

Ahtahkakoop Elder Stories



Acknowledgements

Lyle Whitefish
Emily Whitefish
Diane Ahenakew
Damon Little

and
the elders who shared their stories

This book features QR codes for each story, scan with your phone to get the Cree audio for each story.

1

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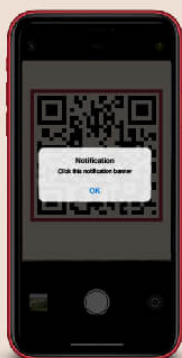
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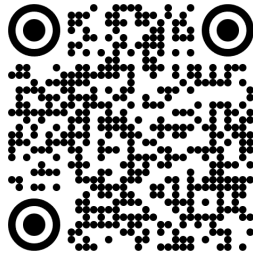
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JAMES ISBISTER:

THIS LAND THAT STANDS HERE RIGHT NOW IS WHERE WE WERE BORN.



This land that stands here right now is where we were born, where my older brother lives at the present time, this is where me and my older brother were raised. We used to walk to school from there. I remember I started going to school at 6 years old. We used to cross a bridge between the bay, it used to be flooded a lot and the Elders built a bridge for people to cross the flood towards the old church. That is where we used to walk up on the hill where the old Church used to be, that is where I used to go to school. Towards the bottom of the hill where the Cree Nations building is right now, was another school and a teacher by the name of Mrs. Craft was the teacher there. I remember we were happy because everything was there, we needed to live by. I don't really remember how we used to be taught or the content being taught. I remember sometimes we used to be afraid, of the teachers. The discipline we used to get, at times we think that we deserved it because we were bad or we didn't mean to do it.

Now as I was getting older, I used to get the stove going and make porridge for my siblings. The reason why I made the porridge for them, which was my sister and brother were in high school at the time. Wally and Sheila are their names. When we run out of groceries. I used to take something from my house and go trade from the store like milk or sugar and whatever leftover we have I go trade for other groceries.

As I was getting older. About grade 5. I remember. What the strap is now. The principal's name was Mr. Hancock. And he was my teacher. I remember he was mean. I remember when. You do something bad; he will give you the strap. I was the fortunate ones. I was at that school for a month before I went to residential school in Grade 5. It was very different. I remember everything at residential school had a routine. And we've had to follow it. Otherwise, we will get disciplined. There were a lot of boundaries at the residential school that we had to follow. For example, I had a brother, younger brother and a sister in the Residential school and I couldn't go visit them. They had these imaginary boundaries, if we crossed them, we get in trouble. Today, I still have difficulties with these boundaries. Still affects me today. I still have difficulties with boundaries today and I'm working on letting that go.

I went to resident school for another three years and this is when my parents moved to Town of Big River, this is where I went to school. I finished up to grade 7 to 12 at the town of Big River. Then my family moved back to the reserve.

Now we're talking about Kinship, Family history. Our family history was very difficult for us. Our father's name is Tommy Isbister, he was white man. He was married twice. His first wife had passed away. Jacob Masuskapoe was his father-in-law and he was a spiritual leader at the church. Woman back then lose their treaty rights when they are married to a white man. This is when Chief Ahtahkakoop and the band members have to agree to disfranchise. Jacob Masuskapoe had also lost a son at the World War his name was Charles Masuskapoe, and he would have lost his daughter to the system because she would have had to get enfranchise. So Chief Ahtahkakoop got his band council together and got a referendum they have to be 100%. And the referendum said that Tommy Isbister can become treaty and he would have got treaty number 151 but he had got number 200 What does that mean? I don't know. He got the treaty number 200 and that's how I got my treaty number 200 when I was young. But I eventually got my own treaty number. I will never forget; well, the people never allowed us to forget. You

guys are “half-breeds” that’s all I heard all my life. That’s how I am, the way I am today. I like to thank the people for the person I am today. Because I didn’t give up, no matter what I am. Half or Indian? I am native first. So, after that, that is where Tommy Isbister met my mother. And my mother’s name is Rachel Masuskapoe. Now there are five families that come from the Masuskapoes. Two of them I know of that is Peekeekoot and Williams. And how I know is we call each other like Gordon Williams. (My cousins) Because his father and my mother were first cousins. And same thing with Tommy Masuskapoe, David Masuskapoe’s dad, and my mother were cousins. So, this is how I understand how relationships (kinship) work. Growing up I began to understand. The difference between who was white and who was Native. Because of this example. But my first instinct is to be native. Then I’ll be Native for the rest of my life. No matter what people say, I know who I am because of my language, and I didn’t know my culture then. I learned my culture from the elders, the elders talk to me, and encouraging me. When we lived in Big River. My mother ran a boarding house, this is where Elders from Whitefish would come stay at our place. This is where I met a lot of Whitefish Elders, last names like Whitefish, Netmakers, and Lewis’. I got to know all the old people from Whitefish here and this is where I got my knowledge from. And they always used to pick on me. And I didn’t know why. Now I know why today. They used to talk to me, my grandson, come here. I want to tell you something and they will tell me how it used to be in whitefish and how it used to be with other people. This is where I got all my information from, I’m at lost when I get asked about my own reserve because I didn’t have the same opportunity with the Elders there as I did with the Whitefish elders, Because of the residential school being away from the reserve and living in the town of Big River, then coming back to the reserve again. I learned from the outside so that I can strengthen my people in the inside that are still stuck in the reserve.

There is this other story I’d like to share and this is about the church. It was 3 times they went on the Sunday. In a morning when they got there. Most of the people got there in about 9 or 10 and once in the afternoon. In the afternoon they go to the sports grounds to go play soccer. Simon Williams used to be the referee. Half way of the game, he would take off. At about 6:30 in the evening, you could hear the first bell. He was getting ready for church service. Everybody in the soccer field heard the bell, we will move to the church for the evening service. My older brother Wally told me a story one time, he said. We used to play over there by the treatment centre. There used to be a field over there. The young kids used to play there. And over here by the church is where the women used to cook. Over here by the pine trees, where the horses used to be, the old men used to sit there and talk and share stories. About what happened during the week or stories that were told to them. He said one time he went to sit there and listen to his elders. And when he sat there, he had to behave himself. He had to sit still and listen. He was listening to the old men talking Cree language. There were old women in the other group. And this old woman came over to the group where the old men were sitting and sat down. Suddenly the old men went quiet until the woman spoke. See today now we lost that. That respect for the woman. That connection that women had, the power of a woman. Anything, that woman shared. They had to share to the men too. Another story was. They used to have a Stampede ground by the old hall. My brother used to tell me a lot of things. A lot of young men used to go to riding the bucking Broncos, cows or bulls. To see who gets bucked off first. That’s another activity they would go do too.

Back to respect of the woman?

Women were very respected back in the day. As soon as the old women stand up the talk. The kids would stop talking, playing and quiet down. Women were very hard workers.

There was a lot of activities. Picture shows at the old hall, the old principal, Sidney Cuthand would bring a movie and we would have movie nights every Friday. The old hall used to have a camera for the picture show. We had a generator. We were lucky to have a generator down in the basement.

Those two last names, how did that come to be? Peekeekoot and Williams?

They were actually Masuskapoes? There was a conflict with the James Masuskapoe, one had changed his last

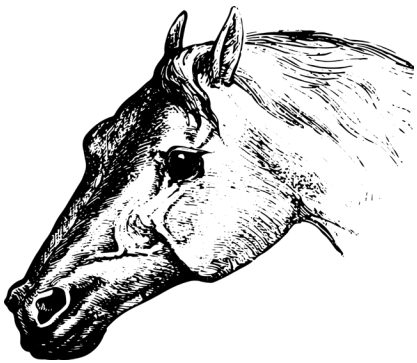
name to Peekeekoot?

My grand father, his grandfathers' name was James. And I became James from my grandfather's side James Peekeekoot. There was only two that were Masuskapoes and that was Roy Masuskapoe and my mother the rest were Peekeekoots. Like Frank, Edmond, Billy were Peekeekoots. My mother had Masuskapoe as her last name but in parenthesis was Peekeekoot on her marriage certificate.

As a child growing up. Maybe talk about your work as a child?

My work was cutting wood and hauling water from the lake, and this was before we had wells. We have to chop wood. Also, if there was no food, nobody cooking. If the mom or a sister is not cooking. You got to cook for yourself or for your siblings. I got four older and four younger siblings. Being in the middle. Because all the older ones are older than me. I had to do the cooking for my younger siblings. I had to help chores with my older siblings. We have to haul hay in Butcher Lake I used to go with my brother to haul hay. And my job is to take care of the horses. We haul the hay about 7 miles away.

The other part too trains from the bridal and stuff. Team back to where the businessmen were standing. He had another person called the team of horses one of the businessmen summoned him as is to look after my siblings. I used to babysit a lot. My mother had a lot of respect. She still always go visit other elders. And I'd be at home babysitting. And at those times, it wasn't hard to babysit. Because everybody back then had other jobs. This is where I learned how to be responsible today. And also, not to be too lazy to always help out wherever you can.



When an elder came to visit, we had to behave ourselves. And always ask permission before we did things. That's how much respect we were taught, especially towards older people and other parents. We were taught to not be disruptive. Once we're outside, we couldn't come inside. Because of the older people talking. And the other thing we were taught was to always close the windows at night and do not play outside at night. And the go inside. Because there's a safe place. There was a safety there because everybody had a lot of love and that is protected. After that, alcohol was introduced. And everything changed. This is another story.

My mother was the one that was very responsible. My father worked outside the reserve. He worked at a ranch where there are horses. People talked about that a lot. My mom was the one that raised us. But my dad used to bring us groceries. It was a joyful time. He also bought us things to wear and gifts.

When alcohol came? Permit system?

My brother told me this one story about my dad getting sick. And he was sick about two weeks. Then he went to farm instructor who lived by the treatment centre. He went and got a permit to go to the hospital. At the mean time, he started getting sicker. Two older women came by and helped my dad, one was Sugil Sasakamoose and Kapaypahpo (Laughing from far woman). They gave him medicine, and healed him. And the permit came about a month later, after he recovered.

I think we were fortunate ones because I think having a white dad helped us get things outside of the reserve. People understood that he was white and that really helped our family because we always had things, He knew people outside the reserve like Montnebo and Shell Lake. Just thinking about it now, that might have been the reason why my dad was the way he was after. He couldn't get a job around, he moved to Big River worked at the saw mill for 10 years. He retired at 70 years old. That is hard work because the thing is, after he stopped working, they had their hire three guys. But that's what he taught us and he taught us to always work hard.

Family: the youngest Marge, Gerald, Jackie and Janice. That is the one that is married to Alex Sasakamoose. And then there was Sheila, Walter. No Melvin, Sheila, Walter and Lester. That's the one that's married to Louisa. And then there is Gerald.

Going back to when alcohol came?

My recollection on that. The time alcohol arrived at my reserve. Something had happened before we moved to where my brother lives. Where the Littles live, where Blanche Little lives now. That's where my parents used to live. And Edward and Lillian lived where Melvin lives today. But because of that problem, alcoholism after it came. And after they were allowed to go into the bar, my uncle became an alcoholic and he was losing everything. So, then my dad because that was his brother-in-law, he traded. So that's why the Littles lived where they do, and that's why my brother lives where he lives now. They trade it. Because it is part of the isolation. So, my uncle being at the isolated area, he stopped drinking. He didn't drink very much. It was at the Polworth area. My uncle, Edward Little. And my dad, he didn't drink very much. Well, he can handle his drinking.

Edward Little is my uncle through my auntie, my mom's sister. Edward's children were Brian, Colin, deceased Edgar, Vernon, and Bernice and Blanche. Helen Little came from Williams, used to call the Kittens, Verna, Evangeline, and Helen. Their dad was William and Clifford was the only brother they had, he passed away, that's why there's a connection there.

Tell me about Dances? Were you ever involved in Dances back then?

I was too young to remember. Once alcohol entered the reserve, we had to end the activities and dances. The hall activity stopped after I became a teenager. Because of the alcoholism, there are no more dances.

My ministry came in a vision, in a native ceremony. It was a chicken dance at the north end of Sandy Lake made by Barry Ahenakew when he was Chief at the time. He got this Jim Kanapototot to come do a chicken dance, there were difficulties happening at that time. And I had a lot of difficulties myself too I was working at the Residential School in Prince Albert, I was a child care worker for about 5 years, I was getting attacked there, it happened for 3 days. It was a really scary feeling. Feeling attacked everyday for 3 days. So, on the third day my brother Gerald came to see me he knew there was something wrong, I told him about the attacks. Then he told me there is a Native ceremony happening at the north end, take some tobacco and a print. I knew a little bit about native ceremonies back then, so I offered tobacco and a gift. And I told an Elder about what's been happening, my problem. At the time there an offering of an animal that time. Then this Elder said to me, "my grandson, that was only God, pray the way that you are used to, tell God your problem and he will listen, see that piece of animal, take a piece and hand it over to God and tell him what you want". So, I took a piece of the meat, and I offered it and all of the sudden there was a voice, "This is my body given to you, this is my blood shed for you", all of a sudden, I seen a Priest standing there, it was me.

And because I guess I have a fast mind in a sense, I knew that this was a calling and had to do something. It's not a combination of both, it is an understanding of both cultures, like Christians they read a bible and our culture is through our oral stories. Through those examples of our people. That's why I can talk to people. My niece's kids call me "mosom church". They all used to come to church here until I moved to Prince Albert. I was ministering at Holy Eternity there and then moved to BC, I got remarried, lived there for 2 years. And I came back, moved to Whitefish.

So, then I thought why did I get that message from God, then I thought to myself, well that was the Holy communion, then the sacrifice, then I understood what sacrifice meant, when Jesus sacrificed his life. Same thing as animals gives their life so we can live. I began to understand the sweat lodges, that's when I was able to combine the two understanding. Get a message out of how to do it, today I recognized myself today as Native, Christian and Anglican. The first two are the most important things, being Native and Anglican. As my niece said, I bring the messages in two forms when I minister.

I retired when I was 60 years old. I combined the Cree language with the message from God. And the Cree means a lot, it's so significant. I always talk the Cree language first before I minister, or at a funeral. From it that's where we get the message, it enhances the message.

I think the organized churches I think misunderstood what was supposed to happen. It's like they are supposed to bring us Jesus but brought us the building of the church instead. It's like they want us to turn our ways, like they expected us to respect something that we didn't really understand and to honour something that was not who we are. They should have had kept our native understanding and culture but bring us a message. But they didn't do that.

