Archives, 75-1906).



Alice: What island were you on?

Elizabeth: Gilbert's Island.

Alice: There is Indian Point, Grimross Island.

Elizabeth: I don't know about them. I don't even know where they are.

Alice: Do you know anything about

Jemseg?

Elizabeth: We haven't heard anything about Jemseg, until they started working there. The only time I remember is when we used to go down there in 1947 and 1948. We used to camp on that Gilbert's Island and

- Burpee's Landing. I don't remember anyone else.
- Alice: Do you know about Brown's Flat?
- Elizabeth: No, I don't. The only time, there was about six families that go fiddleheading. There was Levi Sabattis, Noel Paul, Charlie Sark and us. I guess there was only four families. We would be down there until September.
- Alice: You stay there all summer?
- Elizabeth: All summer.
- Alice: You just go there and spend the summer?
- Elizabeth: The husbands work in the farms. Yes. We used to do that every spring. A lot of people used to do that. After fiddlesheads everybody go down.
- Alice: Just like at home, we used to go to Savage Island. Have you ever been there?
- Elizabeth: No.
- Alice: How many families moved from here? The people in Kingsclear?
- Elizabeth: There weren't that many people back then in 1947. The ones that didn't move was John Brooks, Maude's grandfather. John Sacobie moved up there for a while, he didn't like it and he came back. And then Frank Atwin, he stayed. Ben's father, he moved up there and then he moved back. There was only three families back in 1947 and everybody moved back up. There was Ben's father and John Brooks and John Sacobie. There was just the three families down here.
- Alice: Just here, on this reserve?
- Elizabeth: Just here, on this reserve. Then in 1948-49, everybody moved back.
- Alice: From Kingsclear?
- Elizabeth: From Kingsclear.
- Alice: But a lot of them stayed. When I spoke to people from Kingsclear, they are originally from Oromocto.
- Elizabeth: We used to live, they weren't very big houses. And the floors were bare and it took half a day to clean the floors. There was no covering on them and not only the kitchen and the hallway and then there was the upstairs.
- Alice: After you got married to Ben, what did you do, like in the evenings?
- Elizabeth: Played cards. That's all we would do, play cards. Summertime, every Sunday we played cards. In the wintertime, Saturdays and Sundays, we played cards. And during Lent, we only played on Sunday nights because a lot of people said Sunday is not lent.
- Alice: Were Indians religious back then?
- Elizabeth: Yes. Sometimes the men would join a ball team with the white men. So we travelled in the summertime, because our husbands were picked to play ball or hockey with the white men.
- Alice: Did you have dances? In someone's home?
- Elizabeth: The only dances they had was around the sixth of January. You know where that old band hall is now, they were still using that, until all the kids went to the white schools.
- Alice: Okay, on the sixth of January that

- was 'Old Christmas' right?  
Elizabeth: That was old fashioned Christmas.  
Alice: How did you celebrate that?  
Elizabeth: We'd celebrate that. Monique, Maudie's mother, and Margaret, they made cakes. Monique would make one cake and Margaret would make one cake, molasses cake and white cake. They put beans and buttons in them cakes. Whoever ate the white cake, that's the Queen. And whoever ate the molasses cake, will be the King. And then they crown them. That was good fun.  
Alice: So what happens after that?  
Elizabeth: The King and the Queen will pick their choices, what to do for the rest of the summer and until next January.  
Alice: What kind of things?  
Elizabeth: They will say, we're going to do this for the rest of week. For twelve months. Like dances, in the band hall and dance every two weeks. They'll do that every two weeks. Until in a years time.  
Alice: Where or who made these costumes?  
Elizabeth: They'd make them. They didn't have costumes, but they had hats and they would decorate them.  
Alice: Who made them?  
Elizabeth: Monique and Margaret. No costumes that time. Then we will have a lunch at the old band hall.  
Alice: So the King and Queen decided what goes on for the next year? Then they pick somebody else?  
Elizabeth: They'll crown them and they had Indian music playing there too. Tom Nash was one who played the violin. And Ceclawew, not Ceclawew, but his brother, *Ahtuwen*. His name was Anthony. They would be playing the music, no fights, everything went smooth.  
Alice: Did Charlie Sark play anything?  
Elizabeth: Charlie wasn't even born then.  
Alice: Old Charlie Sark?  
Elizabeth: He used to come over to the band hall. And then after the reserve got bigger, they didn't want to do it anymore.  
Alice: What happened when a person died on reserve, what kind of a ceremony took place? Or if there was any?  
Elizabeth: All they did was stay awake, that's all they do around here.  
Alice: How did they help the family out?  
Elizabeth: They usually take two baskets around, from housed to house. And this was how they got the help.  
Alice: I know they gathered food, and some still do it sometimes.  
Elizabeth: They hardly do, really, anymore.  
Alice: Yes, they go to the funeral homes now, eh. But I guess back then, when they gathered food to help the family out.  
Elizabeth: And everybody can't afford it, really, because a lot of them don't work. But a lot of them, they can give out what they can spare.  
Alice: How about when people got sick,

and they couldn't fend for themselves?

Elizabeth: Oh, that was easy, they could get anybody to town, take them up by car.

Alice: No, I mean, if he was home, sick, how did people help his family?

Elizabeth: Well, they just have to go without.

Alice: They didn't help them with food?

Elizabeth: Not that I remember.

Alice: What about Ben's family, Ben's mom and dad. Do you remember if anybody ever

make birch bark canoes down here?

Elizabeth: Not that I remember. In them days, a lot of the men working in the woods cutting pulp and logs, that's where they made their money.

Alice: Was it your grandparents that made baskets or Ben's?

Elizabeth: No, Ben's grandparents.

Alice: What did they use for tools when they made baskets?

Elizabeth: They only use a crooked knife, that's all I remember. Especially Ben's grandfather he used to fish salmon, shad and gaspereau, down the shore here. That was good fishing down there, along the shore.

Alice: Do you remember them using any kind of tool to shave ax handles? Did they use glass or (pause)

Elizabeth: Glass and a drawing knife. And they had this little horse, where they put that ax handle on the side. And they use the draw knife and one side a stone, where they sharpen their crooked knife, jackknife and glass.

Alice: What kind of glass did they use?

Elizabeth: Any kind of glass you see around here on the windows. They had to shape them and smooth your ax handle or hammer handle, pick ax handle. They smooth the glass, then they smooth the wood. I used to like to watch them. Especially when they said, come on over and get your *suhpin*, a great big cup with handle on it. You have to pour water on that stone and then turn the wheel on. When they do the drawknife and jackknife, they have to sharpen it, and then you have to pour water on that stone. And then a crank and have to crank it real slow, until that stone is all wet. Then sharpen drawknife and crooked knife and jackknife.

Alice: What about ash, where did they get the ash?

Elizabeth: I don't know, but they used to take the boat and go down the river or across the river. They knew where exactly where to get their ash.

Alice: Who pounded the ash?

Elizabeth: The old fellow. Whoever made the baskets, they pounded the ash. It took a whole day. They would get this great big tub, great big galvanized tub. They would have two or three of them and they soak their ash. And then old Grandmother will have these little pots going—shaped like a little mixing bowl, but they are galvanized. She'll have them four little pots going on top the stove and put dye. And then after that dye finished (pause)

Alice: Where did they get the dye and what kind of dye was it?

Elizabeth: I don't know what kind of dye was it, but I know they used to dye the ash.

Alice: What colours?

Elizabeth: Pink, blue, yellow and red. You should see them when they make the fancy baskets at Christmastime. Because they used to make a whole bunch of baskets and them ax handles, hammer handles.

Alice: What did they do with the baskets?

Elizabeth: They would go and sell them. Well, Ben's parents, they'd go down to Saint John. And they fill the market up, down Saint John. In them days, *kahus yot pomyehpun* (train went by here) all the time. And they get on this train and sell their baskets in town.

Alice: Did a lot of trade take place for food?

Elizabeth: Yeah, around here, yes. That was fun, you go with them and help them taking the baskets. They'll make baskets, like this time of the year, and they'll save them for in the fall time. And then after they finish selling them, *Lekew* (poor things), everybody was saving money. Everything was cheap them days, not like now. And then old Grammy will, and our Grandfather will make their baskets until Christmastime. And at Christmastime, they'll take them up to Fredericton, in markets somewhere up there.

Alice: Who made the fancy baskets?

Elizabeth: Grandmother and Auntie *Makolit* (Margaret), all three of them

worked together and sold baskets.

Alice: When you got married, *pihce* (a long time ago), do you remember, was marriages ever arranged for people?

Elizabeth: No.

Alice: No?

Elizabeth: No, *neket nil kisi nipwion* (at that time when I got married), we just tell the priest, tell the parents. Tell the priest, we're going to get married. In them days, we just walk up to the church at the top of, *yat toke ehtutek* crossing (where the crossing is now located). The crossing where the mall is, this is where there was a big, nice path to go to the church. Everybody don't go to the highway, we'll take that short cut to go to church. From there, you go right straight up.

In them days, you don't miss church.

Well, after my parents died, I went to live with Ben's grandparents, we don't miss church. Every Sunday we walked, and then we'll go like in July, we'll go up Kingsclear, St. Anne's. As long as I can remember Shawnee, I go there all the time. Even after I got married and then the old lady said, come on, you better go up too, you got to go to St. Anne's.

Alice: It's nice up there.

Elizabeth: It's nice up there, but in them days, it's not as good as like now. Everything changed, everything changed, everybody changed all over. But that was the worst one, when they moved us up Kingsclear. And they used to give those houses in Ripples and some of those houses,

*tehpineswewopnul* (they had bed bugs in them). But we never had bed bugs in our house. But a lot of people talked about it. Bed bugs. That was Whalen *ole kehte smotwhit* (trying to be smart). He don't get lumber, but the cheapest way, he'd do. And I don't know how they got those houses. I can't remember that one. In them days, when we got those houses up there, we had to lug our water about a half mile. From that old reserve to the reserve on the other side. From here to where that store is, hard in wintertime.

Alice: What year did you start getting electricity?

Elizabeth: We got married in forty-seven. I got married in forty-six, forty-seven, forty-eight. I think we were the only ones who got that electricity up here. I think it was in 1952 when I had Mary, yes 1952. But we had telephone all along. Telephone was different. I remember when we first moved up here in 1956, fifty-seven, fifty-eight, that's when we got telephone. No electricity or nothing. And then we used to have wells on the reserve. We used to have three at the band hall, as long as I remember, that's the only place. They had electricity in that band hall. Because white people used to rent that for the kids, before they got those few school houses in Oromocto, just before the army set in. Because white people used to use that band hall. I got a picture here somewhere about that band hall and a whole bunch of

Indian kids too. I'll have to dig for that sometime and show it to you.

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

Alice: They used to rent the band hall for?

Elizabeth: They used to rent the band hall, the white people to use that school house.

Alice: For what?

Elizabeth: For kids.

Alice: For their children?

Elizabeth: For the white children.

Alice: How long did that go on?

Elizabeth: Oh God, that must have went on for about three years. Three or four years, yeah. And then top it off, after, a few years back—it was just right after we moved. Well, we moved here in 1956, about fifty-seven, fifty-eight. Ben told me one day, *ehtutlekwhapitek* (it was so hot). He told me to get fresh water at John Coon's place, used to live here because they had these wells around them three houses. There's one, two, three wells, because we all shared them wells. So anyway, I came back, went and got the water. Ben said, *lihth toke ti wolsonwik ehta* (make some tea now, and make it good and strong). So I made him tea. After a while he was in the living room and he said, *kisahlta kisahciw ti* (tea must be ready now). And I said, yes. Well *cikah 'suknimwin* (pour me a cup), a great big cup. I was watching the tea while I was pouring it. After I made it, the tea looked just like grease, and I put milk and sugar in it. I told Ben,

*mimpeqit yot ti* (this tea has grease in it). He said, '*knutmin kil ehpit* (you are silly, woman), just get me the tea. So I took the cup to him and he drank the tea and *nit yahqow pemiputuwet* (he blew it out). And I said, what's the matter with you. He said, something's in that tea. He told me taste that tea. I said, Ben, that tea taste like oil. He said, it's your pail, clean that pail. I said, Ben, I clean that pail every other day. He said, clean it and go get more water. So, I cleaned the pail again and went back to John's and got water. So I told John and Stella, this water tastes awful. Nobody believed me.

Alice: So what happened to the oil in the water?

Elizabeth: It just stopped and nobody ever did anything. They never did nothing, they just closed them pumps out, take them pumps out. I told Ben, if I didn't taste that water that soon, that water would have killed us.

Alice: Yes.

Elizabeth: And now they are working on that in the Base [Base Gagetown].

That oil spill in there somewhere, a lot of them don't use tap water. We use it, but not that much.

We get our water from Ridgewood.

Alice: When you were growing up, do you remember anyone working with moose hide or deer hide?

Elizabeth: No, *mata wen kotunkew* (nobody hunted) in them days.

Alice: No.

Elizabeth: No, they didn't start doing that until the next generation. The

only thing they used to do was hunt ducks and muskrats. And after a while, I was getting squeamish of the muskrat [said in Maliseet], because there is too much in the water. My grandchildren [said in Maliseet], when I used to watch them or they would come over to my house. And I would have muskrat in the dish pan ready to clean it or ready to cook it. And they all make fun of them. And they would look at the muskrats and they'd ask that must be some kind of rat. Is it, but I wouldn't tell them anything [said in Maliseet]. I wouldn't eat it, a few of them like it.

Alice: You don't eat muskrat [said in Maliseet]?

Elizabeth: I used to eat it, but I just don't eat it [said in Maliseet].

Alice: I like it, I haven't had any for a long time.

Elizabeth: Charlie Paul, Charlie Paul gave me a couple, four. I don't know where he got them. I think he got them from Gagetown [said in Maliseet]. My grandchildren said, it's some kind of a rat Grammy. I wouldn't eat that, you know rats eat everything. And they used to tell me, Grammy, that water rat is the same way. I bet they eat anything, what they find along the shore. I got squeamish and I stopped eating them. Sometimes, I will be cooking them, cook them real slow, and early, so it will cook

Alice: You've been here all your life, pretty well. You must know all the Chiefs.



Elizabeth: Yes.

Alice: John Atwin?

Elizabeth: John Atwin used to be Chief here. I don't know how he got that, what do you call that meat, buffalo meat. Buffalo meat, did you ever taste that? I don't know where he got that, he was giving it away [said in Mali-seet]. Whalen, I think, brought that. And he said everybody has to taste that to see if they like it. They could get some more, a lot of them got it and a lot of them threw it away. Then he'll go around to see if you liked it.

Alice: Whalen was bad [said in Mali-seet]?

Elizabeth: Yes, he was bad.

Alice: Christina is a sister to Annie Saulis?

Elizabeth: Annie Saulis, Clarence and Viola.

Alice: Yes.

Elizabeth: There are only two of them left now, Viola and Clarence.

That water I was telling you, nobody knew and now they are working on it in the Base. Oil spill is coming from there, somewhere. Last fall, I think, or early in the spring, there was this great big tester going around from house to house. From Doreen Green's and then Band Hall. And then it goes all the way around on reserve, testing that water. I don't know, we never heard any results yet, but they are still working on it. And then they were saying, those three houses over there, they might have to move them somewhere. I don't know where they are going to move them.

Alice: So did John Coon knew a lot about Indian medicine?

Elizabeth: Yes, John Coon knew about Indian medicine.

Alice: Do you know anything about Indian medicine?

Elizabeth: No.

Alice: Not a thing?

Elizabeth: He used to send it to Ben. Ben believed in it. He used to get cured with that medicine.

Alice: What did he used to send Ben?

Elizabeth: Shawnee, I don't know what it is.

Alice: What was it for?

Elizabeth: For cold, but I know it was some kind of bark.

Alice: Yeah, it was. I think it was *Kiwhosuwasq* or Calamus root.

Elizabeth: And my son Donald, he used to believe in it. He used to believe that the green leaves that are on the ground—and they are very sharp. They're nice and big and, I don't know what you call them. He used to believe in that Calamus root and some kind of bark, he used to steep that. One time, we were still living over there, next door, after Ben died. And I caught a cold that time, this was just before Christmas. Oh, I was sick. My son Donald brought me some Indian medicine. Shawn, I couldn't keep it down. And I always like them. So when Jack came, it was late in the afternoon, around about 6:30 or 7:00 pm. He brought a great big bottle. He said, if you feel like drinking tea or if you want to drink water, he said, drink this instead. So

- next morning, one of my grandsons came, and I was so thirsty. So I drank the Indian medicine. I just drank, it would come up all the time, it wouldn't agree with me at all.
- Alice: I tried it one time and I couldn't drink it.
- Elizabeth: ...I am related to all the Nashes. Every one of them down Burton, out Geary. A lot of them live out Geary, three or four families out Geary. The Nashes, out this side, all of them. My aunt lived with a Nash.
- Alice: Who was your aunt?
- Elizabeth: What was her name, it was Lena Sabattis, that was my father's sister.
- Alice: So she must have married Jim Nash. So they would be the mother and father to Bobby Nash and Bill Nash, Viola, Evelyn.
- Elizabeth: You know Evelyn?
- Alice: I met her once. I don't really know her.
- Elizabeth: Tom Nash, his children, his daughters and his sons live down Burton. That's where Tom Nash used to live and then some of his sons and daughters live in Geary.
- Alice: Did any of the Nashes live here on the reserve?
- Elizabeth: No. Yes, Warren. Well his mother was living on reserve too. Because Christina married Lena's son. George Nash, that was Lena's son and Jim Nash. Christina live over there, she was even off the reserve for a while. And then not too long ago, she used to live up the hill, where you go up that Moccasin Lane, they call it now. The very first house, that log house, when you go to that road.
- Alice: The reserve has grown quite a bit, hasn't it?
- Elizabeth: I guess. I guess, as long as I can remember. When we used to live down the hill, on the other side of the tracks, there was Ben's father and Ben's grandparents. Charlie Sark and Vincent Sacobie and John Sacobie. There were only five houses down there. Well nobody can live down there anyway, because that land still belongs to us on the other side of the tracks.
- Alice: The reserve has grown quite a bit since 1947 or 1946.
- Elizabeth: 1946, 47, and 48, but that time when they moved us to Kingsclear.
- Alice: Well what year would have been, the first family that was here in Oromocto?
- Elizabeth: But that time they moved us to Kingsclear in 1947. God damn army trucks. Army trucks were going around the reserve and they said, come on, you're moving, you're moving up Kingsclear.
- Alice: You never had any say over that?
- Elizabeth: No. Well, they got those houses up there. After they got those houses up there, if any one of these families stayed here. If they would have moved, we would have lost all this land. Because the army was speaking about this reserve and they were going to take over it. See, them days there was Ben's father, John

Brooks and John Sacobie. Them was the ones, that didn't move. But if all them families moved up Kingsclear, we'd lose everything. We would be up Kingsclear right now. There was nothing they can do. They couldn't force them. They didn't want to move, they stayed right here. Ben's father moved up for a while. He didn't last for two weeks, then he moved back.

Alice: I've spoken to a couple of people up in Kingsclear and they say 'Kiwaceh (lonely for this place).

Elizabeth: We moved up there just before I had my—how many kids did I have, just before I moved up there? There was Donald, Gloria and Terrance. Terrance was born in 1950, because those were the only two kids I had. Gloria and Donald, because Donald spent a lot of time with his grandparents. He comes every now and then. Every two weeks he would come up and visit us. And then finally, when I had Mary, I had Mary and we moved back. After I had Mary, Timer's father died. He died in water, he drowned, that's when we moved back.

Alice: How are you related to my mother?

Elizabeth: Tina, her father and my mother are brother and sister. Charlie and my mother are brother and sister.

Alice: Where does old Ben Brooks come into this?

Elizabeth: I really don't remember Ben Brooks.

Alice: Ben and Myna?

Elizabeth: I don't know. I don't really

know about them.

Elizabeth: How is your mother related to Benwa?

Alice: Grandfather I think, I am not sure. I'll have to talk to my mother, I guess.

Elizabeth: When I first moved to St. Mary's, after my father died, I think they were still living then. Because when I moved, I didn't last very long. I wasn't there, not even a year and then I wanted to come back too. So I came back, because, I think the reason I wanted to come back was I was eleven when Ben told me we were going to get married. When I get older, he said, you can do whatever you want to do and I can do whatever I want to do. He was right. See, when I came back still, still, we didn't hang around each other. Until I was fourteen, then I got married when I was fifteen. Him and Charlie Sark used to argue... Charlie had asthma. Him and Annie Bear got married. Her husband was in the army and she got divorced and then Charlie and Annie Bear got married. Michael Joe Paul [Joe Shaker] was her first husband. I don't know if their sons moved back to England. We used to go where he lived. He used to live handy to the reserve. He used to live off reserve, in a big house. You know Elsie and Berna, what are their names? What is their father's name?

Alice: Tuedis

Elizabeth: That's it, Tuedis is Joe Shaker's brother and Minnie from Kingsclear.

END OF TAPE

## 12. Indian Agent

CHARLIE BEAR  
NEQOTKUK/ TOBIQUE FIRST NATION

*...we didn't have no office here, just the Indian Agent up town and his name was Norval McPhail... He was bad. Tough guy to get anything from. He let you cut lumber, but he wouldn't give you the full amount. You always had to trade it for material, like for electric wiring or for insulation or windows for your house. Because he owned a hardware store at the time.*

Alice: Charlie, you are better known as *Pokan* on this reserve.

Charlie: Yes.

Alice: A lot of people know you by that name. Talk Indian if you want to. Were you born and raised here in Tobique?

Charlie: I wasn't born here, but I was raised here. I was born in Westfield, Maine.

Alice: Who are your mom and dad?

Charlie: Her maiden name was Annie Saulis, from Kingsclear and my father was Henry Bear, from here, Tobique Reserve.

Alice: Your mother was Annie Saulis, that's not the one that just died recently is it?

Charlie: No. She died in '76.

Alice: What did your mother and father do?

Charlie: Well, mostly baskets, all the years I remember. And we done the potato harvest. That's about all they done.

Alice: What kind of baskets did they make?

Charlie: They made all kinds, I'm too young to remember what type. The last part I remember was potato baskets for local farmers. We used to move around, like Mars Hill, Westfield, Easton and all them, over across.

Alice: How old were you when you moved to Tobique?

Charlie: I was probably one or two.

Alice: And you have been here since?

Charlie: Yes.

Alice: Could you tell me a bit about you growing up on Tobique Reserve?

How things were?

Charlie: Like what?

Alice: Well, the reserve didn't look like this back then.

Charlie: Well, I guess not. I don't know where to start really or what to explain.

Alice: Go back to when you were growing up, or what your mom and dad passed on to you about basket making, or when John made baskets.

Charlie: Well, they didn't really pass it on. I used to help my mother, like weaving a little bit, that's how I learned. Later on, back in 1974, I started off on my own. But we had hard times back then, no running water in the house. No toilets, just outhouses. Get welfare, so we mostly had to survive on potato baskets.

Alice: Did they trade them or did they sell them?

Charlie: A lot of times, I think they traded them and then they had local buyers from Perth-Andover, like Charlie Johnston. I don't know what that Mockler's name was at that time, but they used to come up with a big truck. And they used to buy from my father, *Kunuhsi* (Peter Perley), Spike [Donald Moulton] and all them other guys that made baskets here as well.

Alice: How many of there were in your family?

Charlie: Fourteen.

Alice: Out of the fourteen, how many of you are still living?

Charlie: Today, I think there are six.

Alice: Are you and John [Bear] the only ones that make baskets?

Charlie: Well, Fred [Bear] used to, but he retired back a couple of years ago. He worked with Tobique Works. I guess he's got enough money saved aside, like for him, until he gets his retirement next year. He doesn't want to work now [said in Maliseet]. He used to be a good pounder, made baskets of all kinds. Fancy work mostly. He helped me some and John did. He used to pound ash for us, make bottoms, and nailing.

Alice: It doesn't look hard to make a basket?

Charlie: Not really. You could probably learn in a day, just the rough idea of how it is.

Alice: Years ago, when I was up this way, Roy, your brother, made baskets, potato baskets.

Charlie: I used to work for him at the time. But like I say, 25 years is a long time away. I used to work for him and in time, he turned around and worked for me in the end. When I started he used to drink a lot. He would work for maybe a couple bottles of wine or rubbing alcohol, whatever he could get a hold of. He'd hawk his food for alcohol as well.

Alice: How many houses were here at the time you were growing up? I remember the houses down by the water.

Charlie: Do you mean on that one street? Well, eight next to the river and there was four around that corner, and two before the church. I don't

Plate 12.1: Charlie and John making baskets (photo by David Keenlyside, Canadian Museum of Civilization).



know exactly how many there was on the reserve at that time. When you were around here, that was 25 years ago.

Alice: Before you started making baskets, living with your mother and father, did you have a hard time?

Charlie: Oh yes. He drank a lot [said in Maliseet]. When he did sell baskets, he used to take the money and drink it up. Or he would end up losing it partying somewhere. When he came back, there would be no food [said in Maliseet]. One time we moved to River de Chute. We moved there early in the spring and it flooded the brook and all of our stuff went floating [said in Maliseet]. And we had to

go across on that log there and the water was so fast [said in Maliseet]. We started off over there, we were poor. All we had was molasses and oatmeal for about a week, until he started making baskets and he got some money. He bought a little food anyway, and some wine.

Alice: It must have been hard for your mother and father to feed fourteen?

Charlie: Well, there wasn't that many at the time. Most of my sisters were married already and Roy got married back in the '60's. John got married. Fred is the only one in our family that didn't get married. I think he was a home boy. Then after my mother died, he started going to church. I

*Plate 12.2: Charlie and John making baskets (photo by David Keenlyside, Canadian Museum of Civilization).*



guess he was trying to be good after all those years [said in Maliseet].

Alice: Do you remember anyone making birch bark canoes on this reserve?

Charlie: No, I don't. The only ones that I remember are the ones that made baskets. William Saulis made his own boat, but it wasn't birch bark, that was made out of hard wood. I don't

know what ever happened to that. I think Dale Saulis has that in Fredericton. Back then, he had his own workshop. I think he had mostly all his hand tools to work with.

Alice: You have tools that you work with?

Charlie: Yes. I have draw knife, crooked knife, saw and that's about it, I guess.

Plate 12.3: Charlie and John making baskets (photo by David Keenlyside, Canadian Museum of Civilization).



Alice: What's the draw knife for?

Charlie: Draw knife, it's to whittle out your handles inside and outside rims for the baskets.

Alice: What's the crooked knife for?

Charlie: It's a splitter. Like you have to split the wood and quarter them. Make four pieces out of one; two for outside and two for inside. You're

handles are forty inches long and then the standards are average size. And your weavers are longer, they are about seven feet at the most. The hand saw is only to mark your handles. The gauge is like for when you want to do fancy work. We've got quarter inch and half inch and three quarters. And after that it's free hand.



- A lot of times, you try to guess how wide they are and they turn out good.
- Alice: Have you ever taught anyone to make baskets?
- Charlie: No. I wanted to, but where I work for the band, they wouldn't bring a program up here. And most of my kids—I asked one there yesterday. And again after John quit, I guess they're not interested. Their only interested in how much money I make, that's it. I remember when I first started making baskets, they were only three dollars apiece. But we were making good money at the time, also because money was worth more than today.
- Alice: What do you sell baskets for today?
- Charlie: Right now we get twenty dollars.
- Alice: How many baskets can you make in a day?
- Charlie: In a day, one time I made twelve, completed. Like I cut the stuff, made bottoms, wove them and turned them over like and finished them. And I made handles, inside and outside rims and nail them. It's fun, especially when you work alone, you can do a lot more.
- Alice: Are you the only one that makes baskets on this reserve?
- Charlie: No, there is Spike Moulton, Molly does and Magoo [Melinda Moulton] Gladys [Paul] and Christine Gagnon and there are a lot of other girls. There are about five or six other women, they do the fancy work. They had courses here the last two or three years, John taught. John Bear and Johnny LaPorte, they taught some women. Monique Nicholas and Debbie Moulton and I can't remember Dick-a-Doo's [Richard Moulton] wife there, but there's two white people there.
- Alice: Did you ever pick fiddleheads?
- Charlie: I tried it one day in Plaster Rock, but it was too late in the season. We went towards the last end of it me and my uncle Edmond Saulis, his name was *Poiah*. He married a woman from Kingsclear, Elizabeth Paul, I think.
- Alice: I remember them.
- Charlie: We didn't do very good yearly. I just pick enough to eat here. I don't keep them. Just like salmon, he tried to get me a fish, but I just like a taste of it. I hate to clean it and store it in the fridge with my other meat.
- Alice: So you don't fish either?
- Charlie: No, I don't. I used to trout fish. The last six, seven years I just lost interest.
- Alice: Where would you pick fiddleheads here?
- Charlie: Well, usually we go to Tilley Brook, across the river where Sam Goose [Abner Paul] lives. And then sometimes we go Westfield, Mars Hill. And then there's a lot of them that go to Plaster Rock, Riley Brook or Arthurette.
- Alice: Where do they fish here?
- Charlie: Lake.
- Alice: Years ago, when they fished here, when you were growing up, did anybody spear fish?

Charlie: I don't think so. It was mostly fly fishing. I think they had nets, but the only ones that were hand held. They brought that in about fifteen years ago, netting with a gill net, or whatever they're called.

Alice: What about hunting?

Charlie: Hunting, I used to do a lot of hunting here as well. And you hardly ever see anyone hunting with a bow, it's always a gun.

Alice: Nobody hunts with a bow?

Charlie: No, there may be a few that does it now. But they cheat, they use that cross bow.

Alice: Aren't they illegal those things?

Charlie: Yes they are. But they do it on the sly.

