

*That's the Way
We Lived*



An Oral History of the Fort Resolution Elders

THAT'S THE WAY WE LIVED



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All of the elders who shared their wisdom,
their memories and their stories for this
book.

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PREFACE

In 1984, a project was begun by the Fort Resolution Education Authority to record the oral histories of the elders of Fort Resolution. Some elders declined to participate in the project but seventeen elders very kindly agreed to share their memories and their stories with us.

What followed was a lengthy process of interviews. All, but two of the elders, answered questions in Chipewyan. The Chipewyan tapes were then translated into English by interpreters. The English tapes were transcribed word for word then edited and rearranged into various subjects, which now appear in this book.

In each section the elders statements always appear in alphabetical order of their surnames. Their initials are used to indicate who is speaking. Below is a list to show the initials used for each elder.

HB	Harold Balsillie	Born in 1917
PB	Philip Buggins	Born in 1916
VB	Virginie Beaulieu	Born in 1909
VC	Virginie Calumet	Born in 1913
FD	Fred Dawson	Born in 1916
IE	Isidore Edjericon	Born in 1904
AF	Albert Fabien	Born in 1916
CF	Caroline Fabien	Born in 1903
RF	Rose Fabien	Born in 1917
JG	Judith Giroux	Born in 1909
PH	Pierre Hilaire	Born in 1901
JJ	Joseph Jerome	Born in 1917
FK	Francois King	Born in 1903
MLK	Mary Louise King	Born in 1903
VL	Victor Lafferty	Born in 1914
GS	George Sanderson	Born in 1910
NY	Noel Yelle	Born in 1910

Since 1984, when the information was collected, four of the elders have passed away. This book will help us to remember the lives that they led, their memories and thoughts. Their comments on the way they lived will be with us forever.

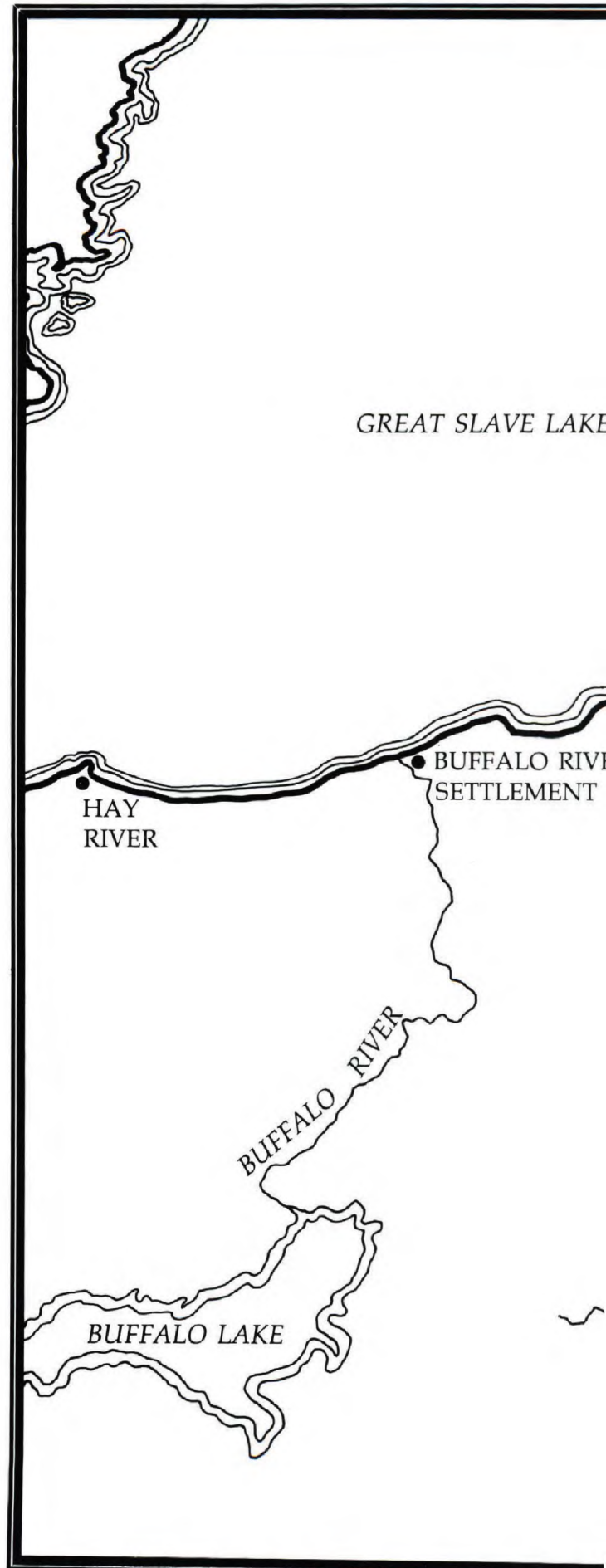
Father Lou Menez prepared the family trees that are contained in the book. Some of the elders' family trees do not appear in the book because of a lack of information available locally.

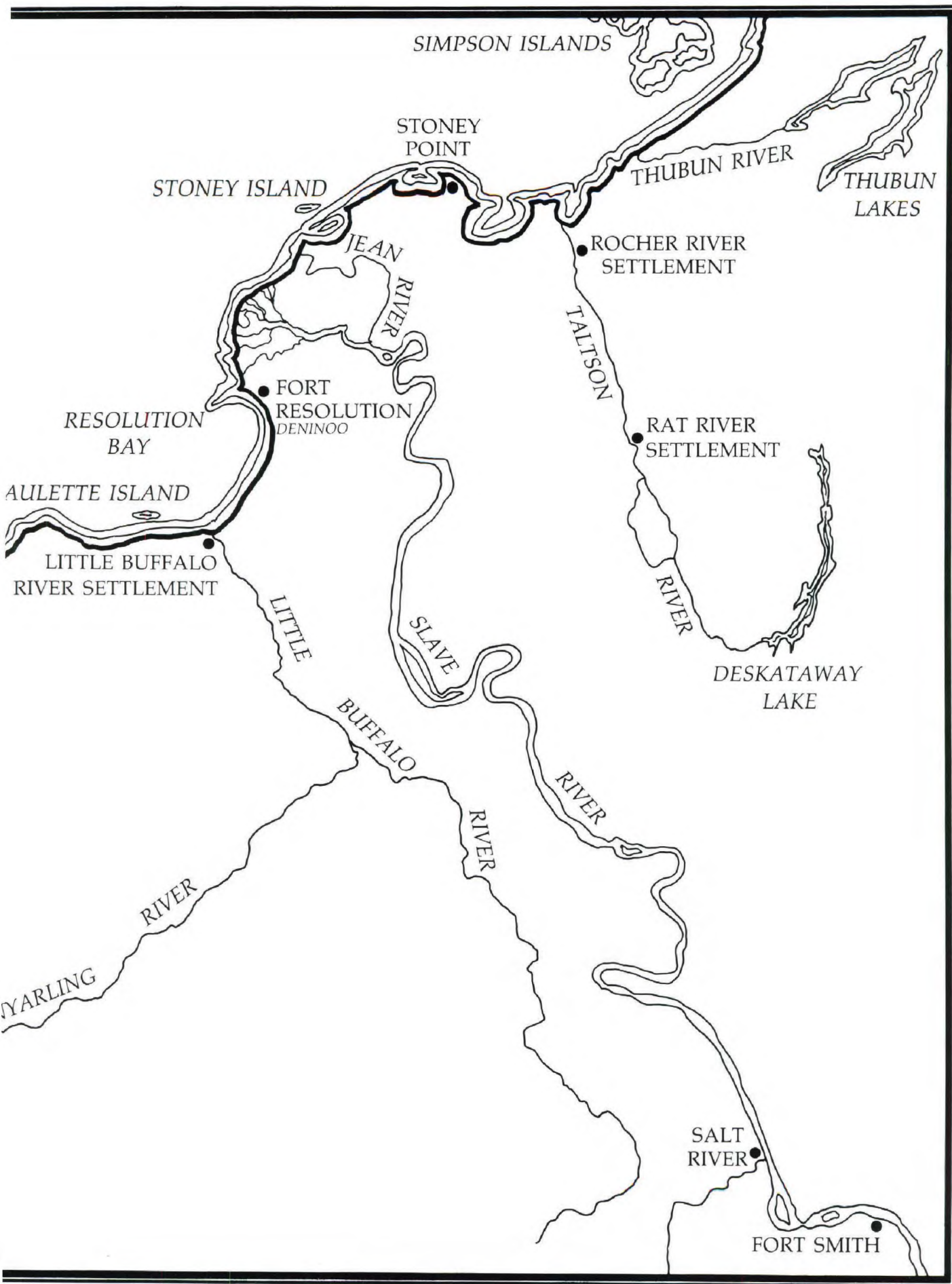
'That's The Way We Lived' is dedicated to our elders. Their lives deserve to be recognized and I hope they will be through this book.

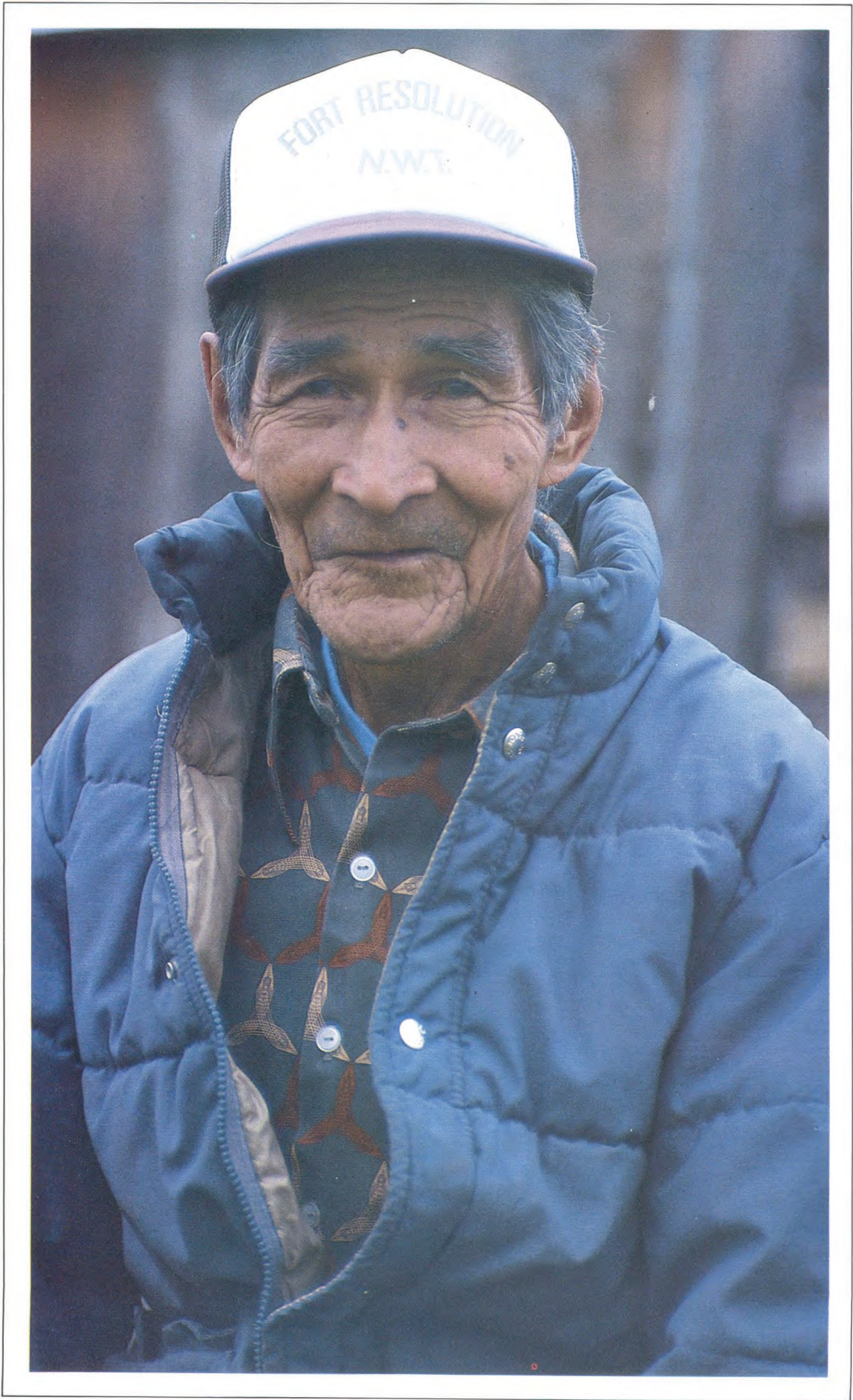
Gail Beaulieu
February, 1987
Fort Resolution, NWT

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Genealogy

HB

My dad's parents were from Calgary. They were Balsillies. My mom's parents were Fabiens.

My mom, Marie, came from here. She was Honore and Alisette Fabien's daughter. My dad's name was Jim Balsillie. My dad worked for the Hudson Bay Company. He worked in Fort Simpson, Fort Providence and Hay River. He worked with the Bay for thirty-one years. When he resigned we were going to stay in Hay River but there was nothing there in those days. Fort Resolution was a better place to make a living because there was more work here than in Hay River so we moved to Fort Resolution. I think I was twelve when we moved here.

There were nine boys and one girl in our family. Now there is only me and Jim and Huey is in Vancouver. Huey and I were the youngest in the family. I was born in Fort Providence in 1917.

My wife, Christine Lafferty, was born in Fort Rae. She came here to work at the hospital. She was living with her sister, Rosa Fabien, when I met her. We were married in the church.

I have seven children. I have only one child at home with me now. Don went south to get a job but I forget the place where he went. Therese, Vivien and Clayton live in Yellowknife. Joanne and Helen live here and my youngest daughter Dianne is the one who lives with me now.

VB

My maternal grandmother's name was Marie Anne Flamand and my grandfather's name was Joseph King Beaulieu. He was from way down the river.

My mother, Flora Hope, was born in Peace River. I think that my dad, Joseph King, was born up here but I don't really know.

My parents used to stay in Fort Vermillion but their children started to get sick with some kind of Flu so the family moved back here to Fort Resolution. I was born here in Fort Resolution. There were ten brothers and sisters in the family. We used to live at Stoney Island. All my relatives used to live there too. Once in a while we would go to Rocher River.

When I married Louison Beaulieu we moved back here. All the rest of my relatives moved to different places. My brother, Moise King, built a house at Stoney Island.

I had ten children. Now only two of them are alive — Albina and Ernest. The rest are all dead.

PB

My maternal grandfather's name was Hilaire Frise. I think he was from Hay River. My grandmother's name was Madeleine McKay. I don't know where she was from.

My father's name was Pierre Nattaway but I never saw him, he was from

Isidore Edjericon was born in 1904 in the Little Buffalo River area and has lived there most of his life.

around Fort Smith. My mother's name was Catherine Frise, I think she was a Slavey. Isadore Buggins married my mother so I called him daddy. We used to stay at Little Buffalo River. We moved to town after the Flu Epidemic and my grandparents died here in Fort Resolution. I'm pretty sure of that. My mother died in 1948 and my dad, Isadore Buggins, died of cancer about ten years ago.

I was born November 15, 1916, while the war was on. I travelled all over. After I was seventeen I tried to be the boss of myself. I went all over the place, to Snowdrift, to Ptarmigan River and way out to Artillery Lake in the Barren Lands. We stayed at Artillery Lake for one year. I used to set traps with Paul Court, he taught me how to do things in the bush. I used to work on the boats before too, down the river. So I have been all over.

We stayed at Little Buffalo River where there used to be a lot of people. Now the people stay in Fort Resolution but it wasn't like that before. There used to be houses way up the Little Buffalo River. William Rymer used to stay up there. We used to visit people when we went up the river.

After I married Marie Field we stayed in Fort Fitzgerald. I worked at the sawmill there and when it closed we moved to Fort Smith.

I didn't have any of my own kids but I raised other kids. One kid that I raised, Ernest Field, died in a car accident in Edmonton and I have one daughter in Vancouver. I don't know if she is alive or not, some people say that she died. Harvey is alive and married and he lives in Yellowknife.

VC

I didn't know my mother's parents but I remember my dad's father a little bit. My grandfather's name was Petit Jean Louine and my dad's name was Paul Louine. I heard that my dad was raised by somebody else when he was small. My dad died in Fort Smith.

My mother, Anne Ethizen, had one sister. Their parents died when they were small.

There were seven children in my family. I'm the only one left. I was born at Stoney Island, where we lived. I'm one of a set of twins.

We used to stay in Snowdrift and further east at Artillery Lake. We used to travel there in the winter. In spring we came back to Rocher River in a boat. A lot of people lived in Rocher River.

Sometimes we would travel from Rocher River to Thubun Lake to hunt caribou. Johnny Jean Marie would come from Jean River and he and my family would go to hunt for caribou at Thubun Lake. Other people came out there too. Johnny's twin brother, Louison, and his wife, Big Harriet, and Louis Beaulieu and his wife Louise. It was really cold in the winter. We moved there in January. We stayed there all winter, trapping, and only in Spring did we come home.

I had three girls and three boys, after I married Pierre Calumet. All of the girls died but my three boys Henry, Leon and Joe are alive.

FD

I don't remember my mother. Her name was Marie Rat. I heard that my mother had about thirteen children. Only two of us are alive.

I was born on March 14, 1916. I remember my sister Elizabeth. She was my sister but she had a different dad.

My dad was a whiteman. He was a big man. I saw him once, when I was in Fort Fitzgerald. He used to live at Dawson Landing, near Pine Point, but he went to Fort Fitzgerald one time and I met him in the store. He gave me some candies and after that he went away and I never saw him again.

I called Pierre Cassaway my dad because he raised me. My mother gave me to him when I was a small kid. I stayed with him until I was married. Pierre and his wife Louise raised me. I call their kids, Victoria (Ed Lafferty's wife) and John, my brother and sister.

There was a man called Johnny who had been married to my mother. I stayed with him one time when I was about fifteen years old. He used to call me son. He was in the army for three years and when he came back from the war my mother had died so he married another woman. Every time I went to Fort Fitzgerald I stayed at his house.

We lived in Fort Smith and at Salt River. From there we travelled to Rat River and Rocher River then back to Fort Fitzgerald. That's what we used to do, we used to travel back and forth. We even travelled to Fort Resolution and Deskataway Lake.

After I was eighteen, I travelled all over the place. In 1938, I moved to Fort Resolution and married Napoleon Lafferty's daughter, Leonie Lafferty. I was married to her for ten years and we had three children. Two of them are dead but Jackie is alive and lives in Fort McPherson. After my first wife died I married Alexis King's daughter, Beatrice King.

IE

My father's parents came from Fort Vermillion. His parent's names were Isaac Edjericon and Suzanne Dliedhez.

My father's name was Olivier Edjericon. He stayed at Big Buffalo River. After he married my mother, Suzanne Dziedin, he built a house at Big Buffalo River and they lived there.

In my family there were four boys, myself, Francois, Jimmy and Jonas and two sisters, Madeleine and Adeline. There are only three of us living today.

I don't know where I was born, or when. I used to live at Little Buffalo River and then I moved here to Fort Resolution.

I married Joseph Nadjere's daughter, Margaret Nadjere. I think I had fourteen children but only George and Henry are alive today.

AF

I remember that my grandmother was Alizette Mandeville. She was born in Fort Resolution. Her brother's names were Alphonse, Moise, and Michel. Angele Dosnoir was her sister as well as the mother of Louison Beaulieu's wife. I remember my grandmother good. There was no old age pension in those days but when my grandmother got older she got twenty five dollars a month from the police. She was happy because she could buy food for herself with that. They didn't help the people in those days but they did help my grandmother. She lived with my mom and dad and my mom looked after her until she died.