It's like what I tell the young people, learn to love yourselves, and the only way to love is to learn to forgive. That's what I had to do when I was being mistreated at Residential school by my own people. I had to learn to love myself first then to others. I began talking to those people who were being mean to me in a good way.

The message to the young people, is to learn to love yourself as a Native person. But also, to understand yourself as a native person and be proud of who you are. There is a lot of gifts that we lost. Like the love from our families, brothers, sisters, and cousins.

One term that is never used, "To earn it". Like if you are elected as Chief, you haven't earned it, it was earned by your people, to earn it is by visiting them and talking to them but we don't do that anymore. So, the young people, learn to visit each other, and talk to each other. Take away all the things you did wrong, alcohol, drugs, prescription drugs and all these things, these that all went wrong. And we as parents, have lost our way and grandparents. We need to rebuild. That's the only way is to encourage our young people. Because our children are at the point now to make their own choices. The only choice they can make is to choose the right path.

There are Native Ten commandments:

Earth- is your mother, honor her. When we start to honor what's out there then we begin to honor what's around us. Our parents, like for myself, my mother used to be strict, sometimes too strict and began to be abusive, she would strap me and punish me. But I still loved her no matter what, I knew she must of went through a lot herself in her past. I knew it wasn't her. I loved her even though she did this. She's the one that gave birth to me, I am very grateful for that, the time being spend with when she was starting to lose it, she was still my parent. And for young people need to start forgiving and respecting their parent, to love them no matter what. This is where you will get your strength back, and we got to go back and relearn on who we are as Native people, it's a powerful culture but it was misunderstood. That is the misunderstanding we have to take care of today.

A story:

Happened in Whitefish, also in Sandy Lake. There was four people who had passed in Whitefish, an accident. Yvoone's son, and other people. I was having my service here as well. And late Felix Morin called me, to come over to Wf, because it was going crazy he said. Here they were having a gospel service, with music, a guitar and everything. So I went over there to Wf, when I got there they were bringing the bodies into the old hall. One side was Anglican and the other was Pentecostal services. I went to talk to David Masuskapoe, Sam B, William, and two other Turners. I asked on what are we going to do here. I was there for the people, Davis spoke up and said you can talk to the people. The two bodies were there, one side of the old hall. I said "let us not use religion, let us not fight about what we should do but let's do it together." then I went to sat down with other spiritual people. There were native elders there, church priests (Anglican), Catholics and Christian. After that they were saying, "amen, praise the Lord, halleluiah" up there. But that didn't bother me. I was praying where I was sitting so everything will go right. After his praying and talking, Clifford Rabbitskin, one of the elders, was done they all started following each other in unison. I was so surprised to see that, thinking how wonderful prayers can be. I was thinking this is so powerful and everyone shook hands. That's the part of our own way, is who we are. I had to come back to Sandy Lake for the wake service here too, but before I came to Sandy Lake, I asked the people of Whitefish, so what are we going to do at the burial site. They said to me, you can have the funeral any way you want it done. We will leave it you. To do both funerals. To me that's the power of God. When you humble yourself. I didn't go there to challenge them; I went there to do a service. And I ended up doing everything. It was such a wonderful day. So peaceful. Everyone was getting along. This made me proud. All I could say, God was at work not us. We are just instruments. Our prayers are together.

BURTON AHENAKEW: THOSE WERE THE GOOD OLD DAYS.



I was born in 1942 during the Second World War. When I was born, I believe the war ended 1940, 42, or 1943, I'm not quite sure when they quit fighting. I grew up on the farm here on our old farmstead. My dad ran up to 100 head of cows and we grew up working hard. There was no welfare, there was no power, no telephone nothing, but people survived. They learned to survive the winters as they were very cold. Today, we only have a few cold days in a year. Back in them days, there was 40, 50, 60 below. And we'd have to go for hay. If we ran out of the hay on the farm here, we'd have to go seven miles to go and get hay for the cattle. To make a story short, Simon Williams told me a lot of things. I don't know why, but he spent time with me. I was just a young man at 14 or 15 years old, but he would come and tell me things about my great grandfather.

The way I was told, his name was Chatelaine and that they came from down south-east and this is where they took land when the government (Indian affairs) put us on reserves. This is where they chose land as per Basil Starblanket, that was my mother's uncle. My mom was Metis from Mattes. They had a little farm on the edge of the reserve. She married into the reserve here with my dad. My great grandmother was from One Arrow First Nation her last name was Almightyvoice. I forgot her name. I'm eighty years old now and I forgot a lot of things and that her last name was Almightyvoice. She was my great grand-mother, my grandmother was Mariam Starblanket. She was Basil's Starblanket's niece, Baptiste Starblanket's daughter. That was my mother's mom. On my mother's side, we were like my great grandmother was Almightyvoice and then married my dad.

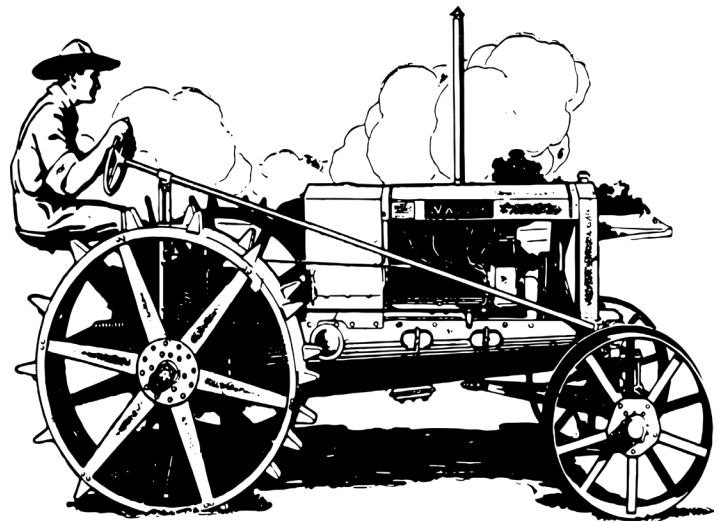
I guess during that time, Tom Pechawis was heading to Ahtahkakoop here. Sandy Lake as it was known then. Nobody ever called this reserve Ahtahkakoop, it was always Sandy Lake. The Anglican priest had called it Hines Lake. But, we called it Sandy Lake and that's where we are today. Tom was heading here and then he stopped at Mistawasis for the night. They were traveling with a herd of cattle and they were going to settle down here. But the chief at that time in Mistawasis went and seen Tom and told him, "you may as well stay here, this will be your land." They invited him, so he decided to stay there. We're kind of related there with Wuttunees, the Tootoosis from Poundmaker and Pechawis in Mistawasis. That's where people were migrating to choose their reserves. Life was hard like I said, there was no tractors with front end loaders, you had the pitchfork and each family, there was no welfare you had to work to live to have something to eat or you had to live on berries in summer-time and especially during winter people were hungry.

That brings me the thought about Almightyvoice. There's a book, my kohkum's (grandmother) nephew, they were starving. I read the book when I was about sixteen or seventeen. My dad had it. They were hungry and their were kids were crying there was nothing to eat. So, he killed his own cow to feed his family and the Indian agent heard about it came and seen him. You know, you weren't supposed to kill your cow without the permit. You never came for a permit. They were arrested and they that agent told him you're going hang for this. So they took him in. But that night, he somehow escaped and went to a friend. They both took off and to make a Long story short, they were surrounded in the kind of a valley with a little bush in the bottom. The police surrounded that

place and they were afraid of him because he wouldn't miss, he was a dead shot with a gun. They were in there while other relatives like my great grandmother were up on a hill with the others. Almightyvoice was the name of that book. Almightyvoice would sing a song in the way they sing and sending a message to his mother and she would send a message back. Then towards the end, his friend was wounded and he sang a song and they were hungry. They haven't eaten anything. Just before that a crow was flying over-head, they heard a gunshot that they saw that crow fall down and they ate it. So right after that they were starving and they sang a song to his mom and said, "my friend is dying he's wounded and is dying. I'm going to shoot him and I'm not going to give the police the pleasure of capturing me and I'm going to kill myself too." So, they heard two shots and that was it. For days, the RCMP wouldn't go into the scene. They didn't know if they were alive or dead the police were scared but finally they went down there found them both laying there.

Anyway, that's where my mom side and my dad side was the last name Chatelaine (French). When Indian Affairs came, they were changing names and spellings and everything they made a mess of the names of people. They also changed the name from Chatelaine to Ahenakew because there's a little story. I know there are some that makes it, they swear (Cree version) the way I was told was Chatelaine was one of the best swimmers around this area amongst the Cree Indians. The Blackfoot's heard about this Ahenakew so they came and wanted to challenge him. They brought horses, blankets and everything. The Blackfoot also had a good swimmer and wanted to challenge the Cree's to a race. They all went to the banks of the North Saskatchewan River to hold this race. A canoe took both of them across the river while the rest were on this opposite side of the river. There were horses, the Cree brought some and the Blackfoot there were blankets and beads and shovels and forks and stuff that they brought whoever wins takes it all. So, they took both of them across and they shot a gun and both went into the Saskatchewan river and they came and they said Chatelaine was ahead for about ten to fifteen feet ahead of the Blackfoot and about twenty feet from the shore he had cramps. As he was struggling there with the cramps, the Blackfoot swimmer passed him and the crowd yelled, "Ahahay-nakew!" and that's where he got this name Ahenakew. That's where we got this name as explained by Simon Williams.

Those days in the 1940's life was hard. Before, there were no tractors with front end loaders and there were no bailers, no combines. Everything was done with stooks and pitch forks to feed the thrashing machines. Everything was man handled. People were always in shape. There was no welfare and my dad ran about one hundred head of cattle and had about forty to fifty head of horses. Horses were most important. We had about six to ten teams of horses and everything was done with horses, even when we're clearing the bush here on the hill side. My dad and I pulled the stumps out with the horses. Today, we got bulldozers clearing up everything, it was so hard them days. Everybody worked hard, even bachelors used to come work for my dad. He had a place here, a little house where he put up workers. They didn't want any money, they just wanted something to eat and have a place to sleep. My father kept one man, Adam Genereaux. He was a good man and he was in the army. When he came out (military life) they started working for my dad right up to almost the time he died. He was a good worker, he looked after the horses. As for us kids we worked from when we were little just about four or five years old. We were taking one or two sticks in the house, wood for cooking and stuff. Everything in the garden, we're all lined up cleaning the garden. This is the way of life in them days. Today, you can't put young people to work because they don't even know how to handle anything. It's hard to get good help.



But in them days, we used to go six or seven miles for hay from here in the winter in a hay rack. I was thirteen

years old when I went over there. We had stacks here, my dad said, "we're going to run out of hay." He said, "let's try and get as much as we can from the sloughs and we will use these stacks in the spring when the calving starts."

I was thirteen (13 years old) and nobody was here. I was home alone and my oldest brother was married and on his own and my other older brother was in British Columbia working in mining over there with Hector Ahenakew and others. I was the only man at home. I was thirteen, my dad sent me early in the morning. He packed lunch for me and off I went. It was forty or fifty below and I was running behind the hay racks and when the horses would start to slow down, I would jump on and whip them a little bit so that they would trot. I was also running behind to keep warm. There were thirteen coils and there were snow two to three feet high drifts on the coils of hay. There were sixteen coils, I had to shovel. Clear the snow off so I could load up my hay rack. It was springtime, and in the springtime and the roads, the snow was packed two or three feet above the ground and then the spring the sun was starting to warm up and the sleigh would cut in (the load would spill) tipped over. I got everything up again and I filled it up again and took all the hay, put it back on. I went to put 100 feet and it cut in again. Of course, three times that happened. All that day, it was 10:00 o'clock before I got home but for my dad, Rod Genereaux and Wesley Bowman, my brother-in-law's, just came that evening. My dad said, "you go look for Burton, he left at 9:00 o'clock this morning."

So, they hitched up another team of horses. They were standing outside and were just getting ready to come look for me. My dad was out there walking and just worried about me. All of a sudden, the cows started bellowing and they started running. They met me over there at the end of this field. They heard the sleigh you know, you used to hear the sleigh coming and they came and my dad told them, he said "never mind he's coming." See the cows, he said, running and they met me at the end of the field, they were following me and they were eating and they were hungry. I only brought about not quite a half a load. I was played right out. I was only thirteen. I couldn't talk my mom would talk to me and I wanted to cry and my dad said, "don't talk to him, he doesn't feel like talking." I had tears in my eyes.

Today, we have young strong men, what are you doing? We got gangs, killing one another, getting into drugs and stuff like that. Back in those days, we didn't have time for anything like that. Everybody worked the whole family survived they worked together kids, right from small in order to live. There was no welfare. In 1969, the welfare started and that's about the time, the power came in but that's only the main area. The telephone came and there was one telephone, you turn that, you turn it like this. There was one telephone in the main area everybody would go to phone there.

Things begin to change, in 1969, the Indian Affairs sent my dad a, thirty-five dollar welfare cheque. He said, I don't need this and he sent it back and he put a note in there. I was standing right there watching him. He said, "I don't need your money, when I can't work I'll ask for it and when I can't support myself but until then. I don't need your money and sent it back." Now you have people from teenage life they're waiting for the next welfare cheque. They can't put up them to work. I need people here. I'm eighty years old I'm crippled, my shoulders and knees hurt and trying to get help. It's hard to find them. They just don't want to work. They just don't know what life was like when I was a young man.