Alice: Welfare, was it much?

Charlie: Not really. For a family of six, at the time when I was living with my mother, I think we were getting twenty-three dollars every two weeks. I think or it could have been once a month also. That lasted us pretty good, that was after my father died. I remember we got our food from Mildred's [Paul] [said in Maliseet]. And at the end she used to give us credit until welfare came in. Because it came from Fredericton, we didn't have no office here, just the Indian Agent up town and his name was Norval McPhail.

Alice: How was he?

Charlie: He was bad. Tough guy to get anything from. He let you cut lumber, but he wouldn't give you the full amount. You always had to trade it for material, like for electric wiring or

for insulation or windows for your house. Because he owned a hardware store at the time.

Alice: When you made the baskets, did you also make ax handles?

Charlie: No, I didn't. It's easier to buy them then to make them. Because if you break one today and made one today, you would have to wait about four days for it to dry. My father used to make them years ago and William Sappier, Albert Paul and a few others.

Alice: What kind of tools did they use for their ax handles?

Charlie: I think it was white ash or rock maple.

Alice: What did they used to smooth them out?

Charlie: They used glass sometimes.

Alice: What kind of glass?

Charlie: Like they would break a bottle and scrape it with that.

Alice: What about barrel hoops, did they make them?

Charlie: Barrel hoops? Yes. The only one I remember was Roy Bear and Baboo [Peter Sappier]. Well Tarzen [Loomis Sappier] was the boss for Roy there at the time. He would *tlikonikahwul* (the process of splitting ash to procure hoops). Roy would *tlakqostun* (the process of fitting a hoop around the inside edge of a basket). They used to make pretty good, maybe six or seven hundred a week.

Alice: What was the going price for them back then?

Charlie: I think they were about twenty-five cents apiece.

Alice: What would they sell for today?

Charlie: Right now, if I made them out of ash, it would be the same thing.

Like potato baskets, you got to quarter your stuff of course. There's no waste today. Like if someone made barrel hoops, I think you would sell them for a dollar fifty to two dollars apiece.

Alice: Do you ever use colour on your baskets?

Charlie: No. But John made some there a few years ago. He used to dye his ash.

Alice: What kind of dye did he use?

Charlie: I don't know that. Leslie Perley had the Arts and Crafts building here, like he worked for the Union, I think. And he brought a program and he used to give them dye. You had to boil the water and put that dye in. It was powder when they brought it. There was red, blue and yellow, they were the most colours that were popular.

Alice: When they made fancy baskets, what kind did they make?

Charlie: Well, they made comb baskets, fishing baskets, button baskets and there are a few others. And they used sweet grass sometimes, like around the covers and around the rim. They hand bind them, they don't nail them or nothing.

Alice: Is that the best way to make a basket? To bind them?

Charlie: For them, I suppose. Instead of having somebody hoop them, all you need is two strips of solid ash.

Alice: That guy downstairs that is pounding ash, who is he?

Charlie: He's name is Maynard LaPorte.

He was born in Caribou. I think he's moved over here the last 15 years. I think he's about fifty years old, but he was brought up in Caribou, Woodland, New Sweden, in all them areas in Caribou way. And his parents made baskets as well.

Alice: What kind of tool do you use for pounding ash?

Charlie: Just, thing I use is drawing knife. Water and ashes to mark your ash, so you will know where you already pounded your ash. So you don't lose your (pause)

Alice: How long does a stick have to be pounded?

Charlie: It all depends on the person, if they have good wind, you can take up to 45 minutes or two hours. It takes me a little longer, because my wind isn't that good. And you use an ax for pounding, that has a big back to it and it don't have to be sharp. And you use a drawing knife, if the bark sticks, you have to cut that. And then you pound so much and take, you take off about an inch each time, when you strip the ash.

Alice: Do you have to keep doing that, pounding the ash right down to nothing?

Charlie: Oh, yes. It all depends on how good the ash is. If it's too thick, you can't use it for anything. Well, some people they can, but for us if it's too thick, we just throw it to one side. Sometimes I'll split it once anyway for potato basket bottoms, but for your weavers, you don't want them too thick. The baskets would be out

- of shape.
- Alice: When you make your baskets and sell them, do they sell good?
- Charlie: Well, right now, not so good. There are only a few farmers we have left for potato harvesting, you know, hand picking. We have about nine people right now and then after September, they won't sell at all until next year again.
- When we first started, John, back in 1974, we used to make them year round. I think we made forty-nine hundred baskets one year.
- Alice: That's a lot.
- Charlie: I know, well, Donald Saulis bought a lot. He got a loan from the bank, bought three thousand, I think.
- Alice: What did he do with them?
- Charlie: He just stored them, he already sold them in the summer. But after we got done with him, we still had to work and peddle. We took our baskets way down to Houlton, Jewel Brothers and Mars Hill, Hershhal Smith bought a lot and Brennan's. And by the time we're done with them, it's time for the local farmers to start buying them around here. There was big demand for them back then. There wasn't just us, there were three or four other families at the time making baskets. But now I think Spike [Donald Moulton] makes a few. Right now they are mostly feather baskets and fancy work.
- Alice: What kind of activities did the people do here? Did they have any dances?
- Charlie: They used to have weekly dances here at the time, as far back as I could remember. I don't remember when the old hall was there, just hardly remember it being there. Either they burned it down or tore it down and made that new one, where that one is now. The school, I went to school back in the '50's. Yes, I think the last time I went to school was in 1957, then I got transferred to Perth for high school.
- Alice: What kind of dances did they have?
- Charlie: Just like any other dances, but they had Pow Wows. And like St. Anne's, they used to celebrate that as well. And have a field day and labour day, they have another time here. They used to have people coming in from Old Town or Princeton or Eastport.
- Alice: Did they hold any square dances, like for the old people?
- Charlie: Well, it was all mixed at the time, little bit of rock and roll, waltzes and square dancing. But today, what they all go for is what you see on TV.
- Alice: Do you remember any of the older Indians playing musical instruments?
- Charlie: Oh, yes. There was George Perley, he used to play the saxophone. Pious [Perley] played an organ, Peter Perley used to play the fiddle, it was called the Perley Band at the time. Because they were all brothers. Just like us now, there's me, Boy [Anthony Bear] Fred, John and Roy. We all played instruments. Sally [Bear] played a little bit and our sister, but she just lost it after she got older. And

I don't know if they had an Indian drummer back then or... I don't quite remember, but the only one left is Pious. George and Freddie, Freddie died, he was the one that was living in Houlton, Houlton Reserve.

Alice: I wonder who taught these people, like years ago, to play violin, saxophone, they must have picked it up themselves?

Charlie: I think, well, *Kunuhsi* [Peter Perley] he played by note. *Kunuhsi*, like he used to play them b-flat. Well, it was all flats when they played in church as well. But for Pious, there I think it was mostly free hand. Or someone would buy a book in a store, how to cord, I guess, by hand. I tried that once, I couldn't teach myself.

Alice: Well, some people can't read.

Charlie: Well, I can read.

Alice: I mean the music.

Charlie: When I think about it, it's easier. The way the music sounded, what you hear. It's a lot easier for me to learn on an organ. Just like the guitar. That's how me and Boy [Anthony Bear] learned. We used to steal John Bear's guitar and Fred's fiddle, that's how we learned. And after a while, for about a year, we got better. Then we used to play for them when they drank. Then we got into a band. We played in a band for about 15 years for Percy Ennis. Our band was called Night Hawks and we played for dances. We went on TV, radio. Went on a tour for about four months. We started off in Grand Falls, went around to Restigouche, Tracadie

and all them places back there. And we came back through Woodstock, we went right around the coast there. It was enjoyable.

Alice: Are there any legends or stories regarding Tobique itself?

Charlie: There has to be, but I don't remember any really.

Alice: I would have to speak to someone a little older?

Charlie: Probably, Sam Goose [Abner Paul] or Pat Paul or Spike [Donald Moulton] and Molly [Mary Moulton].

Alice: How long do you think, will you be forever making baskets?

Charlie: Hopefully, as long as the potato baskets are in demand. I'll be making them another few more years.

Alice: Where do you get your ash? You have quite a bit of it out there.

Charlie: Right now, we get it from Fort Fairfield. We get it from this potato farmer that we used to work for Jim Cohnen. We've been cutting there now for three years. Like this summer, we cut maybe around seventy-five trees a year to make potato baskets.

Alice: Do you get any ash right around this area here?

Charlie: No, there isn't any here. Usually the tops are dry on them and somebody had already checked them for grain. Like somebody scratched them. Usually they dry up and rot anyway. But for over there, you have quite a selection. Pat Bear and Fred [Bear] used to make them. Pat Bear was *Patrick'sis* and my brother, they used to cut ash over there and they

- made baskets about fifteen years ago or maybe a little longer. And that's where we're cutting now. And then we cut behind the high school in Fort Fairfield.
- Alice: Do you have to pay anything to bring them across?
- Charlie: No, usually they ask us, what's the value. And we told them there is no value on it. Because we don't know how much ash is worth, you'd have to use it up. Like when we first get it, we don't know how much we're going to get out of it. But they just wanted to know if we had to buy it. But we usually trade it for a potato basket or sometimes a utility basket for garden use.
- Alice: Back then, do you remember anything about marriages being arranged, what I mean by that is (pause)
- Charlie: Traditional?
- Alice: No, not traditional. Was anybody picked for you, like when you were growing up, did you have to marry a certain girl.
- Charlie: No, not even when you got a woman pregnant. If she was going to have your kid, nobody says you have to marry her. It was you're own decision at the time I was growing up, or after I grew up I should say. I never seen it. They used to say, they would take, they would take a horse wagon to Grand Falls. There used to be a road there along the river, I guess, a long time ago, that's how they travelled. Some of them got married in Grand Falls.
- Alice: When women were having their children, were they taken to a hospital or were their children born at home or did they have a midwife to do all of this.
- Charlie: Well, my mother used to be a midwife. I remember her delivering two kids, was Carmel Ennis and Carol Scott, at that time. And she was the one that brought me into this world. But we did have a hospital back then and we had sisters [nuns] operating it.
- Alice: It wasn't on the reserve was it?
- Charlie: Yes.
- Alice: What year would that have been?
- Charlie: It must have been in the early forties or thirties. They just tore that building down last year. That big white one that was there. Clifford Solomon lived there, that was our hospital then. But I don't remember who the doctor was at that time. They used to have to come from Perth.
- Alice: There must have been a lot of children born here. When someone died did they have any traditional ceremonies?
- Charlie: No. Just lately they have, a Nation House it's called. And they reserved all that area and they have three buried up there now. There's Roy and Juanita, and Kroontie [Tony Bear]
- Alice: Roy is your brother?
- Charlie: Yes.
- Alice: Juanita Perley?
- Charlie: Not Juanita, but Marjorie Perley. Juanita is the one doing the ceremonies now. They'll take them to

the church and they'll take them up there for the last ceremonies.

Alice: Is it only for Indians?

Charlie: The only time a white person goes there is if they bring supplies, like a stove.

Alice: So is there a lot of traditional people on the Tobique Reserve?

Charlie: I think so, if you get to talk to them a lot. But myself, I don't believe it. I haven't seen it. I don't believe in their medicine, that talking stick or the feather. I don't really understand how it could cure anybody. I suppose if you believe into it, it could cure you. Just like they were going to give me some medicine for my back, arthritis, but I don't trust it. I might *citnahqew* (straighten up).

Alice: Well this ends our interview and I thank you.

Charlie: I was born in '44, but I don't remember the first five, six years I was living. It was after my father died back in '53, he drowned by the main reserve there. And after that we started living pretty good, at the time. At least we had running water, television, refrigerator. At least nobody drank up all the money and we could survive after that.

Alice: Your father and mother when they were bringing you guys up, when they had food. I know they were no fridges, how did they keep the meat, the fish?

Charlie: Well they, I don't know. They, they must have hung it up somewhere, where it was cold. I don't remember what they're called. I don't remember how to pronounce it now.

END OF TAPE

### 13. Enough for winter

PAT SACOBIE

WELMOOKTUK/OROMOCTO FIRST NATION

*They mixed that with water and salt. And they rubbed all that water and salt with it, all over that meat. So that the bugs or anything couldn't get at it, because they didn't like that stuff. That would keep them away. And whatever little cellar we had, we hang them downstairs. Corn was the same thing, we buy at the fall of the year all kinds of it. And then we skinned that all up and tie them at the ends. Maybe up stairs, dry them up for winter and we would have enough for winter.*

Alice: Pat, were you born and brought up here in Oromocto?

Pat: Well, I was born in 1923, January 30<sup>th</sup>.

Alice: Who was you're mother and father?

Pat: Sadie and Andrew Sacobie.

Alice: Could you tell me a little about when you were growing up. About Oromocto, what you could remember.

Pat: Well, when I was old enough, when I come out of school; I didn't pay too much attention to anything else when I was going to school, because it would just ruin me. Want you to tell your stories about going home or something.

Alice: Did your mother and father make baskets?

Pat: Oh yes.

Alice: How often?

Pat: Every week, not every day.

Alice: What kind of baskets did they make?

Pat: Apple baskets, potato baskets, that's about all they made and ax handles.

Alice: What kind of tools were used when they made baskets?

Pat: They used a drawknife for the hoops around the baskets, handles. They got to use maple.

Alice: What else did they use besides the drawknife?

Pat: Crooked knife.

Alice: How were they made, back then, the crooked knife?

Pat: They had files about 12 inches long and they kept the handle right on it. And they made their own wooden handles, so they placed them in.



- Alice: What else did they use? Was glass used?
- Pat: Well, drawknife, shape all these handles and everything for the ax handles.
- Alice: To smooth the ax handle, what kind of glass?
- Pat: If you break a glass or go pick them some place else. Glass from the windows is what they used.
- Alice: Did they use any other kind of glass, like bottle glass.
- Pat: No, bottle glass was no good, because I did a lot of that.
- Alice: What did they do with the baskets?
- Pat: They would go and sell them to the farmers.
- Alice: How much did they get for them?
- Pat: I wouldn't know. Mostly for vegetables, they didn't have to use no cash. They trade them with vegetables.
- Alice: Did you get welfare back then?
- Pat: No.
- Alice: When did you start getting welfare?
- Pat: Who, them old people?
- Alice: Well, back then.
- Pat: It was a dollar and a half a week.
- Alice: From welfare?
- Pat: Indian agent.
- Alice: Who was he?
- Pat: Well, it could have been Mr. Griffith, that was the old, old days. And he was a mean old devil.
- Alice: Do you remember Whalen?
- Pat: Yes, in Kingsclear. *Wahant* (devil).
- Alice: He was bad?
- Pat: *Mociku* ( bad), he would sneak up to you.
- Alice: In what way?
- Pat: ... He [the agent] would go after that and before that we had a constable here.
- Alice: Who was that?
- Pat: Gabe Sacobie, that was my father's brother. He would come around early and say that he was going around every house on the reserve, to search every house for whoever had a jug. He would tell the cops to look in every housed to search.
- Alice: Do you remember anyone that had made birch bark canoes?
- Pat: There is only one that I know, he was from Devon.
- Alice: Who was that?
- Pat: *Cehci Piyel Nihkul*, that's what they called him. He was from Devon. They used to make them right down here, with old Simon Paul. See, the old people, they can work together good.
- Alice: Who was Simon Paul?
- Pat: You might have known old Lawrence Paul from Kingsclear, he married my sister Mary.
- Alice: Did you do any fiddleheading?
- Pat: Quite a bit. A good way to make a few dollars.
- Alice: Where did you fiddlehead?
- Pat: Cat's Island, Oromocto Island and Middle Island. We used to camp out when we went further. Ox Island, Gilbert's Island, we moved right down.
- Alice: Were you ever on a house boat?
- Pat: No, we used canoes.
- Alice: You had to travel by canoe every

Plate 13.1: Alice Polchies and Pat's brother, John Sacobie, the son of Sadie and Andrew (Raccoon) Sacobie. (University of New Brunswick Archives, 75-1898).



where you went?  
Pat: Yes, any where there were no out boards. Then that is how come young fellows are lazy now, if they had outboards, they won't paddle.  
Alice: Have you been on down that way, St. Mary's?  
Pat: Up on those islands?  
Alice: Yes.  
Pat: I had a chance to go there.  
Alice: You must know quite a few

people in Devon?  
Pat: Oh, yes. I don't know about Dan Paul and Joe Paul. I don't know whether they ever went fiddleheading or not. I know Frank Paul and his brother Pete. And Frank Sacobie, way down below the old reserve, the one they call *Polons*.  
Alice: So when they made their baskets, did they ever put colour on them?  
Pat: Solomon Paul and his wife, they would buy that dye, any colour they

- want.
- Alice: No one ever made homemade dye out of berries (pause)
- Pat: No they can't, they had to buy it in packages.
- Alice: Do you know anything about Indian Point?
- Pat: No. I've never been there.
- Alice: What about Jemseg?
- Pat: Warren Nash took us down there, we were looking at where the people were working, what they're looking for we don't know.
- Alice: Were you ever there as a young fellow?
- Pat: Ajemseg, no. As far as I went was Oromocto Island, Middle Island.
- Alice: John Sacobie was your brother?
- Pat: Yes.
- Alice: Did he ever tell you about Indian medicine, could you tell me something about that?
- Pat: Well, there is all kinds of it out here. What he used to use, but I only know one kind.
- Alice: What kind is that?
- Pat: Hemlock, bark.
- Alice: What was that used for?
- Pat: You cut it in small pieces, boil it and what else is mixed in it, I don't know.
- Alice: Is that the same thing as *Kiwhosuwassq*?
- Pat: No, that's a different kind.
- Alice: What's *Kiwhosuwassq*?
- Pat: Calamus root.
- Alice: When they made birch bark canoes, how did they go about getting this birch bark?
- Pat: They usually get that in the winter-time. They move way out to Portabello, that's where you see all the birch trees about as big as a barrel.
- Alice: How did they get the birch bark, what did they do with these trees?
- Pat: Sometimes they had to cut them down.
- Alice: Did they have to split them in half?
- Pat: Oh, no. You just take a tree, according to size for birch bark and they strip that for so many feet. Maybe four feet and maybe more, we don't know.
- Alice: What kind of wood did they use for the ribs?
- Pat: Cedar, you soak them in hot, boiling water. Then you can bend them anyway you want.
- Alice: How did they keep the birch bark together?
- Pat: They used what they call pitch, they bought that in stores.
- Alice: What do you call that?
- Pat: Resin. I used to do that. I used to get that when you go fiddleheading, if your skiff leaks. Go to the store and get a couple pounds of that. Add it all up in a can, put a little oil or something to make it better.
- Alice: Did anyone make fancy baskets?
- Pat: Yes.
- Alice: Who?
- Pat: Simon Paul and his wife.
- Alice: What was his wife name?
- Pat: Sarah Paul. The baskets look so lovely. They would lug them from their house. We used to haul them with a hand sled up to the old station.

When the train goes up in the morning to Fredericton, they load up right there.

Alice: Did it cost much to get on the train?

Pat: About fifty cents.

Alice: To go all the way to Fredericton?

Pat: Yes.

Alice: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Pat: I had quite a few but I still got (pause) My sisters are all dead.

Alice: Do you have any more brothers that are living?

Pat: No, brothers no.

Alice: So you're all by yourself?

Pat: Just my sons now, my daughters.

Alice: How many children did you have?

Pat: About 11 or 12, that's fooling around too.

Alice: Where did you get ash?

Pat: Oromocto Island, we had to lug them so long ways. Right on the shoulder. Take a rest once in a while and then go again. Load them on your boat or canoe.

Alice: Can you still get ash on the Oromocto Island?

Pat: Oh, yes, you can. But no one knows how to use them. My daughter, she knows how to make baskets. I never could learn...

Alice: ...I've seen a lot of basket making on my reserve when I was growing up and I don't know how to make them either.

Pat: I'm trying to learn [said in Maliseet]. I'm trying. I watch them working at the band hall [said in Maliseet].

Andrew goes and pounds the ash [said in Maliseet].

Alice: What did they use, what kind of tool did they used to pound ash?

Pat: Ax. Whatever you can get, maybe a three pound ax, maybe heavier or maybe lighter. Lighter is no good, you got to work harder, you got to hit harder. But if you have a good heavy ax, you don't have to pound so much.

Alice: How long does it take to pound a stick? Like a good size one.

Pat: Half a day.

Alice: What about something smaller?

Pat: Maybe an hour or an hour and a half.

Alice: No one makes baskets here anymore?

Pat: No.

Alice: Nobody?

Pat: You have to buy your own for fiddleheads. I bought one down there, I have one down in the basement.

Alice: Where did you buy it?

Pat: I bought that from the young fellows around here.

Alice: Where did they get them?

Pat: I don't know.

Alice: What did the old people do when you were growing up, for entertainment?

Pat: We went to dances [said in Maliseet]. I used to go a long way from here. Even to Rusagonis, I would go with the boys.

Alice: What about the reserve, where did the music come from? Who played?

Pat: There was my brother-in-law, Joe Paul, he played good fiddle, accor-

dion.  
Alice: Who played the accordion?  
Pat: Charlie Sark.  
Alice: Who played the violin?  
Pat: Joe Paul  
Alice: What about Joe Shaker, what did he play?  
Pat: He played guitar. That was before I joined the army, that was about 1938, 1939. That was a long time ago.  
Alice: What did the women do, down around here?  
Pat: In them days, picking berries, blueberries, raspberries, whatever they can get. I know a lot of old people that used to board at my house Tuedie [Fred].  
Alice: And his wife Clara?  
Pat: And them two daughters she had. They got married with the Paul boys, Joe Segby [said in Maliseet].  
Alice: And Dan?  
Pat: Dan, yes.  
Alice: They married Berna and Alexa.  
Pat: I know all of them and Junior their son [Fred Paul Junior]. I hardly go to town anymore. I'm too old [said in Maliseet].  
Alice: Do you ever go to Gagetown?  
Pat: Oh, once in a while, when I get a chance. Somebody might come.  
Alice: Who do you go see there [said in Maliseet]?  
Pat: Bobby Nash and Joanie.  
Alice: Did you do any hunting?  
Pat: Me, quite a bit.  
Alice: What did you hunt?  
Pat: Well, I set my traps out. Muskrats, whatever I could catch, mink, weasels.

Alice: What did you do with them?  
Pat: I skinned them, I made stretchers.  
Alice: How did you skin them, with what?  
Pat: Jack knife. Big sharp ones, it didn't take long to skin them. There's so many and they stunk [said in Maliseet]. My old lady would ask me if I was done and I told her yes. I put them in a box. She said, take them outside, they stink [said in Maliseet]. I put them all in a box and leave them outside.  
Alice: When you skinned them, you sold the furs?  
Pat: Yes in Fredericton.  
Alice: How much?  
Pat: It wasn't much, two dollars apiece.  
Alice: You would have to have a lot to make any money?  
Pat: Making money, you got to keep saving them every week. You take them over, whatever you got. Buy a little stuff out of them.  
Alice: So that bought you groceries?  
Pat: Yes.  
Alice: Did you ever trade them for food?  
Pat: No. We did up here, a Mr. MacRoy, he had a big store. He'd buy them to get a few groceries for them. We had a hard time around here, everybody I think.  
Alice: Was there a lot of people living here at the time?  
Pat: Yes.  
Alice: Like how many?  
Pat: The old people, there must have been about twenty of them.  
Alice: Do you ever remember them

- celebrating 'Old Christmas'?
- Pat: No, I wasn't allowed out, too young. As soon as I have my supper, put all the wood in the house and away I go upstairs.
- Alice: You had a hard life?
- Pat: Oh, yeah.
- Alice: Do you remember anything about the 'little people'?
- Pat: I hear something, and I used to. They used to see them around here somewhere. Little people, yes [said in Maliseet]. I don't know where they went after that. Disappeared.
- Alice: Tell me about how you were spooked when you were a boy?
- Pat: Well, I don't want to talk about that [said in Maliseet]. I was still going to school that time. I was about twelve or thirteen years old. Fred and Clara came to a dance at my house [said in Maliseet]. That's the time they had those two girls and the young fellow, Junior. I know them. Are those girls still living?
- Alice: One of them is, Alexa. Berna is gone though, Dan too.
- Pat: Joe Segby, is he dead too [said in Maliseet]?
- Alice: Yes.
- Pat: He used to work with Andy out here at Seven Works out in the camp. I never worked with those guys out there... I used to drive gravel trucks from here to Fredericton Junction, Maryland Hill. That big hill, that's where I hauled gravel from Fredericton Junction to there.
- Alice: Was the pay good?
- Pat: Ten dollars a day. When the truck breaks down I have to fix it myself. Sometimes the brake line, breaks and I have to do that. I'll look for a parking place. Long time ago on Maryland Hill, I was just going up the hill to cross the bridge and I couldn't stop. No brakes or nothing. The truck fell crosswise across that bridge and I met some cars. I had a load of gravel. I finally took it out of gear.
- Alice: Know anything about moose hide?
- Pat: No, but I know deer hide. What they used to do, skin the deer, nail hide on the shed wall. Stretch them out, dry them out. Clean it. They used to even lay on them. Nice and warm.
- Alice: Did you ever fish?
- Pat: Oh, yes. I fished quite a bit too. I used to do that for my father, do it all by myself. I would do that before school, take big wash tubs, take it up on a boat with me.
- Alice: How did you keep your food, like deer, moose, fish? Back then, we didn't have no fridges?
- Pat: Do you know the old Indian Style? They hung it outside and dried it. I think the way I looked at it one time, they had a big pan. They mixed that with water and salt. And they rubbed all that water and salt with it, all over that meat. So that the bugs or anything couldn't get at it, because they didn't like that stuff. That would keep them away. And whatever little cellar we had, we hang them downstairs. Corn was the same thing, we buy at the fall of the year all kinds of it. And then we skinned that all up and tie

them at the ends. Maybe up stairs, dry them up for winter and we would have enough for winter.

Alice: And they kept that way?

Pat: Yes.

Alice: What kind of food was eaten back then?

Pat: Whatever we could afford. If you bought anything in stores, you've got to keep selling everything, across the river on the Maugerville side. Baskets, whatever you can sell to feed the kids going to school every day. They had to eat. Now the spring of the year, I seen a lot of days, we had them big barrels. They were that high, we salt our own fish. I was the one who did all the cleaning and scaling. Cut them open, clean them, throw them in water. Just like if I was doing them right today, the way I feel.

Alice: We don't forget where we're coming from.

Pat: No, we can't.

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

Pat: Alice Polchies married Jack Sabattis from Kingsclear. At that time, they used to live up here too. They told me to come and stay with them over night. I said, I don't know, I have to ask my parents. If it is alright to go, I'll go; but if I can't, I stay home. So I went down to talk with my mother, and if she okayed, I could go. A long time ago, Noel Paul, he lived in Kingsclear. He must have died there and Molly-sus. That time my uncle came, he would go visit there. The late Noel By, he said, no,

you are too late. I said I could have earlier, but every time I come here I am always late, late for a drink. He wouldn't save me nothing. I said, that learned me a lesson. I even borrowed a dollar from my father to buy them *mahqanhikin* (maple sugar). My father used to say, where are you going? I would say I am going to the store.

Alice: Wintertime, Pat, back then, how did you travel if you didn't have any cars?

Pat: Even if it's a cold day, if you had to go for something, you had to hitchhike. We would stand at the end of the bridge and start hiking from there. Sometimes they pick you up, sometimes you don't.

Alice: Did you ever walk all the way to Fredericton?

Pat: Oh, yes, summertime. When I was old enough, I walk up there. A lot of times, I pass out going down towards Oromocto.

Alice: The older ones, how did they travel? Like when you were just a kid.

Pat: Well, they had to do the same thing. But a lot of times these older people, when they pick fiddleheads in the spring of the year. They load up their fiddleheads in a canoe and start paddling, from here right to Fredericton. Now you can't paddle across the island, too lazy. You have to have an outboard before you can go anywhere.

Alice: Did anybody ever make snowshoes up here?

Pat: No.

Alice: Did John ever make baskets?

Pat: John knew how to make baskets and ax handles. I would go in there and sit along side of him and talk.

Alice: What did you talk about?

Pat: May as well say everything. Accept the good things. What we are going to do next week. When you get too old, I just didn't bother with him no more. I just had to hunt around for a younger guy.

Alice: Did people get along back then real good?

Pat: Well, our people, but them other ones. Some of them people... they were bad. They used to chase everybody else, at nights they use their clubs. They didn't chase us, we'd fight back.

Alice: A lot of people that had lived here before, not all, but some of those ones in Kingsclear today, they used to live here right?

Pat: Yes. The old people we used to protect them. I was fourteen or fifteen years old then...

Alice: Dolly and Levi when they were alive, did they make baskets?

Pat: No.

Alice: What about Charlie Sark and Annabelle?

Pat: Well, once. When they got a little older, they don't bother with it.

Alice: But did they used to make them?

Pat: When we worked at the old band hall. Ah, we done a lot of work.

Alice: Did Timer ever make baskets?

Pat: No. All the young fellows always did was to haul wood for our people.

Hand sled, loads of wood. I used to do that in Devon. Nowly [Noel Polchies], *Qumuci*, I used to haul wood for them. I stayed there all winter one time. One time Nowly said, where are you going? I said, nowhere. He said, you must want to go somewhere, because you are chasing your gloves. That was winter-time. He said, you don't want to go to town. I said, it's too cold. He too had a jug, he wanted to get a couple drinks of my jug. Maybe some other night. Some other night, he said, I will give you a dollar, go to the show in town. How could I go to the show? I just made it to the bus going to Oromocto, I got on and rode to Oromocto. Boy, next day, two or three in the afternoon, here they come. *Qumuci* and Nowly asking, where is he? They said, he is upstairs. *Qumuci* came up and said, why did you do that? I said, sometimes I miss my father and my mother. He said, why didn't you say so, we would have brought you here. I said, I did not want to bother you. I am done cording wood for you.