My mother's name was Helen Sibbeston, she came from Fort Simpson. My dad's name was Johnny Fabien and he came from Fort Resolution.

My dad worked in Fort Simpson and way down the river at Fort McPherson. He worked for the Bay in Fort Resolution, too, then we moved to Rocher River where he worked for NT. We stayed in Rocher River for a long time, I was only a child when we lived there.

My parents had a lot of children. Three of my brothers, James, George and Frank, died. Two of my sisters died as well — Bernadette and Alice. Now there are only five of us alive.

I was born in Fort Resolution on September 13, 1916. I used to travel all over to work. I travelled because I worked for the government. I trapped all the time before I started working for the government. I trapped in Wood Buffalo Park for a long time.

I have five boys and four girls. Two girls are living in Yellowknife, Donald is working in Fort Simpson and Angelina is working in Hay River. Eddy works in Pine Point. Only Lawrence lives with my wife and I and he keeps us. We raised one of our granddaughters, Lorraine, and she is still living with us.

CF

My dad's name was Robert Erasmus, he came from Cold Lake, Alberta. My mother's name was Mary Lafferty, she was from Fort Rae. My parents lived in Fort Rae, Fort Wrigley and Fort Resolution. My father worked in all those places. My parents had fourteen children. All my brothers and sisters live in Yellowknife.

I was born in Fort Wrigley in 1903. I lived in Fort Rae and then here in Fort Resolution. I stayed here for many years working for the Nuns. I was married to my first husband, James Bouvier, in Fort Providence, and had four children there. After my husband died I moved to Fort Resolution where I stayed in the Mission, then I married my second husband, Joe Fabien. I have two children from my second husband, Ernie and Eva.

RF

I was born in Hay River in 1917. I don't remember my dad, Petit Jean Edjericon, but I remember my mom whose name was Sarah. There were three children in our family. I'm the only child from my mom, Sarah.

I grew up in Fort Resolution. When I was young I stayed in the Mission. I stayed there for nine years. I also stayed at Little Buffalo River for two or three years. Lots of people used to live there. I stayed there with my uncle and aunt. My uncle used to trap. It wasn't good trapping but we stayed there.

I married Albert Fabien and I had nine children. Two of my boys are working in Pine Point and one stays with us. Three of my children are in Yellowknife, one is in Hay River and one in Fort Simpson. They are all working.

JG

My dad's name was Joseph Cree, he was from Fort Chipewyan. My mother's name was Louise Smith, she was from Rocher River. My parents lived in Rocher River.

My maternal grandfather was Pascal Smith. I don't know anything about my father's parents.

I didn't have any sisters, just two younger brothers. John lives here now and my other brother died when he was four years old. I was born in Rocher River.

We used to travel all over in the bush with my dad. My mom and I used to stay home when my dad went out to hunt, fish or trap. My dad used to kill a lot of moose so we used to have meat all the time. We lived good with meat in those days.

Once in a while we used to stay in Rat River. Rat River and Rocher River are close together, so we used to go back and forth. Sometimes, in the summer, we used to travel to town here, then we would go back out to stay in Rocher River.

I had six children, five boys and one girl. Wilfred, Anne, Tommy and Roy are living.

Francois King and I stayed in Rat River for awhile. We trapped there. We moved to Rocher River because the kids had to go to school. The school in Rocher River burned down so we moved to Fort Resolution. This is where we live now.

PH

I don't remember my grandmothers and grandfathers but they were from Big Buffalo River. My dad, Hilaire Frise, was from Fort Chipewyan. My mother, Madeleine McKay, was from Big Buffalo River. They lived at Big Buffalo River and they travelled to Buffalo Lake to hunt and trap. Later on they moved to Little Buffalo River, they didn't move from there — they stayed there and died there.

In our family there was Catherine, Honore, myself, Elizabeth and Alizette. I was born at Little Buffalo River.

I married Bella Smith, the daughter of Pascal Smith. We had fourteen children. Only one is alive now. He lives with me.

We lived at Little Buffalo River but my kids were dying off so we moved to Rocher River. From there we moved to Fort Resolution because my wife was sick. We have lived here for over thirty years now.

I raised my children by hunting and fishing for them. I used to trap and kill moose.

JJ

My maternal grandfather's name was Narcisse Naghus, he was from High Level. My mother's name was Therese Naghus. My father's name was Jerome Pierrot. He moved here from High Level when he was a young boy. After he met my mother they moved to Rat River. They got to Rat River in 1902 and he died in 1917. There were nine children in my family but I am the only one alive. My sister's children are alive.

I was born on April 21st, 1917, in Rat River. My grandfather raised me. After my grandfather died I stayed in Rocher River. There used to be a lot of people in Rocher River. No one lives there now. After I married Charlotte Simon, we moved to Fort Resolution because the school burned down in Rocher River.

We had seven children. Only four are alive now. The oldest boy is in Fort Simpson. One daughter is in Fort Smith and one daughter is in Edmonton. The youngest boy is at home with me now.



AN OLD WIFE

K. VISUAL RECORD - 1911

FK

I remember my granfather, Joseph King. My grandparents used to live here and sometimes east of Snowdrift. Uncle Joseph King, who was Harriet Beaulieu's father, also used to go there.

My mother's name was Elizabeth Tatadise. My dad's name was Paul King Beaulieu. I think my mother was born in Upper Hay, in northern Alberta. My dad was born in Fort Resolution. My parents lived in Upper Hay then they moved to Fort Vermillion. They raised animals on a farm there. After my mother died my dad sold the farm and all the animals. We went to live in Fort Smith in 1916.

I was born in Fort Vermillion on October 1st, 1903. There were five children in our family — John, Margaret, Joseph, Liza and myself. My sister Margaret married Samuel Simon. I am the only one alive now.

I was married to Mary Rose Benwell in Fort Fitzgerald. We were married for nine years, then she died of pneumonia. I then went to Rat River where I met Judith Cree, and ever since then I have been living with Judith. We lived in Rat River until the children had to go to school in Rocher River. We moved to Rocher River then the school burned down, so we moved here to Fort Resolution. We have stayed here since then.

In my first marriage I had four boys. Only Joe is alive now and he lives in Fort Smith. Judith and I had four boys. Two are still alive — Tommy and Roy. So I have three living sons and five sons died.

MLK

My paternal grandfather's name was Athanase Desjarlais. I don't know where he came from. My dad's name was Joseph Desjarlais.

I was born at Jean River at the end of July. I was raised east of Rocher River at a place called Thubun River. My grandfather and grandmother raised me and they both died in the same year, so my dad took me home and I stayed with him. In the old days we never stayed in one place, we had to travel to find food all the time.

When I was only fifteen years old I was married. I married Jean Lockhart, who was from Snowdrift, and we went to live in Snowdrift. I married a poor man so I was poor all the time, I had hardly anything to eat. After I had two children I had to travel to do my own hunting for my children. I used to set snares for rabbits and ptarmigans and I set hooks in the river for fish. The only way my children could eat was when I went out to hunt for them. I would get up early in the morning, put my snowshoes on and go cut wood in the bush. My two little children didn't live too long, they both died. It was so cold because it was winter and I was living in a tent with the children and we had nothing to eat. Maybe they starved, I don't know.

After my children died, I moved away from my husband because he didn't do anything for me. I moved in with my second husband, Francois King, and he treated me really good. He treated me really good until he died.

I had ten children altogether, five died and five are living now. One son, Frank, stays with me. My other children are scattered all over.

VL

My paternal grandfather's name was Alexis Lafferty and my grandmother's name was Liza McIver. My grandmother came from here and my grandfather came from Fort Norman. When my grandfather first came here from the south, he worked for a man named Nagle. After that he worked for NT in Fort Rae, Fort Wrigley and Fort Norman. They moved a lot because my grandfather was an interpreter for NT. The last place my grandfather worked was in Fort Simpson, for Lamson and Hubbard.

My mother was born in Fort Resolution and my dad was born in Fort Norman. My dad's name was Napoleon Lafferty and my mother's name was Catherine Beaulieu. My mother's dad was Petit Pierre Beaulieu. My dad was the oldest one in his family. Only three of his family are alive now — his sisters, Celine and Mary Rose and one of his brothers, Jonas. All the rest are dead. My mom and dad travelled all over the place and they lived in a lot of different places.

I had ten brothers and sisters. My six brothers were Jim, Fred, Modeste, Norman, Alexis, and Edward. My three sisters were Ernestine, Leonnie and Cecile. Ernestine and Cecile live her in Fort Resolution. Ed and Norman live here, too. Alexis lives in Hay River.

I was born in Fort Resolution in 1914. After I was born we moved to Fort Simpson where we stayed until 1919. That was the year that they found oil at Norman Wells, so in the springtime we travelled down the river

to Norman Wells where we stayed a little while, then we went back to Fort Simpson. We moved here to Fort Resolution because my mom's relatives were here.

I was married to Georgina McKay in 1932.

I used to go out to work on the boats way down the river. I never went out fishing or hunting or trapping because we used to work only with big boats and we didn't have a chance to hunt.

GS

My maternal grandfather's name was William Robert Norn. He was a minister in Fort Wrigley and when he came to Fort Resolution he worked for the police. My paternal grandfather was Henry Sanderson. He came from Fort McMurray.

My mother's name was Catherine Norn. My father's name was George Sanderson, he was born in Fort Resolution in 1878. My father had two brothers, Henry and Charlie.

There were three of us in our family — myself, Jimmy and Louisa.

Right now I am seventy-three years old. I was born right here, right in this house. Nearly every spring I would go to live in Rocher River for one or two months. My brother Jimmy used to live in Rocher River.

My wife's name is Judith Benaya. We had fourteen children. Just seven children are alive now.

NY

My maternal grandparents were Anne Buggins and Baptiste Biscaye. I don't remember my grandfather but I remember my grandmother really well. They used to live in Fort Smith.

My mother was born in Fort Smith, her name was Marie. I don't know where my dad was born but his name was Michel Yelle.

I think I was born in Rat River. I was born December 24, 1910. We lived at Thubun Lake most of the time. Sometimes we would go to stay in Rocher River.

There were six of us in our family. Margaret, Henry, Gabe and I are still alive.

I was married to Catherine Ekwozh. We had three children and not one of them is alive today.





Way of Life

HB

In the old days the young people were taught by the old people. The old people would show them how to set traps, make a fire, boil tea, and all that. The old person would sit there and let the kid do it. That's the way the kids used to learn. While they were in the bush, they would teach the kid about directions as well. That is how I learned to travel. I travelled a lot with the old people. If I go out on the lake and a storm comes up, I know what to do.

In the old days we didn't have canned meat to eat. We lived strictly off of wild life and that's what gave us the strength to get around. We never played out. I used to walk in snow right up to my knees all day long and I never used to play out if I was eating wild meat.

VB

In the old days when they built a house there was a man with an axe at every corner. In one day they would build a house up to the roof. That was the way Napoleon Lafferty's house was built. I was a young girl at that time.

I have heard that you can get sick if you make animals suffer.

I suffer with asthma and I think that it is because my brothers used to do crazy things. When the boys were playing with the dogs in the summer, they would put the dog's head in water so that the dog couldn't breathe for a long time. The dog would struggle and the boys would laugh. I told my brothers not to do that. I developed breathing problems and I think that is why it happened.

FD

Fort Fitzgerald was a town when I was young. There used to be a lot of houses on top of the hill. Now, you don't see those houses anymore. Fort Smith is a big town now but before there were hardly any houses there. There used to be little trails all over the place and one house here and there.

There used to be a lot of people at Salt River and a lot of houses too. People stayed in Salt River all winter and they would go to Fort Smith at Treaty time because they paid treaty at Fort Smith. After Treaty the people would go back to Salt River. They even used to have a little farm there with horses and cows. The people who were well off had animals. They used horses to haul the freight from Fort Fitzgerald to Fort Smith. Out of these three towns, Fort Fitzgerald was the biggest.

There used to be a lot of people at Rat River, too. There were lots of houses in Rat River.

People from Rat River and Fort Resolution used to go to Rocher River for dances at Christmas and New Years. All the people used to gather in Rocher River and have a good time. After everything was over, the people would return to Fort Resolution and Rat River.

Charlotte Sarcelle
Jones tapping birch
trees for sap.

IE

My dad died when we were young, so my mom raised us alone. My mother used to set rabbit snares and dry the rabbits for us to eat. We didn't use things like tea and sugar. Some people pitied my mother and they would bring sugar and tea and things like that to her. If we came to town, people would give my mother a little bit of flour and a little bit of this and that before we left to go back in the bush. We only had three dogs to travel and trap with. Sometimes we walked all the way behind the dogs. My two sisters and my mother would travel with me from here to Little Buffalo River and those three little dogs.

All the old people, like old man Pascal Hilaire, Harry Buggins, Francois Benwell and old man Honore McKay, used to gather to pray on Sunday. They would bring food with them so they could all have a meal together. They brought pounded meat, drymeat, fresh meat and boiled ribs. We used to go there, too, on Sunday and we would eat good. I would make tea for the people or haul wood and they would feed me. I was happy when people asked me to do things because I knew they were going to feed me in return. When the meal was over, my mother would take home whatever scraps of food were left on the plates. She would take home little pieces of bannock and meat for us to eat.

Life was hard for us. Some people used to have a lot of meat but we didn't. My mother used to stay out all day visiting her rabbit snares. If there were a lot of rabbits, which were heavy for her to pack, she would rest and come home late at night. If she couldn't pack the whole works, she would leave some on the road not too far from our house and I would go back to get them and bring them home for her.

AF

People lived longer in the old days. The people were healthy in those days. They were healthy because they lived on wild meat from the bush and they didn't eat very many things from the store.

People never stayed in one place, they travelled all the time to find meat. If someone killed a moose they would share the meat and all the women would share the work of making the moosehide.

JG

It wasn't easy to make your living before. You had to do a lot of work to make a living. After I was old enough to work, I worked all the time and I worked hard. I used to work like a man around the house, chopping wood and everything. I used to go out in the bush to trap, too. I used to hunt to make a living for my children. If I wasn't working outside, I would be sewing in the house. I made money by sewing and I would buy what I needed for the kids with that money.

JJ

When we stayed in Rocher River we used to travel around in winter and summer to hunt and fish and trap. People stayed in the bush all the time to hunt for meat. In the fall, people would go hunting and they would hang lots of fish for the dogs to eat in winter. As soon as the snow came down, the men would pack their blankets to go hunting again. If they got a moose, they'd come back to get the women. They would put a tent up near where the meat was and the women would make drymeat. Then they would all go to different places to hunt and trap. In spring, the men would hunt for rats and beaver. When the men came back from spring hunt they would all go to Fort Resolution for Treaty. After Treaty everyone would go back to where they came from.

The old people always made decisions in the home and community. The old men were the bosses around town and the people would do whatever the old men told them. That's how the people used to live before.

FK

It is easy for a child to get lost in the bush. When I was a child I went out to pick berries and I got lost. I was running around in the bush and I didn't take notice of what direction I was going. I walked away from the camp and I couldn't find my way home. I yelled but nobody heard me. My parents were worn out from looking for me. All of a sudden I heard two or three shots behind me, so I turned and started running back. I don't know what would have happened to me if they didn't find me.

If you are lost you should look for a little prairie with high grass. The grass will bend towards the south because the north wind is the strongest. You will know which way is north by the grass. You can't get lost if you watch for signs like that. If it is wintertime, take the snow off of the grass and you will see which way the grass bends.

MLK

My dad looked after me before I got married. When my dad went out trapping or hunting, he used to take me with him; he would put me inside a blanket and put me in the sleigh. We didn't have a tent or tipi and it would be real cold. He used to melt snow for water and he used to cook for me and feed me. If he killed a moose, he would dry all the meat.

He would leave me at the camp when he went out hunting. He would tell me not to bother the fire and to stay in one place and wait for him until he came back. He would tell me to keep the fire going because it was winter time and it was cold. He'd put lots of wood beside me so that I could put one stick at a time on the fire. I used to be very scared when he left me along like that. I used to sit in the blanket and wait until my dad got back. After my dad came back he would cook and we would both eat. That's how I lived in those days, that's how I was raised.

I used to cut wood all day. Life was really hard for me when it was cold, but I wasn't sick so I used to try my best. I used to get spruce branches in the bush to use for a floor in our tent. We used snowshoes to walk in deep snow to collect wood and spruce branches.

GS

In the old days you had to ask for a woman if you wanted to get married. You had to stay with a woman's parents for a whole year before you could get married. If you proved that you were a good hunter or a good worker then you could marry the daughter.

We used to travel with dog teams because there were no skidoos. We used to have a hard time. The women used to pack their babies on their backs when the families were hunting and travelling. When they stopped for a rest they would hang the babies on a tree, in their moss bag.

NY

We trapped all winter and when summer came we fished. That's how we made our living. We travelled in the bush trying to get some food. In the old days the people used to live really good. If they had parents, they looked after their parents by giving them food and things like that to eat. The people used to help each other and look after each other good.

We never rested. We always had something to do — travelling, hunting, trapping — we had work to do all the time. We had to fix our fish nets too.

After all the work was done, the people would gather together in the evening and the older people would tell stories. We used to listen real good to those older people telling stories. That's what we would do for fun.



Family Relationships and Child Rearing

When I was young we had to be in the house every night at nine o'clock. If we weren't in the house by nine, dad used to come looking for us. I'm glad I was brought up that way. We were brought up to be decent people. Whenever the grownups were talking about something, they would send the kids away. Kids were supposed to be seen and not heard in those days. That is the way that I brought up my children as well.

We had to do a lot of work. We had to sweep the floor, fill up the water barrel and cut the wood and bring it in the house. In those days they had those great big long crosscut saws. There were handles on both ends of it and it took two of us to saw the wood.

PB

When my wife was still alive we talked to each other just the way it should be. The wife was the boss in the house and the husband was the boss outside. We got along good when we stayed together. If I hadn't been married, I don't know what I would have been today.

VB

I stayed with my parents all the time. When my brothers went out to trap at Rocher River, they would have to tell my parents how long they were going to be. If they stayed a day more than that, my dad used to go out there and get them. "I didn't send you out there to visit," he'd say, "I sent you out there to set traps."

My dad used to be so rough with us that not one of us would talk back to him. All the children listened to their parents. I was the baby of the family. My dad gave me a licking one time but from then on until he died he never gave me another licking.

VC

My mother's sister raised me because I was a twin and my mother couldn't look after the two of us at the same time.

FD

Whenever the old people talked to us, we would listen to them and obey them. My dad, Pierre Casaway, would talk to us about everything. When we went out hunting or trapping, he'd tell me what to do. If I went out to play with other kids, he told me to come home before the sun went down and that's what I'd do. We used to be scared of our parents in those days.

Pierre Casaway raised me, told me what to do, and taught me about everything until I was old enough to know what to do myself. That's how I learned about hunting and trapping. Sometimes when we were travelling in the bush, hunting and trapping, he would take out his book and read me

Rose Edjericon Fabien,
born in 1917, with her
granddaughter Carmel.

a story from the book, in Chipewyan. He'd say, "Some people like to tell you what to do, and some elders talk really rough and loud, but that doesn't mean they're mad at you. They're trying to talk to you for your own good. That's how the people teach each other. So if an elder talks to you and tells you what to do, it means he is teaching you something you should know."

IE

I don't remember my dad because I was small when he died. My mother raised three children by herself. She used to go out to set rabbit snares while I stayed at home and looked after my two sisters. We didn't have anything to play with. Sometimes, my grandmother would look after my sisters while I went out to get wood or get snow for water. When I got wood, I got it close to the house and packed it on my back.

My mother raised me until I was old enough to go out and hunt and look after her. She died after I started hunting and killing moose.