I want to talk about my uncle Alex Ahenakew, (my father's brother). He was a smart man, he had his B.A., Ph.D and whatever, I don't know what all in university. When he came home, he didn't know what he wanted to be. So, he decided to attend the Anglican Bible School (College). He told my dad, I don't know the more I read the bible, the more it doesn't make sense to me. So, he went to marry a Dene woman from Patuanak, Saskatchewan. He was going back and forth to Ile-a-la-Crosse and he was a Hudson's Bay Company store manager. But he was a clerk over there. He got a job as a clerk with the Hudson Bay Company. HBC like him because he was a smart man and he was doing pretty good management on the store and they looked after that Hudson's Bay Company stores up in the north. Simon Williams told me he said he was the brain of the reserve. He organized a lot of things. When Alex came down from Ile-a-la-Crosse to visit, he came and asked the chief to let him go, he wanted to disenfranchise, give up his Treaty status and his band membership. He didn't need it because he was

educated and he had a good job that they liked. The Chief wouldn't let him go, he said no. We can't, we need you guys we don't know how to fight for ourselves. We don't know what the deal with Indian Affairs the way they're treating us. He said, we need you. So, he went back up north and sometime later he came back. They killed a cow and they invited all the people, RCMP, Indian Affairs and the preacher named Hines. Later, on the chief got up and said. You made this feast, what is it that you what? Alex said, I want ask you could just let me go. I want to disenfranchise (Cree Version) I want to leave the reserve and I have a good job. Simon Said, the Chief got up and he cried and he said, "I hate to let you go because we need you to fight for us. You know how to speak English you're a smart man you know how to fight for your people." The Chief cried, but if that's what you want I'll sign it and he put cross (his X) on the paper. You are disenfranchised. Today, my nephews and relatives up there a lot of them want to come into the reserve. I have a nephew at my other house that wants to get his status and just can't seem to get it. Some of them have received it. But, life was hard in those days. If you didn't have an education, you have nothing and you had to find work to live.

People were working on the building homes. Everybody worked together to build a house. I was about four or five years old, the old farmhouse is right here. All of this was bush and at the end of that house, there was a spruce tree about this big. That's where, we made the farmhouse here. There was only a little trail going up there, a wagon trail. This is where my dad built his house and started this farm here. All the people would help when somebody wants to build a house, the whole community came together. You can hear the wagons coming and men they were cutting down trees. They were hauling them. Etienne Gerard, my uncle and another person, they knew how to cut the ends so they interlock. That's what they were doing and the woman over there. There's a little opening, they had blankets on the ground and they were cooking food and when dinner time comes. They would call the men and everybody would come and eat and after they eat they would go back to work. The whole community came. There was no money. Today, you'll get a pension, you get jobs, you get welfare. You get everything. In those days, there was nothing and the whole community worked together. They didn't have what we have today.

Today, people are neurotic, they're nervous, they're not happy. But them days, they were happy and healthy. They enjoyed life, they enjoyed working together. Everybody was laughing telling stories as they are working together.

"They were happy, people were so happy, those were the golden years the forties, fifties and towards the sixties. Like I said, when the power came in, the telephone came in, television started to come in and everything. Today, they have all that, and they're miserable, they're committing suicide our young people. If they could go back to the way we lived, when we were young, they would still be alive today. But, people are so miserable and they're nervous they live in fear and anxiety."

People used to talk about building these log houses. They would go get clay by Mont Nebo road. It was applied inside after mudding was complete. It was brown when it was applied. But when it dried up, it turned white like a whitewash. It was lime. I've seen that, when I first got married in 1963, I had bought a little log house on the other side of the bay from John George Starblanket had a little log house. I bought it for one hundred dollars (\$100.00). I was twenty-one years old when I bought it. I moved it. There were two teams of horses on skids that dragged it. Over there on Mont Nebo road. That's where I settled down at first. We chinked it, inside and outside and after it dried up we use lime and we painted that. It was white lime. Every day my wife would be sweeping and it would fall off pieces of mud or lime. She'd sweep every day but it was home and we were happy people were basically happy.

Today, I was talking at the funeral just last week and I said, "what can we do to redeem our young people?" It's just our young people are mostly dying. It is very rare that an elderly person dies. Almost every week, young people are dying or teens go missing. Just down the road here another young person was shot. There's gangs and different things, we've never seen anything like that.

Everything was different, young people were happy. We played, "kick the can" and all kinds of little games when we visit one another. Throw a ball over a roof game was called, "anti I over" and everybody run to the other side

and see who got their first. There used to be so much fun. Today, kids don't know what fun is. Young married couples they don't know what to do. They're having lots of problems, health problems, physical problems, mental health problems and they have all kinds of issues and marriage problems. Just everything, every evil you can think of and I was saying, "what can we do to redeem our young people?" Things were so different when we were young. Everybody was community minded. Today, you meet them down the highway, you don't see them wave anymore, we are strangers right in our reserve.

Education was important. There were a few people that used to live way on the north side of the reserve by Polworth. When the school was open, they moved closer to the core area. Men built a walk bridge by the river and they began to settle there. They didn't have to go that far to attend school. They had to walk to school every day.

From where we live here and to the school, it's about three kilometers. I was six years old when I started and my mother had to dress us warm. We had to run to school every day from here and then come back after school. It was forty or fifty below (minus 40 or 50 degrees celsius). It didn't matter how cold it was, they'd push us out and we'd be crying. I remember my sister Selna was just younger than me. We were screaming, we didn't want to go outside in the cold and mom, I noticed she had tears in eyes as she pushed us out the door and told the older kids to go look after these little kids. So, we'd run, there was a path in the bush to go across. Sometimes if it wasn't so windy, we would go across the lake. We went to school like that and later on Clifford Ahenakew's mother was a taxi driver. She was our bus school bus with a team of horses and with a caboose. She would come pick us up here. We would fill the caboose up her own kids and us that was our school bus.

Today, children are picked up right by the door. Life was so much easier yet they are most miserable people you can think of and us, we were happy. In the spring time, there were six or seven sleighs full of young people and we would have snowball fights. We would meet each other full gallop and towards each other, we'd be throwing snow balls. We had fun, young people got along.

I remember when I was a kid, there were dances. When a couple guys were starting to fight they were thrown them out and the music kept going and people kept dancing, until the best man wins. They would fight with use their hands and their fists to fight. Today, they put out a pull out a knife or a gun. Back then the best man won. Nobody paid attention to them and the music just continued. Freddy Sasakamoose was telling me, he had a picture of me standing on a stage. He said, you were so annoying (in Cree) they had balloons hanging on the ceiling and there were these sharp little plants that had looked like a spear. We were busting balloons at that party. Freddy said, you guys are busting up all of our balloons! People had lots of fun. There was rodeos every Sunday here with just ourselves. Every year they had rodeos here. People came from different reserves that whole area was full of tents there was pies, there was everything they were selling. It was beautiful them days. Today, it's just sad. I don't know.

Back in the day, they would make a cake and they would place of penny in the cake. Whoever had the penny in their piece of cake, that person would host the next dance. Every weekend there was a dance. Then one time, Evaline Cardinal (Māyāchun) (Nickname) they received the penny, so they had to make a dance at their house and her husband used to play the fiddle, his name was Robert Cardinal. So, they hosted the dance and it was getting late or two o'clock after midnight the dance kept going and Robert kept his eyes closed and enjoying himself as he was playing. Suddenly, Eveline chased everybody out because she wanted to go to bed. Robert kept playing and not paying attention what was going on. Then a man, we called Raggies said, "wait I'll have a talk with her." So, he went back in the house had his arms around her and held her hand and convince her to come back and continue the dance. Evaline (Māyāchan) agreed and then everybody come back in and the dance started again. But then, she really wanted to go sleep. Then suddenly, she got up again and grabbed Roberts fiddle from his hands and then threw on the floor and she stomped on it, crushed it and she broke it to pieces. Robert had to pick up the pieces of his fiddle. Then the dance was over. It was so much fun, everything happened that way. Today now, it's a different world, totally different world.

Robert (Louputch) and Evaline Cardinal. Cardinals, there was three of them Robert, Stuart Bowman's wife (not sure of her name) and Wahpihkwes. They came from south Shell Lake area. Lawrence (Wahpihkwe's) had come here during the pestilence and people were dying, south of the tower. There was a reserve there. He was a jockey and had went to Mistawasis. There was a sports day there with horse races. He rode for horse owners in different reserves. He was asked to go ride in Mistawasis and he won then onto Muskeg Lake. The following races were in Sandy Lake. Mistawasis asked Lawrence (Wahpēkwēs) to ride for him again in Sandy Lake. That's when he met his wife here and stayed to be with her.

There was a small hamlet south east of Ahtahkakoop named Hawkeye with seven to eight houses over there. There was a little store there with a post office and an elevator. It was mostly made up of Metis people. That's where my eldest sister met Rod Genereaux (Napew) and she married him. We used to go visit her and cut across here with a horse and wagon or sleigh. Sometimes we'd run over there. There used be fun to visit over there. There was Martin Robinson and others. Issac Genereaux had five boys and they were huge men. Whenever they drank, they would fight and made each other cry. It wasn't uncommon to see big men cry.

One of our ancestors, David Ahenakew had four boys; Baptiste, Henry, Louis and John. Our grandmothers came here from Hobemma, Alberta (Ermineskin First Nation). There were four sisters arrived and settled here and married onto Sandy Lake. One of them was my grandmother. Shem's grandmother, Norman Fraser (Minnie Fraser's mother) and my grandmother, they were sisters. One of the other sisters married onto Red Pheasant into the Baptiste family. Arlene and Mike (Maymēchitch) took me home to Red Pheasant after they got married for about a half a year. John (Maymēchitch's) son came and ask me to go cut prairie wool. We cut all of the prairie wool in all of the fields there and we baled it. He asked me to stay with him there. So, I stayed there to help him around the farm until fall. Pete Wuttnuee came looking for men and nobody wanted to work so, I said, I'll work for you" I said, "you don't have to pay me." I'll work for you for one week and then you can take me home. I want to go home. This was getting late fall, so we baled his hay. He was so surprised with my work because I already knew how. I grew up on a farm. We finished all of his fields and made square bales. He wanted to keep me and work but, I said no. I said, I want to go home. Take me home and then he agreed to bring me back home. I had met Clara Wildcat whom is a cousin from Hobemma, her grandfather was a sibling to those four sisters. She had planned to come and visit her cousins here in Ahtahkakoop, but she never had a chance to come out. So, there is a lot of connections and relatives on different reserves. All the way down to Rocky Boy, Montana, USA.

We had traditional lands trapping and hunting. Right here, when David Starblanket arrived here. He had asked people to come with him to go hunt and trap at Hawkeye southeast of the highway up on a hill. We arrived at a camp and we put up a tent and we were trapping and hunting. The farmer not far from there seen us. That evening, they brought a box of supper. His wife made supper and he brought it out, he knew that this area was Indian lands. Nobody bothered us, they knew this was Indian land where they could hunt and trap. We trapped muskrats and mink and whatever. So, I came home and I went and sold my muskrats. You know I started buying my own clothes when I was fifteen. Just shooting squirrels and trapping muskrats and selling them to buy clothes for myself. My dad told me you don't have to buy your own clothes. But I said, that's what I want. I started putting clothes on my back when I was fifteen. Today, we don't see that anymore.

My dad pulled me out of school when I was fifteen. This was about January. My dad was getting paralyzed and he used the cane and finally two of them and didn't help. So, then he had crutches and he was going down a set of stairs and the crutch threw him out of balance and he fell. Finally, he couldn't walk. While he was still on crutches, he came to the school and the principal called me out of class and said, "you were leaving us, your dad needs you to go look after his cows." He was just right at the end (of mobility) he couldn't walk anymore. He was bed ridden. Completely paralyzed waist down. I looked after his cows, I was fifteen when he pulled me out of school, I was doing my seventh grade. So, I started looking after his cows and my mom they had everything, pigs and hogs, chickens, turkeys and feeding I looked after everything. My dad looked after the reserve bulls. There were sixteen bulls including ours that I looked after. I worked like five or ten men today. I worked as a man, like I said, I was thirteen when I went to get my first load of hay. I just turned fourteen when I joined the thrashing crew and I kept on with the men. In the evenings, after supper they used to go watch a movie. Hancock used to have

picture shows and me, I went straight to bed. My fingers were locking the first day. I had to try straighten out my fingers. But, the next day, I was up again at four o'clock in the morning. The men were feeding their horses and I fed mine. I worked the next day with the men and that's the way we worked. Oh boy, I tell my kids when they're lazy to do something you guys are not the man I used to be. That was the lifestyle for a few of us not very many see no what we see and you can't tell them anything. The whole family worked including kids and all pick berries, garden work, we're all lined up pulling weeds. We grew our own food.

There were no checks coming in any way shape or form you had nothing if you didn't eat. The bachelors used to come and my dad used to turn them down we couldn't have all the bachelors working there was never enough work to go around. In the morning you could see them coming. Mom used to feed them and my dad used to take them out and put them to work just to eat. Some of them would sleep outside all they wanted was a place to eat and sleep. There was community work today, there's no such thing.

I remember everybody went to church. There was three bells and you can hear the church bells from here. My dad would make us listen. When we heard the first bell, we would go in and then the second one would go off and he'd say, "let's go." By the time the third bell rang, we used to arrive there it would be church time. Everybody went to church. The church was just packed. I was going to say, after my dad got paralyzed, he pulled me out of school and that's when some Pentecostals we're having service along the lake by George Starblanket. We came out of church. I was standing with my mom we walked to church that day. She was dying, she was just skin and bone and that day she wasn't feeling too bad and she said, "I want to go to church," (Pentecostal church) come with me, so I went with her. Emily's Starblanket told my mom, there has been services next to my place by the lake and they are having healing prayers for people. My mom said, is that true Emily's? Emily said, that's true. Send your pastor (Waterhouse), I want to see him. That was when my mom was dying, witchcraft. We found out because six specialists sent her home to die. She was skin and bone and she was like, you're looking at death. One of the specialist spoke up and he said, "we don't know how to treat you we checked you from head to toe, we can't find anything wrong with you. We don't know how to treat you. You may as well go home and be with your family." Hancock sent somebody went and told my dad that he was supposed to go pick her up. My dad had a 1951 International truck and he went to pick her up. When she got prayed for she was healed and when my dad later on became paralyzed, pulled me out of school. And my mom said oh Kane you are so proud humble yourself and ask for prayer you seen the way I was. I'm OK today, she was completely healed.