Alice: Do you still miss them?

Pat: Now, I miss them when I walk along Fredericton, because I know they are gone. How's Evangeline?

Alice: She's dead too, Louise too. She used to make baskets. I remember her making little cradles, they were so beautiful. She would dye her ash too. I think a lot of them used to make baskets there, but I don't think anybody does now. Mike Sacobie, he



Plate 13.2: Lawrence Paul and his wife Mary Sacobie; Pat's sister and brother-in-law (University of New Brunswick Archives, 75-1904).



makes the odd basket, the potato basket, fiddlehead basket.

Pat: That would be *Polons'* (Frank's) son Mike. You know what happen the other day? A young fellow come over here, I don't know what he was looking for. Some young fellows around here, I said, you want to buy something? He said, I would love to. He said, what are you going to sell me. I said, I will let you have them real cheap. He didn't crack a smile, he believed me and I kept a straight face. I said, I got mosquitoes around here for sale. If you don't want to buy

them, I'll let you have them for credit and you can pick them up any time you want.

Alice: How do you find life today?

Pat: It's way better than in my younger days, because I don't have to work so hard now. I may as well say I don't work anymore. My legs are bothering me, my hips. I can't walk good, or I have to use my cane to steady myself. If it wasn't for my cane, I would be crawling.

Alice: I thank you very much for letting me interview you. END OF TAPE

## 14. Old time fiddling music

### PIOUS AND HARRIET PERLEY NEQOTKUK/TOBIQUE FIRST NATION

*...he used to have an orchestra and he played. My father played the violin and my older sister plays piano. And one of my brothers plays the saxophone and my other brother played the trombone. And the other brother played the drums. And then my uncle, my father taught my uncle how to play the violin. And they harmonized as they played. And they played all the old time fiddling music, because my father read music. He was a regular taught musician, he also played the coronet in the 69th regiment band. So that's where we got all our music. - Pious Perley*

*Long time ago, we didn't have any dams, so we had all kinds of islands. Even on the Tobique side and the Saint John River. - Harriet Perley*

Alice: Pious and Harriet, have you lived on the Tobique all your lives?

Pious: I was born here in 1925 and we moved out in 1931-32, somewhere around there. When my father moved over to Fort Fairfield.

Alice: What was your father's name?

Pious: Joseph Perley.

Alice: And your mother?

Pious: Annie Perley, she was Annie Moulton.

Alice: Who is your mother Harriet?

Harriet: Florence Deveau.

Alice: And your father?

Harriet: Thomas Paul from *Pilick* (Kingsclear).

Alice: It's amazing when I go around these reserves, there is somebody

from St. Mary's or someone is from Tobique. From different areas, they are not from the same reserve. What did your mom and dad do? Did they make baskets?

Pious: Yes. They both knew all the Indian crafts, everything. And my mother, she made fancy baskets of all kinds and she even put leather on the *akomok* (snowshoes). She used to weave all that in the inside of the snowshoes.

Alice: ...When they made baskets, did they make potato baskets also, along with fancy baskets?

Pious: Yes. My father had a form. He made a form, so his baskets were uniformed. Four baskets to a barrel.

That's the way they were. I used to watch them make the baskets. I used to go with him, wherever that car went, I went. When I was just about four or five—when you can just barely begin to remember—I used to go with them when they went after ash. And me and my dad and two of my brothers maybe. And they would pound the ash, right out there by the stream. Usually the ash is by the stream, brook, because it needs a lot of moisture from there. I could see how they peel the stuff from them and

process it. And cut it, smoothing it out. And they cut it exactly the right size of the length of the ash and start weaving. Then they make the bottom first and all these, what we call splints, are sticking out, standards. And then my brother used to take that bottom, with them sticking out and nail that right to the form, with a couple of board nails. One on top and bottom and that would hold it. Then he would bend the standards and he'd start weaving and that thing just circulates. They used that form, had

*Plate 14.1: Snowshoes (photo by Viktoria Kramer).*



one of those like an 'x' off of a car and it was in a barrel, like this. That 'x' went on top of the barrel, on one side of the barrel, and pointed down about 45 degrees down. Down here was a place where he could, and that would turn. So as he is weaving, that thing would turn. And that was easy and it was fast once you got it going. It's better than holding it on your lap, because you're standing up. And then they cut the whole thing, that's making potato baskets. Dad would make the handles and also the rims for the baskets.

Alice: As you were watching them make baskets, what kind of tools did they have?

Pious: Well, one of the things is what we call the 'horse', that's what we used and it's kind of hard to describe.

Alice: I know what you mean, I've seen them.

Pious: Yes. Anyway, he had a nice one and he operated that with his feet. He puts his feet down, the thing comes down and it holds the ash. And he takes his drawing knife and start up. I had to laugh, I always thought it looks funny. As I look at it now, my father was a fast worker. You know, especially when he was in a hurry. He was making a nice hoop and he was using a drawing knife so fast, he cut that right in two. You talk about swearing, you'd think he was praying. And he wasn't the type of person to swear either. There came a time when he did.

Alice: So what else did they have, they

had drawing knife, they had crooked knife?

Pious: Yes, crooked knife. What he used to do, to make these crooked knives, he would carve them with all different designs. Like he would kind of beautify the whole thing. He used to do that with sticks and a jack knife, it was like a hobby.

Alice: He must have been good with working with wood?

Pious: Yes, that's exactly it. There wasn't anything that he couldn't make. As long as he knew what it looked like before and he could duplicate it, the way it is.

Alice: That must have been nice?

Pious: He was good working with cedar especially, like those. He would make a form. Like two side, two sticks come up this way and then the cross piece and then the bottom. And then he'd make like a half a basket, like ash. And they used to weave and put that right around in there and that would be the handle.

Alice: No one makes them like that anymore?

Pious: No and he used to make those squares. Everything was uniform, he was like that.

Alice: I was over to Houlton, about a month ago, talking to Fred Tomah. And he had like molds for baskets. And I guess he specializes in the cat head and that's what he makes. They were nice and he showed me pictures of fancy baskets from Princeton, Passamoquoddy, Old Town.

Pious: Boy, my dad used to be good at

- it, comb baskets.
- Harriet: Jim used to make them.
- Pious: He could even make them cone shaped or like a mail box type.
- Alice: I seen one picture of a—you know how that corn. What do you call that? All that coloured corn anyway. And it fit right into this basket and it was so pretty. When they made baskets, did they add colour to them?
- Pious: Yes, oh, yes. They used to send for dye packages from Old Town.
- Alice: Nobody ever made homemade dye? I spoke to one woman (pause)
- Pious: I think my mother, come to think of it now.
- Alice: I spoke to one woman in Kingsclear, she said they used berries, cherries and stuff like that.
- Pious: What my mother used was dye. She would take her ash, before she made the basket. And she takes all this material—splints for weaving—anyway she would have it all cut and put it in a row. [Harriet is saying something here, but I can't make it out]. After it's all processed, after all the ash is taken apart, so that it is very thin.
- Alice: So, what is that tool that they use?
- Pious: That's to separate. The fancy baskets are smaller, now that has to be cut evenly.
- Harriet: It's almost like a measure, is what they use it for.
- Alice: Yes.
- Pious: Once you get that in there, that cuts that.
- Alice: What do you call that? I've seen them, like different (pause)
- Harriet: I know. What did they call them? They have a name for them.
- Pious: That's probably something I haven't heard for (pause)
- Alice: I've seen different, like half inches.
- Pious: Different sizes?
- Alice: Yes, different sizes.
- Harriet: I can't remember either what they call that.
- Pious: Even just making a cover form is quite a thing.
- Harriet: They don't know over at Molly's [Mary Moulton] what they call that or Spike [Donald Moulton].
- Alice: I haven't spoken to Spike yet. I'm going to see him tomorrow.
- Harriet: Because they make baskets.
- Alice: I went to see him yesterday and he was sitting there making a basket. There was two women there doing bead work.
- Harriet: They make everything in that shop.
- Alice: Yes.
- Harriet: Beading, baskets and everything else.
- Alice: How was life for you, when you were growing up here? You said you had moved away for a while.
- Pious: Well, I remember in the fall, we'd move over for potato picking. And in the spring, planting, seed cutting. And these were the two times we'd move over. But then again, my father ran a store here. He had a little store, one pool table. We were the first ones who had a telephone here.

We had to order supplies and it was a general store. Canned foods, stuff like that, candy. I remember the night we ate that up. It's a funny thing, once you've eaten so much, you don't want it no more. Maybe just once in a while, suckers or something. When you get enough of everything, then you don't want it, you don't have the craving anymore.

Alice: So there wasn't that many families then, like here?

Pious: Here?

Alice: Yes. Back then?

Pious: Yes, there was a lot of families.

Harriet: Not as big as it is now.

Alice: No, I remember the old part of the reserve.

Harriet: It went as far as where Rena's [Rena Sappier] house is. Pauline Saulis [Nicholas] used to live there, it went as far as there, a long time ago.

Pious: And just this side of Spikes [Donald Moulton], just a little ways around that turn.

Harriet: And up there where Leo [Francis] lives.

Pious: This is our third year coming up, living in this house.

Harriet: This house.

Alice: You've been living in this house three years now?

Harriet and Pious: Yes.

Pious: This was all woods.

Harriet: We've been here about five years, when we moved back.

Pious: You know where they're putting that little canteen?

Alice: Yes.

Pious: That's the first house we lived in.

And then we lived in Barbara's [Barbara Perley] house, that's almost across, diagonally across, towards the river.

Alice: Your parents being here, what kind of activities did they do, like the older people back then?

Pious: Well, what they done was they played a lot of cards. They had raffles, they played for hazel nuts, candy.

Harriet: It was 45s.

Pious: *Chelimine* (card games). 45s. They used to have house parties, birthday parties, things like that.

Alice: Did they have dances, like square dances? Did they go to somebody's house? Could you tell me something about that.

Pious: We had a hall here, community hall, right where the old house is now. Only it was facing the other way, facing east west. This way is north south. It was an old building, you know, but it was still a good building with not too much underneath.

We were just talking about that this morning. We used to go down (pause) see my father, he used to have an orchestra and he played. My father played the violin and my older sister plays piano. And one of my brothers plays the saxophone and my other brother played the trombone. And the other brother played the drums. And then my uncle, my father taught my uncle how to play the violin. And they harmonized as they played. And they played all the old time fiddling music, because my father read music.

He was a regular taught musician, he also played the coronet in the 69th regiment band. So that's where we got all our music.

Alice: Nobody taught you, you picked it upon your own?

Pious: No. Right from the time I played with him, I was only a little fellow.

Alice: How often did you have these dances? Like square dances?

Pious: There was St. Anne's, whenever the Priest wanted some funds.

Harriet: Like whenever they wanted to raise money, like they'd have these cake auctions.

Pious: Oh, what do you call them, basket social.

Harriet: Basket social, yes. And like whoever buys your cake, you go and have lunch with them.

Alice: Oh, really.

Pious: That was your date and then there was weddings too, you know.

Harriet: Wedding or (pause)

Alice: Speaking of weddings, was there ever any marriages that were arranged for people?

Pious: Yes. In the older ones before us.

Harriet: Only my great grandmother.

Alice: They had someone chosen for somebody already.

Pious: Yes.

Alice: Is that right?

Pious: But it didn't last.

Alice: None of them lasted.

Harriet: Well, he died. *Kci Mum's* husband. My mother's grandmother they stayed together until he died. She hated him, but had to marry him. My mother's grandmother.

Pious: She was Perley wasn't she?

Harriet: Yes.

Alice: I didn't even get your last name.

Pious: Perley, of course.

Alice: What about when someone died, what kind of ceremonies did they have; if they had any at all?

Pious: Years ago, I remember whenever someone was dying, you would see lots of people outdoors paying respect. And everybody felt for everybody, there was a lot of feelings in them days. And they weren't induced by booze or induced by drugs, it was real feeling that people had.

Alice: I can remember when I was growing up in St. Mary's, when I was just a young girl, no one locked their doors. There was no telephones back then, you just walk in, sit down, have something to eat and drink. But today it's so different. Today you have to lock doors, call just to see someone. What about fiddleheading?

Pious: It's the same as it ever was.

Alice: Where do they fiddlehead?

Pious and Harriet: All along the river, up Tobique, on the islands.

Harriet: Long time ago, we didn't have any dams, so we had all kinds of islands. Even on the Tobique side and the Saint John River.

Pious: Above Plaster Rock, there's a lot of them.

Alice: People ever go on these islands and go make their baskets and stay for a summer or for a season?

Pious: That would be before our time.

Alice: Yes.

Plate 14.2: Scene along the Tobique (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, P5-333).



Pious: Not in our time.

Harriet: But we have seen pictures of them, way before our time.

Alice: What about fishing, what kind of fishing did they do here? Did they ever spear fish?

Harriet: That would be before our time, because as far as I can remember, your father used to guide.

Pious: Yes, my father used to be a guide.

Harriet: Simon Paul, *Atole* [Andrew] and all of them, they used to be guides.

Pious: People even come up from New York, come up this way and fish.

Alice: Is that what this lodge is all about up here, that there building?

Harriet: Yes.

Alice: For sports fishermen?

Pious: Yes.

Alice: Do you remember anybody making birch bark canoes? I know we're going way, way back.

Harriet: Yes.

Pious: No, not here. They don't make them here on the reserve, they usually make them in the woods. Near where all the material is.

Alice: I seen a picture.

Harriet: Where all the material is.

Alice: There was five men. Frank Paul, there might have been a couple from St. Mary's or Kingsclear or Oromocto. They were putting to-



- gether a birch bark canoe, but this was a long, long time ago.
- Pious: Yes.
- Harriet: I think maybe somebody had come and tried to teach them. And show them how to put them together.
- Pious: My father used to talk about it, how it's done. He knew, but at that time, it never dawned on me.
- Alice: I think a lot of things don't dawn on a lot of people after a while. Because I speak with some people and they say I should have listened. Or I should have picked this up as they were growing up. And then some don't even remember anything.
- Pious: Of all the times since I was young, watching them pound ash and how everything is done. And I know how everything is to be done and how they do it and everything. But you know, I never done it. I didn't have to. I was being provided for and they never asked me to do it. The only thing I used to do was clinch nails on them baskets on the inside, what they put around the hoops. We had a little rail, about that long and that's how I clinched them nails. That was my job.
- Alice: Was that the proper way to make baskets, to use nails? Weren't they bound?
- Pious: No, no. The potato baskets, potato baskets is something that (pause)
- Alice: That you have to use nails on (pause)
- Pious: For better production.
- Harriet: Well, maybe before nails came.
- Pious: They had to bound them.
- Alice: I've seen baskets that don't have one nail in them.
- Harriet: yes.
- Alice: And they're so beautiful. So what about hunting. Did your father hunt? Did you hunt along with him?
- Pious: No, I was too young in them years. But he was crafty too. On Sunday mornings, usually after mass on Sunday mornings, a lot of the people would go hunting. They usually come up this way and go around that way. So my father knew that this is what they're going to do, so he went down around the other way. When he goes down the other way, they chase the deer to him. All he had to do was take them all and he sold some of that meat in the store. We had a meat grinder and everything.
- Alice: What did he do with the fur or whatever he got?
- Pious: They used it, like say making snowshoes. Making other (pause) Even for chairs, a lot of things, even tennis racquets and *supeksisik* [footwear]. You'd be surprised what leather could be used for. My father would try anything, if he sees it and he thinks of it, he'll try it.
- Alice: So you've had an easy life yourself?
- Pious: Yes. I had a damn good life.
- Alice: Some weren't as fortunate as you.
- Pious: Dad was a good provider. He became an alcoholic, like I did, but he still could provide.
- Alice: Yes. Religion, Indian people were

very religious at one time?  
Pious: Yes. Catholicism, you know  
Mike Ranco?  
Alice: No.  
Pious: He's from Old Town, he used to be one of my directors. The Wabanaki Corporation, I worked for that corporation. I was a consortium of all Indian tribes, noted tribes, registered tribes in the state of Maine. They come together and formed this Wabanaki Corporation. Drug and alcohol. And he told me one time, he was having a workshop and he was talking about Indians in general. He said, Indian, that's the worst thing that could happen to Indians, when they introduced Catholicism. He said, up to this time the Indians didn't have

no fear. There was nothing to fear. And then the Catholicism come along and they taught Indians to fear. If they don't do this or if they don't do that, they're going to hell. From then on, that's how it all started. Right up to this day, I could see where he's coming from. I could identify and deal with that problem. You know when you stop to figure, years ago, you take like Mi'kmaq (Micmac) and some people from here went to them residential schools. How they used the Indian kids and they tried to keep them from talking their own language and their way of life. They couldn't even talk Indian among themselves, they'd get beaten. And so many things, sexual abuse and everything.

Plate 14.3: Tobique, St. Anne's Church, before it burned down between 1922 and 1925 (University of New Brunswick Archives, 75-1872).



- How could anybody out of the cloth do something like that? Using us like animals. Boy that made me just boil over and I almost said the hell with it. And on top of that the Catholics was in with the government.
- Alice: Pious, when you speak of the Indian way of life, just what is that, because I don't understand it?
- Pious: Indian way of life is an attitude, I would say that it's an attitude. You got to think Indian. There's two ways, supposing that you were a white person, what would you think about us? You're thinking white. Well, look at what the white people has done to us. They made us change our attitude, how we interact with the people outside of the reserve, with different nationalities, predominately white. Because they have put us down so far down and that we've lost self-esteem and everything else. And inferior complex is one of the biggest things that the Indians have nowadays; a lot of the contributors to alcoholism. They made us feel inferior and they still do.
- Alice: Are you a recovering person?
- Pious: Yes.
- Alice: So am I.
- Pious: Forty years last March.
- Alice: For me, twenty-four years on the first of August.
- Pious: Hey, that's a new way of life.
- Alice: The religion part?
- Pious: You asked me a generalized question of what an Indian is, but I put it as how I see it. After I sobered up, I could see things better than I had before. Because I wasn't aware of what was happening, until I was sober for a while. I kind of grew up and everything else began to focus.
- Alice: Well, I guess I could say the same, after I sobered up. I think everything falls into place after a while.
- Pious: Remember, they used to say it takes nine months to a year before you get your thinking straight. But that really means is, from nine months to a year you begin to grow up, because an alcoholic is a very immature person.
- Alice: Very immature.
- Pious: You never grow up. See, from the time they drink, they never grow, never grow. They stay right there.
- Alice: Religion was a big thing for Indians a long time ago. When I was growing up, I had to go to confession. I had to go to church every Sunday, couldn't eat meat on Friday, like on Good Friday.
- Harriet: That's right.
- Pious: Curfew here on the reserve.
- Alice: Curfew?
- Pious and Harriet: Curfew.
- Alice: Really?
- Pious: They used to go around with a bull-whip.
- Harriet: Nine o'clock.
- Pious: Bull-whip.
- Pious and Harriet: The priest and the constable.
- Alice: Who would they be back then?
- Pious: George Bernard and Father Alexie.
- Harriet: After awhile it was Father

Raymond.  
Pious: Father Raymond, he was big.  
Harriet: Big, fat Priest.  
Alice: When they had the nuns here. I remember that building, they just tore down.  
Pious: They had the dominance. They had the authority over everyone. That was it. See, there was fear. Now you see what I mean about fear, you do this or else.  
Alice: Why did the Indians let these people do that? At one time, like you said, didn't fear nobody or anything.  
Pious: But at this time, the whole structure of thinking really became different. The dominant race came in.  
Harriet: Because they dealt with kids. And after a while the kids started telling the parents what was happening to them at school. Like they were being punished with a great, big, thick strap [said in Maliseet]. And the parents started fighting back.  
Pious: They done that to my brother, my brother next to me, Fred [Perley]. And my father found out and he went to the Priest. And told him, if you ever touch my kid again, I'll kill you.  
Alice: My mother told me too, one time the nuns were teaching her and she wore fingernail polish and one of the nuns hit her. And she said she still remembers that today.  
Pious: Yes.  
Harriet: Me too, I started fighting back. I wasn't going to get punished for something I didn't do. And I knew I was right, but she thought she was too.

*Plate 14.4: Tobique, on Corpus Christi; "Pamohseimiyan" (walking around praying) celebration, June 7, 1917 or 1918 (University of New Brunswick Archives, AC- 10276-7).*



Pious: See, these were dominant people, people with authority. White people. It just burned in your mind.

Alice: But don't we have dominate people, Indian people also? Now today?

Harriet: Yes, we do.

Pious: We're talking about today, everybody is educated. There's a difference between day and night. We have lawyers, registered nurses, doctors.

Alice: People got along together a long time ago.

Harriet: Oh, yes.

Pious: There was some you know, especially when they were drinking. One of them was my uncle, one of the Sappier boys and they (pause)

Harriet: Frankie.

Pious: Yes, Frankie Sappier. They'd beat each other and they wrestle and it gets pretty hairy after a while.

Alice: But in general everybody got along?

Harriet: Oh, yes. They'd help each other, they shared and cared for one another.

Pious: If somebody had a hard time they pitched in and helped.

Harriet: They'd go around gathering groceries.

Alice: I remember when my father died, one of the men from St. Mary's, he went around to the homes, like food and stuff. You must know my father, Dokie.

Pious: Oh, yes.

Harriet: Dokie is your father? He's my cousin.

Alice: Really, I didn't know that. So, how are you a cousin to him?

Harriet: Through my mother, no my father. My father, like I say, he's from Kingsclear. Tom Paul.

Alice: So, I must have relatives up here?

Harriet and Pious: Oh, yes, you do.

Alice: I wouldn't know who they were or who they are.

Harriet: Valerie, them are my sisters kids, Valerie Francis. Kathy lives in Kingsclear. You have a lot of relatives here and Auntie Malone's children.

Alice: See, I didn't know that either. I thought, like Kingsclear I knew for sure.

Harriet: Connie, Mavis.

Alice: Really?

Harriet: Yes.

Pious: Here's another thing. We talked with the one of those GED class, me and Spike, and I was telling them that my mother was a Moulton. And here was Sonny Moulton's [Arthur Moulton] kids, daughter, right in the class. And they didn't even know that we were related. And that Sonny never ever told them that my mother was Sonny's nephew.

Harriet: No, Sonny was her nephew.

Pious: Never told his kids that we were related.

Alice: I would like to know who I'm related to. Like you said, I probably have a lot here, but I don't even know who they are. Like on my father side and on my mother side, well, I don't even know. Like some Meuses, I guess. Like Alice and Pat Meuse that were here. I am related to them. I don't know about Laportes.

Pious: Maynard [Laporte] and his brother and they have one sister.

Harriet: Martina is their sister.

Alice: Martina, there's Pat, Gregory, Harry, Sonny and the one they call Sister, I think she's in Saint John. I just met that Maynard the other day. I looked at him and I thought he looked familiar to me. He looked like Pat [Laporte]

Harriet: Those are *Atolesis*' [Andrew Laporte] kids.

Alice: They have same mother, but different father, eh?

Harriet: Yes.

Alice: I'm going to turn this tape around Harriett and I want you to tell me about the 'little people'.

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

Alice: Well, let's talk about them.

Harriet: Who [said in Maliseet]?

Alice: I still can't say it.

Pious: *Kiwolatomuhsisok* (Little People).

Alice: Tell me about them [said in Maliseet].

Harriet: Well, this is only what I heard from way back, my mother used to tell us about them [said in Maliseet]. Like he said, Pius, they've been around for a long time. They used to—when they first started having cars here—they used to jump on the cars. Jump on the running board and they only go so far. People have seen them. *Cecicwicik* (Cecic's family) and my mother's brother, Uncle John. Because he used to have a car, they jump on the running board and they

only go so far. As far as where Lana [lennon] lives, this is where they would jump off. And they just go in the woods, in bushes, and disappear right there. And nobody won't see them again. And again when my mother told me about them. And when Ramo [Raymond Sappier] died, Barbara [Perley] told me, and we were sitting there, she told me she seen them too. A little boy and a little girl walking along the road, over there by Louie Nicholas' house. You know where the house is?

Alice: Yes.

Harriet: As they were walking, they came over by Barbara's. And they were dressed so nicely and dressed kind of old fashion. And their shoes were like the high ones, high laced shoes, the way they looked long time ago. And Barbara said the little girl had such a pretty coat and the boy, his little pants were breeches and they were black. Barbara told me this in great detail.

Alice: Are they good luck or (pause)?

Harriet: Sometimes, to some people they are and to some people they bring sad news. But if someone doesn't believe in them and you keep fighting them, they won't help you.

Alice: I hear so much of them from each person that I've spoken to. I think I believe that they exist.

Pious: There's too many that seen them.

Harriet and Pious: Yes.

Pious: But they go from way, way back.

Alice: Oh, I guess. Yes.

Harriet: Way back.

Alice: I believe that. I hear from every reserve that I have gone to.

Harriet: Oh, yes. They're on all reserves. Princeton too, that's where I got them beads.

Pious: They look like little tires.

Harriet: They're all different shapes.

Alice: Have you got them?

Harriet: No. Pat has them.

Alice: Pat?

Pious: Pat Paul.

Harriet: Pat Paul.

Alice: I was thinking maybe if you have them and they come from the 'little people' (pause)

Pious and Harriet: Yes.

Alice: I was thinking, if you had them, we could come and photograph them.

Harriet: I would have to ask Pat if he still got them. He had them in school.

Pious: For demonstration.

Harriet: My needle was still on one of the beads. I was making like a little bracelet.

Alice: Was there a lot of them?

Harriet: Quite a few. When we got them in Princeton, a girl by the name of Dolly, I don't remember her last name. She was the one that sent them. There is one certain place in Princeton where the 'little people' live. They wanted to make a store, a big store, something like a supermarket. IT was up and it caught fire, nobody knew how it started. Again, they tried to build again on the same place, it happened again. It caught on fire, but nobody knew, that's what Dolly was telling me.

Alice: Eastport too, a lot people seen

them too.

Harriet: That's it, Eastport not Princeton. Dolly and Coozy, they were there right near where they wanted to build that supermarket. They couldn't build. And somebody wanted to build a garage and something happened and they couldn't finish it. And they finally gave up. Somebody told them, there is something telling you not to build anything on that lot.

Alice: Something like in Kingsclear, there is a great big rock with footprint in it. Taber's Field, I think that's what it's called. Nothing grows on that land. We were up there last week photographing that rock. It has two foot prints, one this way and one that way. There's a story to that rock. Did you hear about that?

Harriet: I don't remember, but I think I heard it.

Alice: There has been about three or four people that told me already.

Harriet: Is that where they used to have dances?

Alice: I don't know.

Harriet: Where they used to hold dances?

Alice: That rock is like on Chapel Road, it's about a mile in. And it's right there, like on the side of the road. And Taber's Field, nothing grows there on that land. The white man tried to take more of the land than what he was suppose to have. And this Indian had moccasins on—that's what Whimpy [Charles Solomon Sr.] tells me anyway—he set foot on this

- rock and he told that man that nothing will prosper on this land. And nothing has, nothing has grown there for years and years and years. He could tell you stories, just like Royden Sabattis.
- Pious: Snowshoe shaped islands, this side of Kingsclear, are they under water now?
- Alice: Yes, same with Bear Island.
- Pious: We seen them years ago. My sister, my oldest sister lived in Kingsclear. She was married to Frank Sappier, old Frank. We used to go down and see them years and years ago. Back in the 1930's and you could see them Snowshoe Islands.
- Alice: My mother has mentioned them. I don't think she has ever seen them or maybe she has. Well, my mother, she is sixty-seven. Yes, she might have seen them, because I think she said Bear Island, they were on Bear Island.
- Harriet: That time Barbara lived at Louis', those *Kiwolatomuhsisok* (little people), she seen them going around back of her house. So she went to the back door to open the door for them, to talk to them. When she opened the door, they weren't there. And she saw them going or walking back to the road.
- Pious: What was that about them stealing some silverware?
- Harriet: That was Mary that told us. Mary Solomon when she lived at the old convent.
- Pious: Nekol [William Nicholas] and Louie said the same thing.
- Harriet: Yes, Louie.
- Pious: They would take them downstairs.
- Harriet: They would take their silverware and put it downstairs.
- Pious: How or what did they do?
- Harriet: They cleaned them.
- Pious: What did they do to the *Piyekotluknul* (ash shaving waste)?
- Harriet: Yes, well, Louie used to make baskets in the downstairs at his house. And he left everything as it was, he didn't clean it up. He didn't bother to clean it up, he was going to go back and work some more. When he went down, it was all cleaned up [said in Maliseet]. They cleaned up the cellar. Well, that was all right, they let it go. He went back to work, again the same thing; when he went back, it was all cleaned up again. He was wondering. That was the time that Barbara's son drowned and I think his name was Dean, he drowned down the hill.
- Alice: Rena [Sappier] was telling me about, she seen them too. Rena, when she had one of her kids, and she said down by the river there. Like by the dam, before the dam was there. They found a chair made out of rock. Like you said, to a stairway, something like that.
- Harriet: They were just like little steps and you can sit on that chair. Yes. That place [*Auskamotisk*] where we used to go swimming.
- Pious: That ledge, by that ledge those were those steps.
- Alice: I think I should end our interview. I do one hour interviews but



(pause)

Harriet: When Philip [Sappier] was dying they came to him too. He was sitting there and he heard someone come in. He didn't even look, he thought it was little Gary [Sappier Jr.], Gary's son now. When he did turn around, he saw them. Same thing when Tommy [Sappier] died, they really scared Tina's [Tina Branch] little boy. What's his name? Not Tommy, but the other one.