In those days I didn't have any clothing to wear, so the people used to give my mother old pairs of pants for me. My mother would fix them good and I'd wear them. My mother would cut the sleeves off of old sweaters and that's what I used for socks.

When my wife was alive, we helped each other raise our children. After my wife died, the two boys stayed with me until one of them got married.

AF

I used to help my dad working around the house, cutting wood and bringing the wood in. Sometimes we visited nets with him. When I was twelve years old I started helping my dad. If there weren't any chores to do, we would go out to play. My mom and dad treated us really good when we were children.

My wife, Rose Edjericon, was living with her grandfather at Little Buffalo River when I met her. In the old days husbands and wives got along really good. They made their living hunting and fishing and that's how they raised their children. There was no relief in those days. The man was the boss of the family but if the wife told her husband something they would agree with each other and get along good.

When people got old and they couldn't do anything for themselves, their children would look after them. Their children would do everything for them; they would wash their clothes and cook for them and feed them. When they travelled in the bush they would take their old parents with them. Even if they travelled in the wintertime they would take their parents with them. It wasn't easy when they had to travel in the bush with the old people. They used to take good care of their parents in those days.

PH

I don't remember when my mother died because I was just a kid then. My dad raised me then, after he died, Paul Edjericon and his wife raised me.

I raised all my own kids. I raised them good but there were a lot of sickness and sickness killed them all. If there had been a doctor, some of them would have been alive with me today.

JJ

When I was a kid my grandfather taught me how to hunt. I wasn't very old when my father died so my grandfather raised me and taught me everything about the bush. We travelled around and he taught me what I know today. We killed moose and caribou and everything. I lived in the bush all the time.

When my grandfather worked, I used to help him. Whatever he did, I did the same, that's the way he taught me. He taught me how to make snowshoes, paddles and all that. My grandfather used to tell me that if you are lazy you won't live long. Even now I'm not lazy.

For chores, we used to work on wood. In winter, we would haul the wood with dogs. We used to cut the wood at home with a crosscut saw. We'd do that all day. We would bring the wood in the house and pile some up outside. We had to haul water, too.



Women and children, Fort Resolution 1930's.

In winter, after my chores, I used to slide down the hill until bedtime. When there were no chores, I would take a bow and hunt chickens with arrows. We'd kill some and then make a fire in the bush and cook them. We used to do that for fun.

When you were over twenty years of age you became the boss of yourself. Before you reached twenty your family was the boss of you, but after that you could make your own living doing this and that.

FK

When I was a child my stepmother neglected and suffered me. I cooked for them and they ate but I wasn't allowed to eat. I would wash all the dishes and go to bed hungry. She hit me around with a stick until I was a young man. One time, as soon as she hurt me, I laid on the bed crying and she threw me on the floor. She was stepping on my sleeve and hitting me with a stick when Antoine Beaulieu, Henry's dad, came in. He told her not to touch me anymore, "Don't kill that little boy, just leave him alone." He took the stick away from her. After that when she got mad at me, she always said that she should hit me with a stick. So I would say, "Okay hit me. This is the same flesh that you used to hit around, but remember that if you hit me I will take the stick away and hit you twice as hard." After that she never hit me with a stick. It was hard to get along with that woman.

Our parents used to teach us what to do. One time I went out hunting with Pierre Biscaye for five days on big snowshoes. We didn't even kill a moose, so I didn't want to hunt anymore and I went home. In the morning there was a good wind, so before daybreak my dad woke me up. "You went hunting and you didn't kill anything, don't let the moose beat you like that", he told me. "Go out and hunt again." I was tired but still I had to get up and hook up my dogs and go hunting.

My children were all small when my wife, Mary Rose Benwell, died from pneumonia. She was sick for eleven days, then she died. We went to town for a dance and that's where she caught pneumonia. The doctor took her to the hospital and she died in the hospital.

I raised my own children. I used to leave my little children with my mother-in-law when I travelled and trapped in the bush. She would look after them for me. I would come home to my kids and stay with my mother-in-law because my kids were there. I stayed with my mother-in-law for two years after my wife died. Sometimes I would travel to find work and in the fall I would come home. My mother-in-law's name was Adele Benwell.

MLK

My grandparents raised me because my mother died when my brother and I were small. My grandparents died when I was still a child.

I used to listen real good to my grandparents and both of them used to treat me good. They didn't make me work, that's how much they loved me. Once in a while I used to haul water and cut a little bit of wood. Sometimes I used to go out sliding and I liked that. They used to let me drive one dog around. My grandmother used to cut wood for me in the bush and I used to go out with my little dog and bring the wood back.

I was about fifteen years old when my father told me to marry; I wasn't even old enough, I was still young. I guess he told me to get married because he couldn't look after me by himself.

I raised my daughter, Doris, the way that I was raised. I didn't teach my other daughter, Agnes, to work or anything like that because she used to go to school all the time.

I let my son, Narcisse, stay with another family. I brought him back home even though the man he stayed with really wanted him. The family that he stayed with didn't treat him good, so I brought him home. Narcisse told me that he was lonesome and that he would go up the hill to cry, so I took him home. He stayed with me until he was old enough to work.

I remember when my grandfather's sister was old and sick. I was about thirteen years old at the time and we brought her here to Fort Resolution. We couldn't keep her because we had to travel all over for food, so we brought her here and they sent her to Fort Smith, where she died. Now the old people are treated good but in the old days the old people were poor because they didn't get the old age pension. I remember when they used to go out to set rabbit snares, set traps for rats, tan caribou hides and make babiche. Old women would sell their babiche to the store. I remember that when I was young.

VL

In those days there was no truck to haul water to people like there is now. We had to haul water with two pails from the wharf, which was a long way to our house. We had to haul water until we filled up the barrel.

When my parents were working, we would be around them watching how they worked. That's how we learned to work. That's how I learned to make boats and houses and things like that.

GS

When I went out to play my dad would tell me not to stay out late. The sun would still be up when I came home. We were supposed to listen when our elders talked to us. If the chief saw kids on the road after supper he would tell them to go home. The kids wouldn't say anything, they would go home when they were told to.

My father used to work on a boat. He used to travel around with the Treaty Party. After my mother died, I used to travel around with him. I travelled with him for one whole summer. The next summer there was a big flu. I stayed home and my father went travelling with Dr. Bourget.

They had to bury three or four people every day during the Flu Epidemic. After my dad came back, he got sick. He stayed in bed all winter. I used to go out and do the hunting. I used to do all the work around the house. My dad would tell me to go and get something to eat from other people. They would give me half

dried meat and other things. I also went to see the police who told me to go to the Bay where they gave me some food. The Bay manager told me to come back the next week for food.

In spring, my dad was in bed and I thought he was sleeping. I always fed my dad around five o'clock in the afternoon, but I thought he was sleeping so I left the food. I went outside and sat by the door. Uncle George Norn was on his way down to the lake to get some water and as he went by, he asked me, "How's your father?" I said that he was sleeping.

After he came back with the water, he left the pail on the road and went in to see my dad. He told me that my dad had died. I had thought that he was sleeping. Two days after that they buried my father.

My father had told me before he died, that I should keep living in his house and keep his trapline. After he was buried, Albert Norn came to see me. He told me that I couldn't live alone and that I should come to stay with him, so I took my blankets to his house. While I stayed there that night, I thought about what my dad told me about not leaving the house. So I went back to my house while everyone was still sleeping. Albert came to look for me in the morning and I told him that I had to make my own living. I told him that I wanted to do what my father had told me to do. I told him that if I couldn't make it alone then I would go back to live with him. After that I stayed alone until I got married.

My brother Jimmy drowned in Rocher River. I had taken him out there myself for spring hunt. When I found out that my brother had drowned I went to Rocher River with the police. When I got to Rocher River, Joe Buggins told me, "This is your only brother. We have to help each other fix him up." So we put my brother in a canoe, and Joe said, "Now you are the only one left in the family. This is nothing. Later on, if you lose your wife, that's even worse."

NY

I was raised by my own parents. There was no school in those days so the parents taught their children how to travel and make a living in the bush. All the parents taught their children how to hunt and how to do everything. A little boy would go out with his dad to hunt and trap before he was ten years old. The little boys used to go with their dads all the time to be shown what to do. If the boy stayed home with his mother while his dad was gone someplace, he could hunt for rabbits, ducks and everything like that for his mother.

If there were no chores to do the children would sit around and their parents would tell them stories. Their parents would tell them about how they lived in their younger days, how they made their living, how they trapped and hunted and all that. That's what they used to do for fun and that's how the parents taught their children.

In those days the old people didn't get a pension, so we used to look after our parents when they got old. They had to travel with us when we travelled. They were our parents, so we had to treat them good.





Childbirth and Baby Care

VB

Some babies died during birth, but not all of them. Some women would look after a woman who was giving birth. They helped each other real good. Some women knew what to do for childbirth, so they helped the women in labor.

I had most of my kids with the women looking after me. We used to breastfeed all of our children. There were no baby bottles.

Some people used to use moss for diapers. We used to make a little cloth bag and we put moss in there. That's what we used for diapers.

They used to use rotten wood for baby powder. They would pound the wood right down to powder. They rubbed it with their hands until it got soft and then they put it on the baby's bum.

If you walked around, you carried the baby on your back; you didn't carry your baby in your arms. We used to pack them by putting the baby in our shawl and tying them up on us.

VC

Some of the older women would look after the women during childbirth. When I had a baby, Mary Rose King's mother, Catherine Boucher, looked after me. That was the time that my son, Henry, was born.

IE

When I was young, the people used to buy flannellette from the store to make baby clothes. They made rabbit skin blankets for the babies and they used rabbit skins for the baby's clothing as well. Those rabbit fur blankets were good for travelling in the winter.

AF

In the old days the women would gather around and help each other when one of them was giving birth. They never used to talk about things like that before.

The Sisters looked after my wife when she was having our children. There was a doctor there too.

Some women used to carry their babies on their backs so that the baby faced away from their mother's back. They put the baby into a moss bag and they packed him like that on their back. I remember one woman, Rose Cho Boucher, who packed her little girl like that. She used to pack her little girl like that while she cut wood and set traps.

CF

Not very many women died giving birth. When I had my children my mother-in-law helped me. In the old days that was how everyone gave birth.

We used to breastfeed our babies for three years. I had too much milk.

Catherine Beaulieu
Lafferty with child, 1914.

We never used diapers, we put the babies in a moss bag.
There was no baby powder. We crushed rotten wood until it was like powder and we used that on the babies.

RF

One of my aunties and one of my sister-in-laws died in childbirth. We had some special women who helped during childbirth. They told the women what to do and the women would listen.

JG

Some women died giving birth because they had their babies in real cold weather when they were travelling in the bush. Women helped each other when they were giving birth. Men weren't allowed in the same room where they had babies, only women looked after each other. I never had my children in the hospital, I had them all at home.

When we travelled in the bush, we always carried our babies on our backs. It was hard for us to carry little small babies when we were travelling. I don't know why, but we were always travelling in the cold weather.

PH

Moss was used for diapers. In summer, women would tear off strips of moss and then dry it out. After it was dry, before the snow came, they brought the moss in the house. They dried a lot of moss during the fall for the wintertime.

JJ

They used cloth and moss for diapers. They used to tear up moss and put it on the trees to dry. When the moss was dry they brought it in and put it in a little cloth bag. They sewed the little bag up and put it in flannelette. They used one bag under the babies bum and one bag on top. When the bags were wet they changed them. They put the bags in water and rinsed them out and hung the bags out to dry.

FK

They nursed the babies. It's good to breastfeed the baby, it's healthy.
They used the rotten wood powder to heal the baby's little belly button.

MLK

There was no doctor in those days so some women died after their baby was born. They didn't keep themselves warm and they caught cold and died.

There were older women who helped the women giving birth. They'd put up a stick and tie a rope on it, and the woman would hold the rope. The women helping would push on the woman's back when the baby was being born, and they'd tell her not to breathe at the time of the birth. It used to be hard in those days.

I had babies just like the old timers, I used to have two or three women look after me when I gave birth. It was so hard.

When women had to cut wood, they would tie up their babies and carry them up to the big log that they had to cut. Then they would hang the baby on a tree and the mother would cut wood by the baby.

GS

I heard that some women died during childbirth. A lot of them died like that. There was no doctor. They suffered when they gave birth to their children.

My aunt Helen Norn and Rosanna McKay helped the women to give birth to their babies. They had their babies behind little curtains, so the men couldn't watch. Some of my children were born at home.

In the fall, the women who were going to have a baby would go to look for moss. They would dry up a whole bunch of moss for diapers for winter.

If the baby had a cold, we would rub goose grease on his chest and we would put a little wee bit of the grease in his mouth.



The Mission

PB

I stayed in the Mission School for one year, then they kicked me out because I didn't listen. They taught me my ABC's and a little bit of other things. I used to read and write but now I have forgotten everything. I spoke only Chipewyan when I was there, I didn't know how to talk English.

The Fathers used to hang fish so we ate rotten fish. The Brothers used to hunt for caribou, so we used to eat caribou and moose meat. In fall they would kill some cows so we would have beef.

The Sisters used to work good at the Mission. They used to give us clothes to wear.

They used to burn wood so the young boys would split wood. We used to cut wood with a crosscut saw. We would cut a lot of wood and then we hauled it under the Mission porch and down to the basement. There were two big wood stoves in the basement.

If our parents came to town from the bush they would come to see us for a little while.

The Brothers and Sisters were good if you listened to them. It was just like now, if you listen to people they will listen to you and that was how it used to be in the old days.

VC

I stayed in the Mission for a long time, then in 1928 my mother took me home but she died that year during the Flu Epidemic, so I moved back into the Mission in October. When I moved back into the Mission I didn't go to school.

I went as far as grade 5. I can count and read a little bit.

I was happy in the Mission because there were a lot of kids there. We ate rolled oats and bread in the morning, soup made with meat at noon, and for supper we ate fish. We all wore dresses in those days.

All the children used to talk English to each other but the Sisters spoke only French. We talked Chipewyan to the kids who knew how to speak Chipewyan.

When my parents came to town in Spring, they used to come to visit me. Sometimes I would go to visit them for a little while when they were in town.

We used to go to church early in the morning, at about five o'clock. We got up early every morning because we went to bed early. On Sunday we would go to church three times a day.

If a person was sick, the Sister would take a little boy with her to go to town to visit the sick person. Some of the Sisters were nurses in those days. The Sisters were good to people, they were kind to people.

IE

I think I only stayed in the Mission for three months. That was a long time ago.

I spoke only Chipewyan. Sometimes I couldn't understand the Sisters when they talked to me so the other little kids would have to tell me what the Sisters said. We ate only hang-fish there. If we disobeyed, the Sisters would hit our hands or fingers. We had to saw wood with a big saw.

After a month my mother went to see the Bishop and asked the Bishop if I could go home and help her. My mother was cutting wood and hauling water and doing all the work by herself. It was hard for her, so she took me out of the Mission.

AF

My brother and I stayed in the Mission School for two years because my father went to Rocher River.

In the morning we would get some porridge with bread and milk. At noon we got rice soup or barley soup with a little bit of meat, and bread with no butter. At supper time the only thing we used to eat was hang-fish. If we didn't eat our fish for supper, we would get the same piece the next night. We used to eat suckers that had been hung, we never ate suckers at home. It wasn't easy for us to live there.

My brother and I used to wear our own clothes. My mother used to wash our clothes and she made our mitts, mocassins and duffels.

When I first moved into the mission I spoke only French because my mom used to talk French to us all the time. In those days we didn't speak English. After I stayed in the Mission for a while, I started speaking English.

After school we would go outside to split wood. The Brothers would bring blocks of wood for us to split for the kitchen stoves. In those days there was no electricity so we had to cut wood all the time. Sometimes we would have to take all the wood into the kitchen and sometimes we would play.

If my parents were living in town here, we used to live with our parents. One time my parents were in town so we stayed with them until New Years. When school started after New Years, we went back to the Mission again.

The Brothers and Sisters were okay. If anything went wrong it was your own fault. The Brothers and Sisters got along with the people and they were all good to the people. We hardly saw the Brothers because they were always working in the yard. Sometimes we used to help the Brothers work in the yard and they seemed to be nice people. The Sisters were kind to the people in town but if the children in the Mission didn't listen to them, the children would be punished.

We used to have Mass in the morning and Benediction at night. We never missed church, we had to go. After the evening church we would all go back to the Mission and say our prayers all together before we went to bed.

CF

I don't know how old I was when I first went into the Mission School. I don't know how many years I stayed there because I was young then. The Mission was nice, we went to school every day. I stayed in the Mission here, in Fort Resolution, so I didn't go to see my mom and dad who were in Fort Rae. In the summer-time, my family would come here and we would go for a vacation.

All the girls used to wear the same dresses, all the dresses looked alike.

We spoke English and French.

We helped the Sisters sew and we helped the Sisters mend the boys' shoes. We learned how to cook with the Sisters, too.

The Brothers and Sisters were good to the people and to the children who stayed in the school. We prayed every day and they talked to us about God.

RF

I stayed in the Mission for nine years, from the time that I was thirteen years old. After I was there for three years, they put me to work. I really liked the Mission School. It was a really good place for me.

We ate all kinds of things, but most of the time we ate fish. In the wintertime we ate hang-fish.

Caroline Erasmus Fablen was born in 1903 and attended the mission as a child. She returned to the mission in later life and worked there for many years.



When I first went into the Mission, I talked only Chipewyan. After a while I started talking English. The Sisters used to talk French, so I started talking a little French too.

I used to work at noon and after school. I did all kinds of work. When I stayed with the big girls, I worked on the laundry. I worked in the kitchen, cleaned up the big girls' rooms, and cleaned up the Fathers' rooms too. When we first started working we didn't get paid, but later on they gave us a dollar a month, then after that we got two dollars a month. When I was fifteen years old, we got five dollars a month.

There was church every morning and every night. We would attend church every time. On Sunday they had church twice. When you went to bed, you'd say your night prayers too. We always prayed.

My sister lived in town so she used to come and see me and she would take me out to visit her. At Christmas, New Years and Easter, I would go out with my sister in the morning and come back at night.

I used to get along with the Sisters and Brothers really good. It was just like it was my home. They were good Brothers and Sisters, to me anyway. The people in town worked with the Brothers, so they all got along really good. The Mission people were kind to people and they were honest. That's what I think.

V L

I went to the Mission School when the Sisters were here. I stayed in the Mission for eight years but I don't know why because I hardly learned anything.

We used to wear our own clothes that our parents gave us but the orphans used only mission clothes.

If we were bad or did something wrong, they would put us in Penance. We had to stay in a room all by ourselves for one day and we couldn't play with the other kids.

We used to cut wood and bring the wood in. We didn't haul water in those days because the Brothers used to haul it with the cows. We used to go to school from nine o'clock until twelve o'clock and then after we ate we went back to school from one o'clock until three o'clock. After that we would cut wood for the rest of the day. The big children would split wood for us and the little ones would saw wood and bring the wood into the basement, with a little sleigh.

Our families could visit us every Friday afternoon and every Sunday. Our parents would bring us candies and we would bring the candies to the Sisters, who would lock them up. Once in a while we would get two or three candies at mealtimes.

Bishop Breynat and students outside mission.





Children at the mission school.

When I went to school we went to the Mission in the fall and stayed there through the winter until the next spring when we would go home again.

We weren't even allowed to go out of the yard when we stayed at the Mission.

The Brothers and Sisters lived alone and they didn't see people very often so they were happy when people came to visit.

GS

One time, my dad left me in the Mission School for two months.

In the morning, for breakfast, we ate rolled oats. At noon we ate one hung-fish each. The kids, who got the part where they poked the stick through to hang the fish, didn't eat their fish. They would keep bringing the same piece of fish to the kid at the next meals until he ate it.