I had looked after my dad with a bed pan. I looked after his animals and I looked after him. He couldn't get up to go to the bathroom. I used to put the bed pan under him and he used the bathroom that way. I used to look after him too. These things are so entrenched into my mind. What I've seen were miracles. One day, my mom came walking in and said, "Cane, your crying what's wrong?" He said, Ida (the house was right there, pointing.) I used to love working. (He was a work-a-holic). I went up that hill a million times. All I do now is to look out the window from my bed. I can't even help myself to the bathroom." And he said, "Ida, I want to see Waterhouse." My mom, went into the kitchen and motioned to me, you get on that horse and you go tell Emily's to send Waterhouse over here. So, three days after, a car came down the hill. I told mom, Waterhouse is coming. I stood behind her and she said, "Cane is ready." I didn't know what she meant. He wasn't going anywhere. Anyway, he came in and mom placed tea and cake on the table and Waterhouse stood by his bed and they started talking. My dad was a Hereford man and Waterhouse had shorthorn and they were talking about cattle and finally Waterhouse said, ah Cane, you didn't want to talk about cows. You wanted to see me. What is it? My dad didn't know nothing about Jesus or prayer or the bible, nothing. All he had was this prayer book. He had us pray every morning and evening from that book. That's all we knew on the farm. Anyway, He said, I want what Ida's got (healing prayer) it worked for my mom. She was completely healed and it was a strange sickness. If could tell you some day. But, she was completely healed from it. My dad pointed at my mom and said, I want what Ida's got. So, my dad talked to Waterhouse and he talked to my dad and they prayed and after he prayed, he said, now we will pray for the healing of your legs. Now that is impossible, scientifically and medically impossible. Waterhouse said, "you will walk again Cane." And he laid his hand on my dad's shoulder and I could barely hear him but I can hear him enough

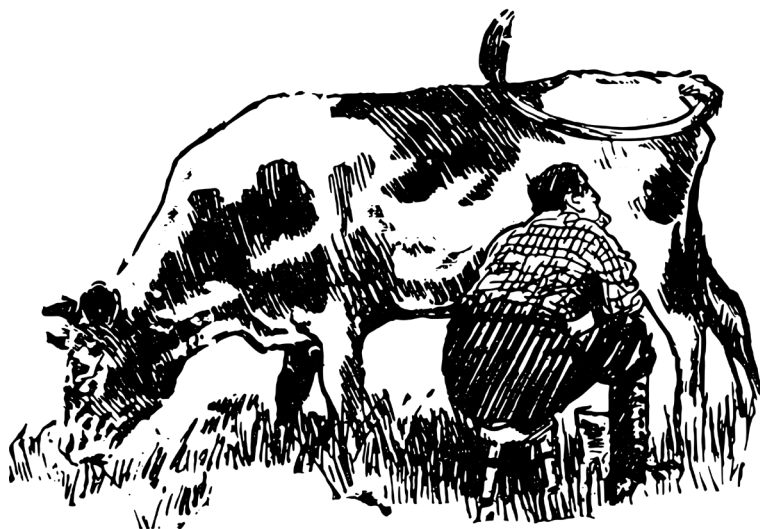
and he said short prayer and then he said, well, Cane I have to go and I have to go feed my cattle. He got up and he got to the door and he turned around and point at my dad and said to my dad, "Cane, you are going to walk again." Just like that and off he went. To make a long story short, "He walked again!" Later, we were coming down from the barn, me and my dad and my brother-in-law, Rod Genereaux, We, were coming down and I pulled my dads sleeve on his shirt and I said, "come on, race me!" you said you were a fast runner. My dad said, "ah come on, quit fooling around." And just a little-ways from the house, all of a sudden, he took off and I was chased him. He left me behind about a foot. He was paralyzed, the man that was paralyzed. I never forget these things as a young man. It's still in my mind. That was a miracle, that's how I became a minister. Since I was eighteen, I've been preaching the gospel right until last Sunday.

Our father is powerful but, we have lost faith. We have put him aside. The only time we pray is when we are in trouble. That is where we strayed in many different ways. Now, we gossip about each other, that's how person is and this is how this person is and so on. Rather than looking at the issues, never mind the bickering, only then we can get back together. We will understand one another. There is only one God that we pray to. What is good for me what is good for you, we live by experience and that's how you begin to understand other people. Putting all of that aside and learning to get along and to love one another. We will eventually forgive one another. Those are the most important things. It has become difficult because we talk too much about one another. It creates a division in our community today. Nobody used to care too much about that. They would just go to church and kept busy trying to survive.

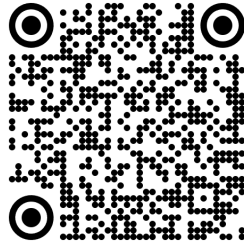
My mother, when she was dying, we went to Whitefish twice to the Sundance. My parents were prayed for. At the opening of the Sundance Lodge, they put my mom and dad and us kids around behind them and the man that was running the Sundance was praying to the pole there I remember he was crying and praying for my mom. He had his arms around the center pole. He cried and was shedding tears and then he came and placed his hand on my mother's head. He then shook my dad's hand. I always remember that, twice we went over there. We went to doctors all over the country. She could not get healed until Waterhouse prayed for her. She had faith and my dad had faith when he was paralyzed he believed what Waterhouse said, "Kane you are going to walk again," when he walked out of our house.

Wilson Waterhouse was a farmer from Parkside. She had purebred short horn cattle he was also a grain farmer when they were harvesting, him and his brother Jim Waterhouse the PTO grabbed his sleeve and ripped his arm right off up to his shoulder. He only had one arm then he couldn't do what he used to do, so he sold his purebred herd and just went solely into grain farming. During the winter, he had a lot of time. He was a Christian man and he came to the reserve. He went all over the country, onto reserves to Indian people and telling them about the Lord. He helped a lot of people that's how my mom and dad were miraculously healed. I told you what my mom was like it was a strange thing it would come and go. She would be perfectly normal and all of a sudden it would hit her. Light tormented her and my dad made a small room with just a bed in there. A dark room. The light would torment her, that's where she would go right away when she knew this thing would come and hit her. She would go there and she would be moaning day and night for three or four days, sometimes for a week. Then all of a sudden, she'd go quiet and the door would open. She would come out just soaking wet. Blankets were soaking wet. We put a mattress on top of her she was still freezing. She also had a foot warmer with shad irons on there. Any small light irritated my mother. If there was a very small light, she'd say there's a light above door. Then we would jam strips of clothing up there with a butter knife and we would close it. She couldn't even stand a little bit of light. As a young man, those things you never leave you. When you see a miracle. Doctors couldn't do anything. Nobody couldn't do anything. All different faiths, she would go run to that. "Go over there, go get prayed for" and she would be gone. My dad went to the states with my mom and said "I will sell all my cows, and we will find healing for you". They heard of a doctor in the states, I don't which part of the states, but they were gone for two weeks. He got a brand new truck, a 1951 truck and they took off. We had babysitters look after us. They come home sad, no answer, no healing. I watched these things as young kid.

I started working for Bill Auto, he was a Ukrainian. He lived in Hawkeye. That's his farm there right along the highway on this side. That was my second home I was fifteen. He came driving here with a team of horses here at Ukrainian. He told dad, I am looking for a couple of men, do you know of a couple of men who would like to work? My dad said, no I don't, he said go to the reserve center, you'll probably find somebody there. He said I seen some, but they don't want to work. I sure would love to get a couple of them to come help me. He was making a fence, then my dad said, "I'll lend you Burton for the weekend". I was 15, I always remember that, so I worked there Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday he brought me home. After that, I was working. I would come and catch up with field work or whatever, haying with my dad. I was back and forth until I was 21. I told Bill, you're going to lose me, I am getting married and I need get on my own. So, I was 15 and I was looking after two farms. Those were the good old days.



HENRY AHENAKEW, CLIFFORD AHENAKEW, & RUSSEL AHENAKEW: LONG TIME AGO...

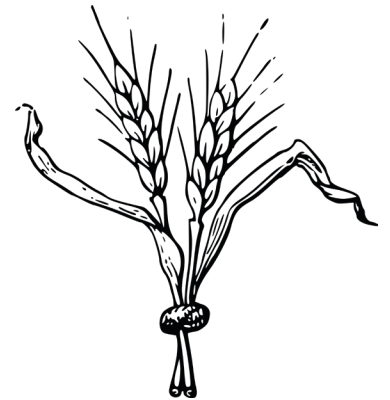


Long time ago Ahtahkakoop had 5 brothers, Ahenakew, meaning he stopped running. Long ago we use to haul wood, water and etc. It was hard back then, back then all the ppl helped each other. As time went on, we got horses, to make our lives a little easier, we use to hunt small game to stay alive.

Peekeekoot are related to many in this reserve. Josephs land is where Sasakamoose's lived. They kinda had land up there northern part of the reserve. We lived in the east, there was no water there, they moved where there was water. Kane, Adam Ahenakew, Shem, my dad, Mike Greyeyes and Tommy Isbister. There was lots everywhere back then. Ahtahkakoop was larger than this before.

When Heighs arrived, they picked out a land to use to plant. We named it heighs and Ahtahkakoop picked this land because it was good to plant on. They actually name the lake Heighs Lake, Ahtahkakoop and Heighs picked out this area it was Biggar than that, they picked this area due to all the natural resources.

Louis Ahenakew used to teach in Stoney Lake, he came and lived here in Ahtahkakoop, he was a teacher. Hieghs and Ahtahkakoop measured the land 160acres to teach Ahtahkakoop farming and he taught ppl how to garden. According to treaty what will the reserve as the population expands how far do they expanded, the cookson pasture was secured. Before we got our equipment we used plows, then Indian Affairs started giving materials for farming. Treaties for housing we had great bushes, School Houses, they had all this stuff planned till the end of time. We would be all very successful if they kept their treaty promises just like those Americans Indians we talked about yesterday. Everybody worked and helped each other out. there was 4 sisters that came from the Battleford rebellion. Ahenakew, there was four brothers who got wives from Battleford area and Ermineskins area in Hobbema. Young Chipwan Land Larid the took off from the Reil Rebellion to the river by Shellbrook and he arrived here. He was a headman where he came from and he adopted Albert snake he was told he had the right to run for chief here. Austin went to work on this at FSI couple years he went to Young Chippwan land and went to the old folks to visit the white folks that knew this land was borrowed. That reserve was vacant and once the reserve ppl come back they would have to leave. Albert Snake went to Shellbrook and went to give shit in 1972 about that land. Woodworth INAC worked for Shellbrook Agency Harold Nelson Woodworth.



The government official said we are not here to take your lifestyle away, meaning hunting etc. 212 reserves in Saskatchewan, what happened to over 100 of them. I hire to pick up all the information of treaty reserves told to come and be government watch dogs. There's a map in duck lake elevator, map of the reserve, Diefenbaker got one of them, will redo it and took that map away from us, this is what Woodworth was doing. No one moved on it the leadership only Barry did it, Larry doesn't know what he's doing.

When I was young I use to do all sorts of things played soccer, hockey, but due to covid I lost my memory.

I remember even trying to get small game I couldn't do it, I'm not a great hunter. Sleigh, caboose, wagon ppl would come to my house and my mom fed everyone, my mom was paid 25 cents a day. We ate good lots of families came to get food. On Sundays we use to go to church 2 times a day, this is one of the greatest things in the world is to see your kids in church. My brothers and sisters are proud.

I think of things at times, I got the last name Ahenakew (they say they run fast) "I'll say that anywhere."

Laughing at Choo-cap Gordon Ahenakew, Germans were scared of the Natives they were scared to get scalped, "ill say that anywhere!"

Gordon Ahenakew was the eldest brother. Andrew's dad's brother. Edwin was our dad. Kane is Reubens dad.

Eight brothers, Conrad was the oldest and one girl. Only three of us alive. My mom married twice but never had kids in her first marriage.

My mom used to squeeze cream and sell it, and store it 3-4 days and sell it. They all had the same traits our family with 4 brothers, they never stole anything from each other. Older brothers hauled wood etc.

Hawkeye and Choo General (I didn't mean to do that)

Gordon and Frank Morin and Bala us to play a lot. BRFN the way.

Ottawa, we were meeting there, they told us how to build us houses. Carpenters are rare around here now.

Today's society they take the bus, back then we use to walk to school, they are not healthy, mental issues and suicidal. Back in the 60's we all got along when someone is building houses wed all go there to help.

The schools today have cultural teachers 10-15 teachers, we were afraid of our parents and the lord. Today kids are having kids, I heard a grandma saying I got 5 daughters 3 are pregnant and saying she only has 2 virgin kids.

I got a call this morning from a leader for advice and discouraged. Our parents how they raised us through discipline today we don't have that. When you think back in the day they take off their hats and eye contact. Today we do not have that, there's a lack of level of respect.

Today young parents yell at their children. We never got hit, we respected their parents. Today the grandparents all they do is babysit. The love is gone. Today a lot is happening, drugs, alcohol, social media etc.

SHIELA REIMER & MARG HYMAN: SCHOOL & OTHER STORIES



Shiela

Past history, I hardly remember. But I do know that Chief Ahtahkakoop was really smart. The priest that had arrived here at that time when Ahtahkakoop was here they worked good together. This is where we got our Anglican-Cree ways. Still today, we pursue this way.

And myself, I grew up in an area by Debden, where my parents had land. As my older brothers grew up, we had to move back here so they can attend school. We used to live by a river. I remember late Allan Starblanket, he built a bridge so they can walk across the bridge to attend school. There was still along ways to walk after they crossed the bridge, as the school was far ways yet. I remember my dad standing by the door, he was watching my two older brothers walking to school one morning as they were holding hands. He got very emotional and began to cry. He says, “now my sons, school system has taken over your lives, no more freedom, you are all be going to school for 12 years, to get education. I pray for nothing but the best for you both.”

From there I grew up to the age where I had to start school. But when I had to start school we had to move from our home. This time we moved closer to school. But we still had to walk to school. No matter how cold it got, we still had to walk. Pretty soon, the river began to flood. The men gathered again to build a bridge for students to cross the bridge to go to school, by this time there was lot of us now attending school. We went to the reserve school here, until we got sent to a Residential School at Prince Albert called, All Saints Schools. I was there for 2 years. I really hated it there; we were treated so badly. We were treated bad in all ways. I don't really want to talk about it too much, but we were malnourished. We were not treated good, at times it was so cold in our dorms, there was 5 of us girls in that dorm. The sister that kept us was so old. The food that was fed to us was very poor, rotten at times, but if we didn't eat, then we starve. At night time it was so cold, there were times where we had to sleep together to warm up, then when we get caught, we get a beating. The teacher we had, was so mean, she would yell at us and also call us dumb, like we didn't know anything.

I finally finished school, and I started a family. I had my children. My oldest is 65 years old now. We both receive the old age pension today. (a laughter). The first man I was with, we had two children. But the man, my husband, I had my two younger children with took my two oldest kids like his own. 20 years passed now since he had passed away, he was not treaty though, he was a white man. He was taken as one of ours though, like a Treaty. He lived with us on the reserve.