Pious: Well, tell her what happened.

Harriet: When the little boy was going to the bathroom, he went in to use the bathroom, there was this little man standing there. Right by the bath tub. That kid came running out. And

Norma [Deveau] said, he scared us all, what's the matter with him. And he said, Mom, there is a little man in your bathroom, an old man in your bathroom. I'm afraid of the little man. He would stay up, no matter how late they play. Norma said, I wouldn't leave him alone, just in case he wakes up while I'm gone.

Alice: Some stories you hear about them are okay. But some of them, like you are saying now, makes my hairs stand up on ends.

Pious: The unknown.

Harriet: If you aren't afraid of them, you have nothing to fear.

Pious: That's right.

END OF TAPE

## 15. Cimsahna – lets go gather firewood

JOHN ARNOLD SACOBIE  
PILICK / KINGSCLEAR

*In the morning, my grandfather said, Cimsahna [lets go gather firewood]. And I said, it's too hot. He said, Grammy is coming too. So I said, let's go then.*

*We used a skiff and paddled down Oromocto way. So we picked up driftwood. It looked so nice and they brought a lot of food. And when we got there it was about five o'clock. My grandfather had bad legs, so I carry the wood most of the time. So I made two trips, and when I got it there, I had to saw the wood. I said, Dad, what do we need all that wood for, it's so hot. You have so much wood there. You better start thinking about when it gets colder.*

Alice: Everybody knows you as Johnny Arnold. What is your real name?

John: John Sacobie.

Alice: Were you born and raised in Oromocto?

John: I was born in Oromocto. Yes.

Alice: Who is your mom and dad?

John: My mom is Annie Saulis, my father is Richard Sacobie.

Alice: Did they pass anything on to you, when like you were growing up, your Mom and Dad, like basket making?

John: Well, my Mom didn't hardly make baskets. When we were living in Oromocto, she used to work in town. She was working for the white people. My father, I don't remember him. He died when I was seven. I never seen him, so I don't know him. So, when I was growing up, Maggie

brought me up and we were very poor down there. When my father died, my mother started working, until she found another man. His name was Walter Saulis from Tobique. Me, Stevie and Clifford would throw rocks at him, when she was going out with him. We didn't want her to get married again. He would come around, he would come around again, and they did finally get married. My mother used to get my father's money from the army. When she got married, they stopped that. We wanted for nothing and we never went hungry. We had clothes and food and when they got married everything stopped. I started working and I was just a kid peeling pulp.

Alice: What years was that?

John: 1946-1947, we started peeling pulp for, *Suwahsin*, his real name was John Paul. Package of tobacco a week was what he paid us. Me and his son Willard, that was his son's name. We used a horse in the summertime and we'd spend the night in the woods. Make fire and it was so hot. And he'd take Indian food and make bread right there in the woods. Boil potatoes and fish. We ate pretty good. On Friday's we got paid tobacco and matches.

That's all I wanted as long as I ate. My mother asked him where I got the tobacco... She said I shouldn't be smoking, you're so young...

Alice: What kind of work did you do for him?

John: Who, *Suwahsin*?

Alice: Peeling pulp?

John: ...I'd go and see Pat. Pat Polchies, Smiley is what they called him. He asked me what I was doing and I said, nothing. He said, let's go fishing. We made our own fishing pole, with string for our fishing line. So we went fishing at the wharf with Royden. We fished for smelts and eels. I don't eat the eels, but the smelts are pretty good. We ran out of bait, so I said, let's get worms or frogs. We tore them in half, the frogs. We take all the eels to *Suwahsin*, because they eat them. I'd go home and my mother asked me where I was. And I told her we went fishing. And she said not to bring the eels here. I go up to my grandmother's, Louise and Pete, that's Peter Atwin [*Pihyel Missel*] my grandfather. He

asked me if I ate yet and I said, no, not yet. So he said, eat. So we ate. He said, stay here. They treated me well. In the morning, my grandfather said, *Cimsahna* [lets go gather fire wood]. And I said, it's too hot. He said, Grammy is coming too. So I said, let's go then. We used a skiff and paddled down Oromocto way. So we picked up drift wood. It looked so nice and they brought a lot of food. And when we got there it was about five o'clock. My grandfather had bad legs, so I carry the wood most of the time. So I made two trips, and when I got it there, I had to saw the wood. I said, Dad, what do we need all that wood for, it's so hot. You have so much wood there. You better start thinking about when it gets colder. He wanted me to go out in the morning and I asked him why. He needed wood for, ax handles. We cut down about four trees and he made the ax handles. He didn't make baskets that much. I don't know how much they got for their stuff, as long as someone eats. We never used to go hungry... And *Suwahsin* [John Paul], he would always put a net out fishing for salmon. They depended on salmon, they smoked the salmon. He used to go with Ritchie or Lawrence and his son. Debson didn't know too much about fishing. Solomon Paul, when he got salmon, he gave it all away to the Indians. He never sold them. What's the sense in selling them, nobody wouldn't have anything to eat.

Alice: How many families were there,

- when you were there?
- John: I would say about twenty families.
- Alice: Is that including you, when you were there?
- John: Yes.
- Alice: How many moved back?
- John: Lawrence Paul moved back, Levi Sabattis moved back, my grandmother moved back. Tom Atwin moved back here, but then he moved back up. And Benjamin. Lawrence Paul moved back, then back here. Then when his wife died, he moved back to *Welmoctuk* (Oromocto). They must have moved back about four time, they didn't like it up here. That Solomon Paul, made a garden, cucumbers, potatoes, carrots, turnips. It was just a small garden. We'd clean it for him in the evening, and nobody stole from him. He put a fence around it and he had a good view of his garden, so no one would steal from him. And the dog was there too.
- Alice: Those families, including you too, did they make baskets?
- John: Not everybody made baskets, my mother, just once in a while. Solomon Paul and John Coon Sacobie were the main ones who made the baskets. And Mitchell, he made them. Johnny Mike, I don't think he knew how to make them. Minnie Mike made quilts. Big Minnie.
- Alice: How old were you when you left Oromocto?
- John: I was seven.
- Alice: When you left there, do you remember Jemseg area? Or any of those islands there?
- John: *Acimsek* (Jemseg)? When I was a child, I never went there.
- Alice: What about Brown's Flat?
- John: Not that much. We spent a lot of time up river. My grandfather, most of what I recall, would be Oromocto Island.
- Alice: Is that Oromocto Island haunted?
- John: Yes.
- Alice: Have you experienced anything up there on Oromocto Island?
- John: I never stayed there night times. When we used to move down here, Whalen and Bakum— Bakum was the Chief. Whalen was a cheat, you know him too. *Suwahsin* was Chief then and they had a meeting. Whalen said they won't want for anything, so they moved up to Kingsclear. If they moved up, we would get chickens, pigs and cows and you'd have a farm. My mother moved up to Kingsclear and I didn't know where it was. He'll use us pretty good, that Indian agent said, we'd have a farm. She said the houses would be nice and we were talked into it. It was in the spring when we moved. I asked my mother, where are those houses. And now, where the band hall sits, there was a field there. There was a row of army tents, had to live there. We were put, we had three tents, Mom, Clifford and Stevie. Look how good our home is, at least when we were in Oromocto we had a house. There were no bathrooms. Pat moved up in a couple of days. Johnny Mike and Mitchell and Noel By, that's where they had to live too, in tents. We

never got anything that was promised to us. So we went looking around, me, Pat, William to see the people. Frank, let's go get water, there was a spring there. The girls wanted to fight us and we didn't even know who they were. And I told Mike Tomah, I'm not going there, those girls want to fight. And that boy was so small. I told him next time I come, I'm bringing a slingshot. I told my mother we are not going to visit because they want to fight us.

Alice: You didn't know anyone?

John: I didn't know anyone. We didn't make friends with anyone. Molly Jack went sneaking around to get water and they wanted to fight her, and they knocked her pail from her hands. We walked down the road and we seen a row of houses. They have homes and we have tents. Noel Francis and my wife's father, Joe Solomon, Gabe Solomon, Pihyel Tomah, Bakum and Wey. Wey Solomon lived down the hill, and Elizabeth Polchies. There used to be a road down there. The place looked dull, so we went to the shore of the river. I said, look at all these rocks. In Oromocto the river shore is dirt, but here it's all rocks. I said, let's go over where the Indian agent lives. When we got there (pause) Where I live now, there was a barn there and an orchard where we would go steal apples. He wouldn't give us apples. As we left, I said, Pat, where are we going to live? Pat said, I don't know. And when spring came, we went to

pick potatoes. My mother said when we get back, our house will be ready. Before we got done picking potatoes we saw a truck coming. And I said, what is that, homely houses being hauled, not put together.

When they got here they were not assembled. They got the houses from Ripples. Army houses. They brought ten that were not assembled. They were homely, when they got assembled, there were no windows and no doors. I said to my mother, which one is our house? She picked one and said, that one, number nine, that will be our house. I said, house? I wouldn't call that a house. And she said, well, we're going to go pick potatoes tomorrow. The farmer's going to pick us up. And he picked us up. After picking we bought clothing. After we moved back we had to move into the tent, the same one, and it was so cold. I told my mother we're going to freeze if we spend the night here. Then it started to snow and I am not lying. We had to stay in tents while it snowed; and the little shelter that Walter made, where my mother did her cooking. She said, okay, now we have to try to move into our house. I said, let's stay here for a while. When we moved in—and I am not lying—Mitchell, Tom Atwin, Bakum, Johnny Mike attached tarpaper where the windows are suppose to be and on the door. And there's no out house and it was so cold when you woke up. No water, you had to carry your water from up the hill where we were. For a

- long time, we didn't have any windows.
- Alice: After you got settled here, after you came back here, did you make baskets?
- John: My stepfather taught me how to make baskets and my mother, my mother had taught me a bit, Maggie. I started making baskets, but I couldn't make fancy baskets.
- Alice: Did they use colour? What kind?
- John: Yes, there was red, blue, pink, and yellow. They used dye, they used to get from Fredericton.
- Alice: Colour wasn't homemade?
- John: No, they used to buy it.
- Alice: Do you know anything about anyone making a birch bark canoe?
- John: Around here, no. They used to make small—Noel Francis, they used to make, they were only four feet long.
- Alice: What did he do with them?
- John: He sold them. Do you know White Pete [Peter L. Paul] from Woodstock? Noel used to sell all that stuff to him. I don't know what White Pete did with the stuff... Same as Oromocto, they did not use any dye. Their baskets were plain. Solomon Paul, they used to make old baskets and not potato baskets.
- Alice: What about ax handles?
- John: Ax handles? My grandfather used to make and my uncle Tom Kiwow. You'd get about fifty cents apiece.
- Alice: What kind of tools did they have to make those?
- John: They used a drawknife, crooked knife.
- Alice: That's all?
- John: And they used to use glass to smooth it.
- Alice: What kind of glass?
- John: Bottle glass; or sometimes they would break a window, so they could use the glass. They sold fast. I imagine when someone makes four ax handles a day, that's your living. And because everything used to be inexpensive. Just like I was saying a while ago, my mother had a ration card, because food was rationed during the depression. Just like butter, sugar, you had to have that coupon. We used to get credit at a store... And every time my mother got her pension, you would go pay your bill. We never went hungry, like the others did. When we moved here and I tell you about Whalen. That spring he said, I am bringing goats. And the Indians must have got together, we were given two goats and six hens. And I told my mother, okay, this is our farm. We will have to milk the goats every morning and we'll have to drink goats milk. I said, I am not going to drink the milk. She said nothing will happen. Well you didn't strain it or anything, bring it inside, because there was no fridges. You have to drink it after. Then Whalen came to get the chickens, after they grew, he said, take the goats. There was no cows, or things that he had promised us. In 1953, Wimpy [Charles Solomon Sr.] became Chief and you would go cut pulp. That's all that was here, all for people to do.

They also had a *Sakwakon* [sawmill] only Whalen would hire just certain people. As fall progressed and you couldn't get food anywhere, Whalen gave you an order. Only five or ten dollar order and then you had to pay it back. It was from Lewises or Goodines you received your order. One time, sitting around my mother's place, someone came knocking on the door. It was Wimpy, he dragged out a half a goat. He said, we will not go hungry, because of this powdered milk and the hard tacks. Army ones, that was dog food! You had to soak them in water and you had to eat them. Goat meat is tasty. You have to eat it or you go hungry, everyone ate it. They didn't have to, they ate a lot better, the Chief and Whalen. What we wore here was mountie [RCMP] clothes, we would get them every six months. Whalen would take for himself the good clothes, shoes, pants, blankets and gloves and mounties hats and go around selling them. And what's left over, we had to pick from. A lot of times, we were dressed nice. And people would think we were mounties, with that long boots and big fur coats. I remember me, Pat and (pause)

Alice: Those clothes, everybody got them, eh? Every Indian on the reserve?

John: Anybody, could get them. Woodstock, *Neqotkuk* (Tobique), *Sitansisk* (St. Mary's) and *Welmooktuk* (Oromocto), they all got them if they wanted them. I guess

they didn't want to get them.

Clifford [Sacobie] said, what Whalen would do is go sell the better clothes in Hartland. The blankets we got were really rough and scratchy and were really worn.

One night we got dressed, me, Pat and Bill. Breeches, high boots and red coats and the hats. We went and stopped cars and then we stopped a mountie. There was no way he could have caught us on Chapel road.

Whalen said, if I find out who it was that dressed like a mountie, we'll put them away forever. Ever since that time, I don't know what they did with the clothes. I think they went and sold them. This guy Joe sold them to St. Mary's somewhere.

Alice: Up on Chapel Road, there's a foot print on a rock. Do you know anything about that?

John: Yes. Taber's. Molly Frenchman told me about that. She said that a *Kci Motewolon* (person with powers) used to be there. But this white man was putting up a fence, but he went over the property line. He was not suppose to extend it over to Indian property. And every time that *Motewolon* went there, the fence had been moved. So the *Motewolon* would take it off, but again in the morning, the white man would have moved it again.

The *Motewolon* got angry, so he took the rock and throw it fifty feet and climbed up on the rock. And said, I am telling you now, there will be nobody on this earth that can move

this rock and nothing will ever grow here on this hill and nobody will ever be able to live here. And he placed his gun butt there. Now if anybody were to go see the rock, the footprint and gunprint are still there. I went to see this two years ago, me and a white woman who wanted to see it. Someone must have got a jackhammer and tried to it cut up, but they couldn't do it. That rock is still there at the field, anybody could go see it.

Alice: We're going tomorrow to see it.

John: Sometimes during the day it's haunted and in the evening the devil lives there. Anybody will tell you that when people were hunting and working pulp; every time somebody goes up there, somebody leaves from the pathway going out. Somebody follows only as far as the field. Sometimes all they see is a shadow coming and this presence is tall and does not speak. This Debson was cutting pulp and I saw a Mochant [bad being] coming towards me. I stopped walking again, it started walking again at the end of the field.

Alice: Why is that? Why does it do that?

John: It does not want anybody to bother anything there.

Alice: Anybody ever take pictures there?

John: Not as long as I can remember. It might not be good. The camera might break, someone will just have to try. I went there one day. I am not lying, during the day, coming towards me, there are *ktopeqisol* (spring water) there too. I went to drink from one

and when I was coming someone threw rocks at me. When I looked, nobody was around. Just as soon as I came to the turn I thought to myself, I am not staying here even for a while. When I came home I told my wife someone threw rocks at me. Another time, sometimes when somebody goes hunting, guys; when someone looks they see someone running across the field. It's a scary place. One time Pat and I went there to go jacking one night. I said, we can sleep right here... We couldn't stand it. Sometimes the wind would pick up and when we came out, there was nothing. We left and I said, this place is haunted. Same with Stevie [Sacobie], same with him, he went jacking at the orchard. He had his car there.

Alice: How long ago was that?

John: About two or three years ago. He said someone took hold of the car and started shaking it. Somebody almost tipped it over. Stevie said, I don't know how the car made the turn. Another night Clifford and Douglas Atwin went there and had some drinks. Clifford said, we were getting drunk and then someone started shaking the car. And I woke up and I told Douglas, look over there, there is someone standing there. Clifford said the man standing there was about ten feet tall. It sobered us up... He said he would never go there again to drink.

Alice: Does anybody go there these days?



John: Every once in a while someone will go up there.

Alice: Do they say anything about anything going on up there?

John: Maybe it's just certain ones. Kids go up there, it must not want to upset any kids. It must be just grown-ups.

Alice: Do you know anything about 'little people'?

John: No, I have never seen them. But I was told stories about them. Tom Atwin told me that when he worked at the school, he used to take a short cut. One morning as he was walking along, he heard something by the brook. He sneaked up on them and there they were frolicking. There were seven of them. When they saw him, they were like mosquitoes, they took right off. Again the next week, same thing, and when he got to the spot where they were, they were gone. He only lived for another year, they say that if you see them they are bad luck. Used to be they used to frolic at the dam. The area used to be called Frankisisk. Because Joe Solomon told me that you could see traces of where they were. You could see their little castles. But nobody will see them, he said, the area that they left was so nicely arranged. They say that they are hairy. I don't think anybody sees them today.

Alice: What about moose hide or deer hide? What did they use them for, do you know?

John: The person that used them was Bakum, he used to skin it and cure it for snowshoes and for lacrosse sticks.

I think he was the only one that cured hide. I don't think anybody else knew how. I think just white people today. He used to stretch it and leave it there for a month.

Alice: Do you remember anybody ever, like marriages for instance, did anybody ever arrange marriages for other people?

John: No. Like someone picking a certain person to marry? No. My mother tried to pick a wife for me. I said, Mom, I will, and not you, will pick the woman. Because I am the one that is going to marry her.

Alice: How long have you been married?

John: Thirty-five years. We only have one kid, that's all my wife wanted. I said, why do we need a lot of kids? If I can't feed them, that's it.

Alice: When you were growing up and the older people, what kind of entertainment did they have? What did they do?

John: In Oromocto, mostly they had dances. They danced every night, that's all.

Alice: Who played music? Who played what?

John: This *Ahtuwensis* and *Ceclawew* and Lawrence Paul. They would dance. My great grandmother, Maggie's mother, Molly was her name. She was blind, she played the piano. I remember her, she used to call me Mikmahsis.

She said, one night when we were all dancing, in walks Sakomawi Wehnoch [stranger]. He was dressed

so nice, and his violin was so shiny. When he started to play, you didn't even know what he was playing, because he was so skilful with the violin. But there was this other older

woman, she said, Molly look at his feet. One of his legs is a horse's leg. He is not a person, he is the devil. Well, I'll go get the priest. When the priest got there, he saw the

*Plate 15.1: From Kingclear, the storyteller, Mary "Mali" "Policaman" Francis (University of New Brunswick Archives, 75-1883).*



stranger and he went to get holy water and sprinkled it on the stranger. And he went right through the floor. The priest said, you play music too much every night. You finally beckoned the devil, you have to stop playing music.

Alice: How could that be?

John: It's true, they say it is really true.

Alice: That's the only entertainment.

Did they play cards?

John: Not that much. And another night, they were playing—I guess, yes, they did play cards. All of a sudden—somebody was sliding with a toboggan most of the night, at this place called *Elomakqek*. That's what Elizabeth used to call it. A spirit and they didn't see it anywhere. So they stopped playing cards and it never happened again.

When we first moved here, this Molly Frenchman [Mrs Frank Francis] used to tell me these really older woman and men used to, say, we should play cards all night. Every once in a while, they would go play at one house and then they would play at another's, then finally there wasn't any.

They agreed that there should be a dance, so every night there was a dance. There used to be a hall down the hill, further down from the church. They started playing music, and again a stranger walked in and he started to play too. They allowed him to play.

And again a man said, look at that stranger's feet. This is a different being. They couldn't tell what his one

leg looked like, because it was all hairy. They said someone better get a *Motewolon*. So they went to get Wey, because he was a *Motewolon* down there. But his power wasn't strong enough.

Well then they said, let's get a priest. So they got a priest, the priest smeared something on his throat. And all they heard was bells. And sure enough, he went right through the floor. The priest said, you are playing cards too much. Molly Frenchman [Mrs Frank Francis] said that the men got together and went looking for lumber to try to fix the floor of the dance hall, they couldn't do it. They finally had to wreck the hall. Molly Frenchman [Mrs Frank Francis] told me this one. Her husband, his name was Weasel [Frank Francis] He said, Molly, I am tired of looking at this rock here. Noel Francis said, I remember the rock being there. He [Weasel] said, someday I am going to throw this rock away, because every time we go out, I hit this rock with my ankle. And you don't get around that good either. She said, how could you lift that, Weasel? You're so small and that is a big rock. I'll show you someday!

One day they went out. And he said, okay, I think I am ready to throw this rock. You have to turn around and not watch me. She said, why should I have to turn around? And he said, I am telling you turn around. So Molly turned around and she said she could hear her husband gaining strength. And when she turned around, she saw

Plate 15.2: From Kingsclear, left to right: Mrs. Noel John Sappier, Mrs. Frank Francis (the storyteller), Mrs. Peter Sappier; standing, Oliver Fallis, ca. 1923 (The University of New Brunswick Archives, 74-17367).



fire in his eyes. Suddenly, the rock was thrown, it was thrown ten feet. And he said, okay, I told you I will throw this rock. She said, you must have powers. He said, well, I can't tell you how powerful I am. Why do you think they call me Weasel?

They're also good singers.

Alice: So what was life like, after you moved up here?

John: Not too good, until I got used to it. They used to ask me, would you move back to *Welmooktuk* (Oromocto) if given a chance? I said no, why should I move back? I live

here now, this is where I grew up.

When I moved here I was only seven years old. What good would it do?

Alice: What were people like here as you got older? Did they dance, did they play instruments?

John: Well, they used to dance a lot here, because they used to bring a white person and teach at the old school. Eugene Paul from Devon used to come join in the dances. Square dances mostly. It was so much fun and we'd play cards in the evening. Or Sunday nights we would have raffles most of the night. Poker.

And during lent they would play Parcheesi. But as time went on, there was hardly anything. Indian generation is starting to disappear.

Alice: Did you pick fiddleheads?

John: We used to pick at Savage Island all the time. And Mirimachi and up by Rossy Brook, before the dam was built.

Alice: Do you remember anything taking place at Savage Island a long time ago?

John: I remember they used to have Fiddlehead Festival there, people from St. Mary's.

Alice: Yes, there used to be a traditional wedding there. They had a man, Ian Tyson, there.

John: Just like Oromocto a long time ago, they used to have a fireman's picnic. It was a week long. Where the old town used to be there was a small field there, that's where this happened. Dances, they had Ned Landry, he would play at these dances every night. They had bingos, but there would also be fights. Natives and whites, the drinkers. There would be a picnic in Oromocto in June. They called it Oromocto picnic, but now they don't have anything down there. But here they have St. Anne's day on the 27th and we have that every year.

Alice: What about fishing, did anyone ever do spear fishing?

John: No, not when we were young. But the older ones like Joe Solomon, Wimpy, that's all they used to do is fish. Wimpy was telling me a couple weeks ago, that starting in August,

they would leave this place and go to Saint John. They would leave by canoe, go pick sweet grass there and then would spear fish. And would go as far as Saint John and then would paddle back. It took a while, but they had fun. But now, you don't see anybody doing these things.

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

Alice: What about Indian medicine, anybody tell you anything about Indian medicine?

John: The only one that told me about Indian medicine is my grandmother. Calamus root for colds and some flower. I don't think anybody knows. Maybe David Solomon probably knows.

Alice: What is that?

John: Flowers, flowers, medicine.

Alice: I heard about golden rod. I think it's golden rod, when a baby has sores.

John: Same with yellow root, they're good.

Alice: Anybody ever use them?

John: My mother used them on Labell, Freda and Caroline [Saulis] when they were younger. We used to go pick them for her. You pick them early, when someone has sores in the mouth, that's what you use. She never used golden rod, just the yellow root.

Alice: Does anybody use Indian medicine these days?

John: No, just Calamus root. I use cedar boughs. I boil cedar boughs when I have a cold. I boil cedar boughs and after they boil, I leave them simmer-

- ing in my water. And if you want to throw in Calamus root it's all right, it's really good. A lot of times, I told white people from town to use them. But they probably say, oh, this Indian does not know anything. It's not good to use white man medicine, because they are trying to kill us.
- Alice: That's what Wimpy says too.
- John: Wimpy knows about Indian medicine, but he says he knows little. A while back he took me to Presque Isle to pick Calamus root. He said, you don't pick them, you put your hand in the water. There's a place down here in a pond, but I don't know where. But this brother and his sister, Melvina, used to pick it there. You have to get a part of the root, then you hang it until it dries, then it's good. Reggie Paul from Woodstock used to tell me, if you take the Calamus root, don't boil it, you use it right away and keep it in your mouth. It's really strong when you use it like that.
- Alice: See this picture, I got that from a girl in Oromocto. They have five or six houses there. I've got a photocopy and I was just wondering if you could ah (pause)
- John: I'll tell you who lives where and their names. *Suwahsin* [John Paul], *Kalel* [Clara] his wife; Willard Paul. They are all dead. John Coon [John Sacobie]; Stella, his wife; *Ceclawew* [John F. Sabattis] and his wife Molly Dell; their kids [Royden, Ambrose]; Solomon A. Paul and wife, Sarah Paul.
- Alice: There's four houses, I think that's all. That's down by the water, eh, in Oromocto?
- John: Yes, over here is another house. John Coon lives near where Missel lived, it's not on this picture. There used to be a field, where this road leads to the main road. Railroad tracks used to be there too.
- Alice: It was in 1953?
- John: It was 1945. I went to spend the night at Solomon Paul's and I went to spend the night at *Ceclawew's* place once.
- Alice: What year was this car anyway?
- John: 1940 something. It's not *Suwahsin's* car, maybe John Sabattis'. Because in *Welmooktuk* (Oromocto) the only person with a car was John Sabattis and *Ahtuwen* [John's brother]. That was all.
- Alice: Back then did they travel by canoes everywhere?
- John: Canoes and train.
- Alice: How much did it cost?
- John: From Oromocto until Fredericton by train is twenty-five cents. Or if they travel to *Menahqesk* [Saint John], they went by train. They didn't have any buses then.
- My mother had a car it was a 1937 Ford. My mother took us one year to *Menahqesk* [Saint John]. Her, Maggie, Clifford and Steve. And my mother didn't have a license. I don't know how she made it to Saint John, I think she paid twenty-five dollars for it.
- Alice: Gee, that was a loss, your mother passing away. I went to see her that

Thursday to see if she was okay. I was in the house talking to her. I wanted to get to know her better, so I could ask if I could tape her. Gee, next thing I know I got a call from

Karen, my boss from work. And she said that she had passed away. My God, I couldn't believe it.  
John: She had a hard life...  
END OF TAPE

## 16. Baskets at Gilbert's Island

NORMAN AND JEANETTE SACOBIE  
WELMOOKTUK/OROMOCTO FIRST NATION

*I know some used to go to Middle Island and Gilbert's Island to make baskets...  
Suzahsin Paul and John Sacobie himself used to cut wood. I was with them a few times, when they  
used to get basket wood. - Norman Sacobie*

*I made baskets since I was four years old with my mother down the hill. I made my first basket, my  
mother was telling me (pause) - Jeanette Sacobie*

Alice: Norman, are you originally from Oromocto?

Norman: Yes. I was born here and all my family moved to Kingsclear, but we still remained members of the band here. I was in the hospital when they made a transfer. Indian Affairs used to make transfers without we even knowing it. So when I finally come around, I realized I didn't know I was a member of the Kingsclear band.

Alice: You didn't know?

Norman: No.

Alice: How many of you here?

Norman: My family?

Alice: Yes, your family.

Norman: Just me and my brother Rufford.

Alice: Rufford is the Chief here?

Norman: Yes.

Alice: When you were growing up here in Oromocto, what kind of life did you have?

Norman: I didn't live here too long really, until I was fourteen. Fourteen or fifteen. It wasn't much of a life, so I took off down to the States. Stayed there for a while, came back broke.

Alice: Who was your mom and dad?