The Brothers were really good when you travelled around the bush with them. The Brothers would feed you really good if the Nuns weren't there.

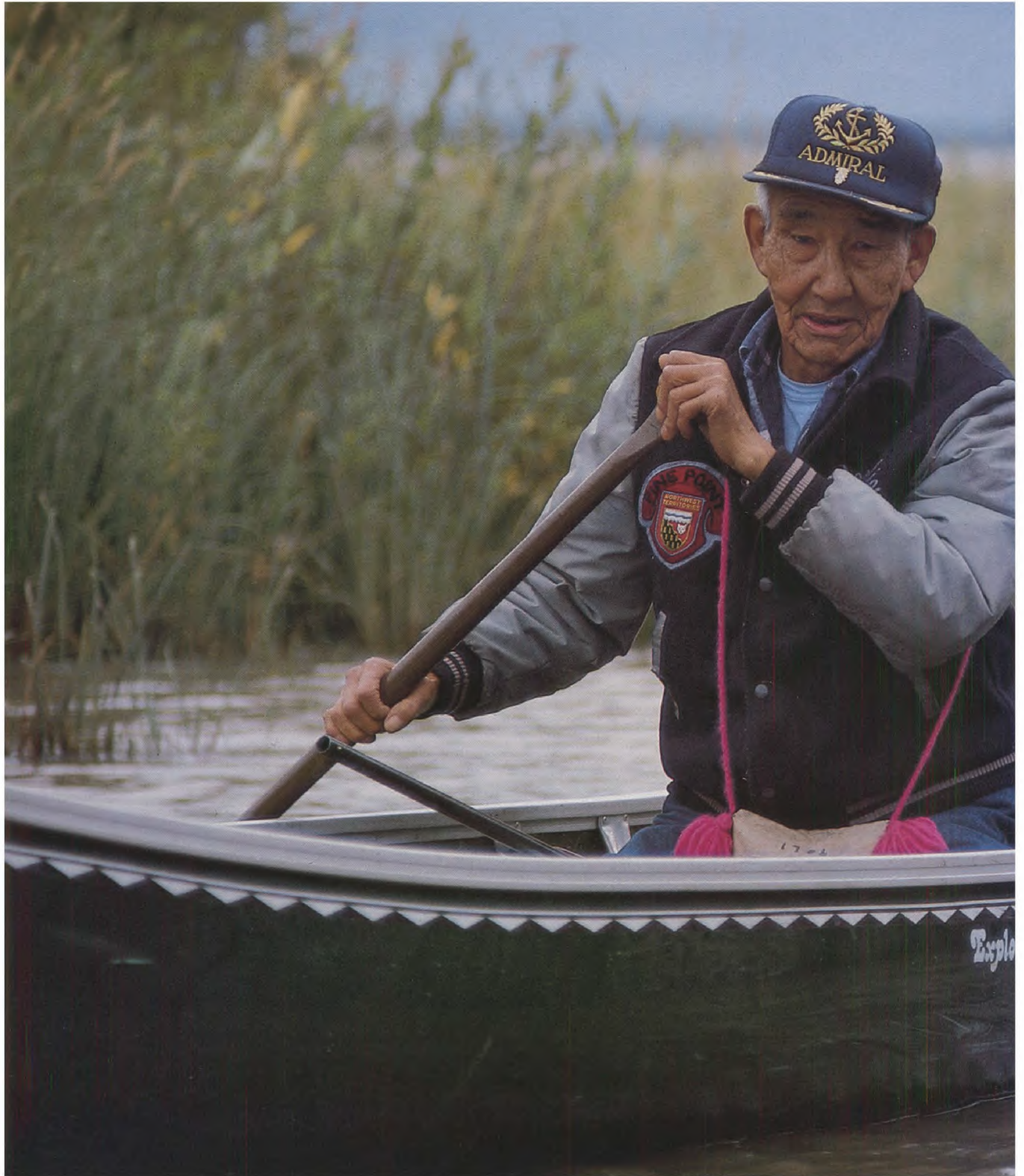
We were allowed visitors on Sunday, for one hour. My parents used to bring me candies, cookies or something sweet like that to eat. After our parents left to go home, the Nuns would take the sweets away from us. The Nuns kept the sweets for big days, like Christmas, when we would get one candy.

The orphans were so pitiful; they weren't dressed well. The children, who had parents, weren't that bad off. They brought some kids here from Snowdrift; those kids were poor. The Sisters used to suffer the kids and treat them rough. Some kids used to wet themselves, and when that happened, the Sisters would wrap their wet pants around their neck and send them to school like that.

I can't say that the Mission was good. A lot of times they used to hit the kids for nothing. Some of the kids used to run away to their homes.

The Father used to teach us the Chipewyan language and French. When he taught us about God, the girls sat on one side of the room and the boys sat on the other side. If you looked towards the girl's side, he would make a big paper hat and put it on your head and he would move you right beside him until the teaching was over. The Father used to do this to me and Alexis Beaulieu a lot of times. Maybe it was because we looked at the girls too much.

I think the Mission School went as far as grade eight.





Hunting and Trapping

HB

When I was young, I hunted a lot of caribou and shot a lot of moose. I also used to hunt buffalo, bear, ducks and geese. It didn't matter if it was winter, spring or summer, we used to go out to hunt. I remember one time when Big Man (George Sanderson) and I went out to hunt and we shot four moose. Those four moose didn't go to waste. In those days we didn't have a deep freeze, so all the meat was cut up into drymeat. Anything from a moose or caribou that could be used, was used.

I used to set traps for rats in March. You get a better price for a trapped rat than a shot rat. If they are shot up or bit up then you don't get a good price for them.

As long as you could go out and be careful with a gun, then you could go hunting. There was no set age. One thing about me, I'm careful with a gun. I always taught the kids, especially Don, how to use a gun when they were travelling. When you are travelling, you don't put a shell in the barrel, only when you see something to shoot then you put the shell in. Don't ever put a loaded gun in the canoe. That's a dangerous thing to do.

To tell you the truth, I once went hungry when I was out in the bush. I had brought just enough grub to make it out and back, but I had a tough trip. Oh yes, I went hungry. After that I always brought more food than I needed. A lot of times you go to your traps and you have a tough time. If there is a lot of snow you have to walk ahead of your dogs to break trail for them.

The fur prices weren't too good but then the goods were cheap so you could get a lot of goods for what you were paid for your fur. When the country started opening up, the people got a better price for their fur. Now, it seems that they get a lot more.

My children would rather go to work than go trapping. They find it tough going out in the bush and making a living out of hunting. Going out hunting and trapping is a gamble. It is a gamble to make money. If you go to work, you are sure to get paid every two weeks or every month.

VB

One time my brother, Moise, shot some moose. I hitched up my dad's dog team and went out there. I put a big load of meat in the sleigh and I brought it home. My brother-in-law also had a big load. My dad and my sister-in-law packed meat home in their pack sacks.

We brought the meat home to my mother and she made some drymeat. She put whatever fresh meat was left over in the warehouse. She hung the meat up in the warehouse to keep it cool. My mother used to work hard even though she was old.

My sister-in-law and I would fix the moosehide together. Then we would smoke it and tan it. I used to make a good moosehide in those days. My sister-in-law helped me because I had asthma.

Philip Buggins was born in 1916. Like most of his generation, he grew up hunting and trapping and continues to enjoy it today.

I didn't go out hunting myself but my husband used to go out nearly every day. He used to set nets for fish and hunt rabbits and ducks too. That's why we used to eat good.

I used to go out in the bush with my husband both before and after we had children. He would fix the tent real good and that was where I used to stay with the kids to wait for him while he went hunting. It was okay like that. When he pitched the tent in the winter time he banked the tent up with snow and he put blankets inside, all around the edge of the tent. It was warm in the tent. There was no wind in there. At that time I had only Albina and one of her little sisters.

There used to be a lot of fur. When we stayed at Stoney Island we used to see foxes running all over the place. The only way the men could make money was from trapping.

PB

A long time ago there were no jobs in the summer time. Since I can remember the people have made money from fur. They sold their fur so they could buy things at the store. In the summer they used to get credit at the Bay or Pinsky's and go hunting for meat.

The fur price wasn't high in those days. Cross fox and Silver fox used to be a good price but Lynx was twelve dollars and mink was seven dollars. You couldn't do anything about the low price of fur, you still had to sell it. We would bring our fur to two different stores and sell it to the highest bidder. Some people used to get money for their fur and some used to get goods. It was up to the people what they wanted.

In the old days it was against the law to kill buffalo. They never used to kill buffalo in those days. The old timers used to have a hell of a time hunting them because there were lots of buffalo, but now there aren't that many.

There used to be a lot of ducks before. Wherever there were sloughs there were ducks and duck eggs. There used to be a lot of water in those days but now there isn't slough water so there aren't as many ducks. In the places where there used to be sloughs there are only willows growing now.

I used to set traps with Isadore Buggins, the man who raised me. I used to use his traps. Isadore was a good hunter. If he saw moose tracks in the winter time, he would put snowshoes on and go after the moose and kill it. Sometimes I would sit at the fire to wait for him and sometimes I would go with him.

The old timer people used to hunt in the summer time on dry land. Mod Mandeville used to watch for moose tracks and he would follow the tracks and kill the moose. Now the people here don't do that.

FD

We used to go a long way to hunt and trap. When we were living in Fort Smith, we used to travel east a long ways, to hunt and trap. We would leave town in the fall and we would trap all winter. In the old days it was colder than it is today. It was cold and dry. When we walked in the bush it was so cold that we would start coughing.

We couldn't hunt close to town because there were no animals near town. We had to go way out in the bush. The people used to have a tough time. Sometimes we would travel for a whole week and we wouldn't kill a thing.

A man couldn't take his family with him trapping, if he had a lot of children. Sometimes the people would travel in the bush with their wives. If they went in the bush with their wives, they would make a camp and that's where the women stayed. All the men would go out and hunt and trap together.

My wife and I go in the bush and stay there nearly all summer, that's what people used to do. Even if we come to town in the summer or winter, we still go back in the bush. That's how I was raised, the way it was when I was young, and that's how I'm still going on the way the old man raised me. That's what people say about me — they say "Fred never stays in town. He likes to stay in the bush."

IE

I used to go trapping with Pascal Petie Jean. I didn't have many traps then, but the people gave me about ten traps. We only had number one traps. That first winter I caught about two or three weasels and one marten.

In those days marten was about five dollars, mink was three dollars, and red fox was five dollars. Silver fox was worth a lot of money, it would sell for about three hundred dollars.

Some people caught a lot of fur so they made a good living, but people didn't get the same amount of fur. Some people hardly got any fur. The people who hunted moose had a lot to eat, so they were well off.

I used to go out hunting for caribou, moose, buffalo and things like that. There were a lot of rabbits in those days and there were bears just like now. I think we ate more fish than meat in those days. We had to go a long way from Little Buffalo River to hunt for caribou. There were only moose at Little Buffalo River.

The good hunters at Little Buffalo River were Pascal Petit Jean, Paul Edjericon, Henry Hilaire (Pierre Hilaire's brother) and old man Louison Dosnoir. Big Louison got married here in Fort Resolution then moved to Little Buffalo River. He built a house there and he used to kill a lot of moose.

AF

I spent a number of years trapping. I used to go out with people when I was sixteen years old. I was married when I was twenty-four years old and after that I started hunting all by myself. Before that I used to hunt with my dad and brothers all the time.

Trapping has changed now because they only have to stay two nights when they visit their traps. In the old days we would go out for a long time because we used dog teams and we travelled slowly. Today they have skidoos and they travel really fast when they visit their traps. In the old days, if there was a lot of snow, the dogs would walk slowly.

I didn't catch more fur than what I needed, but I used to get enough fur to make a living for my children. We used to eat good in those days because we used to bring meat home.

In those days the lynx price was low but today the price of lynx is high. The price of mink was really low but after it went up to fifty dollars and red fox sold for forty dollars. You can buy a lot of things if you catch a lynx today.

There were no jobs in the winter time, so we had no choice but to trap. I used to sell my fur to the Hudson Bay Manager; I had an account at the Bay and they helped me out a lot. I sold my fur to different traders but mostly to the Bay Manager.

The people used to travel all together when they hunted and they would help each other. They used to hunt for everything, bears too. In the late summer, towards fall, they would set traps for bears. If the season was open for ducks, everybody would go out and kill a lot of ducks.

They would hunt anytime of the year for anything. You had to hunt until you killed something. If we heard that there were lots of caribou around, we would all go out to hunt for caribou. A lot of caribou used to come to Rocher River. It's easy to hunt caribou because there are a lot of them in a herd. Moose don't travel in herds, so it's hard to get moose. You have to follow moose tracks until you kill them. In the old days, there used to be a lot of moose and a lot of other animals to hunt. Now, it isn't like that. You have to go a long way to hunt caribou now.

CF

My parents used to hunt for moose, ducks and geese. Sometimes they would hunt with a canoe. When we stayed in the bush we were never hungry because there were all kinds of ducks, rabbits and everything to hunt. We used to dig a big hole in the ground and we would put our meat in the ground to keep it cool. There aren't as many animals now because the forest fires destroyed everything. My children and grandchildren still hunt.

I don't know how many years we stayed at Little Buffalo River trapping. We used to go there for the whole winter; we would come back here at Christmas, then go out again and stay out for the spring. We didn't go back this winter because my husband was sick.

I don't know what the price of fur was but it wasn't high like it is now. When we trapped, we always lived good. We sold our pelts to the Hudson Bay Manager. We would get money and trade it for groceries, then go back in the bush again.

RF

There were no caribou around Little Buffalo River, but people used to hunt for moose all the time. There were bears, but hardly anybody ate bears. We set rabbit snares, too. In August, we'd all travel up the river for moose and make drymeat.

People hunted ducks anytime in the summer. There were lots of ducks on the river in the fall. People killed lots of ducks.

When my sister and me stayed with my auntie, we'd set rabbit snares close by and we'd set traps for squirrels. I remember that the first thing that I killed was two ptarmigans.

All the animals are burned out now because of forest fires. There never used to be forest fires before.

I have only one son, Lawrence, who stays with us. He's the only one who goes out hunting the traditional way, because the others are all working.

JG

If there were caribou around, my father would go out and bring a lot of caribou meat home. He killed moose all the time but he didn't hunt buffalo because the season for buffalo was opened not too long ago. We always had good meat to eat, all the time. No matter what time of the year, summer or winter, when my dad went out hunting he would kill a moose.

I didn't hunt but I used to go out trapping. I used to trap little animals and I would get two or three in my traps all the time. That's how I used to live, how I used to have money. In the old days, women never sat around in the house, they went out trapping.

In those days there was a Hudson Bay store and a trader by the name of Demelt in Rocher River. When I lived in Rat River I would go to Rocher River to sell my fur. I would sell my fur and buy things and when I had finished buying things they would give me the rest in money.

PH

People used to work good on hunting and fishing because they used to live on meat and fish.

When I was sixteen, I tried to go on my own. I had two traps and I would walk out and set them in the bush. I caught marten. The more traps I set, the more pelts I would get. I also used to kill moose and all that, so I was well off.

I used to hunt for moose, ducks and set nets for fish. I tried to make somebody out of myself.

JJ

In the old days we used to hunt moose all the time and set traps for bears in the summer time. We used to hunt caribou and deer. There used to be buffalo but it was closed season. There were ducks and geese and other small game. People never used to go hungry.

I remember my first kill, it was a caribou. I was setting traps with my grandfather when we saw caribou on the lake. My grandfather showed me how to shoot, so I did and I killed it. As soon as the caribou went down, I yelled at my grandfather because I was so happy. My grandfather was happy.

I used to go hunting alone in a hunting canoe and I would shoot whatever I saw — ducks, moose, rabbits, every little thing that I saw. I also walked around in the bush, hunting. In the old days we walked in the bush but now they use skidoos.

The moose isn't like a caribou, the moose is just for guys who know how to hunt moose. It isn't easy to hunt moose. Moose are smart and they are wild. If they hear a noise they run away. The moose watch everything, so if you hunt them you have to be careful.

I have been trapping for about sixty years. I trap in the winter time and while I am trapping I sometimes kill buffalo and moose and I bring the meat home. When I was trapping I used dogs, snowshoes, and a thirty-thirty. Even though we went a long way the dogs didn't break down like a skidoo. If we shot something for the dogs to eat, they would be happy. We never used to get cold driving dogs, if it was cold we would run behind the dog sleigh. That's how we used to make our living.

Sometimes I got a lot of fur and sometimes I didn't get much. If I didn't get much fur I would still have to trap because that was the only job I had. They never used to pay much for fur but now it is a good price. I used to live good with trapping.

The price of lynx used to be only three dollars, so we never used to trap them before. We didn't set traps for them, but we still caught them. We used to trap just mink and fox; they were a good price in those days.

We would take our pelts to one store and the trader would give us a price for our fur and tell us to take

it to another store to see if we could get more for it. Wherever we got the best price, that was where we sold our fur.

FK

In the winter we would hunt caribou when we heard that a caribou herd arrived. If the caribou are in a herd they stay for a long time. We would go to Snowdrift before Christmas and from there we would hunt the caribou.

We used to get a lot of caribou in Rocher River. The caribou used to come right into Rocher River, then travel down to Fort Smith. We used to bring a big load of caribou meat home with our dogs. When we travelled with dogs we could travel across the country on trapping trails. We would go out trapping and at the same time hunt caribou. That's how we hunted.

There are moose all over, around here. In summer we paddle along the lakeshore to see if there are moose walking in the water. You can see them from a long ways. If you know the places where the moose go in the water, you wait there a little while and you might get a chance to shoot a moose. If you see them you paddle over and shoot them. The moose won't move away. It didn't matter whether it was winter or summer, we used to hunt for moose.

I started to hunt and kill moose when I was sixteen years old. When I was young and didn't know much about hunting, I went out with Andrew. We saw moose tracks that looked fresh to me, but he looked at them really good and walked away. I didn't want to leave those tracks, I wanted to hunt that moose. He didn't say anything, we just kept walking until we saw moose tracks again. He told me that these new tracks were fresh. He said that the moose should be close somewhere in the bush. So we went into the bush to look for it. We found the moose and shot it. That old man knew how to hunt and he showed me how to hunt. He taught me which tracks were fresh and which tracks were old.

We used to go up the Slave River to hunt. Everyone killed moose when they went up the Slave River. We didn't kill the moose right in the river, we killed them in the bush. Now you see the moose standing in the river because there is hardly anybody on the Slave River.

You see moose standing in the water when there are a lot of mosquitoes and bulldogs. They come out to the water to drink at about three o'clock in the afternoon. After they get out of the water they go back in the bush amongst the willows to eat, just like horses. They don't come out of the bush until nine o'clock in the morning.

It is good to hunt in the fall time when the moose start mating. At that time if you call a moose, and they hear you, they will come close to you. Even if you call a moose at night time he will come straight to you. You don't call moose in the summer.

One winter, in 1971, I made a pair of big snowshoes. If there is deep snow you have to use big snowshoes to hunt, you can't use small snowshoes. George Giroux took me to Rocher River with his dog team. When we got to Rocher River Pascal Buggins and George went to get wood. They saw fresh moose tracks so they came back to get me and they took me to where the moose tracks were. I followed the moose. I stopped where there was a whole bunch of birch. I thought the moose might come there so I waited there. I sat there for a long time, then I called for the moose. As soon as the young moose heard me he came running out of the bush, so I shot the young one and the mother. I went hunting for moose a lot of times. I have eaten a lot of good meat from them. Now, I can't even kill a moose and I don't have any meat.

We used to hunt for buffalo around Grand Detour and Hook Lake. A long time ago there were no buffalo. The government brought them in. They brought the buffalo from a government camp in Peace River. I don't remember what year they brought them, I was a young man then. The buffalo that they brought here had young ones and now there are lots of buffalo.