I was probably 10 or 11 years old when I was at Residential school. I remember all of a sudden the Principal came in and the main Nun, they came to get me. We drove over to this place, it was a hospital called Holy Family at the time in Prince Albert, they took me inside, took me to the children's ward. I was wondering why I was there until it was supper time. The children there all were getting supper except for me. I didn't get any supper. They came put something by my bed that says 'fasting', I didn't know what that meant. Next morning, they came to get me and took me to the operating room, they had taken out my tonsils. For what ever reason I didn't know why they did that to me, my parent's were not notified at all. I wasn't even sick. That night I stayed there for one night and back to the Residential school to the infirmary room where they kept me for 4 days. That's what they do, they don't notify the parents at all. They did whatever they wanted to us.

Marjorie:

I don't Cree as good as my sister here, my Cree is broken. My life story begins I was born by the river in a shack. There were three old ladies who were the mid-wives. My mom says I was the easiest to be born but also her biggest headache growing up. What I was told to me, was that after the afterbirth, I was wrapped up in a cloth by the mid-wives, they had called my dad with a small cloth and told him to go hang the cloth up in a tree. My older siblings: four older brothers and Shelia, they all had to sit outside the door in the dark while I was born. Sometimes I think my afterbirth hangs on the tree by the river. I know this because I love nature so much, I have this big yard, I love having it clean, and trimmed and everything. I think I have the biggest yard on this reserve my late husband worked tirelessly making it so our children and their children can grow up there. And we live right by the lake, so the kids can swim, slide, ski and play volleyball. My yard is used for family reunions every year. We still have to organize activities and meals for the upcoming reunion in July.

I've been blessed with 5 children, four daughters and one son. I am very proud of my son, he plays hockey. He had travelled to hockey Texas, New Brunswick, in Quebec. He plays local now. And he always checks up on me here. I live with one daughter now, a couple of years ago she had a brain tumour and got it removed. Actually, she had had two surgeries in her brain that affected her vision, visionary impaired. But still a hard worker. Stills lives with me. My oldest daughter lives almost in my yard, she has her children, her boys come to my house to help around at times.

Education wise, I went to school grade 1-2 at Ahtahkakoop. After one month in Grade 3, I was sent to Residential school in Prince Albert. I was there for 3 years. Residential school is a life changer! When I got sent, I thought my mom hated me, that's why I was sent away. My experience at Residential school there was negative. The night before we got left to Residential school, I remember my mom went to Debden to go buy me some clothes. And I was so proud of these clothes. I had a card board suitcase where I had extra clothes. I remember being all dressed up. I had long hair, she made braids. She made this school sound so nice. I was going to fed, given clothes, warm bed to sleep, I don't remember my father being around a lot back then. The memory I kept is my mom sitting at the wood pile, watching the flames. And called us to go hunt some gophers, we had used water we got down the lake to flush out the gophers and knock them on the head to kill them. We managed to get one gopher. She cleaned it and put a stick through the gopher like she was going to roast it. She put the gopher over the fire to cook it. When she was done she called us, now there was four of us plus herself. We ate that little gopher for our supper. We were probably very hungry but that gopher was very tasty. It was delicious and that was our supper. We went to bed went the sun went down and got up when the sun was up because we had no electricity only those oil lamps. We had cows, horses, pigs, chickens and our own garden. Me and my older brother James, our chore was to get these little pails and milk the cows, we had 2 cows. We bring the milk back, leave the milk on the table, because when we leave milk on the table the cream rises, my mom would skim off the cream and put it in a jar. My mom would save some for tea, coffee and the rest she saved it in a jar. In the jar, we had our cream, milk and butter. How healthy is that, we also had our garden. We had potatoes, carrots, and onions. The memory I have is that garden was fenced off, 3 steps of platform going up and going down.

My memory is getting up on the platform and my mother had a black flared skirt. I had made her put her black skirt on me, and the waist part of the skirt it went up to my neck. I put a pin around my neck to make it look like I was a priest standing on this platform raising up my arms pretending to be a priest. And the animals were my congregation roaming around in my yard. I did become a priest, and I think way back then I knew I was going to go into priesthood. But I nursed for 2 years, I worked at students' services at 9 years, came back on the reserve I was a teacher-aid, I was at numerous jobs on the reserve. I'm not an idol person. I don't like being idol. I worked for the NNAP worker for about 20 plus years. I had organized road blocks, promote drug and alcohol awareness, used to have fun days at the north end, prayer walks, for protection and good health. Because without God in our lives we will have a lot of negativities in our reserve. I am retired, but when I am called or if they need help of some sort, I'll go help or become involved, like what I'm doing right now. I've been known to be a knowledge keeper, I suppose I can accept that, I have a lot of memories, I think about my teachers my first teacher was Ms. Craft, my grade 2 teacher was Ms. Playlenn my grade 3 was Ms. Armbrueder. When I was in Residential school it was very negative. My first teacher in there (Res.school) I swear she was a witch, she was very mean, she had

one green eye and one blue eye. There was a girl from up north who sat next to me on the left side, pretty big girl and she didn't master the English language yet and this teacher would ask her a question and she would not answer and the teacher would get so mad at her. I looked at this poor girl thinking to leave her alone. The teacher went out of the classroom for a bit and she came in with a stick. I remember the teacher beating her with this stick, I can still hear those whacks. I remember thinking you can not beat learning into us. It was a very bad experience. I remember thinking she was a witch! For grade 3 at the residence, we had a teacher from South Africa. She was really really dark and I was so scared of her. I was scared of her because that was the first time I had seen a woman from South Africa. I remember I was looking at her, I couldn't never look at her. Because she was so dark, I can only see the whites of her eyes, her mouth were very pink and her teeth were white. But that was the first time I seen a person from that Country, and when you're trying to learn but your scared then you can't really learn because you're not relaxed. Sometimes I think if I hadn't had these teachers, would I had been as smart as my sister and my brothers. There was a lot of fear for me and I had a number at Residential School it was number H2166. H is for "Hut", 21 is from Hut 21 and my number is 66. Everything I owned, of my belongings had a white tag sewn into the collars. When it is time for laundry they know which shirt was mine, which shoes, because of the H2166. And we had those old steel bunk beds, because it was an old army barracks. All you are given was a mattress, white bedspread to cover with and white sheet, pillow and a fire blanket at your foot. Radiators for heat, but they didn't do the job. We were always cold. We would try sleep together at times at night so we warm up, but we always get in trouble for that.

There was sexual abuse in my dorm, but not from the supervisors to student, but from girl to girl. They wanted me to participate in assaulting this one girl, and I refused. And when you refuse to do what they wanted they beat you up. I thought I'd rather get beat up then participate in the assault. We had a boss she had a gang about 10 girls and she tells you what to do and you got to do as told. This one time I was told to crawl over the girl's washroom stall climb through the attic door and get into the storage room and steal these things for us. So I had to do it, because I was scared. I climbed up the attic and went to the storage, it was dark and hot in there, I was scared. So, I threw the stuff down to those girls, and climbed my way back. As I got there, our supervisor was standing there, she grabbed me and slapped my face back and forth, back and forth, and I was only 8 years old or not even 8 yet. I was getting the slapping of my life. And that changes you, it hardens your heart, it did a lot of negative things to me. I got caught stealing all these stuff. I remember looking at the boss and she had a big smile on her face, I remember thinking this must have been a set up. I remember being sick, and I was allowed to stay in my bunk, it was very cold. I remember they fed me supper and it was this broth in a little pail, the grease was roasted in the top of the broth. I had to eat it because I was so hungry. It was disguising. I remember wearing an apron and I had shredded mine; I must have been so angry to shred mine into pieces, they made us wear these aprons. I had this strength to shred my apron. Then I got punished for doing that to my apron. I didn't like Residential school at all. It was a very negative experience.

My father's last name came from Scotland. "Isbister" They came across and settled in the Little Red River area, and my dad's family moved from Wynyard. Then my dad's dad was a farmer instructor and they lived in that big house but it burnt. And our dad married Jacob Masuskapoe's daughter but she had passed away. Then my dad had a second wife, which was my mom. My father's first wife, they didn't have children just one adopted girl and she lives in Town of Big River. She's our adopted sister. So, it was I believe that my mom had an arranged marriage with our dad, so that my granny can continue her affair with my dad, that is my belief. And there was 9 of us, I have 6 brothers and 2 sisters and myself. My father's name was Thomas Isbister. He was half breed.

Sheila:

The first wife he had was the daughter of the deceased Jacob Masuskapoe. They had no children. This was the time my father's dad was a farmer instructor and he met his first wife. Jacob really loved his son in law, this is where my father became status Indian he went to the whole process. To become Indian Status. So, that's where originally the first Isbister came from, it came before the band reformandum.

My mother was Racheal Masuskapoe then Peekeekoot then she married our dad. Our siblings are oldest is Lester, Late Walter, Sheila, Melvin, James, Marg, Gerald, Jack and Janice, and we all Educated. Our youngest sister is a Pentecostal pastor, Janice. But our mom said that she was an original Masuskapoe. Peekeekoot- there was Sam,

James, Clifford, Austin, Allen, Andrew and some are missing. We are all related. Very close related. We used to do walk a thon, to do fund raising, we used to do square dance competitions. We never got a cent from the band. We raised our own money to attend to these competitions. We have these buckles that I have to give to my dancers. I found them in my basement.

Marjorie:

After church service they went down to the tip between the old church and treatment center. They had put a blanket on the ground, they all sat around, they talked about band and church business. I sat by my mother the whole time, I had to be quiet. Then there was this one lady, she stood up to talk and when she stood up, all of them stood up, I don't know who this lady was but to me it said that when she stood up to talk they all had respect for her and stood up to listen to her. I think we need to revive that. That a woman has a very special place in our community in the lives of our people. We have to claim back that respect, and reach out to the young men, all men, to respect women. They were born from woman; they've been nursed by the women. And they should respect right from when they are born as young girls, they should be respected. That little girl should be treated differently than the little boy. And the love is the same for both but the care of them is so different. We need to place the woman back in that proper place of respect and honour. We need to do that. Women had lost their place and needs to be revived.

I know mom used to talk to us before we used to leave the house. We were so obedient we didn't know what disobedience was. We didn't we know that she was our mother. I remember one time I talked back, and I swore at her, because she was mean, and she was on my case. That's one thing that haunts my memory was that I swore at my mother. Today I pray, I pray that she forgives me. I know she is listening. But mom, you were wicked and mean. But she meant well, she didn't know how. She must have had a lot of unsolved anger. She was a single parent and did her best. I think she did a darn good job. Us, children, are the way we are because of her. She taught us to never give up. No more how tough life is.

My late husband's original name came from the Hobbema area. And I don't really know. We never talked about that.

Sheila:

I wish for the young people, the walk they are walking right now is tough, but to not ever give up in life. Also to have faith in our culture and church ways. Prayers are important in any culture. I believe in the Indian ways, I take tobacco, print and gift to an elder to pray to our creator to bless us, this land and our lives. The Elders used to say this to us, to never give up on our prayers. The young people need to remember this, I pray for our young people every night and morning also for the Elders that are still with us today. There isn't a lot of us today that are still alive. I want to Thank you too for taking the time to record our stories so they can be archived for the future generations. Hiy Hiy

Marjorie:

We need to be known as the Elders of this community and utilize us more often, we need more Elders in this school. I think Education should be assigning the Elders to visit the school every week. We can offer different suggestions. We can help out the young people and the people who work there. I want the young people to know who they are related to, to even recognize us as their grandma and great grandma. I would like to be more visible in the school. It's also to talk about problems, its ok to talk to me about that, I would not judge anything. But I will try direct them to the right path. The school need to use us more so we can talk to the school kids about our past and what worked for us.

I went to the welfare office, and I saw a lot of young people lining up for welfare, I was stunned to see that. Why aren't they getting educated out there? Why are they staying back? Maybe they are afraid to leave the reserve. Maybe, so if that's the case. Why don't they bring Education here.

JEFFERY SASAKAMOOSSE, ELIZA SASAKAMOOSSE, & CORA AHENAKE:W WE WERE RAISED WELL.



There were four siblings long ago, and the story I heard was, they should have had a different last name, it was a French last name. I don't really remember the name, it's "Chatelet". Yes, its Chatelet. That was the name they should have had these four siblings, they used to use this last name, like the Sasakamoose, they don't know how to say or where it came from. I had traveled a lot back in the days, northern Manitoba was one of them, a place called Easterville. There was a lot of Cree people, one of them I was talking to asked me, what my name was, I said Jeffery Sasakamoose. What does your last name mean, or come from he asked me. I told him I don't even know I had asked many people about my last name and I still don't know. He spoke Cree, but it sounded different, and meant differently. He said, in my Cree language here, Sasakamoose, means someone who is very weak, who can't feed himself and you fed them from your own hand to his mouth. That is what he told me, what Sasakamoose meant in his Cree language this old man from Manitoba.

And Masuskapoe, I was told this story, there was this one man who was very ill, and he was told by this other elderly man, if you want to feel better, it was already cold by this time, the lake had frozen into ice. This old man said to the sick man, if you want to live, and feel better than you have to have full faith on God, and you have to go sit on the frozen ice outside with full faith in God, until the ice melts. This is where is the last name Masuskapoe came from. The sick man sat on the frozen ice as it melts, he had melted the ice to the ground, until he sat towards the sand, the ground.

I heard that Ahtahkakoop and his people used to go gather at Cypress hills. In the summer they gather over there, with the Black foot, but they end up fighting and then move back. In the Winter time they camp together. Red-berry Lake, Barry Ahenakew used to tell me our people used to gather over there, camp and hunt there. The priest named Hynes and Chief Ahtahkakoop used to take our people there to go gather food, to hunt in the winter time. Ahtahkakoop had chased about three moose, and had killed them and brought meat back for his people. There were other hunting grounds they used to go, one was by Montnebo called Fur- lake, and Big Shell lake. I always believe this, that Big Shell Lake towards the pastures, we are supposed to own this land, by Ahtahkakoop and Whitefish. Remember when they wanted to put Elk there, they had to get our reserve permission to not hunt there. If we didn't own that land, why did they ask us. There is a lot of us that believe this. We own land there. Burton Ahenakew's son, Glen will know the area. If we ever want to go look for a mark.