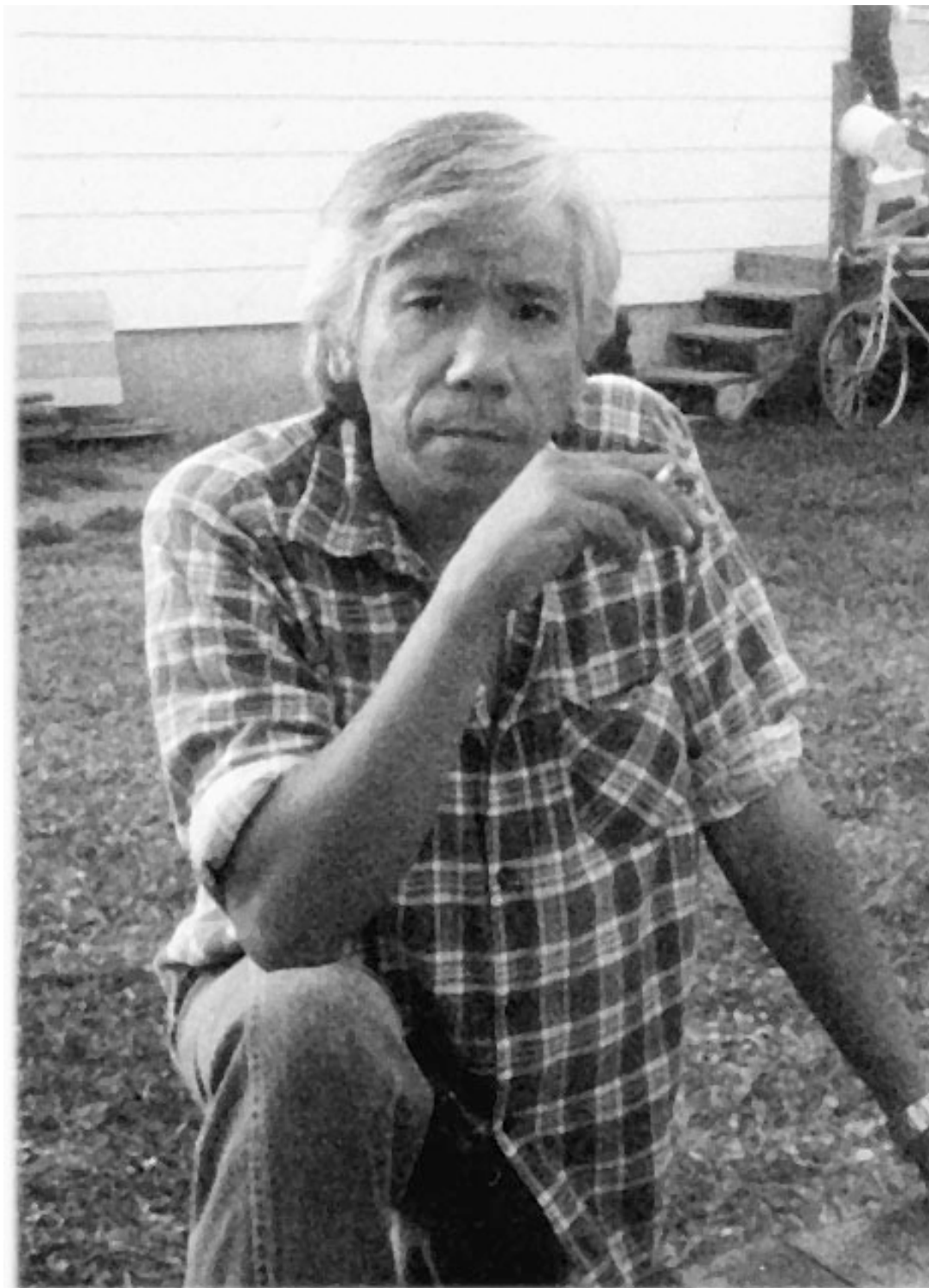
Norman: Annie Saulis and Richard Sacobie. She just died recently.

Alice: So sorry about that. I was just talking with her recently, on a Thursday. I was talking to her because I wanted to tape her. And the next thing, I heard that she was in the hospital, and that was sad.

Norman: I couldn't go see her while she was in the hospital.



*Plate 16.1: Norman Sacobie (photo courtesy of Shirley Sacobie).*



Alice: So growing up here, like when you came back from the States, did you do any hunting and fishing?

Norman: Oh, yes.

Alice: Could you tell me a little about that?

Norman: Well, we had no guns, no vehicles, no nothing. And it was pretty hard eating at times. A lot of times, we were eating porridge three times a day. So John, my wife's father, he had an old shotgun over the door. And he didn't want anybody to use it. So I kind of sweet talked Stella until she said okay, take it, take it. We could buy shells one at a time in them days, so I went up and bought a couple of shells. And I got a couple of rabbits that afternoon. Everybody had a little feast. And shortly after that, he loaned me the gun all the time; until I was able to buy my own rifle.

Alice: So John Sacobie was your father-in-law?

Norman: Yes.

Alice: I hadn't had a chance to talk to John, because he had passed away too.

Norman: Poor John.

Alice: And it's pretty hard to find, like the older people, they're slowly dying.

Norman: Dying off.

Alice: And they're going fast. What about fishing?

Norman: Fishing, like what do you mean? Just rod and reel?

Alice: No. How did they fish back then? What did they use?

Norman: They used shad nets. Like gill

nets for shad or smaller size fish, for gaspereau.

Alice: When you fished do you remember anybody spear fishing for salmon?

Norman: No, I wasn't around here then.

Alice: No. What about fiddleheading?

Norman: Oh, yeah. Me and John did quite a bit of that.

Alice: Where did you do that?

Norman: Just on the islands over here. Wherever we could paddle. He had quite a big canoe them days and a (pause)

Alice: You have quite a few islands up around this way.

Norman: I didn't know how many until I began working with fisheries. And Alex Coy he showed me every island from here to Saint John.

Alice: Is there names for the islands?

Norman: There's a name for every island.

Alice: Think you could give me a few?

Norman: Yeah, I suppose.

Alice: Well, there's Gilbert's Island.

Norman: Gilbert's Island, Middle Island, Ox Island, Ram Island, Griswald.

Alice: Grimross

Norman: Then there is Gagetown Island, Long Island, Upper and Lower Musquash

Island, Never's Island, Spoon Island and some that (pause)

Alice: Did you ever go fiddleheading around Indian Point?

Norman: I never.

Alice: No?

Norman: No, but I have fiddleheaded in Jemseg. Lower Cambridge.

Alice: The Jemseg area, do you know anything about that? Where they were digging, was it a stop over place for people, do you remember anything like that?

Norman: I don't remember anything, but from what I've seen today (pause) Actually, that site was well known before it got to the media. There was a lot of people down there, got artifacts from there right in their houses and they won't give them up. That was only until they found out that they were going to put the road through there, that they decided to let the Indians know about it. But some Indians knew about it already and from there (pause)

Alice: Did anyone ever tell you that Indians used to stop over there to make baskets?

Norman: Not in that particular spot. I know some used to go to Middle Island and Gilbert's Island to make baskets.

Alice: Like who?

Norman: *Suwahsin* Paul and John Sacobie himself used to cut wood. I was with them a few times, when they used to get basket wood.

Alice: Did you ever pound ash for them?

Norman: Oh, yeah.

Alice: How did you go about doing that? What did you have to use?

Norman: It's an old, blunt pole ax, with a straight handle on it. You strip the bark off the wood. Mix some ashes.

Get an old pot, mix ashes and water. And just get an old stick with a rag wrapped around it, use that as a guide mark along with that. And pound along that black strips, until we went all over the stick.

Alice: Was there a lot of basket makers down here?

Norman: No.

Alice: No, how many?

Norman: There was the wife's father and mother, and Stella's father.

Alice: Who would be Stella's father?

Norman: That would be *Suwahsin* Paul.

Alice: What was his real name?

Norman: John. And there was a few others like John's sister, Annabelle.

And then there was Lawrence Paul and there wasn't too many. So the wife and I took it up and she just quit here two years ago, her hands were bugging her.

Alice: What kind of baskets?

Norman: Just about anything going.

Alice: Fancy baskets, potato baskets?

Norman: Fancy, potato, fiddlehead baskets. I really like making fish baskets, creels

they're called. And there was a time when I had two dozen or more hanging on the wall. People came in and buy them right off the wall.

Alice: Do you have any of those baskets left, are those two there that you made?

Norman: Oh, yeah. I made that one, that one and there is a few downstairs.

Alice: Do you think it would be possible if we photographed your baskets?

Norman: Sure.

- Alice: It won't be today though, maybe like, I'll set a time and (pause)
- Norman: I'll probably be working by then, but Jeanette probably will accommodate you.
- Alice: So when you came back from the States you were fifteen, sixteen, what kind of activities went on here, like entertainment for the older people?
- Norman: Mostly on Sundays, they would get together and have raffles for pies and cakes and stuff like that. And once in a while, throughout the evening nights, they play cards.
- Alice: Did they ever do any dancing?
- Norman: None that I remember.
- Alice: I remember on St. Mary's, myself, I remember just the one time they would go dance at someone's house. They would move the old stove and the pipes, get everything out of the way and they play fiddle and square dance, I think.
- Norman: No, I never seen anything like that.
- Alice: Let's talk about marriages back then. Were marriages arranged for people?
- Norman: Not that I know of.
- Alice: What about Jeanette, would she know anything about that, probably not, eh?
- Norman: Probably not, I didn't know of any.
- Alice: Was there anything passed on to you from an older person?
- Norman: Basket making, ax handles.
- Alice: What kind of tools did they use for ax handles? Or even basket making?
- Norman: To make them?
- Alice: Yes.
- Norman: They had store-bought drawknives, a few of them had homemade crooked knives. I got interested in that, so I started making them and I sold quite a few.
- Alice: Do you remember glass ever being used.
- Norman: Oh, yes.
- Alice: What kind of glass?
- Norman: Just like any busted glass they can get a hold of.
- Alice: Do you have to shape them in order to use it?
- Norman: No, they just picked the sharpest part of the glass edge and just scraped the handles.
- Alice: Any kind of glass?
- Norman: Just about, mostly just ordinary window pane that was broken.
- Alice: That was very thin back then, those windows. I remember them on my mother's house. I've never seen anybody use glass, but we're just finding out that people did use glass to shape the ax handles to smooth them out.
- Norman: They did. There is another fellow, Donald Paul. He's dead now, he got killed on the boating accident.
- Alice: That was Elizabeth's son?
- Norman: I seen him make ax handles, not shave them or anything. He was real good with the ax at making handles. He didn't have to shave it or even sand it. I still have one of his ax that he had made, so he was really good at it. Even though he had poor

- eyes, he really amazed a lot of people at what he could do.
- Alice: What did he do?
- Norman: He took up carpentry, cabinet making, a couple of years before he died.
- Alice: I met up with Arthur Atwin and he is into carpentry, cabinet making. I was talking to George and he's into that, he has his own shop there.
- Norman: Jack, he was getting an old age pension, at one time he worked at the Base (CFB). He said, I don't need that pension. So he just took it on his own, the carpentry, bought his own tools, built his own little house. And from there on, he started making furniture.
- Alice: No training of any kind?
- Norman: No training. His grandfather *Suwahsin* Paul, he lived with him. And that's where he picked up a lot, a lot of wood working .
- Alice: That's the thing nowadays. The older ones they try to pass on to their sons all the things that they did a long time ago. Some pick it up and some don't. When John, your father-in-law, made baskets what kind of tools did he have.
- Norman: He just had a crooked knife, a drawknife, well, another ax and glass to smooth. And when he could afford it he would buy sandpaper.
- Alice: And that was it, that was all the tools that he had?
- Norman: Well, outside of the shaving horse.
- Alice: I remember those.
- Norman: I still have one, I loaned it to Wilfred or somebody. I made it years ago. And there's another rig there, to thin your splints down, it's over Alfred's I believe. I use it every year. One year we made baskets all winter here. There was a fellow coming back hiking from PEI to Maine. It was minus 30 degrees and he came with a bag of ash from Maine and I would buy it off of him. And we'd got right to town downstairs. Buddy had them all cut and shaved, we didn't have to work them at all, just start making baskets.
- Alice: Where did you get your ash?
- Norman: We got ours here on the islands or over where the Dutch people live in Maugerville. But now they're (pause)
- Alice: Getting kind of scarce?
- Norman: Not only that, the people won't let us on their land. There's gates and barbed wire, whatever, to keep us out.
- Alice: What did you do with your baskets when you made them?
- Norman: Just made our own market and sell them.
- Alice: Did you ever trade them for food or goods?
- Norman: I never, but I was told that old Solomon Paul and some people would walk to Geary. There was no Geary at the time, I don't think it was name Geary. But they would be gone for two or three days trading baskets for food.
- Alice: A lot of people down here worked on farms?
- Norman: Some, yes.
- Alice: But not a lot of them?

*Plate 16.2: Lawrence Paul and his wife Margaret Sacobie; Lawrence trapped with Norman Sacobie (University of New Brunswick Archives, 75-1904).*



Norman: Some did it for spare money. They helped with the harvest. They didn't actually help planting seed or anything like that. None that I know of anyway.

Alice: Did a lot of them fiddlehead?

Norman: Yeah, pretty well everybody.

Alice: What about trapping muskrats?

Norman: Yes, John and I and Lawrence Paul did it, until Lawrence couldn't do it any more. So John and I went at it for a couple of more years.

Alice: Where did you trap?

Norman: Right from here, clear on up to Oromocto River way. And we'd paddle all the way down to Middle

Island, sometimes waves would be three or four feet.

Alice: Did everybody have their own territory for trapping?

Norman: Yeah, more or less.

Alice: Were they marked?

Norman: We would, John and I. He knew a lot of people down river, they didn't mind if John went in and set a few. I remember one fellow, Mokson, he used to trap every year. John set a trap about twenty feet from Ralph Mokson, and once in a while John would take Ralph's rat thinking that it was his. And I kept telling him, I don't think that's our trap John. Oh,

yes, yes. So one day we met Ralph there taking a trap off, or taking a rat off that particular trap. And we all got talking there and John said, Ralph, I didn't know that was your trap. Ralph said, I felt like taking it off because I haven't been catching anything on it anyway. And John took to laughing and he said, well no wonder, I got seven of it already. So he paid him back.

Alice: We was taking the rats and he thought he isn't getting anything?

Norman: John was good that way, we gave the seven rats back. That was the only trap that Ralph had on this side. Well, he had an outboard motor and he could get around pretty good. Where as John and I had to paddle,

paddle, paddle. I didn't mind.

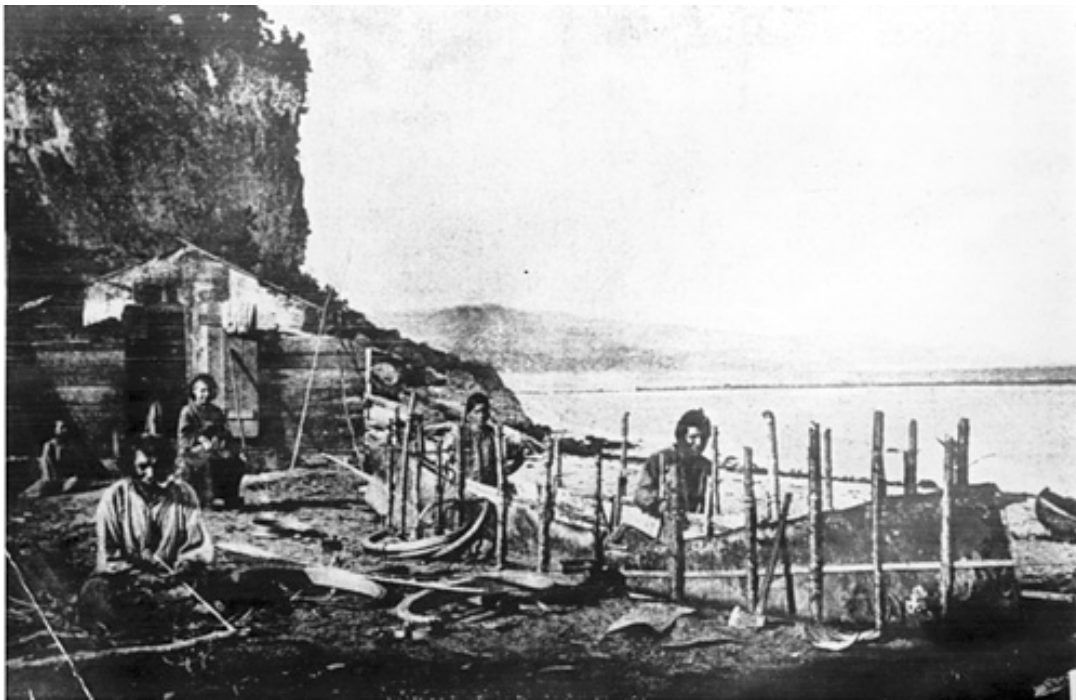
Alice: Actually paddling is good exercise. I went up river couple weeks ago and we went up all the way above Sugar Island. And we paddled all the way down to Fredericton on a canoe. First time I ever got in a canoe too. I thought it was scary, but it was okay really.

Norman: I've had a canoe for quite a while, it's under the porch there now. It needs some work.

Alice: What kind of canoe do you have?

Norman: Chestnut, old fashion one. I couldn't afford to put canvass on it, so I used fiberglass. And now the fiberglass—I didn't know that the wood was oiled—won't stick onto that wood. So I bought a bunch of

*Plate 16.3: Three people engaged in building a birch bark canoe (New Brunswick Museum, 00026#52).*



ribbing for it last year, so as we get working I am taking it down to Alec Oisfeather, he builds boats and canoes.

Alice: Do you know anybody that ever made a birch bark canoe?

Norman: Well I met a couple lads from the States. I forgot his name now. He looked more like a white man than an Indian, but he could talk Indian better than me. He had two handmade canoes, birch bark.

Alice: You don't know anybody from Kingsclear, St. Mary's that has made one?

Norman: No, I don't.

Alice: I've seen an old photograph one time. I don't know if it was down at the old reserve at St. Mary's. There were about five or six men, they were putting together a birch bark canoe.

Norman: I was going to try it myself one time, found this great big birch over up the church road in Maugerville, but I didn't know a way to get at it. Alfred and I were going to try it, just for the hell of it.

Alice: I guess they are pretty scarce, birch bark canoes?

Norman: I have a few pictures of John holding one about that long. It was made by them boys from over States there, what do you call them?

Alice: Passamaquoddy?

Norman: Yes, they had a great big one here. We actually paddled around in it.

Alice: Had the birch bark on it? What part of Maine?

Norman: One of the reserves there.

Alice: Well there's Bangor, there's Old Town that way and there's Princeton.

Norman: I think it was Princeton.

Alice: Eastport, *Sipayick* and then there's Dana Peter Point.

Norman: It was either Eastport or Princeton. Jeanette would probably know. That fellow was pretty smart, he taught us how to make arrowheads, start fire with no matches, anything like that.

Alice: So how do you start a fire with no match?

Norman: First get some birch bark or cedar bark and get the inner part of it. Nice and dry, looks like hair, you could actually make rope out of it. Get a bunch of little shavings, whatever stock wood on the bottom, pine and piece of hardwood stick about a foot long or so, sixteen inches. And then he makes like a bow with a sting, wraps around that piece of hardwood and like he was playing a fiddle or something. He would have a hardwood block up in his upper hand and when it starts smoking, you just have a little knife and cut that fire out. Put it in the (pause)

Alice: Did you ever try it?

Norman: Yes.

Alice: It worked?

Norman: Worked the very best.

Alice: Did you ever go camping? Do you ever use it that way?

Norman: No, I usually take steel wool and just light that up. And it's better than birch bark even, it will light right up.

Alice: What about Indian medicine, do



- you know anything about that?
- Norman: Not really. I watched John get some, mostly that root that the muskrat eats a lot. And he just steeps that, like if you have a sore throat or I find it works for colds.
- Alice: It must be that *Kiwhosuwasaq*?
- Norman: And then he used to use gold threads, get that under pine trees. When babies have sore mouth.
- Alice: I heard my mother say that too one time. Calamus root also?
- Norman: Calamus root is same thing as *Kiwhosuwasaq*.
- Alice: What about moose hide? What was it used for?
- Norman: The only thing I ever seen it used for was sell it, make a few dollars.
- Alice: Anybody ever trap beavers down this way?
- Norman: Oh, yeah. I have, John and I.
- Alice: What did you do with them?
- Norman: Skin them out, sell them.
- Alice: How much did you sell them for?
- Norman: Anywhere from twenty bucks up, forty bucks was considered real good. Two or three a day sometimes (pause)
- Alice: What year are you talking, when you and John are hunting and fishing?
- Norman: Seventies.
- Alice: But John done that for a long, long time.
- Norman: Oh, yeah, way, way before me. I am not up too much on reserve. I was in the hospital, then they send me down that 'nut house' there, Shubbie [Shubenacadie] for four years. I got out, I didn't know anything.
- Alice: And you never lived up Kingsclear?
- Norman: For about two or three weeks.
- Alice: That all?
- Norman: I did live there for one summer with Frank Sappier. Old Frank.
- Alice: How did you find living there, and then coming here after?
- Norman: Not too much difference. The only difference is more city life here, while Kingsclear is more like out in the wild.
- Alice: I can't say our reserve is isolated, because we're right there. When they made baskets, what did they use for dye when they coloured their ash?
- Norman: Actually, we didn't colour any baskets until we met a lady from Tobique, a Saulis lady. She put on a work project, leather work, basket work and she introduced us to store bought dye. That's all we ever used.
- Alice: I spoke to a woman in Kingsclear and she recalls, remembers using dye from berries.
- Norman: Berries and roots I heard.
- Alice: I asked her if she remembers anyone making yellow colour from onion skins. One Easter, I didn't have any colour for the kids, eh. And I was thinking, well someone said onion skins. So I boiled them and I got a yellow colour out of them. And I let them dip their eggs in and they turned yellow.
- Norman: Was it smelly?
- Alice: No. She said there was strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, cherries that they used. Probably not everybody, because you can

- buy dye in the store.
- Norman: For one little package you could colour hundreds of splints.
- Alice: It would have to be good colour to stay on there, eh?
- Norman: They boil it to make it stay in better.
- Alice: I have a basket at home, it's got, I think it's red and blue or pink and blue. But it's all faded now though. George Nash made it a long time ago. My son is twenty five this year, so that basket has got to be twenty-six or twenty-seven years old. Like a clothes basket and I used it all on them, like my kids as a crib, eh, for them to sleep in.
- Norman: John would always say, we know how to make baskets, but we don't use our own Indian-made hampers. We go buy plastic ones, sell the ones we made.
- Alice: I don't think any basket maker keeps their own work.
- Norman: I kept that one. I was putting up a demonstration up the craft school and that was suppose to be a fish basket. Everyone was adding to it, took their turn and it turned out to be a little pack basket.
- Alice: It's nice too, it doesn't have a nail in it. That one up there has a nail in it. I was over to Houlton, I was talking to Fred Tomah, over there. But he's related to Jim Tomah, Aubrey, Leo Tomah.
- Norman: I know that Sappier that died, Tom Sappier. We stayed at his place when we were hiking on the road.
- Alice: Anyway he makes baskets and not one nail in his basket. That's like what Ronnie Paul said too. When you made baskets, where were nails years ago. You never see nails in baskets.
- Norman: When I make them now, I use a—I make my own—they're not nails, they're pins. Then I paint them over on back end. I made this, I took jewellery and everything, make jewellery downstairs or whatever.
- Alice: Yeah, you do make jewellery. Tell me a little about that, how did you get into that?
- Norman: I was working at the band office and I was sick and tired of everyone giving me hell all the time. So I asked the band manager, where can I take up silver work, how to work with silver. There's a craft school right in Fredericton, it's been there thirty some, forty years. I didn't know anything about it. So I said, I want to put in for it, if I get it, I am going to quit right here. Nobody believed me that I would leave, sure enough, that September I said I'll see you. I was gone there and I went up there four years.
- Alice: So what kind of jewellery you make?
- Norman: Well, I made this. Sterling silver, suppose to be a letter opener. I don't have much right now, I sell whatever I can as quick as I can.
- Alice: You use a lot of stones too? What kind do you use?
- Norman: Yes, I cut my own stones. I get people to bring me them, go over the States. Tommy, Joe, daughter Shirley, they brought me some real nice

stones from Montreal. And I cut them, polish them, shape them, set them in metal and sell them.

Alice: And you have been doing that for how long now?

Norman: I've been doing that since '93.

Alice: I find a lot of Indians go to that craft school, not for jewellery making, but for photography or art.

Norman: When I first started in there I didn't know I had to take art, drawing, painting, photography. I said, look, I didn't come here to do this. So I talked it over with the metal instructor. And she said, you go home and come back a week after New Year's, I'll put you right into metal and metal only. I said you got yourself a deal. That was the first year and three following years, I was there everyday that I wanted to be.

Alice: You had to be there every day, eh?

Norman: No, not really. I was a part time student.

Alice: Did you meet a lot of Indians there?

Norman: Quit a few.

Alice: What were they taking?

Norman: Most of them were into that Indian studies, Gwen Orehia [Bear] was the instructor there. A few boys from St. Mary's, couple from Kingsclear, a lot of Micmac Indians from Miramichi way. I think one or two from Nova Scotia. They took mostly—few took jewellery—mostly photography, drawing, painting.

Alice: So, when you were fifteen, when you moved here, what year was that?

Norman: It was '60 something.

Alice: I've seen an old photograph from one of the girls here. 1953, May, 1953—of the reserve when it was down that way.

Norman: I was here once, when I came out of the hospital, went up to Kingsclear. I stayed with Jim Atwin. They were good basket makers, him and his wife. Veronie and I learned a lot from them too. So he said, do you want to go see some of your people in Oromocto. I said, yeah, sure. Me and Winston Solomon got in the back of this old half ton. Pretty near froze to death, we had to wrestle each other to keep warm. And he took us down the hill there, but I can't remember really what it was like. I know it was old shacks here and there. It looked terrible. But I seen two guys splitting wood. They went in and talked for a while. We weren't allowed in or something, stayed in the truck and froze. I didn't mind, it was just a day of doing nothing.

Alice: Did you ever associate with people from Kingsclear?

Norman: Oh, yeah. I used to go from housed to house talking, have tea, lunch.

Alice: That's the good thing about back then, you can go into anybody's home and they tell you, eat or have a coffee or tea. Back then, nobody's door was locked, you were welcome. It was more our way of living, I guess, but today it's so different. You have to lock your doors now. Call to see if anybody's home, see if they'll see you.

Plate 16.4: Jeanette Sacobie (photo courtesy of Shirley Sacobie)



Norman: Can't leave anything outside, lock it up. I bought an outboard motor and a nice boat one year. And I left it right down the shore, left my gas tank there. Nothing was bothered. But lately within the last ten years, you can't even have an ax out there now. Somebody will take it. Lock everything up.

Alice: Jeanette, tell me about the time you and Norman made baskets with your mom and dad, John and Stella?

Jeanette: Cut splints up, cut everything up, start making baskets with my father. My mother, she used to colour her splints. When I moved up here, I coloured mine a little bit.

Alice: What kind of colouring did you use?

Jeanette: Oh, colouring, Veronica gave me some.

Alice: Where did she get it?

Jeanette: Over the States, I still got some there somewhere. Downstairs.

Alice: So you never made your own colouring for your baskets?

Jeanette: Oh, yes.

Alice: What did you use?

Jeanette: That same one she gave me. I made them flower baskets. That picture up there, I made flowers and put them on there. He took that picture in the back, when we moved up here.

Norman: Clothes basket.

Alice: So how long did you make baskets?

Jeanette: About, I made baskets since I was four years old with my mother down the hill. I made my first basket, my mother was telling me (pause)

Alice: What kind?

Jeanette: Flower baskets.

Alice: Did you make really fancy baskets?

Jeanette: No, my mother did. I just made hampers and cabbage baskets, potato baskets, I made. I didn't make that much.

Norman: Ones for tools were, Charlie, Jim Atwin, Veronica and her father. Knives and those little—they cut the splints.

Alice: I don't even know what you call it, but I've seen them. I know what they are and you got a crooked knife and then you got a drawing knife.

Jeanette: He made a crooked knife; but my son bought it, because he wanted something he made. Where's that knife that Shirley gave you? The one that Tom gave you.

Norman: It's downstairs.

Alice: Did you ever keep any of your baskets that you made?

Jeanette: Just that one there, I bought that at the market.

Alice: Did your sister ever make them too?

Jeanette: Mildred, and my other sister.

Norman: You just make them, weave them up an inch or so. And share the bucks when we went to sell them.

Jeanette: I am the only one that made baskets, you know, after my mother died. But nobody else paid attention. Nobody else will make baskets around here.

Norman: They don't want to do anything. I tried to teach jewellery, knives, knife making.

Jeanette: I used to teach up Hubbard Avenue, do bead work and everything.

Alice: Nobody's interested in that kind of thing anymore.

Jeanette: Little kids did.

Norman: Some people do bead work now, they just picked it up on their own. They're good at it.

Jeanette: Oh, yeah. Little kids around here, they make key chains and everything.

Alice: Theresa Sacobie, eh, she's still into that. I've gone to see her a few times and she's always putting together something with beads.

Norman: It's hard on the eyes.

Alice: And she really works with detail.

Jeanette: She makes baskets. Nobody don't pound ash for you.

Alice: She used to make them. I don't think anybody is pounding ash anymore.

Norman: Joe Green's got a stick over there. I am going to make a basket for them this week.

Alice: I'd like to go and talk to Joey Green. I was talking to Tommy last week when I was over talking to Charlie. And Tommy says that Grandfather passed on a lot of things to Joey.

Norman: His medicine, Joey made a portfolio of it and wrote down samples. But I don't know where that (pause)

Jeanette: Joey is a good talker.

Alice: I tried to get a hold of him last week. I went over to his place, his truck was there, but there was no answer at the door. Maybe he is a hard person to get a hold of.

Jeanette: He usually parks his car behind his house.

Alice: No, it was right up front there.

Jeanette: His wife teaches school up here.

Alice: Well, I want to talk to Joey.

Alice: I thank you for this interview and maybe sometime again, maybe.

END OF TAPE



## 17. Living off the earth

GLORIA NASH  
GAGETOWN

*Well, when I first come around, Mildred and Bill—Mildred was still alive then—they were making baskets, made canoes and they were fishing and trapping. They lived off the earth, they had a garden. You very seldom saw them go to town, they had pretty much everything. They had livestock, raised their own animals. They made baskets, they made good money then when they made their baskets.*

*Plate 17.1: Bill Nash (photo by Patricia Allen).*





Alice: How long have you been married to Beaver Nash?

Gloria: Twenty-five years.

Alice: Were you here before you married Beaver?

Gloria: No.

Alice: So you know about the Nash family?

Gloria: I know quite a bit about them.

Alice: Okay, let's hear something about the Nash family.

Gloria: Well, when I first come around, Mildred and Bill—Mildred was still alive then—they were making baskets, made canoes and they were fishing and trapping. They lived off the earth, they had a garden. You very seldom saw them go to town, they had pretty much everything. They had livestock, raised their own animals. They made baskets, they made good money then when they made their baskets.

Alice: Where did they sell their baskets?