We used a boat to hunt ducks and geese. There were ducks all over the place. The geese were a long ways east of here. There were usually lots of geese at Stoney Point in the spring time, but they didn't stay there very long.

There used to be a lot of rats. There were a lot of rats way out east and the people used to go there to hunt the rats. In spring, after the month of March, we set traps in the rat houses.

There were beaver a long way east and we used to travel to hunt them. In those days we could only kill a certain amount of beaver, about fifteen beavers a year, that's all. Now, you can kill as many as you want.

We don't travel that far for beaver now.

In those days women used to do everything and they worked hard. Even really old women would go out to trap. My grandmother used to walk a long way to set rabbit snares. She would leave early in the morning and come home in the evening with a bag full of rabbits and maybe a lynx, which she would pack on her back. Women would never do that now.

I used to go all the way from Rat River to Fort Smith, then back to Rat River. I would travel a long way to trap. Sometimes we used to make a big long trip around Snowdrift. The last time I was there I hung traps up on a tree in a safe place. I was going to go back to get them but I never did. I guess they are spoiled now because they have been hanging there so long.

MLK

The people who hunted and trapped well were better off than the ones who tried their best but couldn't get anything. They were poor. In those days I remember some old people who didn't even have flour to make bannock with. I wasn't raised like that because my grandfather used to kill moose and everything. He used to catch a lot of fur so I was raised good. When I stayed with my dad, my uncle and my dad used to hunt all of the time so we never went short of fish or meat. We always had something to eat, and we used to have flour and bannock all of the time.

When I was young we used to go in the bush to hunt and we would stay there for a while until we got a lot of meat. We made long portages, packing the canoe on our backs. We travelled together as a family. If anyone killed a moose or bear or whatever, they shared the meat with everyone.

We would hunt geese in the spring time and we would hunt ducks anytime. In those days there were no laws, there were no closed seasons for hunting.

I used to set traps for rats, that's how I used to make money. In those days the rat price was low but goods were cheap then. Even with ten dollars you could get a lot of things from the store.

My grandmother showed me how to set rabbit snares. She taught me things like that, just like teaching me in school. I used to get a lot of rabbits and we would eat them.

VL

I have been trapping since I was fourteen years old. When I trapped with my dad there was a lot of fur. My dad used to take all my fur. I used to think that later on when I could keep my own fur that things would be different. I was fooled because when I trapped with my dad, we never used to go short of things, like food. After I was married and became the boss of my own fur, I used to go short of food, shells and things like that.

In the old days, when I was young, there were no beavers around here so we used to go east to Deskataway Lake. People used to live at all those little lakes on the way there, so we used to stop and stay with them overnight.

When we came to town to buy supplies there were all kinds of different traders, like the Hudson Bay, NT, Alex Loutit and Pinsky. We would bring our fur to them and they would look at it really good and then they would write down on a piece of paper how much they would give you for your fur. You would take your fur to four different places and then compare the four papers with your fur prices. We would sell our fur to whichever trader would give us the highest price.

I used to go out hunting any time of the year and if I saw something I would kill it. We would hunt moose and everything, we would kill anything to eat. In the fall, my brothers and I and my dad used to kill a lot of moose, so we used to have a lot of moose all winter.

There were a lot of times when I went in the bush and I never killed anything. I used to camp out many nights for nothing. After a while I started to kill moose so it was okay. My first kill was a moose. I was proud of myself. After I finished cutting up the meat it was night time so I kept the fire going all night and I stayed up all night until my dad came to get me.

GS

I started trapping when I was eighteen years old and I trapped until I was sixty five years old. I quit trapping after I got my old age pension.

I used a dog team because there were no skidoos in those days. There used to be a lot of fur then, but

the price of fur was very low. Fox was about eight dollars, mink six dollars, muskrats thirty-five cents and for beaver they didn't pay more than fifteen dollars. Anyway the price was okay because the goods at that time were not expensive. We made a good living for ourselves in those days. We had meat, fish and caribou too.

Before we had children, my wife would come with me in the spring time to hunt rats. After we had a lot of kids she never travelled with me.

I was seventeen years old when I killed my first moose. My dad and I went out hunting until noon. After he ate he told me that he was going to stay in the tent and that I should wait for him. I went a little way from the tent and I saw the tracks of three moose. The snow wasn't deep so I tied my dogs up and started following the moose. I saw two moose standing among the birch. I shot two of them.

I skinned the moose and pulled their guts out. I kept the kidneys. It was starting to get dark and I was scared. I remember that I used to be scared when I was in the bush, so scared that I tried not to make any noise. I went back to the tent. My dad was there. "So what were you doing?" he asked, "I was so worried about you." I told him, "Dad, I shot two moose. I was chasing three of them, but I shot two. I brought the kidneys back."

After that I thought that you were supposed to chase moose so everytime I chased them I chased them all away. So my dad showed me how to follow the moose tracks properly. Once I learned how to do it, I started to kill moose.

If we heard that there were a lot of caribou at Deskataway Lake we would go out there to hunt. Sometimes the caribou would come right close to Simpson Islands. I remember that we had some caribou close to Rocher River. We usually hunted caribou with a dog team.

When the berries were ripe the older people, like Uncle Paul Beaulieu and Uncle Michel Beaulieu, would set traps for bears. Every second night they would visit the traps. Sometimes they would catch two or three bears.

There are hardly any animals these days. Before, when I used to trap up the Slave River there were a lot of moose. Everytime I would go out to my traps I would kill a moose and live good on fresh meat.

There used to be a lot of buffalo, too, but it was closed season for buffalo in those days. The buffalo weren't scared of the people. If you saw a lone buffalo in the bush, he would never run away. Even though the buffalo season was closed I used to shoot them. I would hide it from the people and bring the meat in.

NY

We used to hunt for caribou, moose, ducks and geese. The people used to eat good on geese at that time.

I was twelve years old when I first went out hunting. I would hunt for ptarmigan, prairie chickens, ducks and rabbits. I knew how to kill them because my dad showed me how to shoot.

There weren't any stores in those days so the only way that people made their living was to travel all over the place looking for food. Sometimes the people went out hunting for moose but they didn't get any. The people would eat fish if they didn't have any meat. If we wanted food we had to go hunting. Even though it was really cold in the winter time we still had to hunt so that we could eat.

The land is different now and the water is disappearing. There are a lot of fires every summer that burn the land, so there is hardly any fur or animals left to trap or eat.



Fur Traders



HB

There used to be trading posts. When we lived in Hay River, the people used to come in from Buffalo Lake to buy goods from the Hudson Bay store. Dad worked for the Bay at that time. It was too far for the trappers to come for goods so dad hired a guy called Martel to take goods out to Buffalo Lake to trade for fur. Martel took whatever the people really wanted; like tea, tobacco, shells and stuff like that. He traded for the Bay out there. The people didn't have to come to Hay River after that.

My brother, Edward, traded for Alec Loutit in Rocher River, years ago. Alec Loutit had a store in Rocher River when there were a lot of people there. I think they paid a pretty fair price for fur at that time. They made a good living out of being traders.

There used to be a lot of white trappers out in the Barrens. They would stop here in Fort Resolution around the end of March. They stayed at an old house down at the Hudson Bay for a week or two to clean their fur. They used to put their white fox into some kind of stuff that would make the fox really white. Then they would hang the fox pelts outside and let them get air. When they were finished with that they would go down south to sell their fur.

VB

The traders used to travel all over the place. They would go out to Jean River and when they sold everything they would come back to Fort Resolution to get some more stuff. They would paddle all the way, there were no kickers in those days. They carried food and tobacco to sell.

A man by the name of Pete Baker used to travel with the goods. After trading at Jean River he would go to Stoney Island, where people used to live. We didn't buy much of the food because we hardly ate whiteman's food but we used to buy lard, butter, jam and flour.

Once, when I was a kid, my family gave me ten rat skins to dry. After I dried them I made a little parcel of them and I went to the trader. I threw the little bag of rats on the floor and he gave me a pair of shoes for them. I was proud of those shoes because that was the first time that I had something nice like that to wear.

In those days, when people came to town, they could go to the store and the Manager would give them a whole case of food for free. That's what they called rations.

AF

Sometimes traders from outside would come up here with food and things like that to trade for fur. There were a lot of traders in those days. There was man named Pete Baker who used to bring stuff here with two dog teams, and he would buy fur. An old man named Lirette used to bring stuff here too. Pinsky had a store in those days.

Trading fur at Hudson's
Bay trading post,
Fort Resolution.

It was mostly natives or Metis people who looked after the stores in those days. At that time Pierre Mercredi looked after the Hudson Bay store here. The people liked him because he spoke Chipewyan. He was from Fort Chipewyan. After that, whitemen came in to look after the stores.

In the old days there was hardly any cash. We sold our fur to the store in return for credit.

I can remember, when I was about twelve years old, that there were white people living in Rocher River. Star Beck and George King were white trappers. A lot of them went to Fort Reliance, to the Barren Lands, to trap white fox.

PH

People would bring pelts into the store and buy groceries with them. The traders never used to give the people money. Sometimes the people traded fish for tobacco.

FK

One time my father and two of his friends used a big barge to take all their fur to Edmonton. They bought cases of goods in Edmonton and brought them back. Another time, my dad and Pascal Smith took their fur to Fort McMurray and they came back with all kinds of food and clothing.

There were a lot of different traders in those days. There were a lot of different stores. Each of them had different prices and they competed with each other. Pete Baker used to go to Rocher River. When the traders came in the people were happy because they had clothing, guns, tobacco and all different kinds of things.

MLK

In my grandparents days they didn't use money, they traded fur for goods like flour, sugar, shells, tea and things like that. They used to travel a long way to buy things. Sometimes the traders would travel to where the people were in the bush and they would bring things like tobacco, flour and shells to sell. Sometimes they would trade goods for drymeat.

Northern Trading Company Office, Fort Resolution, 1920's.





Hislop and Nagle Trading Post.

There was an old man named Joseph Houle, who we used to sell our rats to. He used to travel in the bush amongst the people bringing all kinds of things for sale. If I had rats I would sell my rats to him.

GS

My dad used to tell me about trading fur for goods. He told me that if you wanted to buy a gun you had to put beaver fur on top of each other and pile it up until it was even with the length of the gun standing alongside of it. If you didn't have enough fur, you had to wait for the next year to get some more pelts to make it even with the gun. Only then would you get a gun for the fur.

There were traders who travelled all over the place. If we went out to hunt rats they would come to see us with their stuff. They would come as soon as the ice went away in the spring time. The trappers gave the traders rats to buy shells, clothing, grub, tobacco and things like that. Pete Baker was a trader; he was the first one to bring oranges. We would get twelve oranges for one rat skin.

The white people used to help the people real good. Dan McQueen and Eddy McQueen had a little store up at Rat River. They tried to help the people during breakup.

NY

The people used fur for money, they traded fur for things from the trader. The traders travelled with stuff to sell to the people. They travelled all over the place, wherever the people were living. In the winter time they used dogs and in summer time they paddled boats. People bought mostly food, but they also bought shells, tea, matches and things like that. The traders bought mitts and mocassins that the people had made.

In those days the fur price was low but the food price was low, too, so it was okay. There was a lot of fur in those days so it was okay. Even if the traders took a lot of money away from us we didn't care because we didn't have a store here to buy the goods that they had.



Fishing

HB

When I lived in Hay River they made birch bark canoes and they used them for fishing. They made their own fish nets too, with twine.

You could keep a whole bunch of whitefish by making dryfish out of them. After the fish was nice and dry you would put the dryfish in a bag and pound it till it was all broken up, then you would pour lard over it. It was good.

We caught a lot of trout with hooks in those days. I remember years back when I used to go twenty miles out of here, to Egg Island, in the winter. I would put twenty hooks in and I would come back with twenty trout. Now, if you go out, you're lucky if you get one or two trout. Trout are better to eat than whitefish. I have eaten a lot of trout.

There were all kinds of fish in those days, but since commercial fishing started on the lake the fish went down. The fish are starting to come back again, but not the trout.

PB

We stayed at Rocher River and we would fish a little ways out with fish nets that we made ourselves. Our hands used to get cold when we visited our nets in the winter. We weren't the only ones who fished, some fishermen used to make a living out of fishing.

AF

In the old days there used to be a lot of trout and whitefish. Now there are no more trout since the fishermen took them all. We will never see trout again.

When we went out to trap, we would set nets or hooks, and in between visiting our traps we would visit our nets or hooks.

JG

We used to stay in Rat River to fish. When we set nets in the river we caught a lot of fish. There were whitefish, jackfish and connie in the Taltson River. In the fall, when the fish were running, we could hear the fish because there were so many of them.

PH

In summer we would go all over to get fish. We used nets and traps. We made a dam with spikes out of willows. There was an opening where the fish used to go in. We used a fish net to bail the fish out.

JJ

They made fish traps by peeling logs and putting a whole bunch into the water like a fork. Then they blocked it in the back with poles, making something like a crate. They fished like that in the river. They fished with nets, too, when they were fishing for dog food.

Victor Lafferty was born in 1914 in Fort Resolution. He is pictured here attaching a lead sinker to a new fish net.

We fished in the fall before the water froze and we would hang fish so we would have a lot of fish to eat all winter. There were a lot of fish, I don't know why there aren't many fish now. Maybe the fish travelled to different places, so that's why there aren't many now. The fish are like the caribou, they travel all over to different waters. Sometimes the fish come back and then we have a lot of fish.

I did some commercial fishing on Great Slave Lake, around Rocher River. That was a long time ago when they first started commercial fishing. We used dogs to travel to our nets and we would give our roughfish to the dogs to eat. We only sold the whitefish and trout.

After we visited all of our nets, we would gut the fish and put them in the snow and the Bombardier would come to haul the fish to Hay River.

FK

The people would travel to the best places to fish. Everyone would travel to go fishing, just like when you travel to go hunting. We ate fish about once a week.

In Rocher River the whitefish used to run up the Taltson River to Fish Hole; there were a lot of fish there in the fall. We could hear the connies in the water, making a lot of noise, when they were running up the Taltson River in the fall. Connie are good to eat because they aren't many bones in them. Mariah has good fish eggs, meat and liver. The liver of a big mariah is good, the liver of a small one is made mostly of fat.

We made dryfish from suckers, whitefish and connies. We didn't make dryfish out of trout. You have to dry the fish really good and smoke it really good or the flies will get after it.

We hung fish for our dogs in the fall. We made a hole in the tail of the fish and hung them up on a stage. The dogs ate the fish all winter. There were a lot of fish at Stoney Island. We used to fish there in the fall for our dogs.

At the mouth of the Salt River there was a sucker run and a lot of connies. People used to come from Fort Fitzgerald to Salt River to make dryfish. The suckers started to run when the ice was breaking in the spring. The people even used to make dryfish for their dogs to eat.

MLK

I didn't eat very much fish in those days because my grandfather killed moose and we had wild meat. We ate more meat than fish in those days.

I used to commercial fish with my last husband. We fished in the fall. One of my little daughters used to help me fish while my husband was out visiting his traps. We would visit two nets at a time and we would get a lot of fish. We got connies, jackfish, whitefish and everything but they only bought whitefish in those days, so we used the other fish for ourselves. We sent our fish out on a bombardier or on a plane that came in once a week. We didn't make very much money.

VL

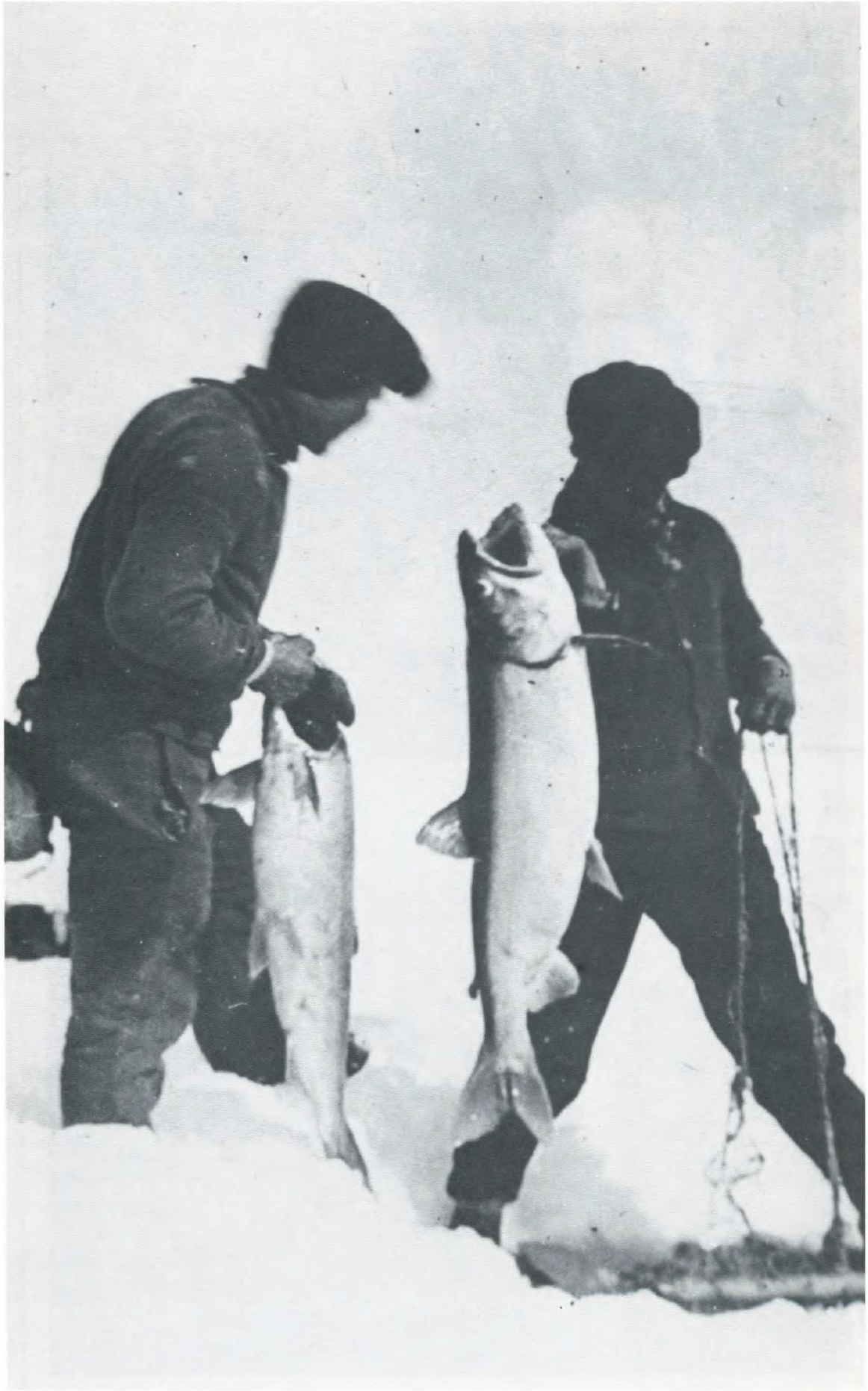
We didn't eat fish all the time because we're not seagulls. In August there were a lot of fish at Little Buffalo River, so the people used to go there to get fish. The whitefish would run up the river and everybody would go there to make dryfish. They fished with nets. One time we fished for one night and we had enough fish for the whole year.

GS

We used to eat trout and whitefish. There used to be a lot of trout. We caught a lot of trout with hooks and we used nets for whitefish. Even after I got married there used to be a lot of trout. If you set twelve hooks you would catch trout on all the hooks. There's not as many fish now, mainly loche.

Before Christmas, there were a lot of mariahs in the Slave River. I used to stay on the Slave River, in those days. If you set nets, your nets would be full of mariahs. You could catch them with hooks too.