No one mentions about Park Valley. Our people used to go there and pick up berries. It was a berry picking place. Also cooks and cooks used to go there to work with the farmers. They got along with the farmers good back then.

Eliza

Park Valley, the cooks used to move there, a long time ago different families will go there with wagons and stay there to gather up berries and roots. I remember when we used to go there, there were pines and a stream, spring, where we used to get water there. We were told not to take any small children with us, if we take them with us, these small men, will take us. (dwarfs) small people. This wasn't true. I think the older people were just trying to scare us (laughter) because there was a park there. The older people did not really want us going there,

they used to cut and dry up the wild meat around there.

Jeffery

We had an uncle who used to go hunting at the park, and they would drag- out wild meat, they would cut the wild meat and dry it in the bushes. Then and the caretakers would come out and look for the wild meat and find nothing. (laughter) they were hunting without the care-taker's consent.

Eliza

This was the reason the children were not allowed there, so we do not see any of this sneaky hunting and hiding the wild meat, they were doing. (laughing). Because we would have asked a lot questions from the care-takers and our people were afraid that we will tell on them. (laughter) At Red-berry Lake they used to go pick choke cherries over there, there was lot berries over there. A lot of choke cherry bushes across the river. Our people would gather them for winter. Barry Ahenakew used to drive us there, he knows a lot of stories and places.

Jeffery and Eliza

Sasakamoose is from our great-grandparents. I do not really know where it originated from, but this is where, Chatelet came from then Sakebow. Our grandfather was Alexann. (First name) Sasakamoose. Then our father Joseph Sasakamoose. Our grandma was Julia Favel from Little Pine, but we do not know any relatives. We had one Gilbert, who knew us very well, but passed away. Our dad's cousin Edmund Jackson, we met him. And Evelyn Lewis (Jackson) who was married to a Lewis.

My father had brothers, Uncle Ronnie, there was only 2 men, brothers. There is about 400 of us, Sasakamoose and there was one sister, Annie Isbister married an Isbister.

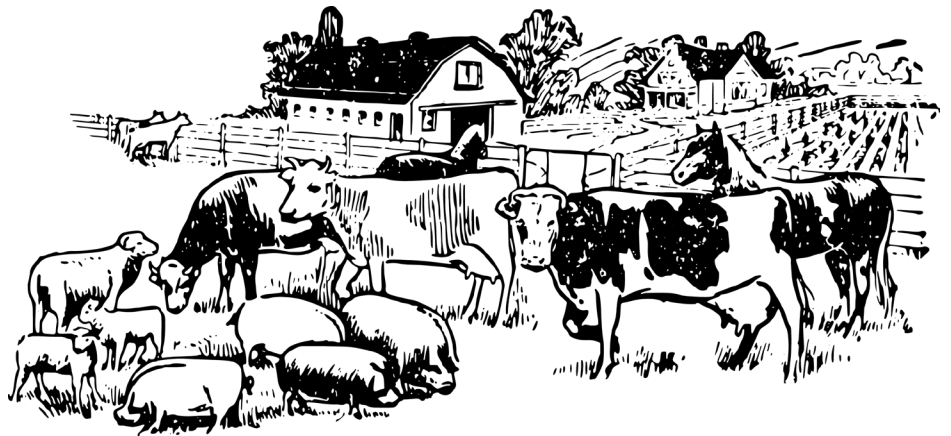
Our grandfather's relatives had passed away from consumption, sickness, Tb, respiratory illness.

We used to play hockey by the river, towards Debden, where the other Sasakamooses live now. That was my father's first homestead. But we moved here because of school, my father did not want us walking too far. It is about 2 miles straight across, he used to make us a path to walk to school. Then he saw how education is going to play a part in a person's lives. He moved us closer to have education.

Today my own family four of my children are teachers and my grand kids are teachers. This is what he saw, how education is important in our lives, he too, was a smart man even though he did not go to school. He knew how to count; total acres are in a field and how many bus holds. These he knew so well. Even when we went to Alberta, he counted the acres of the fields we are going to be doing. He

knew exactly how much we did. He was also a very hard worker, he never quit. He would wake up very early and start to work until nighttime, this is where he had to stop, when it is too dark outside. This is what he had taught us. He used to get us to load up some wood at nighttime and in early morning we would go to Debden to sell the wood for spending money. He used to get along with those French people in Debden, I do not even know how they used to understand each other as my father spoke mainly Cree and barely spoke English and the French was the same (laughter) they spoke little English too. And they would tell stories to each other and laugh at times. We used to stop and visit a lot.

Hector Demers, a butcher, my father used to have cows and when we used to run out of food, he would load up a steer. I knew when he was doing something, he would be getting ready. He was getting a steer ready that evening. And in the early morning about 3am he had load up the steer and drive to Debden 6am to sell the steer, he had to sell it without the Government knowing because we were not allowed to sell our cows. But the butcher will



buy the steer off my father for groceries, Hector Demers.

Eliza:

Our father used the cows a lot back then, I remember when there was a dead calf in the winter and our father had dragged it to plow us a path for us to walk to school. It was hard, so it made us a path.

Eliza and Jeffery

Our mother was very hard-working woman, and we grew up that way.

She was so good at sewing together clothing for us. I tell my children this all the time, there is this story about these 2 boys, Sedric Starblanket and Wesley Knife. They come down to visit at times. In the Fall, we already had new clothing, and they did not have much clothing, not even jackets. And then my mom had this good cloth still and made the boys new parkas with buttons or zippers and on top she had put some ribbons on the parkas. The boys were so proud of their new parkas, especially Sedric, he had run around so his ribbons will flow. She used to make parkas for them.

Eliza and Cora

Today, we sew, me and my sister, we learnt from our mother how to use sewing machines too. We inherited that from her, she was also so clean around the house. She used to tell us to always sweep, sweep under our beds every day, every day, if you did not sweep that floor, you go back and done it. We try being like that today, but at times we forget (laughter). No dirty dishes, you do not let them sit. All day she used to sew and make blankets and sell them. She used to take sewing classes and made jeans and shirts.

Jeffery

She used to make lunches, bake bread, use sandwich spread and one cake. She used to make a bunch and on Sports days on Sundays, she would go sell them. We were raised very well, our parents were so hard-working, we were not hungry, we always used to help though, we picked up berries all the time. We also had to work in the garden. I remember when Jeffery stole berries off these old ladies because he had to fill up his pail. (laughter). I remember my father made a homemade cooler, log-cooler, where we used to live, my father made an ice cooler in a little house, it was a cold place, it is like an underground road cellar. It had a good door too. They used to also use old wells, where we used to store milk, berries and meat.

Church was always packed, they used to always have good food, a lot of food in the basement. Then we would go watch soccer afterwards where our mother used to sell her lunches. There was this one man named Ervin Dreaver, he would walk from Mistawasis to join us at church and then play soccer then he would walk back. He enjoyed coming down to visit. I bet this is how my auntie met her husband, her husband is from Mistawasis, they got married. His name was Samuel Dreaver.

I had finished Grade 8 here on the reserve then I had to leave for Prince Albert All Saints School and then PACI.

In the fall they used to herd cows over here from other reserves like Witchikan, Pelican lake and Whitefish. Also, from here, Mistawasis and Muskeg. They would herd these cows to Shellbrook and load them in a train. It was a big herd almost every household had their cows in there. But they did not get their cheques, not until the following year. There was a lot of families that waited for these cheques, and the reason they did not get paid, is because the money went to Indian affairs most likely end up in Ottawa then back to Regina and then to Indian agent then to farmer instructor. They waited over a year to get their cheques. Our people were not treated good back then, when they sell their cows, they had to wait to get paid, and these cows were branded "ID" Indian Department. There was a foreman who kept track of these cows on who had how many head. The families would make a distinguishing feature in their cows to identify them, like cutting the right or left ear-tip off.

Many of them were not allowed to sell their own cows. My dad was almost charged for butchering his own cow due to being hungry. Malcolm was there too, the time they butchered it, Malcolm Greyeyes. They needed the food.

Where the NADAP building standing right now, that is where our school used to be. It was a one big school with a big basement. I remember when I used to haul wood to the basement and potatoes, all sorts of vegetables before winter. We used to pump the water every weekend to use for the whole week. Me, Walter and Lester. So, they had running water upstairs, but we had to pump by hand. Upstairs they had living quarters I do not know how many rooms, there was a whole family of teachers that lived there. I also remember these older girls late Grace Ahenakew and Sylvia they used to make a big pot of soup with vegetables from the garden. And upstairs these teachers had aspirins, cough syrup and all sorts of dispensaries, A few bandages. I remember when we could not speak English, we tried to speak it and we were horrible at it. All we spoke was Cree and our teacher would not like that. I remember I was in Grade 4 I was trying to figure out math, it was hard to understand for me. And at the school there was this dip where we always play, and the late David Ahenakew we were sitting there, and I kept thinking about math, the numbers, and all sudden it clicked in my mind. I knew what the math is all about, just like that, I was suddenly good with numbers. Math became my best subject, Algebra. I knew what math meant and can figure it out in my head, and it was a good use because I ended up doing good with carpentry. I inherited that from my father. It was like switch turn on, I can see the numbers. After that, I had no problems with numbers. When I was in Grade 9, we used to laugh about choosing our classes, me and Walter Isbister. We used to sign-up in Home Economics, and we used to get a schedule and once we stepped into the Home Ec. Classroom, we saw nothing but girls. We were embarrassed, we ended up laughing about it and dropped the class. That was funny.

PACI- Prince Albert Collegiate Institute- we all went to school there, there was no grade 9 here, so we had to board at the Residence in Prince Albert.

We had to leave and board there. That was such a cultural shock for us, going to a school with a lot of white people, facing racism.

It was not so bad for me (Jeffery), I signed up for the sports, especially Track and Field and I had to join in with the white kids. Shell lake, Blaine Lake, and Rosthern these are the places I had to travel with the white kids to compete. My boys Stanley, Lenny and Barry used to be all very good track running.

I remember this one man named Dumius Arcand, he had told me a story about when he was a young boy, they left Duck Lake to come this way. And they came upon a river, there was no bridge at the time, wagons had to right through the river. He had said that their horses got stuck in that river, and these horses were not strong enough. So, his father had to climb up a hill to get help. He said your grandfather, Alexand came with a team of very strong horses, and strong harnesses and chains, he wrapped the harnesses to those horses and the chain on the wagon and pulled them out. That was my grandfather Alexander. He had a red beard. He did not used to talk he knew sign language, only when he was a young man, he used to talk a lot. He was very ill, and his speech got effected, after that he could not talk. He knew how to communicate to people with sign language. He once visited a man who knew how to sign language one time and they would understand each other through sign language. They would tell stories and laugh.

When I was small, I used to harness one side of the horses on the wagon and my mother would do the other side, and sometimes Steven will do the harnessing. When you go across the river where late Freddie used to live by that big field. I used to help my dad farm there, I was a small boy at the time. That was the time I was riding a big horse, my horse kept going towards the side of the road, where he stepped on a beehive. My horse jumped and threw me off, I had a broken arm and collar bone. Next day the farm instructor took him to pa and the doctor put a sling on my arm. Then he took me to the All-Saints school where Edna Knife went to school at the time. I stayed there for 2 nights then the farm instructor brought me back home.

My father had a lot of cows and horses, he had 19 mares, there was 20 but it was sick, and he had to kill it. Before my father died, he had cancer, he was still a hard worker, he was still hauling wood. We used to have a lot of wood, he may used to sell the wood or give them away. He did not use any power saw, just an ax. He was 76 years old, and our mom was 78 years old when they passed. Cancer took both.

There used to be a lot of cabins back then, by Mont ne boo, and in Whitefish area where Metis people lived. I remember I used to stay with my uncle and auntie many times at the north-west of the reserve, I remember

this bachelor named Enjeeyan, they would snare rabbits, and they cook them. At nighttime, they would eat the rabbit, play music and tell stories, and dance. Sometimes all night. They used to have a lot of fun. These bachelors used to have a lot of fun. But one of them had to leave Enjeeyan Gerard had to leave. While he was living alone, he was excited when someone came knocking at his door, he jumped up and yelled "Kevin" here it was a nurse. She went to the wrong house looking for someone else.

This is where the late Doris Bear was raised at this area called Hawk-eye, at north- west of Mont ne bo, just outside of the reserve, it was a no-man's land, because it was not a good land.

Eliza-

Martin Robinson married my aunt, Matilda. They had Doris, Deloros, Dawn and Calvin. Dawn drowned when she was 15. Martin was a Metis ended up being a treaty, he lived here. This is where these relatives came from, Flora Beds and Agnus Ratt, those were his aunties, they used to visit.

Jeffery

We never had a catholic church here. We always had an Anglican church. Hynes was the one that started it all. All the material came from a train to Polwarth, and they all took their own time to build the Anglican church. I remember when I was riding behind the wagon from Mont ne bo, me and John. We were playing fighting, and John had shallowed a peanut in a wrong way, he could not breath right. My father brought him into the house, he was turning red, how could not walk right or breath right. Then he got rushed to pa for x-ray, he could not get surgery too because of the way he had shallowed that peanut. He was sent to United States, he was to get operation over there, he got put on waiting list. So, one day we went to church, and John sat beside me and my father too. We sat where we always sat, third row on the right side of the church. Suddenly John coughed so hard, so hard that my father tried to take that peanut from his mouth, he coughed so hard that he ended up shallowing that piece of peanut. Then he his breathing went back to normal. This happened inside of church. The hospital ended up cancelling the operation for him. It was a miracle.