Gloria: Mostly when they went to town, to the market or people gave them orders.

Alice: Did they ever trade their baskets?

Gloria: Oh, yes. His mother used to make them. They would trade them for something else they would need.

Alice: Like what?

Gloria: Mainly vegetables, stuff like that, to keep the family going. Flour.

Alice: The Nash family was not recog-

nized until 1951?

Gloria: Yes, about that (pause)

Alice: So does everyone get their status?

Gloria: A lot of them still don't. A lot of them are still fighting about where they belong. An older fellow that I have met, he would have been Jim Nash's brother's brother, his son. I met him a couple years ago, George Nash. He's from Maine, came to New Brunswick.

Alice: Some of the Nashes belong to Oromocto or they belong all from St. Mary's?

Gloria: Jim's family belongs to Oromocto. Bill's family belongs to Oromocto. The rest belong to St. Mary's. They are quite a family when it comes to sharing, they do everything they can, they help each other out. It's just different, you know, when they keep talking about close knit families. When the older ones were still around, not too much today, they are more (pause)

Alice: About how many are there in the Nash family?

Gloria: There are a lot of them, I'd say about a hundred.

Alice: [asking about band numbers given out].

Gloria: What I heard was, I guess they called them (pause)

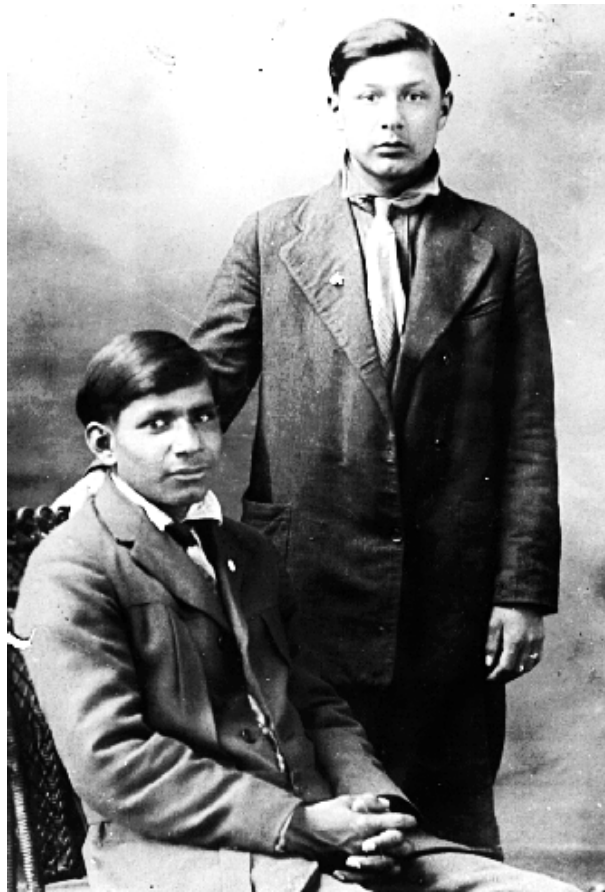
[The rest is poor audio quality]

**18. There used to be islands here**

MAURICE /RITA PERLEY  
NEQOTKUK/TOBIQUE FIRST NATION

*There used to be islands here, they were really good until the dam was built.  
Everything was spoiled, fishing, fiddleheading...*

*Plate 18.1: Maurice's father, Gabe "Mehkow" Perley (sitting) and Patrick Paul (standing)  
(University of New Brunswick Archives, AC-10276-26).*



Alice: Maurice you lived in Tobique all your life? [73 years old].

Maurice: Ah, ha [yes].

Alice: Who's your mother and father?

Maurice: Gabe Perley and Maria Perley.

Alice: Were they also from Tobique?

Maurice: Ah, ha.

Alice: Did they make baskets?

Maurice: Oh, no.

Alice: Well, what did they do for  
(pause)

Maurice: We usually worked around farms, working in the woods.

Rita: But your mother knew how to make baskets.

Maurice: My mother could, but she wasn't interested. Working on the farm (pause)

Alice: You can speak Maliseet if you want.

Maurice: Okay. Well, what did you ask me? No, well my father didn't. My mother did a lot.

Alice: What kind of baskets did she make?

Maurice: Mostly potato baskets, that's the only one them days, I guess.

Alice: So when you were growing up, you grew up here, eh?

Maurice: Yes.

Alice: Did you make baskets?

Maurice: No, I pounded ash for other people.

Alice: Were there a lot of basket makers up here?

Maurice: Yes.

Alice: Could you name me a few?

Maurice: There was Noel Bear, Pat Meuse.

Alice: Did you remember anyone mak-

ing birch bark canoes?

Maurice: Not really, I don't know of anybody.

Alice: How was it for you growing up here? Did you have a hard time?

Maurice: Yes, them days it was depression time, that's the time I started working all over. I had to help my parents. We had a hard time, because there were so many of us. There were thirteen of us in the family and I am the oldest.

Alice: Everyone must have had big families back then?

Maurice: Yes, and I had to quit school.

Alice: What grade were you in when you quit school?

Maurice: Grade four. I wasn't interested in school, I'd rather work.

Alice: Was there a lot of, when you were growing up, like houses here?

Maurice: Not too many, hardly any. But after the war, then they started building houses, veterans. The Indian agent was bad, he was stingy, he hardly helped Indian people.

Alice: We must be talking about Whalen?

Maurice: No, McPhail, Norval McPhail. He was the devil man, that one.

Alice: Gee, they talk about Whalen that way too, down my way.

Maurice: I never saw that man.

Rita: Who is Whalen?

Alice: He used to be Indian agent too.

Maurice: Saint John River?

Alice: Saint John River, suppose to be  
(pause)

Maurice: I don't remember him, do you?

Rita: No.  
Maurice: I had to quit school them days.  
Alice: What kind of work did you do?  
Maurice: I worked in the woods, farm, construction jobs, mostly woods.  
Alice: Do you hunt or fish?  
Maurice: Me, no.  
Alice: Did you pick any fiddleheads?  
Maurice: Yes.  
Alice: Where did you go for those?  
Maurice: There used to be islands here, they were really good until the dam was built. Everything was spoiled, fishing, fiddleheading.  
Alice: How did you travel back then? Anybody have cars back then?  
Maurice: Well, they had a few cars, mostly taxi, if someone wanted to go shopping downtown or Fort Fairfield. Not too many cars.  
Alice: Did, do you remember anything about, were marriages ever fixed for Indian people?  
Maurice: Marriages?  
Alice: Were they arranged?  
Maurice: Oh, yes.  
Rita: No, it was up to a person if they wanted to get married or not.  
Alice: So your parents never said, well you have to, this lady is for you. Like when you're older you have to marry her, nothing like that?  
Maurice: No.  
Alice: What about Indian medicine, do you know anything about that?  
Maurice: No, I don't know Indian medicine, but I used to hear, a long time ago my grandfather talking about medicines.  
Alice: Who is your grandfather?  
Maurice: William Laporte, on my mother's side.  
Rita: You should tape Loretta [Perley] for Indian medicine.

*Plate 18.2: Camp at Narrows of the Tobique, before the Dam (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, P5-248).*



*Plate 18.3: From Tobique, Maurice's in-laws and Rita's parents, Simon Paul and wife Elizabeth; little boy is Alexander "Sandy" Paul, and little girl is Rita (Paul) Perley (University of New Brunswick Archives, 3-41).*



Maurice: My mother's father.

Alice: So you remember your grandparents, eh?

Maurice: Just that one, my mother's mother. I don't remember her, she was probably dead by then. Same as my father's side, I don't remember them.

Alice: When your mother and father

were alive back then, what did these people do for like activities, entertainment, stuff like that?

Maurice: Not too much. Dances, square dances.

Alice: Did you go to anybody's home to do that?

Maurice: We used to have a hall here before they built that one. The only

Plate 18.4: From Tobique (left to right) Maurice Perley, Francis Francis, Billy Laporte, and Raymond Nicholas (photo courtesy of Karen Perley).



time they had was St. Anne, celebrate Saint Anne. We would have games, some kind of games. Merry-go-round and a great big tent for a picnic. They had baseball too. That's the only thing I remember.

Alice: Did the men, back then, play any instruments?

Maurice: Yeah, Pious [Perley], *Kunuhsi* [Peter Perley]. Fiddle and piano. And Joe Perley's sons and daughters, they had some kind of band. Drums, piano, violin, guitars and be-be *kwad* (horn) and drums. George Perley they used to have a band and the women from Kingsclear, Madeline, piano player. Those are the only ones I know, whenever they have dances.

Alice: Did people do a lot of fishing

here?

Maurice: There was good fishing a long time ago.

Alice: How did they fish? What did they fish with?

Maurice: Salmon, they used rods a long time ago, but nets now. All this was during depression time.

Alice: So yourself, when you got older, and you got married, how long have you been married?

Maurice: Forty-seven years.

Alice: How many kids?

Maurice: Fifteen.

Alice: Did you have a hard time?

Maurice: Well, we got by. We weren't rich, but we got by. What little money I made working, a little welfare, in them days you didn't get too much.

When you wanted welfare you had to beg from that man, Norval McPhail. It was really hard times, but we got by, working out.

Alice: Did your family help you too?

Maurice: When they grow up, yeah.

Alice: I would like to know more about Tobique and how it grew. There wasn't that many homes here then, eh?

Maurice: No, until after the war, then they started building. First veterans homes and then it started picking up then. Government. Even right around here, there used to be just a few houses, now there are so many.

Alice: People still have a hard time today?

Maurice: Well, it's pretty good now when they are working. But when they are on welfare, well then, just enough to buy their groceries, I guess.

Alice: And it ain't much, welfare, these days either?

Maurice: Well, now most go to school, young people.

Alice: Do you know anything about 'little people'?

Maurice: No. I heard of them when they talk about them.

Alice: A lot of people heard of them, eh. And some people seen them?

Maurice: A long time ago, must be years ago, but I never seen them.

Alice: Any legends up here or any marks?

Maurice: I don't think so.

Alice: I think we'll end it right here. Thank you Maurice.

END OF TAPE

## 19. People galore

CHARLES POLCHIES  
WOODSTOCK FIRST NATION

*I am telling you, there was people galore. You hit one of them inlets sometimes, there would be three canoes there already. There was plenty of fiddleheads there for everybody. We would pick two or three bags, sometimes we would get four bags. We would bring them down to the market. Me and Dick and your father would stay there or sometimes he would come down. Somebody would always stay picking, two guys would take them, sell them at the market. We would buy supplies. We liked molasses and we used to stock up on molasses and go back to the islands.*

Alice: Charles, were you born and brought up and raised here in Woodstock?

Charles: Yes I was.

Alice: Who's your father?

Charles: Peter Noel Polchies.

Alice: And your mother?

Charles: Agnus Deveau.

Alice: Where is she from?

Charles: She was adopted from some people that went by here in a horse and wagon. You know what I mean? The baby was born probably up the road somewhere. And when they got to the reserve, they figured they'd be too young to continue the journey. So some lady adopted her, took her.

Alice: You don't know who brought her up? Who was your father's father?

Charles: My father's father, his name was Peter Polchies too. He was from

Woodstock, as far as I know. Them days, people wasn't into where you came from or who you were, you know what I mean. Our main objective was just survival, make the best of what we got. We never worried about where we came from or who was our father, who was our cousin or anything like that.

Alice: How many families were down? When you were growing up?

Charles: About fifteen families.

Alice: How many families up here today?

Charles: We got about thirty-two families here.

Alice: What year was that when you were living down the hill? How long was that reserve there before you moved up here?

Charles: I am not that good on dates.



They were still there when I came out of the war. They were still there, I think 1945, it must have been after '45. So I don't know what year, but it was after '45 when they moved up here. It was the same year, when they made them move up here was when they built that Mactaquac Dam. See, the backwater took our reserve, so they bought this new location up here. They bought it from the Wetmores and (pause)

Alice: Could you tell me a little bit about your father and what he did?

Charles: Well, my father, like I said we

used to pick potatoes and then he made ax handles and stuff like that.

Alice: Any basket making?

Charles: No, he didn't make too much baskets. No, he was in the ax handle business. And we did have a few basket makers around here.

Alice: Who would they be, would you know who they are?

Charles: Gabriel Polchies, he used to make a few baskets. My brother was a dealer, he used to buy all the baskets from the people that make baskets on this reserve.

Alice: Which brother are you talking

*Plate 19.1: The family of Peter Polchies of Woodstock; front from left: Charles Polchies, Oliver Polchies, seated: Anne Polchies, Peter Polchies, Agnes (his wife), Nancy Polchies, standing: Leo, Patrick, George, Frank Polchies, Children not included are Mike and his sister Mary Jo, who probably took the picture, ca. 1940 (University of New Brunswick Archives AC-10276-14).*



- about?
- Charles: Oliver, used to buy it all. Anything that the Indians made he would buy, he would resell it. He used to do good in the fall of the year, because he always had lots of potato baskets, you know, in stock. So he had no problem getting rid of them.
- Alice: How many brother and sisters did you have?
- Charles: I had fifteen, ten brothers and five sisters.
- Alice: How many of you here now?
- Charles: There are only three of us living today. My oldest brother Patrick Polchies, second oldest is Oliver Polchies, of course I am the baby of the family. I am seventy-four years old. The rest are all gone.
- Alice: So when you were growing up in the older part of the reserve back then, how was life for you back then?
- Charles: Life was very simple life, there wasn't too much activities going on. Like there was work for people that wanted to work. Work in the woods cutting. In them days there was no gas and stuff like that. There might have been electric stove, I don't know, but everybody used wood. We would cut sixteen inch wood for the kitchen stove, two foot wood for the furnaces. And the people that couldn't afford the two foot wood and sixteen inches used to put them in four foot length. Cord wood and they would have to saw that up stove length. And that was about the limit of work. And in the spring of the year (pause) In the fall of the year, we would pick potato. In the fall of the year everybody looked ahead. When they got their first pay, they would buy a jacket or something for the coming winter. And warm shirts, underwear, you know, getting ready. Because the winters were harsh. We didn't have any furnaces in our houses, we just had kitchen stoves and that was kept continuously. But it didn't seem we had that much sickness. I think you got immune to the cold. There wasn't too many colds. Your in a warm house, next day you go outside and two days later you got pneumonia or something. There wasn't too much sickness around. I think maybe that was a plus, but life in general was kind of a dull life. They played a little cards here and there. They used to have a lot of raffles. Some people would make that Indian soup, Indian corn. And some Sundays they would have a raffle, all gathered.
- Alice: That must happen on every reserve?
- Charles: There was a lifestyle them days.
- Alice: I remember my mother saying that my father would go out and cut wood. And he would make enough to sell it, so he could play raffle on Sundays for corn or something like that. Tell me a little bit about your father?
- Charles: My father was a great story-teller. He used to—he was a great one to tell all the things that used to happen at these lumber camps. When he was younger, he must have went.

He must have did something other than ax handles. He used to tell me about the times he'd be in the woods, twenty-five miles in the woods. They'd go in the majority part of the winter, stay until spring. They used to cut wood, logs. He was a great one to tell ghost stories, I guess. For one instance, he said that towards spring they had a severe thunderstorm, they wanted to play poker this night. I guess they had a few drinks and everyone was kind of rowdy. And everyone said, oh, let's have a game. So they all started playing cards. And one of the elder gentleman said, hey, we shouldn't play cards, it's thundering lightening, we should stop. Then one of the gentlemen said, look, if the devil walked through that door I would say, hey, let's play cards with you. So anyway little time elapsed. So first thing, God All Mighty, a knock came at the door of the old camp. Everybody looked at each other. Come on in, somebody shouted. In walked this gentleman dressed up like a - it would be unusual being in a dense wood and all of a sudden a guy comes in all dressed up. Top hat. He said, can I join? Go ahead, sit right down here, your money is just as good as ours. So they sat down, the game started and as the game, the game was on for a little while. This gentleman was dealing the cards and one of the cards happen to fall off the table. So this guy that was dealing the cards bent down to pick up the card off the floor, when

he looked at this gentleman—this sophisticated gentleman—one of his legs was a hoof of a horse. So when he saw that he just freaked out. The guy just fell backwards and passed out. A little while after that the guy just vanished and then everybody looked at each other. You know how the hair almost stands up? It would be a frightening thing, I'd still be there under the table if that happened to me.

Alice: Anything like that ever happen to you?

Charles: No, minor things. But I believe there is a lot of times I've had experiences where - I was away in Connecticut when one of my brothers died. And he knew I wasn't the bravest person walking on the earth, on account of my father telling me all these ghost stories. I'd be afraid to go upstairs to go to bed, he had me so scared. But I guess knowing that the baby brother was always a fraidy cat or something, I suppose he wanted to let me know he was passing on. I got up to go to the bathroom. When I came back I was by my bed and my feet were under the bed. You know how you stand by the bed, you pull your covers on. Somebody touched my toes, ever so gently. At the same time, the first person I thought of was my brother that was sick. And within fifteen or twenty minutes the telephone rings and said your brother just passed away. The same instance happened when my sister died, Mary Jane.

Alice: Were you all close?

Charles: I was close to Mary Jane. I was away a long time, I was away fifty some years. When we were growing up we were close, but we used to have our little battles too. Because there wasn't that much to eat, slice of bread, heel of bread was very - If there was one slice of bread and four people want it, there is going to be some commotion there.

My sister Mary Jane, she died here just a while back, she was living in Grand Bay. And she knew that her brother was a fraidy cat and we were up here in Woodstock and she was down in Saint John. She was in the hospital, a lot of times I would go down.

And the exact moment she died, I was laying in the other room. I must have fell asleep watching television. My hands were in front of me, all of a sudden, at the exact moment she died, somebody came and touched my finger ever so. And I jumped up. I said to Rita, I bet Mary Jane died. I just went in, she was laying in that bedroom. I got in. I said, I had the strangest thing happened to me. Telephone rang and said your sister just passed away about five minutes ago. So that makes you think sometimes, but other than that I never (pause)

Alice: Tell me about your travels when you were a young fellow and traveling to different reserves, what did you do there?

Charles: Oromocto? Who knows, maybe a guy was looking around for a—

what does a young person look for? Hard to tell, it could be several things, maybe a guy was looking for a wife.

Alice: Did you work down there?

Charles: No, I don't think too many people worked. I stayed with these people and if there's work to be done I would help. I paid for my keep. Just like down there, I used to help him, Simon Paul. Whatever he does, pull his nets in or repair them, I was always good help some ways. And I stayed there and every time they ate, I ate too. They were very nice people, they had two boys. I can't think of the guy's name.

Alice: You must remember Annabelle, Levi Sabattis, all them people?

Charles: I remember all them people. John Coon.

Alice: He just passed away recently here, he would have been a good person to talk too. I heard he was very knowledgeable in a lot of things.

Charles: He married some girl, I forget her name. Stella Paul was her name. I knew them.

Alice: What about St. Mary's, what did you do there? Who did you hang out with?

Charles: I hung out with your father, mostly the three of us hung around together.

Alice: Must have been my father and Uncle Dick.

Charles: Yeah, Dick and Dokie. We fiddleheaded together, down the reserve.

Alice: Where did you fiddlehead?

Charles: Savage Island, Hartt Island and two or three other islands up there.

Alice: There was Bear Island, Sheep's Island.

Charles: We hit all of them anyway. I know that would have been me and (pause). But you know, most of the people congregated on Savage Island. I don't know what it is, if there is more inlets in there or whatever.

Alice: Probably the biggest island up there anyway?

Charles: I am telling you, there was people galore. You hit one of them inlets sometimes, there would be three canoes there already. There was plenty of fiddleheads there for everybody. We would pick two or three bags, sometimes we would get four bags. We would bring them down to the market. Me and Dick and your father would stay there or sometimes he would come down. Somebody would always stay picking, two guys would take them, sell them at the market. We would buy supplies. We liked molasses and we used to stock up on molasses and go back to the islands.

Alice: Most people I interviewed always mentions bees beer.

Charles: It was good and you couldn't afford the other stuff. Once in a while, you would go buy half a gallon of wine. But that stuff was good. You know, a lot of people, it would go a long ways. I think it's better than beer. That's what it was suppose to have been *Amuwesey* (bees beer). It was great.

Alice: So on Savage Island, was there a lot of people from St. Mary's, just St. Mary's?

Charles: No, they were all from, a lot of them came from Kingsclear. And it was easier for people from Kingsclear. There were very few people from Woodstock.

Alice: What about Tobique?

Charles: No, not from Tobique. They probably had their own way, they probably went up towards Restigouche. But from Kingsclear, they drop their canoe and in no time they would be at one of the islands. Everybody had their own place to stay. Some of them had tents, some had little shanties. Some of them stayed in the little houses that were on the island. I don't know what they were for but (pause)

Alice: There was houses on the island?

Charles: Something like little barns. You know, like people that leave their cattle there. They probably had a little storage room for—and people used to stay in there. They were never there fiddleheading time and people would fix it up and (pause)

Alice: Do you remember Ronnie Paul from St. Mary's?

Charles: I heard of the name, but I can't place the guy.

Alice: He does a lot of beaver, muskrat. He's a taxidermist.

Charles: The person I knew the most down Kingsclear, I mean St. Mary's, is Dickie Polchies. Him and I were in the army together.

Alice: Are you related to him?

Charles: I think about sixth cousin or something like that, distant.

Alice: Are you related to anyone in St. Mary's?

Charles: No.

Alice: Oromocto?

Charles: I don't think so.

Alice: Kingsclear?

Charles: I don't think so, well Dickie Polchies is sixth cousin, that's what they used to say.

Alice: I think Dickie is our oldest elder. No, I think it's Elsie Paul, Josephine, Dickie.

Charles: That is the first lady I know, Elsie Paul. When I first came to Fredericton, we went to the band hall, down by the railroad tracks. I think she was working there, she recognized me just as soon as I walked in.

Alice: Gee, the reserves have changed so much.

Charles: Yeah, just like here. People don't mingle anymore, they are jealous of each other. Before everybody was equal.

Alice: Oh!

Charles: He won't bite you, that little bug like that. You think it was an 'Injun devil' jumped on top of you there. It's only a mosquito!

Alice: I find a lot of difference. When I was growing up, my mother and father took us to Savage Island almost every summer or every spring. We would stay there until almost end of summer sometimes. It was nice being there picking fiddleheads, everybody was up there. Today you don't see that. My brothers still fiddleheads.

Frankie, Willie, Shack, Barnie, Richard [Brooks]; they all fiddlehead every year they go.

Charles: You must have a big family too?

Alice: Yup, there is thirteen of us.

Charles: You're not the thirteenth person are you?

Alice: No, I am not, I am the fifth. The only two missing from my family are my father and my uncle. My mother is still alive.

Charles: Did your father die of a heart attack?

Alice: He died of heart failure. He was suppose to quit smoking and he never did, he kept on and on.

Charles: It's hard to give up something like that. That's what I gave up after I had my heart attack in the '80s. The doctor said, why don't you quit smoking? I used to go through couple pack a day. I said, I'd like to live a while longer, I am going to try it. In two weeks I gave them up, just like that. Not everybody can do it.

Alice: How old were you when you left here? When you left Woodstock and went to Connecticut or wherever you went?

Charles: I am seventy-four now, I must have stayed there fifty years or so. I was a kid when I left here, prime of life anyway. I got a job down there. Of all the times I stayed there, I think I had two jobs. I drove a truck and the latter part of the years, when I couldn't hack the truck anymore, I worked for another company. I worked for Borden Dairy, I ran a

bottling machine.

Alice: How many kids did you and your wife have?

Charles: We have five girls, no boys. All

my girls are in Connecticut, they come every year.

Alice: How often do they come around?

Charles: They come every year. We go

*Plate 19.2: Gabe Solomon, Frank Francis (man with paddle); Dr. Peter Polchies, Sarah Solomon, Jack Solomon (sitting); Kingsclear on Corpus Christi Day, ca. 1887 (Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, P5-259).*



down there every year too. But as you get older—it used to take us ten to twelve hours—today it takes us two days to get down there. We have a set of twin girls, born in 1956. And when they were born it was in the newspaper down there. It hit the headlines, ‘Twins with a problem’. They were twins, but a day apart. One was born before midnight, the other one six minutes after midnight.

Alice: They were never brought up here then?

Charles: No, none of them. Oh, yes, Sheila was born here .

Alice: So did you ever hear of Jemseg?

Charles: Yes, I heard of it.

Alice: Have you ever been there?

Charles: I’ve been through there. That is a good fiddlehead place too, a lot of people go fishing there. But that’s the only thing I know about it. And just lately, when they talk about a burial ground down there; other than that, I never heard of it before.

Alice: Have you ever heard of red ochre?

Charles: No, first time I heard of it, reading in the newspaper.

Alice: Do you know anything about moose hide?

Charles: The only thing I know about it, that it’s attached to a moose. People used to, once in a while—we used to have a guy down here years ago—used to tan that stuff. A guy by the name of Dr. Peter Polchies, they called him. This Peter Polchies was some kind of a gentleman that used to go and travel in the circus. I don’t know if he was related to my father or not, but he used to do all kinds of things. I never saw him do these things, but everyone used to talk about him. Like he used to put a needle out on his arm and then close his arm like that and the needle would (pause)... And they said he used to work for the circus. He was a sharpshooter and tight-wire climber. And he would fire a twenty-two on top of his head using mirrors and hit an apple on some body’s head.

Alice: Was he from here?

Charles: He lived down here, he lived here a long time. See, but if you talk to people that are around here all the time—like if you interviewed what’s-her-name down here, she’d probably remember him. But it’s just people telling me what he did. Like my father used to say ...he was a good shot. Anybody that can walk on tight-wire and put a gun over his head and knock an apple off somebody’s head had to be good. Me, I would be knocking the person’s head off.

Alice: I don’t think we have too much of our tape left here, so I’ll end it here. And thank you for letting me interview you. And I’m going to transcribe this tape and get a copy for you.

END OF TAPE





## 20. Skicinuwey - belonging to an Indian

MAURICE SACOBIE  
NEQOTKUK/TOBIQUE FIRST NATION

*But in one Island, Gilbert's Island, it is up on this side of Lotus Creek. It's called, they call it Skicinuwey (belonging to an Indian). But anyway, there is this place my father used to say, the Island is beautiful. Maybe from here to top of the hill, all green. Stretch of green grapes, maybe as wide as the other side of these houses. Really beautiful.*

Alice: You come from Oromocto right?  
You're originally from Oromocto, but you lived here at St. Mary's for a long time. So let's go back to Oromocto and tell me what it was like, like a long time ago.

Maurice: I lived in the country, twenty to twenty-five miles from Oromocto, in the country.

Alice: Do you know anything about Jemseg?

Maurice: I travelled all around there growing up, eh. Me and my father, fiddleheading around, paddling around. And back then there were a lot of Indians on the islands. They come from different reserves, Kingsclear, Tobique, Woodstock, St. Mary's, camping, eh. But we, I didn't hear too much about Jemseg. Back

then but my father used to talk about Indians living on reserve. What they done for work, what they done for summer work.

Alice: What did they do?

Maurice: They work, make baskets, work on the farms, trade, make few baskets and trade.

Alice: What did they trade for?

Maurice: Vegetables, meat, whatever farmer had. I remember my father doing that.

Alice: So ax handles were made too, eh?

Maurice: Back then yes. Because my biggest thrill back then, growing up, was when I was six, seven, eight years old. Every spring, I couldn't wait for spring. Indians come there every spring, fiddleheading time. People on the island, down where we

Plate 20.1: Gilbert's Island, facing South East from Sheffield, looking at western tip (photo by Karen Perley)



live, down along the river. About five or six tents and maybe couple miles down the road, two or three.

Oromocto people maybe somewhere else, the other side Tobique people, *Pilickewiyik* [people of *Pilick/Kingsclear*] All these old people, most of them are dead now.

Alice: But that's not the only place they went?

Maurice: Well, along there they used to start from Gagetown, camping. They travelled back and forth paddling and they lived along the river. They would make stuff, trade with people.

Alice: So had you gone to any other site? Brown's flat?

Maurice: Brown's flats, no I never

really (pause)

Alice: Indian Island?

Maurice: No.

Alice: St. Croix.

Maurice: St. Croix, I was up there, but I don't know too much about that. All I know is that Indians used to paddle from here all the way to Eastport. St. Croix, they travelled a lot back then. Twenty, fifteen, so many Indians. I couldn't wait for the evenings, so many talking about what happened years ago. *Miltaqot* (all different stories). I should have listened more, because there would have been more that I would have remembered. But everybody had a different version of what went on. Our people, every-

Plate 20.2: Gilbert's Island, facing South East from McGowan's Corner, looking at eastern tip (photo by Karen Perley)



thing—how things are haunted along the Saint John River, certain areas.

I've camped out there a few times in places, when my kids were growing up, but I never heard anything.

Alice: I think I was spooked one night on Savage Island.

Maurice: I never was anywhere. Even in the old house after my parents died. I went down there every other month, all by myself. It was haunted, but my father used to say where Indians lived years ago are haunted. Camping places where they say are haunted. But I think it was their belief or imagination. But in one Island, Gilbert's Island, it is up on this side of Lotus Creek. It's called, they call it

*Skicinuwey* (belonging to an Indian).

But anyway, there is this place my father used to say, the Island is beautiful. Maybe from here to top of the hill, all green. Stretch of green grapes, maybe as wide as the other side of these houses. Really beautiful.

My father said, there is something there, every year there would be a depression on the ground, I want to dig there, he never did. Finally, he died.

He used to go there in the springtime. He used to hear people talking, small voices, dwarfs or 'little people'.

Something, but he'd hear that.

Alice: Is that true, about 'little people'?

Maurice: Yep, that's what he said. Many times he used to tell me this.

Alice: I heard that too from Eastport?