Fish have always played an important role in the lives of the people of Fort Resolution.





Gardens and Berries



HB

We used to grow our own garden. We had our own carrots, turnips, cabbage and potatoes. One year we picked forty bags of potatoes. I had a great big cellar in the old house that we used just for potatoes. If someone didn't have potatoes, we would give them potatoes. In those days people lived strictly off the land and a lot of them used to put gardens in.

My parents used to pick cranberries, saskatoons, strawberries, raspberries, choke berries and crow berries. They would boil the berries up and bottle them. The berries would keep for quite a while like that.

VB

My brother, Moise King, had a big garden, and my dad had a big garden too at Stoney Island. We grew a lot of big potatoes.

There were a lot of berries in the old days. People picked berries and put them in pails and little wooden barrels. They brought the berries back to town and gave them to others. Sometimes they sold the berries to buy supplies. There were cranberries, raspberries, gooseberries and saskatoons.

When my mother picked saskatoons, she would spill the berries out on a big canvas to dry them. Sometimes she would mix the saskatoons with pounded dryfish.

IE

There were a lot of cranberries, especially on Paulette Island. In the fall they would go out to pick berries and they would pick enough to fill a wooden barrel. They saved the berries for winter. My mother used to make birch syrup in the spring time and she would mix the syrup with the berries, and that's how we ate them.

AF

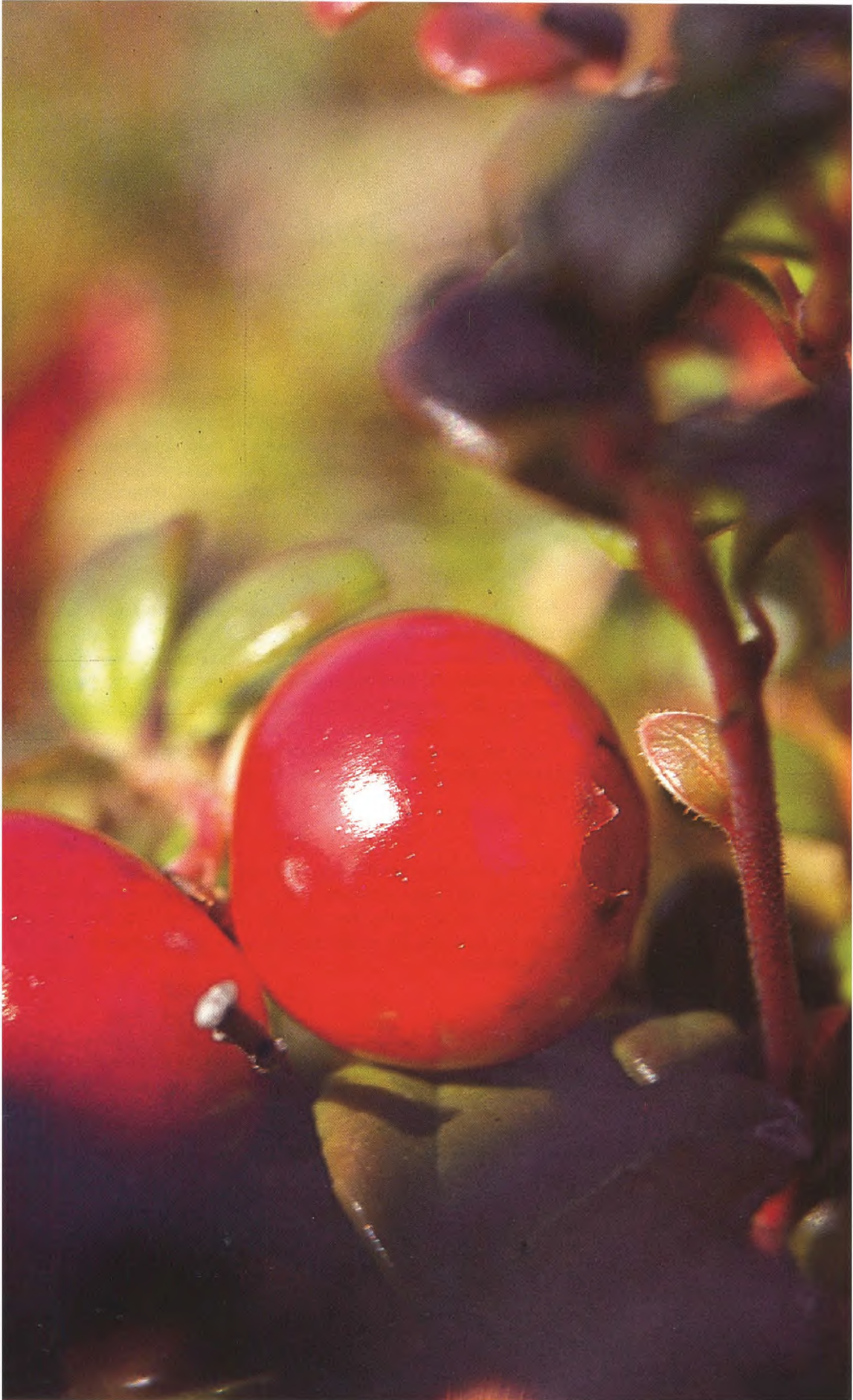
Some people used to have potato gardens, my dad had a garden. In those days we didn't know about carrots and turnips and things like that so we only planted potatoes. Potatoes were good to eat with meat and fish.

There were a lot of raspberries in those days. When we picked a lot of berries, we brought them home and made jam with them. In the fall, before the snow fell, everyone used to go out to pick cranberries and they picked raspberries at the end of August.

RF

I never travelled around much for berries after I got married, but when I stayed in The Mission we used to go for berries in August with the Sisters. We picked lots of berries and we used them for the whole year. There were no freezers but the Sisters would keep the berries in a cold place and they'd also make jam.

Pierre Hilaire was born in 1901 at Little Buffalo River. Pierre is one of many Fort Resolution residents who enjoy growing their own potatoes.



JG

When we stayed in Rat River we planted some potatoes. The garden wasn't that big but sometimes we had enough potatoes for the whole winter.

JJ

We used to plant potatoes. The whitemen used to plant everything but us Indians just had potatoes. We made a cellar and we put grass on the floor and then we put potatoes in gunny sacks in the cellar. We used to have a stove on so they wouldn't freeze.

We never used to go far for berries. I used to pick berries with my mother and my sisters. We picked a lot of berries and my mother would fix them good. She put the berries on a big canvas and she took all the dirt off of them. Then she put them in wooden boxes and put them in the warehouse to keep them cool.

When we stayed in Rocher River my wife and I travelled around for berries. Baptist McKay used to travel with us. He would watch the baby for us while my wife picked cranberries and strawberries.

MLK

I remember one time when my grandfather plowed a garden with a shovel and he planted potatoes. It was a small little garden but we got potatoes out of it. The rabbits and little animals ate the leaves off of the potatoes because we didn't have a fence around the garden. We didn't do that every year because we travelled all the time.

The old lady, Marie Frise, told me that they used to dry berries and keep them all winter. I've never seen anybody do that but Marie used to do that. You put a big canvas on the ground and you poured the Saskatoons on the canvas to let them dry there. That's how they used to keep the berries. When you dry berries like that you can keep them for a long time.

VL

In the fall when there were a lot of raspberries everyone would go to pick raspberries and then bring them home to make jam. They would have raspberry jam all winter. You never see raspberries today like there were before. They don't grow anymore.

They picked cranberries in the fall and put them in a box, which they would keep in the cellar. They kept the berries frozen in the cellar and anytime they wanted berries they would take them out.

GS

In the old days there were a lot of berries. The people would travel all over to get berries. There were a lot of raspberries by the Salt River and a lot of cranberries at Mission Island.





Sharing



HB

If someone killed a moose, the meat was divided through the town. They never asked for money for the meat.

FD

In the old days, people used to help each other. All the women would help each other to work. The men helped each other as well. People lived good before. They helped each other by working or by giving things to each other.

AF

The people used to help each other and share most things. They would share anything and they would help each other any way they could. Now it is different, they don't do that. Not very long ago it changed. The people want to sell things to each other now.

RF

When people killed a moose they shared it with everyone. They'd make drymeat with whatever meat was left over. In those days the meat never spoiled because there were lots of people to share with.

FK

People used to help each other travelling. The people who had kickers helped the others who didn't have kickers by pulling their canoes for them. If you wanted to go to town from the bush, they would help you. They helped everybody, not just their relatives.

MLK

I remember when I was young that people shared everything with each other; meat, fish and even work. When they killed beaver they cooked the beaver and then they would all eat together. In those days all the people were lucky because they shared. It isn't like that anymore.

VL

When the people came to town from the bush they brought all kinds of pounded meat, drymeat, fresh meat and dryfish with them. They shared everything they had with everyone, not just their relatives.

Residents packing
goods up from the
shore of Great
Slave Lake.





and Made Items

HB

We used birch to make sleighs. A birch sleigh is a lot more slippery than the sleighs you get now. The frost gets into the birch in the winter and stays there. That is what makes it so slippery. Once it warms up outside it is hard to pull.

I built a skiff once and also a fourteen foot canoe. I made chairs, paddles and fur stretchers too. We made paddles out of driftwood because they last a long time. If you make a paddle out of a board it doesn't last long because it gets bone dry and breaks in no time.

PB

I remember my grandfather, Hilaire Frise, making birch sleighs. I used to walk around with him to find good birch. He would split the birch trees and the trees that split open straight would be used for the sleigh. In the winter time my grandfather made birch bark boats. After the boat was finished, he would have to watch it really good because the dogs and birds would chew the spruce gum on it.

Before, when they made houses, they chopped the logs off on both sides with an axe. Now they peel the logs and leave them round. They used to cut spruce poles to make the roof.

VB

My dad made toboggans and snowshoes out of birch. He made boats from birch bark.

IE

They made birch bark boats. They sewed the bark with little roots from the trees, the roots were like string.

They used to make rabbit skin clothing and caribou hair clothes. Some people made jackets, pants and tipis out of moosehide.

They made sleighs, snowshoes and axe handles out of birch.

They built their houses with spruce trees. Some people made their houses with round logs and some people chopped the logs to look like boards.

AF

The people made shovels out of wood. They used the shovels to take the ice out of water holes. If they found something made of iron they would make an ice chisel with the iron.

PH

They used to fix the logs for houses by chopping them flat on two sides. They made the roof of the house out of driftwood. They would split the driftwood and cut it down with a drawknife.

Emily Simon making
snow shoes.



This building on Mission Island, near Fort Resolution, demonstrates building techniques still in use today.

JJ

They used to make their own drawknives and planes. To make a drawknife they used to put a little small file in the fire until it was hot then laid the file on an axe and hit it with a hammer until it was flat. They made a blade out of it, then heated it up again, then laid it on a piece of wood and put oil on it. When the metal was cold they made a handle for it.

My grandfather used to make toboggans out of birch in the summer time. He would get a piece of birch and split it in half and make boards. He planed the head down and while the wood was still fresh he would try to bend the head a little bit. He would bend the head just a little bit then he would put it back in the bushes and let it dry all summer. In fall he would take that piece of wood and plane it and put it in a tub of boiling water. After he took it out of the water he could bend it really good. After it was dry he could fix it.

To make boards, they would get spruce trees in the spring. They got the ones that split open really good and choose the length that they wanted. They used to do that to make the ribs for the boats. They would plane the board, then dry them, then put the board together and cover them with canvas. Then they painted the canvas with canoe paint. That's how they used to make boats.

They used to make houses and those houses were good. They split the logs on both sides and when they had enough logs they put the logs together and made them fit really good. They used small logs for the roof. They drilled holes in the logs and they put a peg in the hole, straight through. That's what they used for nails in the old days. When they were finished the house they covered the inside wall with paper and the outside wall with mud or moss.

FK

In the old days they made boats out of birch bark. Not too far from here, at the mouth of the Slave River, there is a little creek that goes out to the lake. They used to get spruce bark from the place where the creek meets the lake. They used the spruce bark for the bottoms of the boats.

MLK

People made scrappers to work on moosehide and they made snowshoes too. They made wooden shovels to shovel out the ice from the water hole in the winter.

My grandmother made tipis from moosehide and caribou hide.

They made toboggans out of birch and they made small little canoes. My dad, my uncle and my grandfather made boats like that. We used to travel far when there was no birch around so that we would have the right material to make boats and toboggans.

I used to tan moosehides and when I finished the hide I would make mitts, gloves and mocassins, and I would sell them. I made a tent one time out of canvas. I made fur coats out of caribou hide and moosehide jackets for my boys.

GS

The people would make tents or tipis out of caribou hide or canvas.

They made sleighs with birch and sometimes they made boats out of birch bark. I remember when the people from Snowdrift used to come here in birch bark canoes.

They built houses with round logs. There used to be a lot of round log houses. They filled the spaces between the logs with moss. My dad told me that they used wooden nails because there were no nails in the stores at that time. They made holes in the logs then they hammered really long sticks into the holes.

NY

For clothing, the people would make moosehide pants, dresses, jackets, mitts, hats and mocassins. They also made tents with caribou hide.



ransportation

HB

My parents travelled by boat in the summer. When dad was in Hay River he had an old 5 HP Evinrude kicker, that he used. It weighed nearly seventy or eighty pounds. It was pretty heavy. Now they make kickers that are light and they don't last long. During the winter they used dog teams to travel. You could trust a dog team in the winter, but not a skidoo.

When my dad worked for the Hudson Bay in Hay River he would travel to Fort Resolution with a dog team to straighten up the books.

You had a better chance when you were hunting with a dog team. You used to run into animals such as moose and buffalo when you were driving dogs.

It is no fun on a skidoo in cold weather. When you get out on the lake with north wind blowing and you are travelling fast on a skidoo, it gets pretty cold. I remember one time when I was coming back from caribou hunting, going towards Rocher River. Fred Dawson was with me. My skidoo started to buck and died. The starter was full of water so I had to take the filter off

Dog team pulling cart, Fort Resolution, 1921, driver Francois Mandeville.



right there with bare hands. All the time I was doing this, the north wind was blowing and my fingers were freezing. I never felt my fingers until I got into Rocher River. I can remember this as though it were today. George King was in Rocher River so I stopped at his house and started warming up my hands. Oh God, I didn't know what to do. My fingers were black and blue. I suffered so much that I never slept all that night. I have found that the best thing to take the frost out of frostbite is Vicks. Vicks draws the frost right out of a frozen part.

VB

In the old days they travelled with big boats on the Slave River but now the river is getting narrow. All the mud is falling off of the shores, so the water is getting shallow too.

FD

They used to haul freight from Fort Fitzgerald to Fort Smith. The people had to pack the freight across the portage. Sometimes one person would pack about six bags of flour at a time.

JJ

They hauled the mail with a dog team in winter and with a boat in summer. The dog teams travelled on trails with a man walking ahead of the dogs all the time.

FK

In the old days we paddled our boats. While travelling on the rivers we let the dogs walk on shore or swim behind us. Even though the river was wide, that is what we used to do.

I used to use a sail on the boat if the wind was behind us. If the wind changed to the side of the boat we took the sail down and pulled the boat with a rope or we let the dogs pull the boat. If your lead dog was good you could tell him where to go and the dogs would pull the boat for you.

Hislop and Nagle trading steamer bringing supplies to Fort Resolution.





News and **C**ommunication



PB

When the people went to hunt caribou they would give the news to the people that they met. When they trapped they would do the same thing. People didn't travel just to tell the news.

They used to haul the mail with dogs. They brought the mail from Edmonton to Fort Smith and then from Fort Smith to here. They hauled the mail to every little town with dogs.

AF

In those days the people used to chop off a little bit on the side of a tree and they would write to each other in Chipewyan on the tree. They would write with coal and that was the way they would tell the news. If someone passed there they could read the message. There were a lot of people who knew how to write Chipewyan in those days. Joe Buggins still knows how to write in Chipewyan.

PH

Old timer people used to tell each other stories when they met in the bush. They would tell each other everything about how they were hunting, what they'd killed, where they had passed through and all that. They would tell each other news and then when they saw another guy, they would tell him too. Some people travelled a long ways to hunt and trap. That's how the news travelled.


FK

In the old days the news got around by people travelling. When I was in Rocher River one of my brothers drowned in Fort Smith. I didn't know a thing about it until Pierre Cassaway came to Rocher River and brought me a letter that my family wrote me. That is how I got the news that my brother drowned. It was summer time, so as soon as I got that letter I got ready and we left after midnight to go to Fort Smith by boat. We got to Fort Smith a day later but they had the funeral before I got there.


NY

The people used to travel all over the place and that's how the news travelled. People would travel and visit each other from town to town and they heard the news that way.

Chiefs from around
Great Slave Lake
holding meeting at Fort
Resolution, 1925.



languages



HB

Dad was a Scotsman, he used to talk only English. Mother was taught French in school, she could hardly speak English. I don't know how they got along when they first got married.

I speak English and French and a little bit of Chipewyan, whatever I can sling off; when I don't know how to say something, I just cut off. My grandchildren speak just

English, it is up to them if they want to learn Chipewyan. The biggest majority of people speak English now.

PB

My grandchildren speak only English. I told Harvey and his wife to teach their son Chipewyan but they are raising him to speak only English.

VB

They never used to talk English, not like now. They only talked Chipewyan in the early days.

When old man Francois Beaulieu came up here, he talked French and that's how some people first learned French. That's what my dad told me.

My parents could speak four languages — Chipewyan, English, French, and Cree. I can only speak Chipewyan. My children speak Chipewyan but my grandchildren only speak English.

VC

I speak Chipewyan, a little French and a little English. I speak Chipewyan to my children.

AF

My dad spoke Chipewyan, Slavey, Dogrib, French and English. He also understood a little bit of Cree. My mother could speak only four different languages — French, English, Chipewyan and Slavey.

My dad knew how to read and write in Chipewyan and he could sing in Chipewyan too. In the old days they sang in Chipewyan in church. They would all know how to read the hymn book and sing in Chipewyan. Now, only Joe Buggins and Dora Cardinal know how to read Chipewyan. Almost everyone knew how to read and write in Chipewyan in the old days. Joe Buggin's father taught him and his brother, Isadore, how to read in Chipewyan.

I speak Chipewyan, Slavey and English and I understand Dogrib and French. My children speak Chipewyan but their children only speak English. I would like my grandchildren to speak Chipewyan because we always speak Chipewyan at home.

Early prayer book
written in Chipewyan
syllabics.

CF

A lot of people used to speak French. They still speak French and they speak Chipewyan. I used to speak only French and English. I spoke English to my children because Chipewyan wasn't my language. The Father taught me how to read and write in Chipewyan even though I didn't know how to speak Chipewyan at that time.

RF

My mother spoke English and Chipewyan. She was raised by a minister, so she spoke English. My dad only spoke Chipewyan.

I remember that my husband's parents spoke French, and Mary Beaulieu's mom spoke French, and Rosanna McKay too. A lot of people learned to speak French when they stayed in school.

My uncle, Paul Edjericon, could read and write Chipewyan. He didn't know how to write English but he could read and write in Chipewyan.

I speak English and Chipewyan and I understand French. I never learned to read and write Chipewyan. No one taught me that.

My children speak Chipewyan but most of my grandchildren only speak English. My granddaughter Lorraine understands Chipewyan really good.

JG

My mom spoke only Chipewyan but my dad spoke Cree, English and Chipewyan. You hardly hear any Chipewyan language now. I think I am the only one who speaks only Chipewyan.

I speak Chipewyan to my grandchildren but they hardly ever speak Chipewyan.

PH

My parents just spoke Chipewyan. They never spoke English because there weren't any white people around then. When the priest came here the people started using English and French.

My grandchild speaks English and Chipewyan really good.