Before Christmas me and Gordon Williams were coming home from school in Prince Albert we took the bus, and I had enough money to get to Debden, and he only had enough money to get to Polworth. I did not want to leave him alone at Polworth, because he did not know anyone around there, it was already getting dark, and the weather was getting cold and stormy. Before that though, there used to be like a radio thing where you can leave a message for people, it was CKBI. I had left a message for my father that we left home on a bus that night to Polworth. So, we got off, it was storming. We waited for a while at Polworth, Steel was the name of the owner of that little store there, and Mrs. Steel. So, we began walking on the old highway, and I remember we took a turn into this road, there was only one house around there in the bushes, where Samuel Peekeekoot lived. We were walking on deep snow on open field. It was blowing snow everywhere. I came across a black popular, I climbed that tree to see what is ahead of us, I was feeling sick, all a sudden I saw a light. I yelled at Gordon to walk that way where the light was shining from. Then I told him to stop and stand still there. I climbed down, and I yelled at him again to walk towards the light was shining, then while he was walking towards that way, he would end up around to walk back to me again then I would yell at him again to walk towards where the light was coming from. We ended up on the highway, we would turn left again and there was nothing. We came back, we ended up seeing a little house in the bush, and I knocked. An old man bachelor named Henry Burns opened the door and we explained ourselves to him what had happened to us. He told us to spend the night there in his little house. The next morning my father had plowed his way to that old road nobody uses, he plowed his way to Samuel's house and then to Polworth to search for us. Then Steel had told him that me and Gordon walked off. Because my father had had a dream that night that we had frozen to death. I woke up that morning and went outside I remember seeing someone walking on those open fields and here it was my father. He came to find us. If I did not climb that tree, we would not have seen this little house. We would of probably froze that night. My father was the first one to have a vehicle here. It cost him \$400. There were not many roads too back then, just the ones the cows used. We used to ride a Kaboose to school when it was winter.

We were so blessed the way we were raised. We were raised so well, now today I see it. Everything we were taught we need it today, ever since this sickness came, people are planting their own now, own vegetables. What we

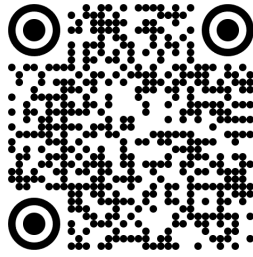
plant helps us feel better, it feeds us better. Your heart, your body and soul. And when a person feels better about themselves, they pass the good feeling towards others. You pass the positiveness to others. It does not get us sick. This is how it should be. This morning my wife said that there used to be a lot of visiting back in the days, now there is nothing like that. People used to visit from evening until late at night, then they would go home. She was talking about John George Starblanket and Muriel they used to visit anytime of the day, at night until midnight. They would come anytime. She said she remembers her father used to visit there; she had seen him when elders come there to visit, they would get so comfortable and just lie down using their jacket as a pillow and visit each other at times talking about Jesse James. They were happy. I remember too, we used to go visiting a lot, to Whitefish, Polwarth, Hawk-eye, now today we lost that, we do not ever visit anymore. We lost that, the closeness, we need it back. I, myself, is very Thankful and had been truly blessed, my siblings, we love each other. We need more families to love each other, not to fight and hate each other. We were blessed to love other people no just us. That is how we were raised. To pray for each other and other people. Give a lot and you will be blessed. That is all. Thank-you.

My father used to gather up his oats in the Winter and take off to Stoney Lake on a sleigh. He would trade for wild meat, moose meat. Then my father would share that moose meat to others.

Cora

We were raised well, like what my bother said. In the summertime, I used to help a lot back in the days, most of my life. I cannot do that anymore. There are other people that can do that now. I do little things. I make star quilts; I was taught how to sew. I retire now. Sewing keeps me busy. I cannot seem to not do anything. Because I am so used to doing stuff. We got to have faith, only God changes us and our ways. We are praying our children to do better. Sometimes it feels so hopeless, but only God can change that. I pray for my children. I do not really talk as much, I went to high school until grade 8, I got married. From there I lived almost a separate life than my siblings so the things they had seen I did not get to see. I was more controlled, even my visiting. Things were different for me. But we worked hard too, my husband was a hard worker I worked along with him. We had our kids, and sometimes other kids like my kid's friends. Also, the pets I had to take care of along the way. It was a good life. We raised our kids. But my life was not that good, but I had done what I was to do as a mother.

IRENE HYMAN: BACK IN THE DAY...



Back in the day, it was so nice, people used to help each other out without getting paid or anything. It was always lending a hand. There was no paying anyone to help you out with something you wanted help with. If someone wanted to give away something it was just given away to the people for helping them out.

I remember my grandfather, he used to farm in the fields, his name was Solomon. People would come gather to help him out even the women, they would come cook. They all lend a hand, they came to cook a big feast, because they loved one another, they did not get paid for doing that. They wanted to help. After that's all been done, they would all go home. Now today, it is all about money when you ask for help.

Our land too, was so beautiful long ago. It was also fun back in the day. At treaty days, people used to go pitch up their canvas tents every where to camp for the night, they had a lot of fun, like dancing, there was no alcohol used back then, it was not even on our reserve, our people were very healthy. And when the men go hunting, they share the wild meat, they give them out to people. They were not cheap with anything. Even when they used to build their own houses, once they hear that someone is building a house, they all gather up to that house and help out that person.

I remember when my father built his house, my uncle showed up and helped my father built his house all around until the house was completed, he helped my father out a lot. When it was time for my uncle to leave, my father gave him one of his horses, as a thank-you for helping out.

There was also a lot of visiting back in the day, even if they had to walk. No matter the season or weather, they would still go visit one another. Now today, there is no visiting at all, it seems like when people try visit, they're always in a hurry to leave.

Kinship, how we are related to people. In this reserve, everyone is related to each other in a certain way. A lot of then I call my uncles, my aunties, I try to acknowledge my relatives as I did growing up. One time my sister-in-law came to ask me how er were related to this one family because her daughter was dating this young man, I told her how we were related to that family we were close family. Those young people ended their relationship because of the close family kinship. It used to be so respected, our kinship, how we were related to others, and now today people are staying with their first cousins (brother/sisters). Like my uncle's children, I call them my brothers and sisters, and they call me the same thing. They call me "big sister" because I'm the oldest. This other family, our roots go way back, they call me big sister. Now today these young people today, they do not know how they are related to one another. This kind of way is lost today, it's broken, kinship. It is so difficult; you can't even tell the young people on how they are related to one another. They don't understand the virtue of kinship, but they don't understand it. They were not taught this growing-up. Nobody taught them this kinship.

My Parents were very hard workers too. I am too, a very hard worker, I remember long ago when I was a young girl at 14 years old, when the school- year was done. In the summertime, July-August, they were these old couple in Debden, that I was sent to go help them around their house, to take care of them, to serve them. And the next Summer. I was about 15 years old when I had to take care of with these three young children, they were girls, the oldest was 5 and the youngest one was 3 years old. All summer I had to take care of these three children, because

the parents were sick and had to leave somewhere else all summer.

I also used to work with these two men, they had lot of respect for me. Not once did they disrespect. There was a lot of respect back then, especially towards those strong-willed people who had been helping out towards others. There was a lot of gratitude too. Today we don't see that. When a person helps someone once, it seems like that person wants your help even more, take advantage of you, instead of being Thankful and trying to reverse that, to help you out as well.

I went to school in Duck-lake, St. Micheals Residential School for 5 and a half years. But I did not lose my Cree language. And after I was raised in a traditional way, I am Christian now, I don't judge any other ways, I still respect the traditional ways. Where I work, I tell my co-workers how I was raised, what I was told and how it used to be back in the days. I tell them this because I want to and for them to know. I respect all religion as long as they respect what I believe.

One time, my dad's cousin, his roots were right there from the Masuskapoe side, but he took the Williams name. But they had a different Cree name before he switched to Williams this one, I don't remember. My grandpa was James Peekeekoot. I am related to this side. It goes back when these Elders were baptized, they were given their white names there. Like my grandpa, he had a Cree name, which I don't remember, he was given the name "Solomon- Masuskapoe. Even my great grandpa was named Masuskapoe. This is where all these white names were given out, and this is where kinship got broken. How we are related to one another. Because of all these Chistian names, they all got mixed up. Like Peekeekoots. Just because they don't have the same last name doesn't mean they weren't siblings. My uncle used to tell me this, about these 5 siblings, one was at a battle and lost his life there. The one that was killed I don't remember his name, the other siblings were Masuskapoe, Ahenakew, Ahtakakoop (Starblanket) and Peekeekoot.

I also have French roots on my Masuskapoe side, also Rabbitskin. Along time ago, those white people who used to travel by canoe, would make fur trading posts, this is where I got some French roots from my mother and father's side. My mother was Cecelia, and my small grandfather's name was Paul Rabbitskin. His Cree name was "Small person", and my grandmother's name is Angelic. I don't remember her Cree name. But I heard they had separated, my grandparents. My mother had had two siblings, a sister and a brother, but her brother had died from a hunting accident. So, it was only my mother and her sister growing up. Margaret was my mother's sister's name she married and moved with her husband. Then there's my mother, her mother and then there was nothing but women, Alice, Isabelle, Dora, and Bella. Now today there's only one living woman, my auntie. My father's side, there is John Rabbitskin, Robert, John George, and Margaret. Both my mother and father's side, I had a lot of family. My grandmother had a lot of children back then. She was 50 years old and she still birthed children. My father used to tell me about kinship.

Where we used to live, we walked 5 miles to school. But we had to do our chores before we left for school, it was very early too. No matter the weather outside we still had to do our chores and walk to school. There was no such thing as school closures. It used to be freezing cold, we used to hear the trees crack from the frigid cold winter days. I used to live by the Victoire road. There was a house on top the hill, down the hill is where we used to far from that road. My grandmother and other relatives used to stop in and visit us, sometimes they would camp a few days. This is what I meant, along time ago, people used to visit each other and love one another, when they'd visit they camped for days. I used to have lot of old pictures from long ago, and someone had stolen them. I still have my grandparent's picture though and my father's.

I went to Residential school for 5 and half years, David went for 4 and half years and Frank went one and half year I think. It was a Sunday we came to visit here and we were not allowed to go back to Duck lake. My father used to be how we call today, a bus driver, he used to use an open sleigh in the winter time. We had a lot of fun, when we would get cold riding on the sleigh we would jump off and run along side the sleigh to keep warm then jump back on. Then they had built a Kaboose there was little woodburner inside there, where we

used to warm up. We wouldn't be running outside anymore to warm up, it was so toasty warm inside the ka-boose. The open sleigh and the wagon with horses were the first buses. He used to pick up kids in far distances too. My father's name was Thomas Masuskapoe (Tommy). I was 16 years old when I had to finish school, my father had to make me quit school to work. Only Frank had finish school but he had to move to Prince Albert. But us, we had to work. Whenever we leave Duck lake we would only live in the reserve for awhile and then move to go work for white people. We would work on fields all day long, pick up rocks, and all sorts of other labour work. We didn't have welfare back then, no child tax, nothing, we always had to work to make money. But it was wonderful days back then. I always call them the good old days. It was good we had no worries, we used to leave our belongings behind and no one would bother them, they'd still be there when we get back. Today now, we have to lock up everything.

At funerals, it was so respected, we used to sit on the floor not on chairs. There were no children allowed too at all. I was 16 years old when my father took me to a wake service for the first time. But I didn't go there for the wake, I went there to help out, to work. All night my father would sit there. We cooked all night and made tea for the people until the funeral day.

My mom was catholic, and my father was Anglican. There used to be grave yard clean up every year, people would come gather here and work here. We used to have the women cook too, put blankets on the ground and eat. Each family would sit by their loved ones. Even by the church by the river, the horses were tied up there and they would be fed too. The families would then move to other families and visit each other while they eat. The women were so respected because women are the child bearers, and they go through the hardships of giving birth and sometimes losses. That's why back then women were highly respected. There used to be no doctors just the mid-wives. There was also a lot of dances, but there was alcohol involved now and people would get into fights in the middle of the dance floor (laughter) but they would get kicked out of the hall and then the dance will continue. There was no band too, we had our own musicians that would take turns playing some tunes like violins, guitar's, and pianos. Now today you have to pay a lot of money to get a band to come play for a dance. It was so fun. People used to walk to dances whenever there's a dance somewhere else.

This one time I had found a coin in my cake, which means that the person who bites into a coin must make the next dance. I had told my mother, that I had bitten into a quarter and I needed to make a dance. She says to me, well you are not making a dance here so off you go. I went to my grandmother's house next and I told her the same thing, she had a big house. I told her I my mother didn't want to make a dance. So she says you will make one here. (laughter) so I made one there. A lot of people came there because her house was big. There was a little room in that house where they were in while the dance was happening. We had a fun night that night dancing. There was no alcohol back then too. When people try bring in alcohol they get kicked out.

Like the Sundances long ago, the Elders would know when a woman was on their moon time. I had seen this done where an Elder came out of the lodge towards this young lady who came to watch the dancers, and he told her you must leave immediately. The Elders used to just tell them to leave. They weren't shy. Elders used to discipline the young people back then now today they do not really do that. If when someone disciplines your child, the parent of that child will come defensive and stick up for their child. That is going to be their fault when these kids grow up without discipline. The parents stop disciplining their own children, they let them do whatever they please. Back in the days, the whole village raised your child, discipline. Now today there is nothing like that. I raised my children with discipline and today they all work and have jobs. My grand daughters I had raised too, I had raised them with discipline. I have great grand children that go to school here, and when they do not listen, I'm the first to know because I work near by. I'd tell them to come to my house after school so I can have a talk with them, its not giving them heck too, it's telling them, correcting them. I want to teach them how to live with virtues for them to be a better person. But for them they call it, getting heck, they are in trouble and arguments. There was this one old man named Solmens, he used to tell legend stories. I remember my father used to go get him just so we can listen to his stories. He lived on top the hill. We sit there all night as he told stories until we'd fall asleep. I can not remember these stories as I was so young. Today now, we had lost these ways too, legend

stories. No body knows them that much. The schools don't use the Elders that much to try learn these stories. Now that is broken too. These kids were not told, they are now just beginning to learn. Our traditional teachings are vanishing slowly, too many white man's stories.

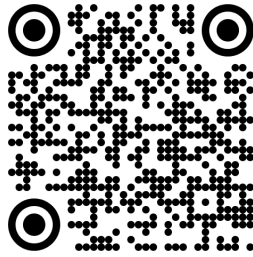
There are strong Anglican here, they had contemned Traditional ways. There's this one Anglican minister who had threw out medicine bags back then. That was Hynes. I was told this, but I had never seen it.

A lot of young people are lost today. I tell them about our creator, our God, who sees and know everything, He knows when you steal. I tell them to love one another, not to hate. It's difficult to talk to the young people today. They don't respect their bodies, their lives, like the ones that are finishing school grade 12, I tell them to keep going in life. Do not give up. I tell them you need to prepare what is in your future. It is going to a hard future; you need to keep going. Even our land base, some of the teenagers are disguised in touching wild meat to cut. I see it in their faces. I tell them not to do that. This way is our traditional ways. We were not raised with microwaved food, that's not even real food. Also, that is why a lot of people are sick today because of the white man food. This traditional food is way healthier. These wild animals eat organic foods. The meat we buy at the stores, we don't know what these animals were injected with, and we have to eat them. This is what I tell the young people. But at times, they laugh and seem like they do not want to believe you.