Maurice: He said, I would be walking along, I won't see anybody. He said, once there was a big tree there. I saw someone hide behind the tree, two or three different times. But they are too fast, I saw them for only a blink of an eye.

Alice: Is it true they look after Indian people?

Maurice: That's what they say, they guide you, they watch over us. I don't know what it is. There is just so many different stories. That is one thing I used to like; every spring, I would wait for them to get here. And what they done, make baskets or make handles. All of them making baskets. Then I would go around and steal some bees beer and as a young fellow I used to like the foam.

Alice: We were talking about that this morning, me and Ronnie, about bees beer.

Maurice: *Phite* (foam). We seldom got pop. Maybe once a month, my mother would go to town and I would get a bottle of pop or something. Spring of the year, I get a treat maybe twice a week. We would paddle to the store, I

would look for Indians. Dad, let's go in there. He would say no. He wanted to hurry too much. But we would manage to get in there, talk for a while, have a cup of tea.

But I was amazed with them making baskets and the way they lived, how they look. Some old people, not like us or dress like us, things like that (pause)

Alice: So where did they trade their baskets at?

Maurice: White people, farmers.

Alice: Anywhere?

Maurice: Yes, they would be paddling along or camped maybe down the river. They got to know white people. Make a couple baskets, go up there, trade maybe peck a potatoes, beans or gas and boats. I remember that boat, I was just a young fellow when the boats were floating. They used to go way down to Westfield, from there, on up this way. Indians used to get on that. They would go up on Westfield, work in the woods. They would stop at a very big wharf, these boats.

Indians would be there with baskets, for someone would buy them (pause) [Tape ends abruptly].

## 21. That man

ROYDEN SABATTIS  
PILICK/KINGSCLEAR FIRST NATION

*It was that agent by the name of Edward Whalen and he lived right here on Indian land. He had a big house over there, a little ways from here. Where we live now, there used to be an old road in front of our house. The agent lived close by, he used to run everything and he had everything too. He had cattle, horses, pigs, cows and chickens. He was suppose to give this to the Indians but he didn't. And it was that man, he was starving the Indians here at Pilick*

Alice: Are you originally from Kingsclear?

Royden: No, I'm originally from Oromocto.

Alice: Could you tell me a little about when you lived down there?

Royden: Well, when we moved away from there I was awful young. That was how many years ago when we were moved from Oromocto? It was forty-seven years ago when we were moved. Government men from Ottawa came and lied to the Indians. Everything they were told never happened, when they were moved to *Pilick* [Kingsclear]. Well at first, the way they lied to the Indians was, when you move to Pilick your houses will be ready to move in. They will be

all finished and there is a big farm down the hill with lots of cows and chickens. There are five hundred head of cattle for you and same time, five hundred head of goats. And each family will have five hundred head of chickens. And there weren't any chickens up there.

Alice: Who is your mother and father?

Royden: They called my father *Ceclawew*, John Sabattis and my mother *Nastas*, Daisy Sacobie. It was that agent by the name of Edward Whalen and he lived right here on Indian land. He had a big house over there, a little ways from here. Where we live now, there used to be an old road in front of our house. The agent lived close by, he used to run every-

thing and he had everything too. He had cattle, horses, pigs, cows and chickens. He was suppose to give this to the Indians but he didn't. And it was that man, he was starving the Indians here at *Pilick*; after him and the Government men cheated the Indians to come and move here. He, whatever he planted in the spring, potatoes, oats, turnips, everything and cut pulpwood in the woods. Every night we would load on all this stuff, until about twelve o'clock at night, for him to go sell. At the time me, Clifford and Jim Nash used to work for him. We were the only ones hired on. And Indians used to get clothes from the mounties [RCMP], a whole truckload, shoes. And we would haul them here and put it in the grain shed, so he would pick the best clothes. And whatever was left over, he would give to the Indians and he would go sell the good stuff. Even blankets, white sheets, pillow cases and the real good stuff, and shoes. We would go with him to the lumber camps to sell the stuff and he would keep the money himself.

Alice: So what did the Indians have, nothing?

Royden: They never had nothing, they were starving, we didn't have welfare. If I hadn't scraped some money somewhere, I would not have eaten. You would starve. At that time Indians were not educated enough to do something against the agent. That is why they did not get welfare, because Indians at the time did get it, but this

agent would not give any?

Alice: Was he greedy?

Royden: Oh, yes. He ran everything.

Alice: Well, let's go back to what I asked you, who your father and mother were.

Royden: Jack and Nastas.

Alice: Jack and Nastas, would be Daisy Sacobie right and she was also from Oromocto?

Royden: Yes, my father was from Oromocto also.

Alice: So when you were living down in Oromocto when you were growing up, what kind of activities did people do down there?

Royden: Nothing.

Alice: Nothing? Did they fiddlehead?

Royden: Oh yeah, they would fiddlehead in the spring and a few were working on the other side of the river, on the farms.

Alice: What about trapping?

Royden: In the spring they would trap, they would go way down river and they would live right there.

Alice: What about hunting?

Royden: When they hunt in the fall, they would go that way?

Alice: Do you know anything about Jemseg area?

Royden: Well, not that much, but my father used to work, we used to live down there. He used to work for this guy, Arnold Dykeman was his name. He owned a funeral home, my father worked there. And every winter they would go cut wood from the islands and haul wood to Jemseg using horses. Or sometimes a lone horse

would haul a coffin—back then a coffin, all by itself, would be hauled in the evening. Even my father said the horse was walking and it started walking faster and there was a coffin behind it. He forgot to get a screw driver out of the—and it kept going back and forth. And my father said the horse must have thought that it was the devil. Then the horse started running real fast and his tail was up. And my father said, I couldn't control him and my eyes almost blew backward.

Alice: What about the area they were digging in this past year, do you know anything about that area? Do you know what it was called?

Royden: Well right there, where they are digging is where the farmers used to bury their cows. Sometimes a cow would die and they would take them there and then cover them with dirt there.

Alice: Did Indians used to make baskets there?

Royden: No, not the place where they are digging now (pause) Do you know the bridge when you go over on the upper side? When you go down, down the bottom, there is an old road this way. Well, that's where they used to make baskets, down there at the point. And they used to live there, up a little ways, when your coming up on this side of the bridge. They used to live there too.

Alice: And what would that be called?

Royden: Rev. Channelik.

Alice: Do you know anything about

Portabello, Grand Lake, that area?

Royden: Yes, Indians used to live in Portabello every year. They went to hunt there, muskrat.

Alice: Indian Point, where is that?

Royden: Do you know the way to Scotchtown, Princess Park? You turn off this other road on the right when you get to Princess Park, then there is another road with a sign that says Scotchtown. But you go way on down until you get to dead end point, that is Indian Point. Indians used to live there. You go along the river on this side, grassy area, they used to have their camps there a long time ago.

Alice: Is that place haunted?

Royden: Oh, yeah. Before you go where the point is, when you get there, there is a road leading down the hill. There is a little landing here and there's an island. Well, they say nobody has ever spent a full night there at Indian Point.

Austin was telling me that my Uncle John's daughter's husband, his name was—a Newfie guy anyway. They took their kids down there and a tent trailer and set it up around ten o'clock at night. They made a fire outside. At about one o'clock they got sleepy and crawled into the tent trailer and went to bed. Then someone started to rock the trailer back and forth, to the point where they toppled it over. The tent was sitting sideways. Roy was Rose's husband's name. They had to leave from there that night, about two o'clock in the morning. They couldn't



sleep there, the devil wouldn't leave them alone.

Alice: That's what Bobby Nash says also when I was talking to him.

Indian Point is a bad place. Who would be there? Who do you suppose is haunting the place?

Royden: I think it's old Indians. Just like us, when we went hunting... over there in Big Cove, not the Mi'kmaq (Micmac) place, but the one going down towards Cambridge Narrows. When you get there, there is a little town, you turn off this way, Norton. You go right on straight until you get to Big Cove. Then Hatfield Point, Belle Isle, all them places. Hatfield Point, beside Big Cove, is where it is haunted. It's nice and sloped and a stream right in the middle, a big brook. When we went hunting at Irving Camps, the field was nice and open, it got dark early. As we were going back to the car, Malcolm and I—and it was dark—and in front of us, we heard a woman crying. We thought it was an animal, the woman was crying towards us and really close to us too. The boys were so scared that they both took a hold of me. I almost fell. Malcolm even scratched me. We finally got to the car and she was crying towards us. I should have known better than that, I already knew it was haunted, but then I go there. But I didn't think of it because I was going there to hunt. We finally left and went to Indian Point. I told the boys, we may as well make tea here—it was around one o'clock

at night. The place I parked had birch trees growing... and they made a Kci Lakwakon (stick used to hold kettle), got water, boiled it for tea. So I thought I would go where the fire was. I was there for a little while, then I told the boys, I may as well get the food from the truck, so we could eat by the light of the fire. I went to the car and... They almost knocked me over, they were both trying to get into the same door. They said someone was going towards the fire. I looked and I saw someone real tall coming towards us. It looked like he didn't have a head, dressed in black, his coat was 'v' shaped, black boots, white shirt. He came straight for us. I went inside the car, both wanted to sit in the front and they crowded me. This person was coming, I tried starting the car, it won't start, lights went dim. And this was almost a brand new car, new battery. Everything died, it won't start. When the stranger disappeared, then the car started. We left Indian Point spinning our wheels, it was about half past three when we arrived here. I believe it is haunted.

Alice: There's a place down there where Bob Nash goes to have a barbecue. They are there almost every night, they have a bonfire. There's an island right across there.

Royden: Oh, it must be down hill from Burpee's, it's straight from Gilbert's Island, that's where they go.

Alice: He said there's another place, a camp, a girl's camp. And he said one

night there was a bonfire over there and hollering. And the kids on the other side where Bob and them were would holler back. So the next day he sent the boys over to see if there was a bonfire over there, but they didn't even find any ashes.

Royden: That Gilbert's Island is haunted too. Especially the upper end, Indians call it *Pahtuhk*. Gilbert's Island in Indian is *Piyakawek*. That's haunted too. Tom Nash used to tell me this.

And my brother they stayed there and every night someone bothered them.

Just like once my father told me. They hunt every fall at a big town, by Big Cove, somewhere near there. Well anyway, they had a tent, a soldier's tent, big and round. It could hold seventy-five men and about fifteen to twenty men would go hunting and stay in the tent. Once Buck Nash, Frank Nash's son, Buck was so afraid of the devil, he would make his bed right in the middle where the other guys slept. He said, nobody will be able to bother me. About two o'clock in the morning, my wife's father Tom was there and my father. They both told me, he [the devil] picked Buck right where he was laying in the middle and he beat him up. Buck had scars on his leg where the devil grabbed him and also by the throat. He was throwing him around, but did not see anybody doing it. Buck asked the boys to help him, but they didn't see anybody, the devil was fighting him. Buck saw him but nobody else did. I wouldn't believe the boys but I

asked Buck himself. I said, Buck, I want to ask you something. He didn't think anything of it. He lived at Ferris Lake, on the other side where Jemseg is, near on this side. Indians used to live there. Do you know McGowan's Corner, about four or five miles down the road. Where they used to live, there was a little bridge there. But when the government made the road, they covered the bridge and didn't bother putting another one back. That is where Buck used to stay. Down below that, *Apahtek* is what they called it. Ferris Lake, on the end, is where Buck lived.

He used to live there wintertime, it was a tar paper shack that was not insulated, and it was a run down camp. It did not have any insulation, just wood and tar paper over it. He had a wife and one kid. He used to work for the farmers, Jim and all them. So I asked Buck that time, he showed me the scar where the devil grabbed him. It was round, there was a covering of skin, it was red looking. Left an imprint on his arms, the marks were still on them. He showed me all this. He said he would show me all the scars if I didn't believe him, and that's when he showed me.

Alice: Who was your grandfather?

Royden: My grandfather, his name was Raccoon, Andy Sacobie.

Alice: What about your grandmother?

Royden: Sadie Sacobie. My uncle John Coon, did you know him? His mother and my uncle Pat, it was their mother.

Alice: So did your parents and grand-

*Plate 21.1: From left: Alice Polchies (Woodstock), the daughter of "Oromocto Pete" Polchies; John Sacobie (Oromocto), the son of Sadie and Andrew (Raccoon) Sacobie, brother of "Oromocto Pete" and uncle to Royden Sabattis (University of New Brunswick Archives, 75-1898).*



- parents make baskets?
- Royden: They used to sell them or trade them. Because back then, farmers must not have had enough money, so they traded pork, potatoes, buckwheat for ax handles and baskets. They would haul their goods to where the farmers were and they would trade. They did not get money. They might have got some money for smokes or tobacco for chewing or for tobacco for the pipe.
- Alice: Did they use colour for their baskets?
- Royden: Yes. Solomon Paul and Sarah Paul—was Sacobie.
- Alice: What kind of colours did they use?
- Royden: Green, red or yellow.
- Alice: Where did they get the colour?
- Royden: They used to make it themselves.
- Alice: How did they make it?
- Royden: I often wondered, Solomon Paul used to make it. There is this stuff he mixes and the pot would be this full. He would boil it, tie the ash weavers together and throw it in. He had two or three pots, different colours. When he removes it, the ash will be coloured.
- Alice: Did they ever use berries for colour?
- Royden: Boy, they might have. I was young when we lived in Oromocto, when Solomon made baskets. But their house was pretty good, they had kind of a nice home, because he used to fish salmon all summer long. And near by he would make baskets, so he could see down the road. He had a license back then, so he could fish salmon. But now an Indian can't get a license, they won't give an Indian any. They will tell you, that license has to go to generation to generation, that is what they say. They think that an Indian has wool over their eyes.
- Alice: Was it hard for you growing up in Oromocto?
- Royden: Seems like it and our house was shabby, and we were poor. Tar paper shack is what we lived in when we lived in Oromocto. And the windows—and I am not afraid to tell this—we did not have any windows. In winter my father would cover the opening with an overcoat, tacked down by two nails. We didn't have any flooring, just dirt floor was what we walked on. And it was a small camp.
- Alice: Did you have any electricity?
- Royden: No.
- Alice: How many rooms did you have in your house anyway?
- Royden: All in one room, after we got older we build another on, we added on.
- Alice: Was there a lot of people from here, Kingsclear, that came originally from Oromocto?
- Royden: They were a lot from Oromocto, like Cora, Theresa, Yvonne, Molly-Sus, John Arnold and his wife, and Babe [Annie Sacobie], Clifford, Stevie [both Sacobies]. All were from Oromocto. Us and my wife's relatives, Tom, Marjorie, they all used to live in Oromocto. Missel,

*Plate 21.2: Sarah "Selapic" Sacobie in 1894, daughter of Andrew Sacobie, and Royden Sabattis' aunt; Sarah made baskets (University of New Brunswick Archives, 74-17358).*



- Freddy Sabattis up there, he came from Oromocto.
- Alice: Is he your brother or relative?
- Royden: No, no, my brother was *Apoluwes* (Ambrose), Frankie and Johnny. Freddy's brother is Charlie Bear and *Suseph* (Arthur Sabattis). And Freddy, his father is black. He would say I am black man and not an Indian. He likes to say that.
- Alice: Why?
- Royden: He said, Missel is not my father, that is why I was the black sheep of the family.
- END OF TAPE ONE SIDE ONE  
TAPE ONE SIDE TWO
- Royden: Rosie too from *Welmooktuk* (Oromocto), Debson too was from *Welmooktuk* and Stanley and Myrtle.
- Alice: Debson, what is his real name?
- Royden: David Paul. A long time ago in Oromocto, John Casey's wife Frances—Debson was married to Frances' sister, her name was Molly Louise. I don't know if she is still alive or if she died. I remember when she left Oromocto. Debson gave her money to buy her shoes and clothing and she's been gone ever since. That was a long time ago.
- Alice: What about, like when you were down in Oromocto there, do you remember having the older people having dances and (pause)
- Royden: Oh yes, I remember, there used to be a dance and they had a dance place. Old school or sometimes somebody's house. It was fun there were no fights, they would only dance and drink.
- Alice: Was there a lot of drinking?
- Royden: Yes, they never used to buy it. They had bees beer, one would have four or five jugs. When they make this they use molasses and white sugar and brown sugar and warm water. It would be ready in ten minutes. One day, your mother and father—this was before you were born—they had four jugs. We had the overnight stuff, it was very strong. You drank one cup of this stuff and your stomach felt like it was burning. And you felt like you were so many inches off the floor. It tasted good.
- Alice: Did John Coon ever tell you any stories?
- Royden: Not that much, because I was quite young when I left there.
- Alice: How old were you when you left?
- Royden: About thirteen.
- Alice: What year are we talking?
- Royden: 1933, when I was born. 1947. There was a war going on in 1945, right after I left there. I was down in Cambridge Narrows at that time, I was fourteen when I went back to Oromocto.
- Alice: How many in your family?
- Royden: There are (pause) boys would be Maynard, Petro, *Apoluwes* (Ambrose). About seven brothers all together. Sisters: Rose Mary, Loretta, Jean, Cora, Joanie, Molly and Annie. About eight girls all together.
- Alice: Do you remember anybody making birch bark canoes?
- Royden: No.

Alice: What about moose hide?

Royden: No.

Alice: There must be somebody somewhere that knows about.

Royden: I did see a few birch bark canoes in Oromocto, but I don't know anybody that had made one. I do remember one guy made one.

Alice: Who was it?

Royden: My grandfather, Racoon, Andy Sacobie. I remember him making one. I asked him all kinds of questions on how the birch bark would be big enough to cover the ribs. He said the tree has to be big enough, like that big around, just right. Because the tree is already bowed and it's shaped where all you do is slip it under and tack on top to where the ribs are in between. They have to attach it and they have to smear something to the birch bark and they have to bake it. They heat water up real good and slide the bark like that.

Alice: Do you know of any burial grounds down that way?

Royden: Down Oromocto? Native Ones? No.

Alice: Do you know anything about Brown's Flat?

Royden: No.

Alice: Sheffield?

Royden: No, I don't know these areas that well or burials.

Alice: So you moved up here in 1947. So how was things here when you got here?

Royden: When we got here there wasn't anything here, no homes, nothing. We lived on the other side of the road

here. There was no TransCanada then, so the other side of the road, down that hill, we lived down by the brook in tents. There were no houses anywhere. They lied to the Indians. They said, your houses, all you have to do is walk right in. When we moved here there were no houses anywhere. They were so good in fooling us.

Alice: Whalen?

Royden: Yes, I bet when he died, he went straight to hell.

Alice: My mother said he must have got rich off the Indians.

Royden: Oh yeah, he became a millionaire. When he retired, he bought a house on top of that hill and he didn't live there very long when he died.

Alice: He must have been quite old?

Royden: Seventy-five. He was really fat and tall.

Alice: A lot of people speak a lot of him and he wasn't a very good Indian Agent from what I gather. He promised, like everything you said on there, like animals and stuff like that. And they never got nothing, some people might have got something, but not too many probably.

Royden: He cheated the Indians, not just one but all. Remember when some got an army pension? He used to keep that for them. Or when a small kid got milk, it was given to the Agent for the kid, but the Agent did not give the milk to the kid. I don't know what he did with the milk, I think he sold it. I know when he raised cows, twenty head of jerseys, all jerseys. My wife's father used to work for the Agent, he

- used to milk the cows by hand every morning, this guy would pick up cream cans of milk. The Agent was the one that would take the money. Whatever he sold that belonged to the Indians, he would pocket the money. He did not give a cent to the Indian.
- Alice: Do you remember anything about when someone dies, did they have any Indian ceremony?
- Royden: No, they never had that. I just remember when we used to Indian dance, a long time ago, we used to travel all over. There used to be an old hall at Lake George, there would be so many settlers to watch us. Do you remember Joe Shaker? He used to take care of money—and Andrew Paul from Devon, and him—they used to handle money. I think they cheated the Indians. When we put on a show, there would be so much money the white people would put on the table, we never got anything. It was a sight to see, when Indians danced.
- Alice: Did you ever hang around Gagetown with the Nashes?
- Royden: Yes, a long time ago. I used to go there when Evelyn, Bobbie, Jim Nash and Lena and Louis Paul... He used to live at Upper Gagetown Ferry, on that side of the river, along the shore is where they used to live.
- Alice: They lived in a houseboat, eh?
- Royden: Yes, they lived there years and years. Louis and his wife *Ahnis* [Annie ?], I don't know her English name.
- Alice: What about marriages back then when you were growing up? As you got older, were marriages arranged for Indian people, some Indian people?
- Royden: Oh yeah.
- Alice: How did they go about doing that?
- Royden: Well, a long time ago in Oromocto (pause). Do you know the St. Vincent Church, that is where people used to get married. But Indians were dressed very poorly. Sometimes for a neck tie, someone would wear a sock or something.
- Alice: No. I mean did somebody—say I was the elder person okay. Your my daughter and there is another family there with a fellow. Was anybody ever told they had to marry this one or had to marry that one?
- Royden: No.
- Alice: Were Indian people very religious back then?
- Royden: Very much, they were very religious Indians a long time ago. They were more religious back then, but not now. Now you don't see any Indians in church.
- Alice: Only when someone dies, marries, baptism, that's about the only time.
- Royden: Like a long time ago—this is in Oromocto, Indian area—there was this priest his name was Father Moore. There was an Indian person dying, *Sahk Suseph* was his name. He was almost dead and someone got the priest to go prepare *Sahk Suseph's* last rites. The priest was reading a few prayers. And you know that container



that holds holy water and it has a knob. It's lead and it screws off on the handle. Well, someone had used it in church, one of the alter boys. He sprinkled i, he dipped the container. And the Native person was laying there on a bunk bed and it was made of straw and something else. He sprinkled for last rites, the knob came off and hit him in the head. This native person said, oh you dirty bastard, you almost killed me, to the priest. All the people laughed very hard, but anyway the native person lived long after that. My uncle John told him, *Sahk Suseph*, anyway my uncle said, you should not swear at a priest. He told John, I don't care for any ones feelings. The holy water containers back then were made of lead and very heavy. A long time ago, they did not take anyone to a funeral home or *nute utsasohkew* (cut out from your body). What they would do is put you on a bench and cover you with a white sheet, not like now.

Alice: So did they do anything else to them? When they put them in a white sheet, did they put anything on these people?

Royden: When you got buried they would put you in a box. They would make a box, rough coffin and a wooden cover. Drop it down and cover it up. They would prepare you right at home.

Alice: Do you remember any traditional Indians? Back then, Elders.

Royden: Not too much.

Alice: Do you know anything about red ochre?

Royden: No. Did you ever hear the story that the late Joe Sagaby tells about Noah? He lent me the tape that he made. He sounded so funny, like he was talking through his nose. He wanted to sound so Maliseet when he was talking. It's about somebody telling him to bring on board all the animals in *tulokuk* (the big boat). I should have saved that tape. I had it here for a while and then he wanted it back, so I took it back to him.

Alice: Medicine, do you know anything about Indian medicine?

Royden: Just *Kiwhoswasq* (calamus root). And my uncle John knows type of medicines to used to heal people. Once, Phillip, my wife's brother got a thorn in his hand. He went and got x-rayed, they didn't find it, it didn't show up in the x-ray. He came back home and it still bothered him, this was in *Welmooktuk* (Oromocto). Then uncle John made some poultice for him. Used some type of bark, which he boiled and crushed it up, and it was from some poplar. It looked like a salve after, he put this on a bandage and put it over where the thorn was. He said, in the morning take the bandage out and it will not be there. And sure enough next morning when Tom woke up, he took his bandage off and there was this thorn in the suave. The salve drew it out. He knew

a lot of medicine my uncle John. He used to teach me, but I forgot it all.

Alice: Did he ever tell you any stories?

Royden: Yes, he did, but I forgot them all. I used to sit there and listen to him.

Alice: He would have been a good one to go and talk with, if he was still alive. He knew so much.

Royden: Oh yes, he knew everything. Native way of life, I don't think there was anything he didn't know about. Like he could predict the weather and he was always right. He used to use pig's gut. He used it's gut with knotches on it to tell him what the winter was going to be like. They used to kill pigs, they butchered them and he would look at them to tell him what kind of winter we are going to have. There are knotches on them, he would count them. He was always right. He would also go by how high bee hives were, if they were high then there will be a lot of snow in the wintertime. If a partridge had a lot of feathers down here and if they have fat legs, then there's going to be a lot of snow. If a person watches, there is a lot that falls into place.

Alice: So how was things for you when you moved here?

Royden: Well, the people were poor. But for me, I started working right away, for Simm's Roofing Company. About twenty-nine years I worked for them. Why I quit working for them is they all died off. That is the only reason I

quit work. So I went to another company and I worked there for nineteen years at the Industrial Park. And there were two other companies, Porter Roofing Company and Tasco. We counted the years and it totalled forty-three years. Winter and summer, I never got laid off once in that many years. I saw a lot of white people that were told to leave Christmastime, but me and a few other white people were left on. I don't know why. I used to think, I wish they would send me away, because it would be snowing so hard. But they will say, I'll see you Monday Royden. In that many years I worked, I finally got tired of it and thought I would look for something easier. So I got a job here at the school. It has been six years, I worked at the old school and then the new school.

Alice: Anybody ever tell you anything about 'little people'?

Royden: A long time ago they used to see them—my wife's father—by the brook. There's a hole in the ledge, there used to be a tunnel there. That is where they lived and along the brook. They were so small and they would swim, one dove down. But I guess they had big heads. But when they saw people coming they go in the water and are not seen again. And my father and I were hunting on this side of Gagetown. There used to be a boom which was owned by Irving, on the pulp along the river. No, that was

past Oromocto, *Macfetchnik* [place belonging to MacFadzen] is what they called the place. Early in the evening, we're walking towards there. My father said look over there where the boom is, there's 'little people' there. He said, when we get near the place they'll jump in the

river. I never used to believe until I saw them myself. My father told me this.

Alice: I think we're at the end of our tape Roy, so I'll cut it off here. I have one full tape anyway.

END OF TAPE

## 22. The Snowshoe Makers

FRED TOMAH  
HOULTON, MAINE

Yes, that's another thing about us that we were known to make. We were known as snowshoe makers, this tribe, the Maliseets [*Wolastoqiyik*] were in relation to the others. And another tribe would, Micmac (*Mi'kmaq*), look down and know that a Maliseet went by, because of the webbing. Very fine webbing, that's what Maliseets were known to make. It was even a choice of webbing. The moose hide, the underbelly of a young calf was best to use.

Alice: Jim and Aubrey Tomah, their originally from Kingsclear, were they?

Fred: Yes, their father and mother were there when Jim and Aubrey were born. They went to school there also, grade school. That was years ago, Leo lived over here most of his life, so did Jim and Aubrey. They just happened to be born there.

Alice: Who was their mother?

Fred: Mary, maybe, she died way before I was born. Soon after that they moved to the Houlton area for work, make basket and stuff like that, even though they made baskets over in Kingsclear. Their mother was a good basket maker, fancy baskets. As for Jim, he got his fussiness from her.

Alice: What year did they come over here, do you know?

Fred: Must have been when they were teenagers. Leo worked for Bangor-Aroostook Railroad, their father was a carpenter for a good many years. He retired from the Bangor-Aroostook Railroad to get a pension. Boys lived right around this area, they lived in the Houlton area. Indians were in different settlements, either they were out here in the Foxcroft Road or they were over there in the Hungary Hill area, where they were down in the flats. The last area they migrated from was the flats, moved from there to here. That would have been, down the flats where Jim's basket shop used to be. They would have moved there in

*Plate 22.1: Aubrey Tomah of Houlton, Maine, uses a wood mallet and wood wedge to split a brown ash log which will be used for making baskets. (photo courtesy of Houlton Band of Maliseets).*



- the forties, late forties. Because back in those days there was a mill down there. A lot of white men lived down there, in the houses that were built for the mill workers. When the mill went bad, went belly up. Indians started moving in because they happen to be living nearby anyway.
- Alice: Do you know what year that would have been?
- Fred: It would have been at least 1945. Somewhere around that time, because there was a house on a flat we used to call the Sewell House. It's no longer standing, but of the two or three houses that remain there, there is one down at the main flat area. And across the street from that was the Sewell House, only house at the time that had a foundation. That was built in 1941 and it wasn't too long after that the Indians started moving into these other houses that were more of a shack.
- Alice: So where did the Indians come from that are here now?
- Fred: The Houlton Band, their derivatives of various other tribes, Tobique, Woodstock, Kingsclear. And lived here even before Houlton was even founded, it's those families.
- Alice: What year was Houlton Founded?
- Fred: 1860's perhaps. There were Indians here, they were basket makers, gatherers, hunters. And they used the river here at *Metaqtihkek* (end of bushes), which is what it means as a water tributary to the north. And they gathered and hunted around here.
- Alice: So going back to Aubrey and Jim, there were originally from Kingsclear, did they ever live there?
- Fred: In their childhood days, went to school there. The school was funded by the Province.
- Alice: So tell me how you got into basket making. I know you told me that Jim and Aubrey taught you everything that you know?
- Fred: Jim, Aubrey and Leo and Charlie Tomah.
- Alice: Can you tell me a little about that?
- Fred: That was a long time ago. That actually started before I could remember, because Aubrey used to take me in the woods and they went to get ash. I was just a little kid, I wasn't even in school. They used to take me in the woods, because I guess he didn't have any boys. He didn't have any kids then. He would have had Sue, his oldest daughter, was born Christmas 1953 or 1954.
- Aubrey was the one who took me in the woods when they went to gather ash. And I would be crying, wanting to go back in the truck and go home. I was about fourteen or fifteen when we started picking it back up. Because of the nature of the material, nature of the wood from the tools, I couldn't have started any earlier than that. Because of the dangerousness of the sharpness of the tools and stuff. So it was around that time, that would have been around 1960, '65 or '66. I remember because Jim bought a new car, a '67 Buick GS, a demonstrator

car. He had that for about a year and that would have been a year to two before that learning. The process, it took a series of years to get it, to understand it.