JJ

My parents and my grandmother and grandfather spoke only Chipewyan. I used to speak just Chipewyan before but now I understand English a little bit. I speak Chipewyan to my children and they understand me but my grandchildren don't understand me. I want my grandchildren to speak Chipewyan but their parents don't speak Chipewyan to their children.

I was never taught to read and write in Chipewyan but my parents could read and write in Chipewyan. The people who didn't know how to read and write would go to the ones who knew how so they could write letters for them.

FK

My parents spoke Cree and English. There was no Chipewyan language towards Fort Vermillion. We spoke Cree and a little bit of French. After we moved down here we started speaking Chipewyan. There are a lot of words that I don't remember in the Cree language now. I speak four different languages — Cree, English, French and Chipewyan. I speak Chipewyan and English with my grandchildren.

MLK

When I was young all of my relatives spoke only Chipewyan. I speak only Chipewyan to my children but my grandchildren don't understand Chipewyan.

VL

My dad spoke Chipewyan, English, French and some kind of Slavey language that I don't know the name of. My mother was like that too, but she didn't speak English. My mother could read and write in Chipewyan.

All I speak today is Chipewyan but I can speak English and I understand French, Slavey and a little bit of Dogrib. In the old days they spoke more French but now they speak more English. Nowadays, the older people speak only Chipewyan with each other but the kids use English words.

GS

In the old days the people used to speak Chipewyan and French. When the sisters were here in the Mission they used to teach the kids mostly French.

When I was young we spoke only Chipewyan at home, and some English. I understand Slavey real good but I can't speak it. I spoke Chipewyan to my children when I raised them. My grandchildren speak just English.

NY

When the first white people came here they spoke only French, so the people learned a little bit of French. Before that the people only spoke Chipewyan. My dad used to know how to read in Chipewyan.

I speak a little bit of English and I understand Slavey and Dogrib too. I speak Chipewyan with my grandchildren but when they go to school they speak English.



 *Working for Wages*
HB

I started working when I was about seventeen. I worked at quite a few places. I cut brush at Pine Point and also worked at Dead Man's Island. Dead Man's Island is about thirty miles from here. I worked there for nine months, hand drilling. We took samples of rocks and measured water. They were dredging there, making some sort of harbour.

I worked in Yellowknife, too. I worked on the road there. At that time they were putting gravel on the road. There was quite a bunch of us who used to go behind the trucks, after they dumped their loads to pick the big rocks off the main road. That was on the road in the old town.

I worked in Fort Smith too, at Denny's Logging Sawmill. I worked at their sawmill up the Slave River. It was a big sawmill. There was quite a few of us that went up there at that time. The pay was so small that a lot of the men couldn't work there because they had families to look after. A lot of men quit working there. Later on they raised our wages.

I worked in the Delta here, at the mouth of the Slave River. They were measuring the water to put a channel in for the boats. We had to take the depth of the water. In those days there was hardly any work.

I worked with the Americans, up the Slave River. They were hunting buffalo and they hired quite a few of us, from here, to build their camp there. After the camp was built they used to go out on horseback and hunt buffalo and bring the meat in with the horses. We got thirty dollars a month. We had to get up at five o'clock in the morning to round up the horses before breakfast, then we guided the hunters out to the buffalo.

I worked at the Mission sawmill near the Sawmill Snye. I worked at the Mission here in town, too, when the Mission had a hospital.

I worked up the Liard River, on boats. I stayed there for five months and we got forty five dollars a month. It used to take us about twenty days to go up the river to Fort Nelson from Fort Simpson. It only took us a day and a half to get back to Fort Simpson from Fort Nelson. That's how swift the water was. The freight used to come by boat from Fort Smith to Fort Simpson. In Fort Simpson the freight was unloaded and from there smaller boats would take the freight to Fort Nelson, B.C.

PB

When I was a kid I used to get paid for unloading the freight on the boats. We wouldn't be paid in cash but we would get some stuff from the store.

I worked at the sawmill lots of times. Sometimes I worked there all summer. I worked at Dick Wynn's sawmill, at Jean Marie River, at Bob Wynn's sawmill, at Ingram sawmill, and at the Giant sawmill. I would work wherever they put me, but I didn't saw logs. We used to work ten hours a day and sometimes we worked until midnight but we didn't get paid overtime. Sometimes the sawmills would get low on meat which wasn't very good because we had to work even though we didn't eat very much.

Sawing lumber along
lakeshore, Fort
Resolution.

At the Mission sawmill married men made two dollars a day plus rations such as flour and bacon. Single men made one dollar a day, those were good wages in those days. We used to eat good when we worked at the Mission sawmill.

I used to work in a drilling camp as a driller helper. I worked with a hand drill on the rocks. You had to push hard because the ore was strong and sometimes I couldn't feel my hands. I worked there for two summers.

VB

After my husband died, I worked at the Mission. I worked there for eleven years. I used to get seventeen dollars every two weeks. While I was working my kids stayed at the Mission with me. I didn't have to pay for room and board for myself or my kids. We used to eat right there in the Mission. My daughter Albina wasn't very big at that time. After I had worked for eleven years I lost one of my kids. I was lonesome. The Sisters told me that I couldn't work anymore because my heart was no good.

My husband, Louison, used to go out to cut wood for the people. He would make a big raft and bring the wood back here. He would sell the wood and buy grub.

VC

I worked at the Mission hospital in 1952. I also worked there after my husband died. I washed the floors and dishes and I made the beds for the patients. We worked for a dollar a day. Virginia Beaulieu worked there at the same time that I did. It was a good job for me because it wasn't hard work.

FD

When I first moved to Fort Resolution I worked for the Mission. That was in 1938. That was the first time that I worked. We cut hay for the cows in summer and we cut wood in the winter. Sometimes we would go to work at eight o'clock in the morning and work until twelve midnight. For that, we got paid two dollars a day.

Sometimes I would work on a boat in the summer. We went all the way down the Mackenzie River to Inuvik and Tuktoyuktuk.

I worked at the sawmills, too. I worked at every one of the sawmills along the Slave River. I worked at Bob Wynn's sawmill, at Bobby Porritt's sawmill and at the sawmills at Jean River, Long Island, Ingram Island and McConnell Island.

IE

I worked at Bob Wynn's sawmill at Jean River for two months. The work was okay but the pay was only two dollars a day.

I staked claims for a week at Dead Man's Island. I worked with Eddy Jones.

My mother worked for the police. She made mitts and mocassins for them. She worked inside the house, too, sweeping and washing the floor and all that.

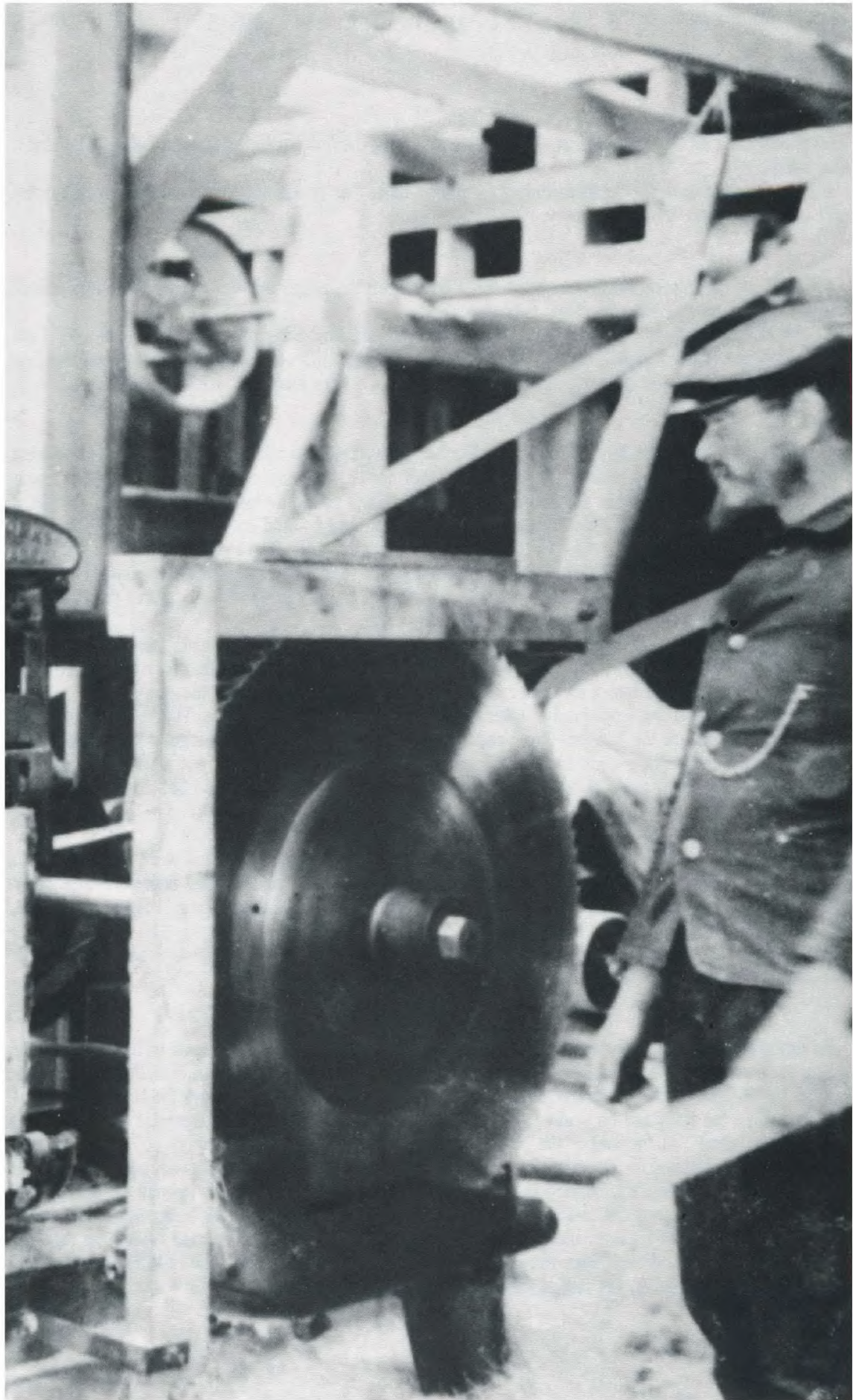
AF

My dad, Johnny Fabien, used to be a pilot on a barge that hauled freight. In those days they used sails and paddles on the barges. He travelled to Fort Rae, Hay River and way down the Mackenzie River. If there was no wind it was pretty hard because they used only paddles. The barges belonged to the Hudson Bay and NT. My dad worked for those two companies for a long time. He worked for them in Fort Providence, Fort Rae and Rocher River. He worked around the store and he interpreted for the store managers.

I worked at the Hudson Bay store but I didn't work there very long. I was a clerk and I sold things. I was paid seventy five dollars a month.

A long time ago I worked for the Mission sawmill, up the Slave River. I was still a young man when I worked for the Mission. I was paid one dollar a day and I ate at the Mission when I worked there. We didn't have any other work so the work was okay.

I worked for the government for a long time after I got married, then after that I started to work for the government. When I worked for the Mission I cut wood. In those days they burned wood in the hospital so



I used to cut wood all the time. We would cut logs and bring them down the river on a raft and cut them up for wood.

I worked in this town for the government for a long time. The government paid me good wages but it wasn't enough because things are so expensive in the store.

CF

I worked on the Mission barge, the St. Anne. I cooked on the barge and we would go to Tuktoyuktuk from here. We would be gone for about two weeks.

I don't know what year I went to work at the Mission, but I stayed there for fourteen years after I got married. I worked in the hospital, here in Fort Resolution, doing housework, washing clothes and cleaning the rooms of the sick. I was paid five dollars a month. It was a hard job but it was lots of fun.

JJ

I used to work for the trader, Ed Demelt, in Rocher River. That was a long time ago. I started working for him in 1936. I worked with him in the store and with horses, pigs and chickens outside. I wasn't paid very much, just two dollars a day. I would work from six o'clock in the morning till six o'clock at night. I used to eat good there, at meal time I would go in the kitchen and I would eat what I wanted. I liked that job because no one told me what to do. I worked the way I wanted to and when I wanted to rest, I would rest.

When I was young I worked at the McConnell sawmill on the Slave River. I worked there during the summer for three months at a time. I skidded logs with the horses. I would bring the logs out of the bush to a skid-way, then the logs would be hauled to the mill with a Cat.

One summer I got a job at the Ingram sawmill. I was paid four dollars and fifty cents a day there. I didn't have to pay room and board so I was happy because I was getting good pay. The manager knew that I had worked with horses, and he had a lot of horses, so he gave me job working with the horses.

I used to do prospecting work here at Little Buffalo River with Ernest Paulette. That was quite a while ago, in 1946. I worked at the Nyarling River and I used to get good wages. It was a good job. All you had to do was to cut a line using a compass. You counted out so many steps then you put a post in. If you put the posts too far apart it was no good, but if you put them closer than they should be, it was okay.

FK

When we worked on the steamboats they paid us twelve dollars a week. That used to be a lot of money. We travelled on the steamboats way down the Mackenzie River. The steamboat would make two trips every summer from Fort Smith to up north. We went to work June 5th to paint the boats, scows, barges, everything. After all the ice went we would go down the river.

We also worked on horseback. In those days they brought goods across from Fort Fitzgerald to Fort Smith with horses. After that they started hauling freight by boat.

VL

My grandfather, Alexis Lafferty, worked for the traders as long as he lived. He used to interpret for the manager and he would help around the store. The first trader he worked for was Nagle in Fort Resolution. After that he worked for him in Fort Wrigley, then he moved to Fort Norman to work for NT. He travelled all over and then the last place he worked was in Fort Simpson for Lamson and Hubbard. I remember that he was paid in rations. At the end of the month he would bring home a lot of stuff.

I worked at the Mission for six years, for just two dollars a day. After the snow thawed in the spring time we would bring the logs into the Mission sawmill. After the work was finished at the sawmill we used to cut wood and bring it down on a raft. After we were finished that we went up the Slave River to cut hay. After we were finished with the hay, we would go out fishing in the fall. After we were finished fishing, we brought all the boats back here and took them out of the water. That was the end of our job until the next spring. On top of our pay we used to get rations from the Mission. I saved my rations and my wife and I lived on those rations all winter.

I also worked on the big steamboats that hauled freight. If the steamboat got short of wood we would stop and cut wood and load it on the boat. We used to travel a long way, from Fort Smith to Aklavik. It was good because we used to see a lot of different people.

GS

My dad, George Sanderson, used to pull the barge from here to Fort Smith. If they came down the Slave River with a barge, they would go back to Fort Smith pulling the barge with a rope. My dad was also the pilot on the Indian Agent's boat for three or four years.

I worked for the Hudson Bay in the summer time. I hauled water and wood and put everything in order on the shelves. Moise Mercredi and I used to do that. Pierre Mercredi, the manager, gave me rations on Saturday.

I worked on the NT boat for three years. I worked on the boat with Isadore Sayine and Henry Jones. We travelled to a lot of different places like Hay River, Snowdrift, Fort Simpson and Yellowknife. I also went to Fort Rae twice on the Mission boat. When I worked for the Mission I was paid two dollars a day. I ate all my meals there and I got a ration for my wife every Saturday. We ate really good when I worked for the Mission.

I worked at three different sawmills. I worked at Deadman's sawmill, Bobby Porritt's sawmill and Cinnamon sawmill. My family lived with me at the sawmill. When the sawmill closed down we all came home.

Fred Dawson and I used to work on the building of the dock, here in Fort Resolution. They used to blast rocks across at the mountain and we would get the rocks and bring them down here to build the dock.

I used to work with the Brothers at the Mission. We would work around the Mission and we would get wood, too. We would make a raft and bring the wood here with the raft. We would push the raft by hand, while walking in the water. We didn't go fast. We used to come back here late at night.

I worked on building the highways to Pine Point, Fort Smith and Yellowknife. We were paid twelve hundred dollars to cut one mile of brush. If there were ten of us, we had to divide the money between ten of us.





Indian Medicine

VB

Some people used spruce gum to heal sores and deep cuts. Fox fat is good for healing sores, too. You heat up the fat of the fox and you rub it on your sores and they heal up right away. You can use beaver hair to fix a deep cut. You put a little bit of beaver hair inside the wound and tie it up with something and it will heal right away.

IE

The people used Indian tea for colds. Some people used what they call rat-root for colds. There were a lot of people who knew medicine. They used spruce gum for deep cuts and blood poison. They put the spruce gum on a piece of moosehide and wrapped it around the cut. It would heal fast.

AF

If someone cut themselves and they had a deep cut, they would put spruce gum on it. They put the soft spruce gum inside the cut and wrapped it with moosehide and tied it up until it healed. Some people used to put beaver hair right in the cut and then tied it up with moose hide.

JG

My dad, Joseph Cree, knew Indian Medicine because he was a Cree. His medicine was good, I guess, because he used to heal people.

JJ

The old people used to use burnt hair for colds. They boiled the hair then drank the broth.

We used spruce gum for burns. We boiled the spruce gum before putting it on the burn and the burn would heal up well. Spruce gum was used for deep cuts as well. They put the spruce gum on a piece of cloth or hide, then pressed the edges of the cut together and placed the cloth over the cut. They tied the cloth on until the cut was healed up. For infections, we used to scrape all the juice off of the spruce bark and put it on the infection while the juice was still fresh. It would suck all the pus out.

I was taught that if someone was spitting blood they should drink the liquid of boiled spruce gum.

My grandfather knew medicine for sores and cuts. When I was a kid I cut my fingers on a pointed stick while I was fishing. My grandfather grabbed my hand and said, "Put your hand above your heart, so your blood won't come running out." Then he ran in the bush, picked some plants and chewed them. He put them on my fingers and tied up my fingers. My hand healed up well.

People believed in Indian Medicine. Before the whiteman came there was no other medicine. Only some people made the medicine. If a person made

Francois King, born in 1903, collecting medicinal roots.



This root, known locally as "clochenthoe", is used to heal skin disorders.

medicine for someone else, the other person would pay them with tobacco or matches.

FK

I used to make Indian Medicine, I know a lot about it, but I don't bother with it anymore because there are lots of good doctors now. My brother, Alexis Beaulieu, taught me about Indian Medicine; what to do and how to do it. He and his wife were good doctors for Indian Medicine. People would send for them because the people knew they were really good. Alexis used to travel around to heal the people. He even cured mentally ill people.

Beaver castors are good for healing sores. You boil up a little piece of castor in a cup of water and you use the boiled water to rub on your sores.

There are hardly any poisons if you know the right kind of medicines to use. There are two roots that look the same and one of them is poison, but if you know medicine you know which one is good. One time I wanted to make sure that the root was no good so I tried it. I pulled up one little root and I broke off a small little piece and touched it to the tip of my tongue. I felt a big pain in my jaws and throat; that's how strong it was. I almost got poisoned. There are three roots on that plant. They say that if you chew it just once you will get cramps all over your body and that's how you die with that poison.

Mary Louise, Pete Rabesca's wife, had a toothache one time so Pierre Soza chewed the poison root and told Mary Louise that it was good for toothaches. Mary Louise put it in her mouth and it was so strong that she took it out again. They both got cramps from it. Pierre took cramps right away and he fell over, and he died right where they had set the table for him to eat. They told the doctor right away but the doctor couldn't open Pierre's mouth, his jaws were stuck together. Maybe if the doctor could have made him vomit he would have lived, but they couldn't open his mouth. Then the doctor went to Mary Louise and he gave her something and she got better, but she was sick for a long time.

If someone is sick with VD they use bear gall bladder. They boil the gall bladder in a little bit of water and they drink about two cups and they get better right away.