My father used to have all sort of farm animals back then. We also used to make our own butter, cottage cheese, cream, and other stuff. There was me, David, Frank, and George. It was all healthy foods.

BARRY AHENAKEW: WHERE DO OUR PEOPLE COME FROM?



Years ago, my grandfather used to talk about the founding father of our nation, his name was Chatelaine (French). The people called him Chatlah. Our nation came from the Chatlah, but not everyone. There was a man named Masuskapoe, his father was Pakaskineheyawew (Fluent Cree Speaking Man). Their mother was named Okimawahtikohk (Sundance Lodge Center Pole). This man Masuskapoe was the son of Okimawahtikohk, Ahahkakoop's father was also Pakaskineheyawew. But Sasakamoose's father was Chatelaine (Chatlah). Then our great grand father Ahasiw-akohp (Crow Blanket) may have been born to Chatelaine (Chatlah) I am not sure and may have had different father. Ahasiw-akohp (Crow Blanket) was the first to be named "Ayhay Nakew!" (Ahenakew) was the first to use that name and his younger brother was Napeskes. They were tall men, Masuskapoe stood six feet two inches while Ahtahkakoop, six feet three inches, Sasakamoose was five foot eight inches tall. He wasn't very tall and he had a white complexion. Ahasiw-akohp was also a tall man, he must have been six feet tall while Napeskes was six foot three, he was the same height as Ahtahkakoop. These men's mother was Okimaw-ahtihkohk they travelled from down south/east when many people migrated from east to the west (from where the sun rises).

People from the north called Ayahtchenewak (Strange peoples or Blackfoot) travelled west first and our people followed there after. The Churchill River was named Ayahchenew Sipi which was name after these early migrants (Strange People). Down south-east was geographically called Kihchi Sakahikan (the Great Lakes) and rivers such as the Kihchi Sipi (St. Lawrence River), Lake Ontario, Lake Huron, Lake Superior. Ayahtchenew Sipi was named after these people now called Churchill River. These people came first also Kihchi Sakahikan (Lake Ontario) is where our people came from and others heading west. Our people travelled that route. Neheyawak came from the Great Lakes such as our people (Algonquin People).

Our people settled and took land at Peyisew Wachihk (Thunder Bay, Ontario). This is where the Mistatim Isimowin (horse dance) began. I distinguish the ceremonies from this era and along the shores of Kichikamihk (Great Lakes) came the ceremony called Peyisew Simowin (Thunder Bird Dance). Some nations still call it the same Peyisew Simowin. Another ceremony was called Okihchitaw Simowin was carried out two days such as the Peyisew Simowin. These ceremonies were Atayohkewin (legends) told by our forefathers as they continue to migrate west. From then on, a horse dance was blessed to a man named Pahkwes. He went to seek a vision quest (Kekosimowin) in the mountains. Nothing came of it. He was there praying and fasting for four days and four nights. But, as he descended from the mountains, he fell asleep halfway down the mountain that's when he was foretold. A white horse with wings appeared before him and the Misatim Isimowin (Horse Dance) ceremony was bestowed to him by the winged horse. He was given songs to use in ceremony. He was told to use fourteen poles and how they should be placed in the lodge. But at that time there were no horses back in the east. The winged horse instructed him, "You have to tell Napehkasewenowak (Warriors) at the Okihchitaw kamikohk (The Warriors Lodge) about this vision. You are to travel west with them. In your travels, there will be a vast forest, rivers, lakes and muskegs and but eventually, you will come

into plains territory. It is there where you will find horses. You have to catch them, tame them and bring them back. Upon your return with the horses is when you can carry out the fourteen-lodge pole ceremony.

When he reached the camp, he shared his vision. This is what he was told to do. He went down and told of his dream to the warriors, we have to go ahead where the sun sets to find horses. We will find horses and bring them back and make them dance in the ceremony. We will use (napehkwana) fringes to bless the ceremony. And so, the venture began. There were approximately twenty (20) to thirty (30) men. They were a large group and so they did come across the plains and right around where Winnipeg is. They gathered the horses and tamed them and then brought them back to Thunder Bay, Ontario but, I won't elaborate on that story further. That is where the horse dance originated. This is how we learned their way of life.

The group continued to migrate along the plains and they came upon vast prairies when Ahtahkakoop were still children and they settled around Bigger, Saskatchewan and south of there. Geographically between Kinderley and Bigger, Saskatchewan. There were Tawatinaw wacheya (rolling hills) Waheyaw Ka-itaskweyahk (long plains) in the area where a place named Buffalo Hump Hills, the hump on a Buffalo is called kaskiskawan (Buffalo Hump) this is where Ahtahkakoop was raised kaskiskawan atinawah. They traveled everywhere to hunt and gather.

My grand father used to confuse me about nitopayiwinn (leads a war party) raids on other tribes. I used to wonder how far these war parties had to travel. Others foretold these stories such as late Angus Knife and late Allan Ahenakew. These men used to talk about kaskiskawan atinawa is where we originated. We were true plains Indians. When they lead their raids, this is where they came from. They used to go raid the Red People camps (Blood Tribes) and the Dakotas south into now United States. Mostly to steal and capture their horses down south.

Meanwhile, Mistawasis lived and raised his family in the east around Mikisew Sipiysis (Eagle Creek). Southeast of Rosetown, Saskatchewan, and it was a great plain. This is where Mistawasis dwelled with his people. There was an abundance of chokecherry bushes in that area as well an abundance of Buffalo everywhere. They used to use the choke cherries and blend it with buffalo pounded dry meat and they made pimikan. They worked cooperatively with Mistawasis and Ahtahakoop's people. They never ran out of supplies or ever was hungry. They used the hides to make shelter such as apahkwan (teepees), they were rich in abundance of buffalo.

Ahasiw-Akohp (Crow blanket) went on the raid with the red people or the bloods in southern Alberta and they stole many horses. On their way back home with horses and right around Alsask, Saskatchewan, just south of there are three hills. As they were just coming over a hill when on the other side of the hill, his warriors look behind and saw crow blanket stopped and dismounted his horse on top a hill. An arrow was stuck to his knee and the warriors yelled, "Ayhay nakew!" The warriors went back and one of the warriors jumped off and said, "look at the plume of dust behind us, they're coming". Threw Crow Blanket back on his horse and they kept riding as Blood warriors were chasing them and they kept going. They were close to their camp and knew the blackfoot would not dare come close to our camps as they would have been out-numbered. Crow blanket was being chased by the bloods and they arrived at mistapew kanawachet Neheyawa (big man cooking Indians) They resided between two mountains on north/east side is where the camp was and his children were growing and becoming men. Ahtahkakoop was one of them. The camp made a victory dance for Crow Blanket and the warriors upon arrival. The young boys were being groomed to steal horses Crow Blanket was given a dance by women that by giving thanks that nobody what's fatally injured and they celebrated as the warriors would stop dancing and told their version of what happened and about how crow blanket stopped and was injured "Ayhay nakew" was given the name to Crow Blanket and eventually his name change to Ayhay nakew, it became a common name to all the people and the name Crow Blanket was gradually being phased out. Crow Blanket was to be our last names but it eventually changed to Ayhay Nakew (Ahenakew).

There was a mountain named "Ayhay Nakewin" where Crow Blanket has dismounted his horse during the raid.

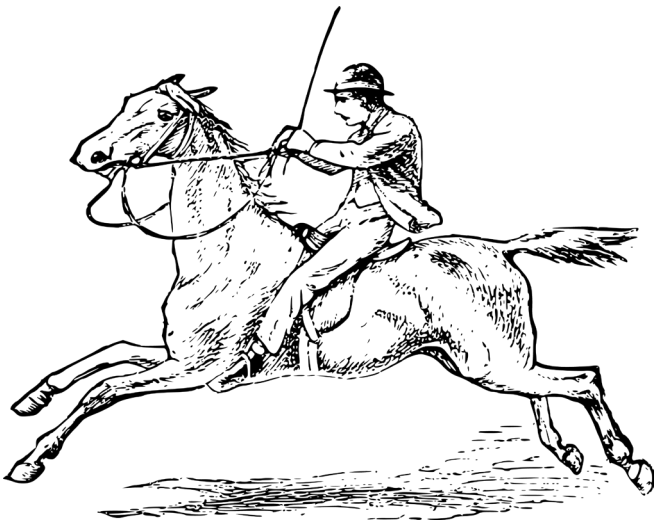
There are three mountains there, approximately ten miles south of Alsask, Saskatchewan and further south were more mountains towards Leader, Saskatchewan named kinepik oskowansa (snake nose hills) around Kindersley is called Kenkasini (Pointed Rock), there's a big pointed rock that was sticking out of the ground there. There was also another hill near Bigger, Saskatchewan called Wapastim Kanepowit (where a White Horse stands) people used to see a White Horse standing by a lake in the area, a premonition. This is where Ahtahkakoop's people dwelled.

Approximately, ten years before treaty payments began, people used to come together in an encampment and traded buffalo hides. Ahtahkakoop and Mistawasis were informed by the white traders that many of our white people are arriving on this land and moving west. There are many arriving every day on sail boats from the east.

So, they called a meeting and amongst them were Mihko Pehiw (Red Pheasant), Mistawasis and Ahtahkakoop. They summoned Ahtahkakoop's younger brother Napeskes, he was the youngest. They instructed him to go on a fact-finding mission, "We want you to go to the east and confirm the validity of the traders' revelation" that many of their people are coming. Your eyes will be our eyes, your ears will be our ears. We want you to go alone. No one will mind you if you are alone. No one will bother you, we know that you can make it. You will go scout out to see if its true. They asked him, "Will you be brave enough to carry this venture out?" Napeskes said he would take on the mission.

So away he went to the east. He came across many different indigenous people such as Ojibway people and Onatowewak (Iroquois people). He arrived in Montreal. Moniyaw Ohtinaw (white man city) he saw apartments that were three stories high. They were so many white people everywhere like ants sprawling over one another. Furthermore, he did observe so many white people coming off sailboats on the St. Lawrence River onto the city.

One day, as Napeskes was standing outside of his hotel, he observed business men in suits. A six-team horse drawn wagon was parked beside them and a young woman was on the wagon. He wasn't very far. He was closely observing the situation and something spooked the horses and took off. The business men froze and



didn't move at all. Napeskes jumped into action and chased the wagon and jump on the back of the wagon and onto the backs of the horses. From one horse to the next. He jumped onto the lead horse and grabbed the reins from the bridle and stopped the run-away team. He dismounted the lead horse and led the team back to where the businessmen were standing. He had another person hold the team of horses. One of the business men summoned him as he wanted to talk to him. The business man had an Ojibway interpreter. He wanted to know his name. The business man said, "this man practically saved my daughter's life". The interpreter asked him what his name was, "what is your name?" He said his name was Napeskes. Of course, they didn't understand what Napeskes meant. So, they wrote his name on a piece of paper. Tell him that, I am the owner of the Hudson's Bay

Company. I own all of the stores. To express my gratitude, I want to give him this paper for saving my daughter's life. With this paper (voucher) he can enter any of my stores and he will receive whatever it is that he wants for free. I am so thankful for his bravery. He told Napeskes to guard the paper as he signed it, he folded the paper neatly and placed it in his person.

And so, Napeskes made his journey back home to his people in Saskatchewan. He saw the people coming off the boats, he also saw the Iroquois and the Ojibway were assigned to Lands and the reserve system was beginning the lands were set aside for people and he made that revelation when he returned to meet with the Chiefs. This

was ten years before treaty was signed in Saskatchewan in 1866. This is what my grandfather had told me years ago.

And so when he returned, the chiefs were in a meeting, Ahtahkakoop, Red Pheasant and Mistawasis and together they lifted the pipe to smoke and Napeskis told his story. The traders were right, they are coming not immediately but there will be more white people coming to our territory. I have seen the houses, the towns and their cities. They were living in apartments also seen the Iroquois were given land for reserves. It is bound to happen in our territory soon. Napeskis finished what he was set out to do so.

Six years later in 1870 Red Pheasant and Mistawasis met in North Battleford. They went to meet in Fort Battleford and they also invited Ahtahkakoop. They asked the question, "what should we do, white people are coming and they're going to take up land in our traditional territories, also lands are being set aside as reserves and it is already happening in the east?" Ahtahkakoop said, the Buffalo are diminishing we may have to move north and find lakes with fish and so our children and grandchildren can live off fish and hunting other game.

And so, they began to migrate. They had no choice but to leave kaskiskawan atinawah (Buffalo Hump Hills) they arrived in North Battleford. There were camps of Mistawasis and Red Pheasant. Ahtahkakoop went and sat with the two Chiefs, Mistawasis and Red Pheasant. Mistawasis told Ahtahkakoop that, they have already been discussing what Napeskis saw in the east regarding the lands being set aside for Indians. We may have to do the same. We want to consider lands. We want our three bands to take lands next to each other. From the Battleford River to the Eagle Hills. This is what we want, the Pile of Eagle Feather hills. This where want to reside. Ahtahkakoop response was, we would love the idea of creating a large territory but unfortunately, I have been talking to our people and we are considering lands in the north where there are lakes so our people can fish for food. We are on the move north to find these lakes. I cannot commit my band to your thoughts. The next day, they packed their camp and were moving north.

Along their trek were thickwooded hills just between Shell Lake of what's called Spiritwood. They arrived at Fur Lake. Two miles west of Mont Nebo and took up there and lived there for four to five years. There are grave sites there and my grandfather wanted to take me there to go see them, but I never had a chance. They scouted west into Turtleford area on horse back. They came upon turtle lake, but it was too large. Witchekan Lake had no fish. They went south of Spiritwood to Long Lake. They went north to Green Lake, but there were too many mosquitos and horse flies. On their way back, they came upon the north end of Sandy Lake. They thought it was the right size. There were fish, hills, rivers, streams, marshes and trees. Ahtahkakoop instructed his warriors to go advise the others to move camp here. Two years before treaty, the band had settled on this land and they had already decided where they wanted to create a reserve. Mistawasis also moved from the battlefords and took up land around east of Leask, Saskatchewan. He took up land where they are now.

In conclusion, this is the origin of Ahtahkakoops people.