Jim and Aubrey used to be a basket maker and duplicate other people's work and stuff, but in order to do your own work you have to be good at it. In order to be good at it, you have to learn what we're trying to tell you. You have to prepare yourself for it.

The very foundation of a basket is finding it in the woods; the right one, the right tree for the right type of work. Anybody could be a basket maker, but if you're going to be making certain types of baskets and you need a certain kind of wood.

So at the very early stage they emphasized that. And they would, they made the different size baskets. They made industrial baskets that are used in farming, clear down to what you use in housework, to put valuable things in. It varies, it's based on various type of wood they were using, that was the important part of all this.

Alice: So it took you a number of years to learn?

Fred: Yes, even the concept of baskets itself. It's very easy to understand, but you need to make your tools. They are handmade, they won't let me use their tools.

Alice: Do you have names for these tools?

Fred: Gauges, horses, things like that,

ax. Your choice of your tools, you either had to make it or acquire it in some manner. You just didn't use other persons tools, it was considered unaccepted, it was the lazy man's way of making a basket. But they, of course, they showed me how to make my own tools. And what choice wood to use and reason why you use it.

Alice: So what kind of wood did they tell you to use, to make your tools?

Fred: Apple trees. Sounds weird in a way. But using an apple tree, the wood is extremely hard and odd shaped. The branches are odd shaped, you can simplify your work by having to carve less by finding the right bend in the tree. And the thickness and things like this. And you would bake it, heat it up or let it dry naturally. You would use that to carve it to fit your hand. That's the reason why you don't let anyone use your tools, because they designed it for themselves.

Alice: So have you ever designed any of your own?

Fred: There is no concept of designing your own. Each one is, it bends to fit your hand, until it fits comfortably for your hand.

Alice: What about Jim and Aubrey did you ever use theirs?

Fred: Yeah, I used theirs. There is such a thing as a universal one and some of the old timers use it. It's just a straight curved handle, with the curve downward for dead centre, versus it being curved on its side as your holding it facing you.

Alice: So does it matter what type of apple tree?

Fred: No, it didn't.

Alice: I never heard that before, first time I heard that.

Fred: That was their choice, whether it's any truthfulness in it. But the date, even their father told them that.

Alice: So what do you call one of those?

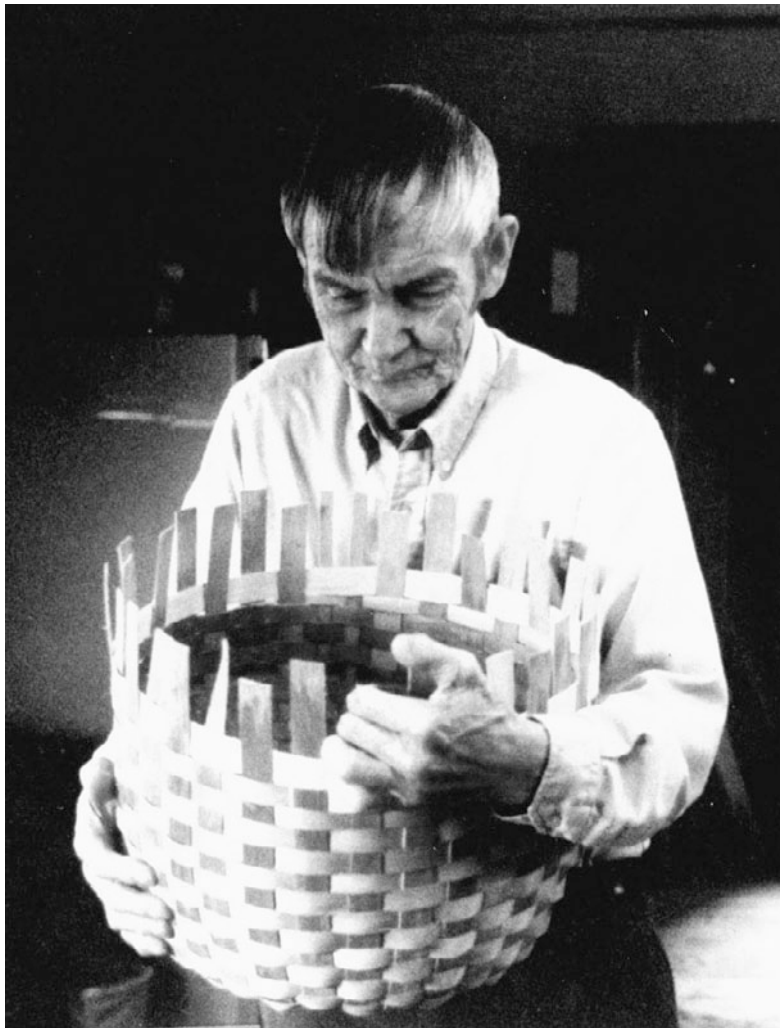
Fred: It's a draw shave.

Alice: It's not made to fit your hand, it's not made to fit anybody's?

Fred: But it's bent. It's not a draw shave, that is your off-the-shelf draw shave.

Once a draw shave is chosen, it's chosen for steel contact, the older ones are better. The Old Timers would say the more carbon in the steel the better. It will hold its edge over a long period of time when it's

*Plate 22.2: Jim Tomah (photo courtesy of Houlton Band of Maliseets).*





sharpened. That's extremely important. But the handles are also bent in relation to the blade direction, so you have to bend those handles as a basket maker. There is a draw shave they call a spoke shave. It does the same thing, but it's used to make spokes for wheels for the Old Timers. And this is a plain draw shave, the handles are bent downward in relation to the blade, to the workers choice and each basket maker in a sense. If he constructed a construction basket, that's generally used for a construction basket, more so than a fancy baskets. Fancy baskets, you would use a rim that would call for a need for using that. Whereas the other types of baskets you needed a drawn

shave to shave it down. And then there's a crooked knife. I don't have one here. I found an easy way to do it, an easier way to use the purpose for a crooked knife. Jim and Aubrey they use crooked knives.

Alice: I think a lot of the older Indians used crooked knives.

Fred: Crooked knife had two purposes, it was used taking the edges off the wood, also used for scraping purposes. It had to have the best feel. The best metal you could find in it.

It was crooked, the handle was designed crooked. More bent in an arc than any other knife you had laying around, for the purpose of holding the knife in your hand. Your thumb. The back side of the handle, so it will fit in your

*Plate 22.3: Basket making tools (photo by Viktoria Kramer).*



Plate 22.4: (photo by Viktoria Kramer)



hand and the blade faced you. And the way the blade was built into the handle, so it would fit in the palm of your hand. And the end of the handle would be bent outward, away from you. That is where your thumb would rest. It would be used for taking edges off, flip it around and use it for scraping.

Alice: So did you find it frustrating learning off your (pause)

Fred: Did I?

Alice: Let's hear a little about that.

Fred: First basket I made all by myself, I took it down to show it to Jim and Aubrey. I showed it to Jim first. Jim criticized the basket so bad and he told me to take apart. So I had to take it all apart, before I showed it to Aubrey. Aubrey did not see all the details Jim seen, but nonetheless, he said to take it apart and do it over. Of

course I did, I did that basket at least three times before it was done right, including making a different handle, for it. Eventually, I got to the point where it was considered acceptable for a person who was considered a green horn. They would sit there, but they would criticize me in such a manner. They would (pause)... you was told how to do it and if it didn't sink in to you, then you were a waste of their time. And they didn't like it. They would say, no matter what we tell you, you didn't pay attention. And if you are going to learn it, then you do it this way. Details and everything. Then they would, in a sense, re-explain it to you. As you make baskets, even with them, they would re-emphasize the importance of scraping wood. To make it look more presentable than for in-house use, in the

selection of wood. When they first taught me, they taught me from the ground up. And they used me as a mule, taking me in the woods and using me to haul the stuff out. And then they would explain to me the area we were in, why it grows here and stuff. The different growth rings on the tree, in relation to what your going to do with it. And then they said always notch the top of the tree, never notch the base of the tree.

Because it's deceiving, if you notch the tree with an ax, it determines how much growth the tree has grown.

Alice: Does that go with any kind of wood you wanted to use? I am not saying ash, but a tree, any tree?

Fred: Well, do you mean for other uses, like snowshoes or bows or stuff like that? No, not necessarily. The reason they are telling me this is because of the nature of the handles and the rims and the basket wood. To make the basket itself, it requires a different growth for each one. For example: thin grain wood, you couldn't use it for weavers of any large basket. But it would be a choice of wood for rims, because thin growth on a tree will allow you to bend it with relative ease without snapping it, the wood itself. And the thicker the grain, real thick grain stuff would be used for handles. Because a handle in a basket, it took a steep bending. It arches across the top, straight down almost. It requires a thicker, much thicker, grain to that. Because that critical bend at that point on that tree, a thin grain will not

take it. It will take a gradual arch, but a handle, it won't, it will snap. And also brittle wood, what we call swamp ash. Ash that grows anywhere near cedar or any soft woods will be predominately brittle. It will be more brittle than any other tree... When you go in the woods and your looking around, you see an ideal location for basket wood, any other wood in that area will also be good for handles and rims. But that doesn't hold true for handle wood. Rim, if that's all your looking for. You can't go into any tree, you have to go back to the area where you know is good ash for basket wood. But it's like this handle here, see how fairly thick the rings are? The rim with the layers are much closer, see what I mean? That's the reason behind it. Well, when I was making a basket, I'd often bring a handle or two and say, well, it's the choice of your wood. That would be criticizing for a reason, because you need to understand the very basics to begin with. And they wouldn't pass their baskets off to a buyer if they were made by somebody else, back in those days. As they got older they changed. It was important to maintain the standard they made.

Alice: And you met their standards?

Fred: In fact, I exceed them. Aubrey wasn't known as a handle or rim maker and he was very good at making bottoms and weaving it in. He really wasn't a, per say, a handle or rim maker.

Alice: What about Jim?

Fred: Jim was good at handles and rims. In fact we used to have contests, who could make the fastest. We would have double horses and we would see who could make the most. That was back years ago, we would sit there and make three dozen baskets a week. Think nothing of it together and load a pick up truck right up.

Alice: So you must have had some good times with Jim?

Fred: Oh yeah, we made baskets there at the shack where his father had been in. And my grandfather had made them, he made them in my shop and made them over where Jim and Aubrey were. Me and Aubrey were the last to make baskets together.

Alice: Aubrey? When did Jim quit making them?

Fred: Jim never did, Jim died at a basket shop. Jim made baskets all his life. Aubrey made baskets most of his life. But Aubrey wasn't as good at making handles and rims, so he needed somebody to finish the basket off.

Alice: Actually, you needed one another back then.

Fred: Yes, in a way. So as I got to the point where I could go on my own, I did. But time to time, we would join forces and it would be based on for filling big orders. Like a thousand basket order, we'd get together and do it that way. And sometimes it would be a matter of company. But as time progressed, I basically went on my own. Often Aubrey would come over and ask if he could make baskets with me, so we would get back

(pause) Aubrey couldn't make baskets on his own because he lacked the ability to make handles and rims.

Alice: When did he quit making them?

Fred: Aubrey made baskets up to the point where he died too. Jim too. Aubrey was a sand blaster, a stone cutter, he did memorial stones. He did that quite a bit, but that was seasonal. When they couldn't find a market for baskets they would do other things. Jim was a carpenter by trade. But in the beginning, in the early, early days, Jim was a shoe maker and we would talk a little about it, about other things, women folk and stuff. This was before he joined the armed forces, he was a young kid, Jim. Not sure when Jim was born, 1922 maybe. He was a few years older than my father. My father was born in 1925, three years difference.

Alice: Did Jim ever talk to you about relatives in Kingsclear?

Fred: Oh, we used to go over there, we used to go there a lot. I met Jim's aunt before she died. That was when Noreen lived there, when Mike and Daphne were small then. They were still in school, but they often visited them because Noreen was there. After Noreen died it was like, they didn't go down as often. Bingo was a big attraction for Jim and they would go to bingo. Back in those days, Canadian money was worth more than American, so it was an incentive for going over there. In fact they would go down there two times a week, three times a week.

Alice: I used to see Jim quite a bit down St. Mary's, at the old band hall. How many relatives do you have down there?

Fred: Down there now, not too many. There really isn't any Tomahs to speak of.

Alice: No, not really.

Fred: Although Mike is a Tomah, but goes by Solomon because of his father. But other than that, that's the only family that I know down there.

Alice: Mike would be about our age too.

Fred: Mike is younger than me, because I'm forty-six.

Alice: I was born in '51 and Mike has to be close to our age.

Fred: Thirty-five maybe.

Alice: No, he's got to be older than that.

Fred: Would I be ten years older than him? Probably not. Thirty-five. Mike used to come

here and make baskets. Mike is left handed. That's another thing about tools, see if your left handed, you can't use these tools.

Alice: It's funny when you say left handed, because I am left handed. But also right handed, so I am both.

Fred: Jim's sister is left handed, Debbie. I remember once we were down in the shack making baskets and they wove it in left handed, you could notice it. Actually, when the basket is constructed, when it's all done, it takes something to see where, if it's a left handed weave. But in finishing it off, it's different to a left handed than to a right handed. Jim and Aubrey had a difficult time sometimes dealing

with their left handed baskets.

Alice: What kind of stories did these men tell you?

Fred: Stories, what kind of stories?

Alice: Well, I don't want to hear anything about women. Or did they tell you any legends or stories? Did they tell you about little people? I hear that quite a bit.

END OF TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

TAPE ONE SIDE TWO

Fred: No, they talked about *Motewolon* (person with powers) once in a while. There was an Indian that said he was the seventh son of a seventh son. But they were always telling me, in a way, that *Motewolon*... *but* actually *Motewolon* is different from what they were trying to tell me.

Alice: What were they trying to tell you?

Fred: That *Motewolon* was a person that you would shun from, stay away from or you would avoid. If the person was, it meant bad, evil.

Alice: How would they know if it was evil?

Fred: Because a curse or something would occur when that person was around. That would be a forerunner, things like that. But actually, *Motewolon* is a little different, it's the exact opposite of what they were trying to explain to me. *Motewolon* is a gifted person, a person that is noticed as a child. More than anything, *Motewolon* is a gift that a person has. It's a special person, Like a person is going to be extremely important within a group, like a

- bearer, medicine man, a person that could find how to make it better. That kind of a thing, technically that's what a *Motewolon* is.
- Alice: A *Motewolon*, I never heard it to be like that.
- Fred: Yeah, it's a person that was considered to be—that was practised a generation or two before Jim. That's how that term was used. And it's been acknowledged to mean that and that comes from several sources. We did a historical thing on the tribe dates, back before the white man really was here. And that came up, why a tribe a tribe, why is a chief a chief, that concept of the role of leadership within an Indian group. Namely within our group, the Maliseets. *Motewolon* was brought up a couple of times, it almost could be construed to mean *Sakom* [Chief]. Actually, it's different from *Sakom*. *Motewolon* is a little bit different than that. It's that, but more. It's the person in fact, the person is different.
- Alice: Well, a person, the *Motewolon* is powerful. But from my understanding of a *Motewolon*, it's more like a devil or somebody that does like you said, a forerunner.
- Fred: The last *Motewolon* probably around these parts would have been Fred Tomah that died a while back. Not my father, but a different Fred Tomah.
- Alice: And what was he like?
- Fred: He was a medicine man, Passamaquoddy.
- Alice: But I thought a *Motewolon* and a medicine man were different?
- Fred: Well, they were in a way, but that's the closest you could get to one. But a *Motewolon* today is construed to mean evil or bad. Something like that, you treaded the ground lightly around him. You did not upset that person. But we still use it today in that way.
- Alice: If someone does bad or wrong they call them in Indian *Motewolon*.
- Fred: I talked to White Pete about this. This was a few years ago. Leo Tomah was alive then, 1970 maybe. And I remember we were sitting in a bingo game and White Pete says, do you want to see your grandfather when he was a little boy? You got pictures that old? He said, oh yeah. He had some real old pictures. He had some of Frank, he even had them pictures. This guy here, he collected everything, he never threw nothing away.
- Alice: Oh, I know. I was there to see his daughter. I was talking to her, Carol, on Friday. And she said she had a lot of photographs. And she gave me some material of what was written about her father, White Pete. But I told her maybe sometime I'll come back and look at photographs. She said I could borrow them or have them photographed.
- Fred: White Pete was, according to the Old Timers, claimed that he was left at a door step of an Indian when he was an infant. That is why they call him White Pete.
- Alice: He's not Indian!
- Fred: No, he's not Indian.

Alice: But he could talk Indian?

Fred: Oh yeah. Well you see, when he was an infant, just born (pause)

Alice: Well, who brought him up?

Fred: The Indians did, Woodstock reserve. They left him at a door step of an Indian house and they brought him up as one of their own.

Alice: Is that right! Did he tell you that?

Fred: No, Leo told me that. I confronted him about it. As a matter of fact, I went over to his house. At first, I was invited over there from the bingo game and we were going through all these pictures and stuff. So I asked him. I said, is it true you were brought up by the Indians here? He said that it was true. In fact his mother and father, he doesn't know who they are. As far as he's concerned, these people that brought him up are his mother and father.

Alice: Who brought him up?

Fred: I am not sure. I think it was the Paul family. Another thing about it is he said he didn't speak English until he was in his thirties. It was 1930 something. He said that he spoke English, he started learning it. That was before they had electricity at the reserve, that was some time ago then. But then, yeah, he was left at the door step and they brought him up as an Indian. And they accepted him, in his generation time, as an Indian. As a matter of fact, he was even a Chief at the reserve over there.

Alice: He was. No, no, he was never Chief. Carol was saying that, I was talking to Carol on Friday and she

said he was never Chief of this reserve. It was just something they labelled him with. Because she told me that herself, he was never Chief. I don't know why they say that or it's written, but he was never Chief over there.

Fred: I could have swore that he was Chief a long time ago. But then that was before I was born. That was before Carol was born, she would be my age.

Alice: I think Carol is about fifty-five, somewhere around there.

Fred: But anyway, that's the reason they call him White Pete.

Alice: I know I was (pause) Before I started doing this... well Karen, Karen Perley said find out about White Pete and Oromocto Pete. Who is Oromocto Pete? Well I found out who he was, and I found out who White Pete is.

Fred: There was this Pete, is he a Polchies?

Alice: Oromocto Pete?

Fred: Yeah.

Alice: No, I think he was (pause) Yes, yes, Polchies, come to think of it.

Fred: I get kind of confused in that there's a, there was a doctor there in Woodstock. His name was Fred Clarke. Did you ever hear of him?

Alice: Yes, I've heard of him.

Fred: He was a dentist, a collector of arrowheads and all this other stuff. He liked to go to people's property and look for old Indian stuff. He wrote a book, a book called 'Someone Before Us'. I got this book—Leo gave it to

me or somebody—and I was reading through it and they talk about Dr. Peter Polchies. And from what I can gather, this is White Pete. He's talking about, they were at the kitchen table. He would often have conversations with Dr. Peter Polchies. That's how he found out what Meductic meant. Because he was doing his digging, he could not find anything beyond Meductic.

Alice: What does Meductic mean?

Fred: The end of the trail. And according to the book, according to Dr.

Peter Paul, he says he uttered it when

he was at a table. He was thinking to himself, the doctor was. In his diggings, he couldn't find anything beyond this particular point. And he said, and he was saying, why the word Meductic? Why can't I find anything beyond that. And he says, White Pete tells him what Meductic means. And then it finally dawns on him that Meductic is the point where, apparently in the water tributary process, Indians never went beyond that. And that's the cross roads of the way Indians travelled back years ago. And it finally made sense to Mr.

*Plate 22.5: Picture taken at Frank Tomah's home in Houlton, Maine; from left to right: Philip Tomah, Louise Tomah (now wife of the late Arthur Polchies of Kingsclear), Elizabeth Tomah, Benny Tomah, Sarah Atwin, Simon Atwin, Tom Bear (Tobique), Frank Tomah (originally of Kingsclear), Tom Forlis, Sappier Sappier (Tobique, later St. Mary's), Frank ("Weasel") Francis (former Chief at Tobique?) Gary Francis, Agnes (Francis) Forlis, Mary (Paul) Francis, mother of 14, Mrs Frank W. Francis (Mary Poligiman), her father was Noel Paul, her mother was a French woman; Mrs. Sappier, mother of 11, Leo Tomah, Peter Tomah (University of New Brunswick Archives, 74- 17378).*





- Clarke the reason why.
- Alice: One time when I was working for the Union of New Brunswick Indians, there was a Herman Saulis and his wife. I think he knows like Pokiok, Meductic, all these along the Saint John River, coming up this way. She knows what they all mean and I have yet to speak to her.
- Fred: White Pete should have wrote that down. Because he talked about the difference in language of the younger generations, losing some of the meaning of words. And he said he noticed that with the language kids were using, they used words in a different manner. And he couldn't understand it, it bothered him immensely.
- Alice: It's just like today, when I talk to somebody from Princeton or Eastport, Bangor way there, the reserve there; I find that their words are different. Almost the same meaning as ours, but not quite.
- Fred: Even their dirty words, there is no way you can say them words in Indian. In a way there is and in a way there isn't.
- Alice: Just like this man I was talking to from Kingsclear last week. He was telling me about something that went on. And he said, this woman was calling me everything in the book. She mentioned hoe, hoe to us right now in our language *Lahkihikon* (garden hoe). Until I found out last week, to me meant a whore. No, there is no such word for a whore, a hoe is a garden hoe, when your working in the garden. I said, what about a bitch? He said a bitch is a *Sqehsomuhs* (female dog) and anyway when you say bitch, people think you are talking about a dog. Like one of those.
- Fred: Just like a woman purses in Passamaquoddy it's one word and in Maliseet it's a little different.
- Alice: My mother told me that, she said *Moneynuht* is a pocket book. But (pause)
- Fred: I was playing pinochle at Pleasant Point, I was going with a girl down there. We were at this park and going to somebody's house and that came up. This girls asked this other girl to pass her that, I started laughing and explained it to them. They said, do you speak Indian? I said, not really, I can understand some.
- Alice: Yeah, I've heard my father say that too.
- Fred: Jim and Aubrey spoke Indian a lot when they were around each other. Back in those days, everyone made baskets. We'd all be making baskets for farmers and stuff. Next thing you know Eleanor, Jim's sister, they would be making bottoms, cutting and scraping, putting them out left and right.
- Alice: Where is Eleanor at, what nursing home is she at?
- Fred: The road going to Calais, there is a nursing home outside of town. I haven't seen her in years. I should go visit her too.
- Alice: How old would she be?
- Fred: I think she's in her sixties. Jim was seventy something when he died,

- so yeah, she's in her sixties. She could cook, whenever they'd bring muskrat in, she'd be cooking it.
- Alice: Do you eat muskrat?
- Fred: Yes, when I can get it.
- Alice: Me too. My mother used to cook that in a stew or she would bake it. That was good. It's been a long time since I had muskrat. Ronnie Paul, on our reserve, he still traps.
- Fred: Over here it's regulated, white man has laws on that. Can't go do that without getting an act of congress, but hopefully in the near future we can change that. And her husband Fred Perley, he's from Tobique. He would (pause)
- Alice: He made a what?
- Fred: A pretty good bottom for a basket, he's quick. He's a barber by trade. When we'd all need a haircut, sit down and he'd get his shears out and give us a hair cut. Didn't cost us anything for a hair cut when Fred was around. Never had to worry about fixing anything up because Jim or Leo were carpenters.
- Alice: You know it's funny, we look at Indian people—like when I was just thinking about it here—it's like they didn't have trades back then, but they did. Like you were saying, Jim was a carpenter, Aubrey was a stone cutter. You don't hear that too much, about what the old Indian did for a trade. We're always looking at them as just Indian people. And oh, he knows how to make baskets. And that was it.
- Fred: When I was a kid, they used to make snowshoes down here. Leo and Charlie talked about what they could teach me. To fill them in, get yourself prepared. But although, Jimmy claimed to me what needs to be done, what to use and it has some similarities to basket making.
- Alice: Snowshoes?
- Fred: Yep, especially making the hoop for the snowshoes. It's done the same way as a handle for a basket or a rim. Because the outside of the tree has never been disturbed. That's one thing you don't want to do is bother the outside of that tree, the last growth ring. But if you do, then you have to take it down to the next growth ring. Nine times out of ten you won't because it's important, extremely important for that. Because when the shoes gets cold in the wintertime, if that tree—of course it would be less cold as it is outdoors. If it's really cold like subzero, then the nose of that shoe will crack, break on you when it's not done right. And by doing that by, not bothering the outside, it won't break. See that the gist of that? The modern ones are sawed out stuff and put it through a steamer and all that stuff. Anyway made the same way as a rim. As far as making that, it would freeze.
- Alice: What the snowshoe?
- Fred: Yes, that's another thing about us that we were known to make. We were known as snowshoe makers, this tribe, the Maliseets [*Wolastoqiyik*] were in relation to the others. And another tribe would, Micmac (*Mi'kmaq*), look down and know that

a Maliseet went by, because of the webbing. Very fine webbing, that's what Maliseets were known to make. It was even a choice of webbing. The moose hide, the underbelly of a young calf was best to use. And you make gauges too, just like you use for cutting this stuff up. You cut them the same way. After it's been scraped, prepared, once it has been gauged to the size, then you have to stretch it. There used to be stretchers down there. Something like this, nothing but wheels to separate it. Stretch it real hard on one end, let it sit there for a while and go back pull some more. Stretch it and the remainder wrap it around the other wheel. They have these scrapers there. I remember when I was a kid, they had the hide outdoors, frozen, and bring them in and scrape it. That was the easiest way to do it, scrape it down to the proper thinness. The scraper was concave and it was cut like, it had a handle on it, you use that for scraping. After it has all been scraped then you start at an end somewhere and a continuous weave. Continuously cut that big, long piece until it was done. I could do all that, but I don't know how to weave it in, even though I am sitting here a fast weaver. Although I'd probably take one from the shack, one down here. In fact, I'll go get one bring it here and study it.

Alice: Who made the ones that are at the shack?

Fred: God only knows. I am just taking a wild guess, this is going to be a cat head basket, this one.

Alice: Who made that basket over there, the small one?

Fred: A Micmac (*Mi'kmaq*) made that, my sister's basket, kids broke the handle. I'll take it over, I'll see if I can put a handle on it. But I think it will be a difficult process, it's a melon basket. I never made one myself.

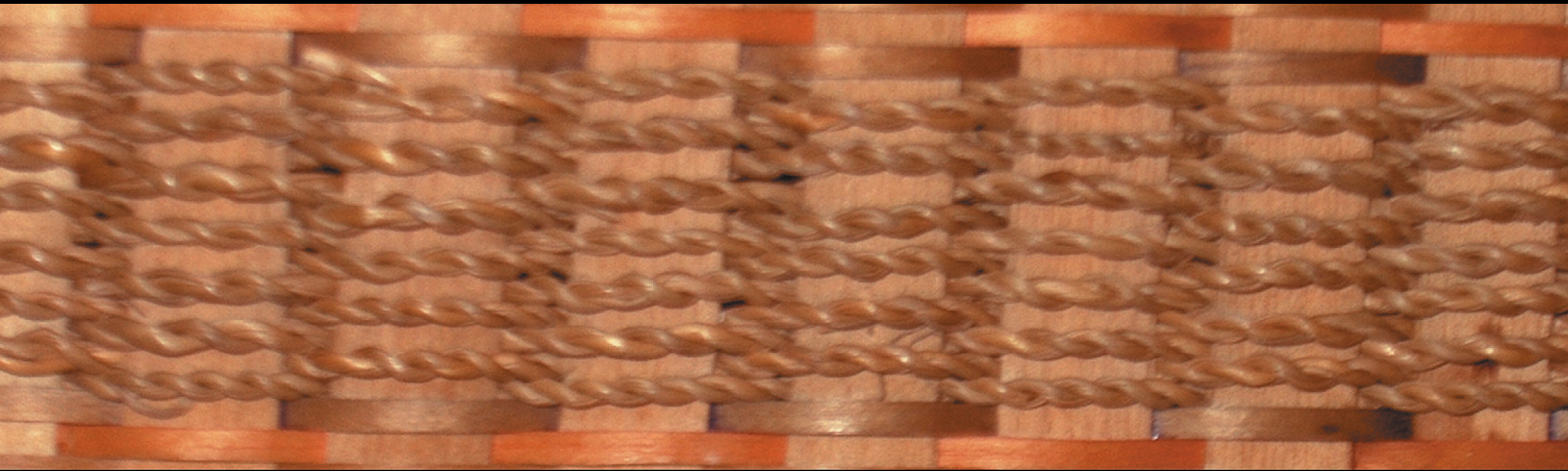
Alice: So you're going to get me a copy of the green book, so I'll know your family tree?


Fred: We have that somewhere, not necessarily in the green book. It's in a report that a guy named James Wherry is the one who did this. The Association of Aroostook Indians years ago, it explains a lot. Even it explains the structure of an Indian tribal group in ancient times. It says, it talks about the council and why a council was a council. I found it very interesting, although today white man's government (pause) The Chief is a Chief, he can say and do everything and they all accept it. But actually it isn't true, this explain it.

Alice: A Chief is only a council member that's all, he just carries that title, that's it. Just like us down that way, same way. You can overpower him any time if you choose to.

Fred: Here, this government won't recognize that. And we tried to do that here, but it caused all kinds of riffs and he won as a result of that. But we're going to change that soon.

[Tape Stops Abruptly]



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