I don't think spruce gum is any good. It just comes off and takes all your skin off, too. I use 'clochenthoe' to heal deep cuts. I chew it off and put it on the cut. One time I chopped the tip of my finger right off. When I went to see the doctor he told me that he wanted to cut a piece of flesh from some place else to put on my finger and I said no. I went home and cleaned my finger really good and I chewed the 'clochenthoe' and put it on my finger. Two days after that I checked on my finger and it was healing really good. I put the root on again and not too long after that my finger healed.

MLK

People used to use skunk grease for sore legs. If they had a sore leg they rubbed the grease on their leg and it got better. Duck grease is good for sores.

Sometimes they boiled willows and plants and they drank the water if they had a cold.

Indian Medicine is good if you know a lot about it. Only the people who know about medicine pull out the roots. My second husband showed me what kind of medicine to take from the bush, but I don't remember some of the medicines. One time I was sick and my husband made medicine for me and I got better right away.

GS

They used Indian Tea for colds. They also used beaver castors if they had a cold. They would put a little wee bit in a cup with water and drink it. They didn't drink very much. Sometimes I chew rat-root if I have a cold.

They rubbed bear gall bladder on sore bones and muscles.

The inner bark from the spruce tree was used for burns. They peeled the bark off the tree and they took the inner bark that was around the tree. They made a juice with it and put it on the burn and wrapped it with a cloth.

If we had a bad cut we would put beaver hair on the cut and wrap it up to stop the bleeding, but it burned for a little while.

If we had a skin infection we would use spruce gum. We would put the gum on the infection and wrap a piece of moosehide around it. The infection would go away and it wouldn't even be sore after that.

NY

In the old days there were a lot of people who knew how to use Indian Medicine and they had strong medicine. If someone knew Indian Medicine, they knew which plants were poison. There were different medicines for each sickness. In those days there were no doctors so there were a lot of people who knew medicine. If they went out to look for some kind of root that they needed, they could hear some kind of noise and that's how they found the roots. I believe in Indian Medicine because in the old days that's all they used to use.



Health

HB

TB was the biggest sickness there was in my days. TB was terrible before but people don't get TB now.

I thought it was a good thing when they built the hospital here. At that time there were a lot of people in this town who had TB. The hospital was full of patients. They had so many patients, they even had beds in the aisles.

The whiteman medicine that we used the most was aspirins. There weren't many medicines then. People thought a lot of the new medicine because it did them a lot of good.

In my days I used charcoal on my teeth. They claim that charcoal is way better than a toothbrush. If you use a toothbrush, you take all the enamel off your teeth.

PB

The sickness was strong at that time. People got sick, I think it was TB, they got worse and died. Now that the whiteman is here they try all kinds of medicine.

If you teeth were aching or moving, spruce gum was good for that. If you put spruce gum on your tooth, you wouldn't feel anything for a long time.

VB

The first doctor came to the north way before I was born.

The TB patients used to stay in the hospital here. The Sisters nursed at the hospital and there was one doctor, Dr. Bourget.

VC

I don't remember when the first doctor came here but I remember one doctor by the name of Dr. Bourget. There used to be only Nuns here in the hospital.

My grandfather and my grandmother died the year that everybody was sick with the Flu. My mother also died during the Flu Epidemic, in 1928. I came out of the Mission to live with her but she died with that big sickness, so I didn't stay with her very long before she died. My dad couldn't keep me so he sent me back to the Mission again.

In the old days they ate only wild meat, fish and things like that. They didn't eat very much food from the store so they lived longer.

IE

I remember Dr. Rymer, he was the first doctor that we had here. A boy by the name of Harold was staying in the Mission at that time. He went to live with Dr. Rymer to help him around the house, bringing in wood and things like that. They called him Harold Rymer after that.

I stayed in the hospital for over a year when I had TB. My lung healed

Dr. Rymer, who practised medicine in Fort Resolution from 1908-1912.

so I went home. It wouldn't be good for people if there were no hospitals or doctors. The people would have died without the doctors.

The first medicine that they brought here was Capsoline, white linament, a rubbing medicine. It burned when you rubbed it on yourself.

AF

Before I was born there was a doctor here whose name was Dr. Rymer. I remember a small little Sister who used to help Dr. Boruget. The Sisters looked after the sick people in the hospital.

The people were happy when the first doctor came into the area because they didn't know what their little children were dying of before that. I guess these little kids had been dying of TB, but no one knew what it was before the doctors came. When they built the hospital here, there were over sixty patients sick in there with TB. When people had TB they stayed a long time in the hospital. Some people were sent out to Edmonton for TB and they were lonesome. I guess they hadn't found good medicine for TB in those days so that was why the people used to stay in the hospital for a long time. Now the people don't stay in the hospital when they have TB.

The first medicine that I saw was a rubbing medicine called Sloans. I remember white linament, too, that was a rubbing linament. They also used Pain Killer, it was really good, that's what they used for colds.

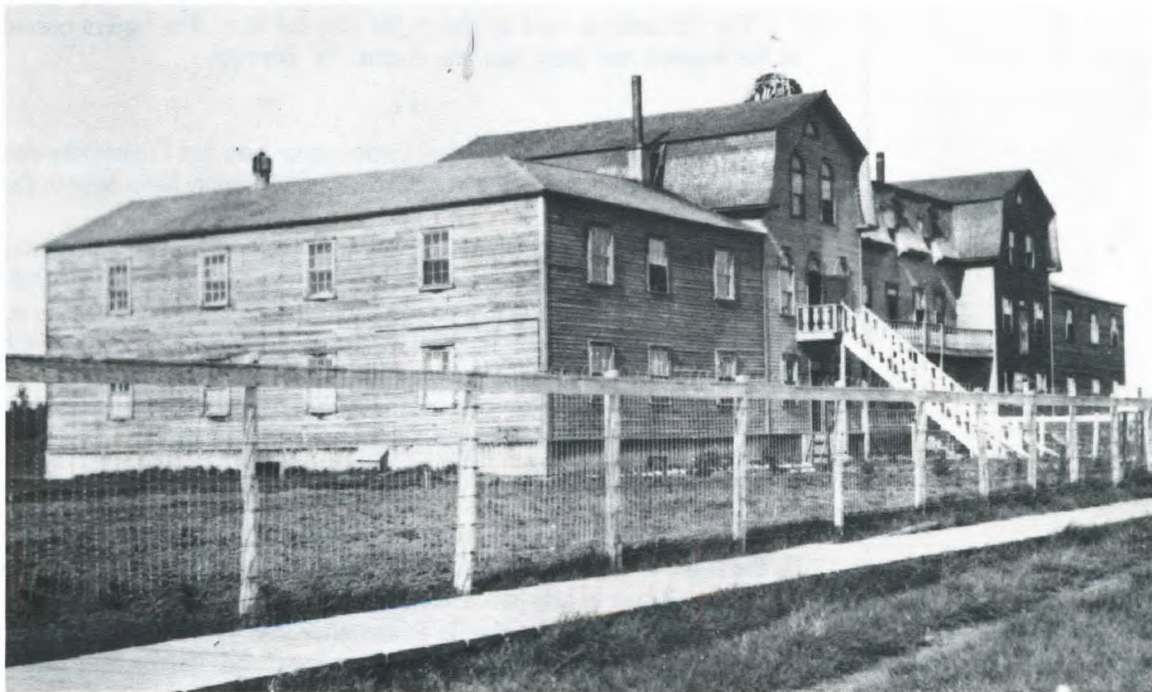
When they first brought medicines here the Metis had to pay for medicines and pills. We used to pay for our children being born in the Mission hospital too. I paid twenty five dollars for my children to be born. The Sisters looked after my wife in the hospital.

RF

I remember when we lived at Little Buffalo River that we came to town in the summer. My mom got work with Dr. Bourget and my dad worked for him too. That was the first time that I saw a doctor.

I was in the hospital with TB one year. That was when they used to take the people to the hospital in Fort Smith because there was no TB hospital here then. Kids and lots of people died with TB. They would get sick for a long time and then die.

The old Mission hospital.



JG

Now, everyone has a good chance to live because there is good medicine and they take good care of people in the hospital. It wasn't like that before because we had to look after the sick people ourselves. Before my dad died he was really sick and I looked after him myself. I also looked after my mother when she died. I looked after them, but still they died. I guess they knew they wouldn't live. My dad died of pneumonia in Rat River.

The first medicine that they brought here was rubbing medicine. They called it Capsoline. That was the best medicine that we had in those days. When you rubbed it on your skin it burned. Some people didn't want to use Indian Medicine after the doctor brought medicines here, but my dad made medicine for the people and he cured a lot of people.

In the old days, people would get sick and stay sick for a long time, it affected their lungs. We didn't know what it was but I guess it was Tuberculosis, we know that now. They would be sick for a long time and then die.

PH

In the old days, there was no doctor. People used to die pitifully. When people got sick they died, now they have some hope with the doctor. I remember when Dr. Rymer came here, but I don't know what year it was.

I stayed in the Mission hospital, here in Fort Resolution, for two years for TB. My wife stayed at the Charles Camsell Hospital, in Edmonton, for four years with TB.

JJ

I was a kid when the people first started using whiteman's medicine. There were ointments, cough medicine and aspirin. The doctor's medicine was good. Indian Medicine was good too but some people didn't know how to use it.

In the bush, while I was hunting for beaver, I shot myself in the arm. I had to have an operation — they cut my arm off.

FK

I stayed in the Edmonton Hospital for six months, with TB. They took me to the hospital June 5th and they brought me back December 20th.

MLK

When we lived in Rocher River, there were a lot of people sick with TB so they were brought to the hospital in Fort Resolution. They were taken good care of but some of them were sick for a long time and only then they got cured.

VL

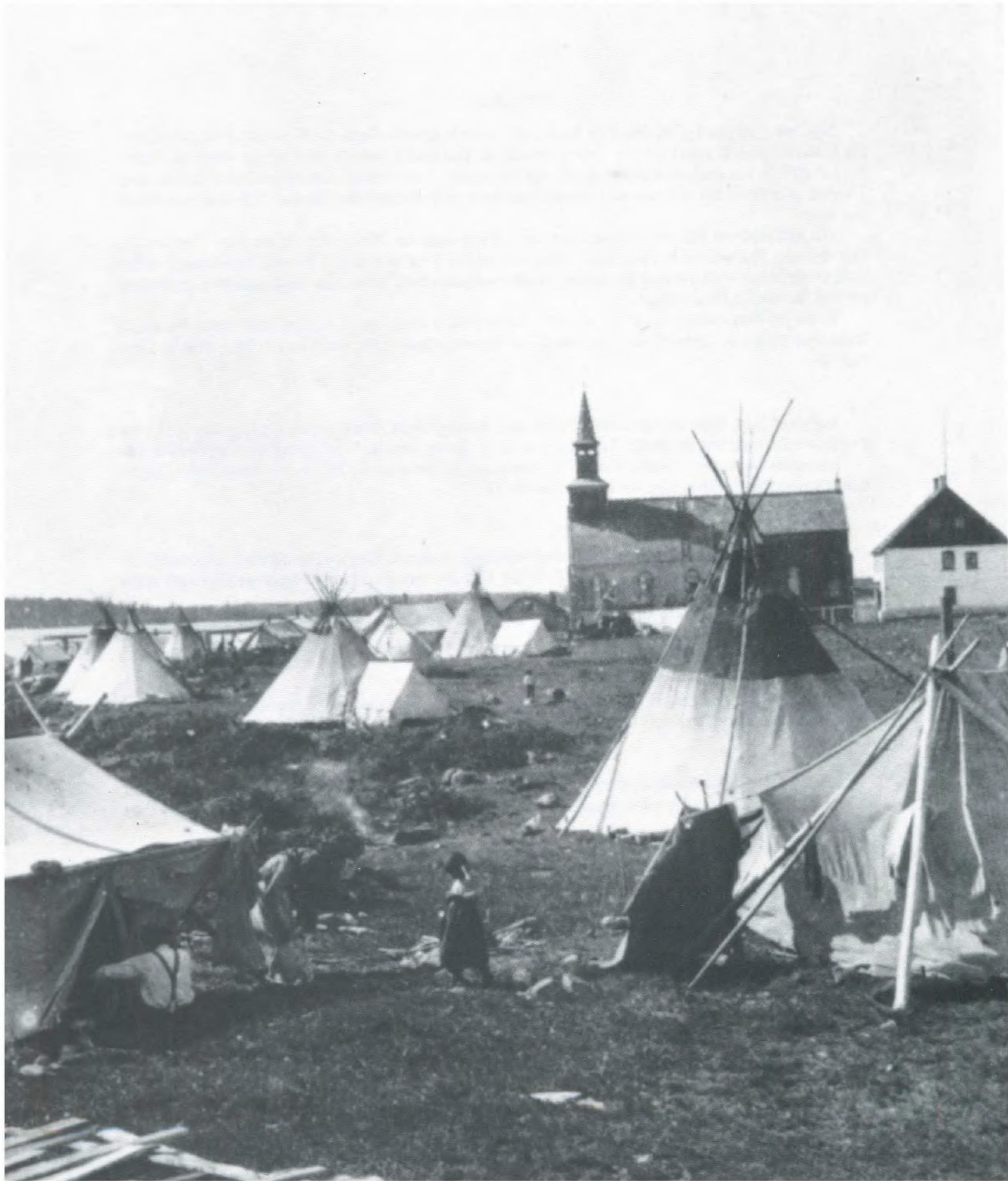
There was a doctor by the name of Rymer who looked after an orphan named Harry. After that they called the orphan Harry Rymer.

In the old days people used to eat only wild meat from the land, but now all the people in town eat canned meat. That is why they get sick easily. In the old days, there was hardly any sickness around.

GS

The first white medicine that we had was Painkiller. We would put three or four drops on a sugar cube and take it for a cold. When we were tired we would put a little bit in water and drink it. It was really good.

Dr. Rymer was the first doctor here. He was old when he came here. He stayed here quite a while but I don't remember how long. He was a good doctor. When people were sick he would take them and look after them really good. He was the doctor who raised Harry Rymer, that was where Harry got the Rymer from.





Influenza Epidemic, July, 1928

HB

We were in Hay River the year of the Flu Epidemic. It took mostly the old people. It didn't affect the younger generation. We were kids and we didn't catch it. It was bad. It took a lot of the old people away. They just couldn't stand it. It was brought here from down south. The Flu was down south and it travelled with the fellows on the boats. I guess some of the deck hands had the Flu.

PB

The big sickness was the Flu. I was either nine or ten years old when the big sickness started. People died every day. A lot of people got sick and about half of them died. My grandfather, Hilaire Frise, and my grandfather, Henry Buggins, died during the sickness. It was the only time that a lot of people died because of the Flu. After that the Flu wasn't that bad.

VB

A lot of people died with the Flu. Every day people died here. They buried three or four bodies a day. I remember that. I don't know what caused the sickness. My father-in-law, old man Paul Beaulieu, went down to Edmonton and when he came back he got sick with that Flu. The doctor told the people not to go see him. I wanted to go see him and shake hands with him but the doctor wouldn't let me. Just the same, all the people started to get sick.

The sick people couldn't cook for themselves so other people used to make soup for them.

VC

I remember the big sickness, it was in 1928. My mother died with that big sickness.

When the people were sick here with that big sickness, some people went back to Rocher River. A lot of people died while they were travelling back to Rocher River. A lot of people died when they stopped at Stoney Island. They buried them there. Some of the people were from Rocher River and some of them were from east of there. They didn't even get home, they died before they got there.

IE

The big sickness came in the summer. Everybody got sick. Almost every day people died off. There were a lot of people living in tents along the shore and my friend and I used to walk around and look in the tents. I was a young boy at that time. I was sick with the Flu for five days. It was a strong Flu. Nobody knew what caused it.

An old man named William Clawhammer made coffins every day. I think five people died in one day.



Steamship "Distributor" docked at Fort Resolution.

AF

I remember the big sickness really well. Old man William Clawhammer made coffins for the people every day, because the people were dying off so fast. Jim Mason ran a little cafe, so the doctor hired him to make soup for the sick people in town. He passed soup and bread around, but some of the old people would be dead already. Catherine King didn't know that her parents were dead because they were just laying there.

The sickness started in summertime when everyone came to town for Treaty, so a lot of people got sick. Some of the people left town and they died on their way back home so they are buried at Jean River and Stoney Island. A lot of people died in Rocher River and Rat River, too. Not one of my relatives died with that sickness.

There was one doctor here, Dr. Bourget. He made house calls with the Sisters helping him, but still the people died off. Five people died in one day with that sickness. A lot of people died. (Fifty four people died in July 1928 in this area.)

CF

A lot of people died in the big Flu in 1928. I was in Fort Providence at that time and I didn't have that sickness. Sometimes four people would die at once and there would be no one to bury them so the Brothers would help.

RF

I was nine years old when a big sickness came here. Everybody came to town for Treaty and the sickness was around and lots of people died. That's the time that I lost my mom. My mom spit blood and she was sick for a long time and then she died.

JG

A long time ago there was a big sickness. It started by catching a cold and then the people got real sick. They died off. My grandmother was the only one who died in our family.

The Flu started when the people gathered in Fort Resolution to watch the first steamboat come in. It came in and the next day you didn't see anyone walking around town, they were all sick.

PH

Edward Jones had to go to court so the white people came in from outside for the court. Maybe that's how the sickness got here. We believe that the white people brought the sickness here. It wasn't good. My father died from the Flu and a lot of my family. Some people really suffered with it before they died.

JJ

I was about fifteen when they had that big sickness. It was the Flu. It was years back when I came in for Treaty with my grandfather. One old man got sick and then everybody got sick. People were dying and finally even the food we ate didn't taste good, so we left here. Everyone had come here for Treaty from all over, the Slaveys too. Maybe they brought the Flu here.

When the people left Fort Resolution, some of them died at the Slave River and some at Stoney Island. When we got back to Rocher River everybody had that sickness. I was sick but I played in the water and I got better. My grandfather was sick and he was getting worse so I told him that I got better with water. I put water in a saucepan and I washed him and I changed his clothes and he fell asleep. When he woke up he felt better. He didn't die with the Flu.

FK

There was a big Flu that came to the north and killed a lot of people. Before that big sickness came, there was no sickness, nothing. The whiteman brought the sickness from outside. The boat came in and some people went to visit the people on the boat and after that they got sick. My family was really sick with it but they got better.

VL

When I was about fifteen or sixteen years old there was a big sickness and almost all my mother's brothers and sisters died at the same time. A lot of people died in 1928. Myself and Willie Norm used to dig graves for the people then. We worked for almost two weeks steady digging graves.

GS

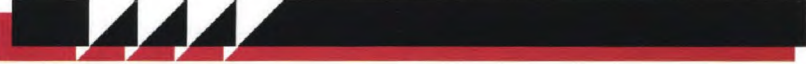
I didn't know what kind of sickness was around but I used to walk down to the wharf where there were a lot of people camped along the lakeshore. There were tents and tipis. Some of those people were moaning and laying by the door as I passed there. It was so hot. By the time that I got back home I would hear that some of these people had died already. I thought that everyone would die like that.

They would bury three or four people at a time, every day. William Clawhammer used to bury the people, him and Willie Norm and Pierre Smith. Sometimes I helped them dig graves. William Clawhammer made the coffins for the people.

I was staying by myself at that time and I thought the whole town was going to die off. I lost uncles and aunts from the Flu.



L *Leisure Time*



PB

The people used to sing and dance. They used to have drum dances in town and when the white men played the violin they would have square dances.

VC

Sometimes the people from Fort Resolution would come to Little Buffalo River to have a dance. The people would make a big feast and everyone would come there to dance.

IE

Sometimes they used to drum dance but not very often. They used to drum dance only on big days. Sometimes the people sang with no drums and the people danced.

HB

In the old days there was just drum dancing, then later on we had a lot of fiddle dances in the restaurant. We had a lot of hand games, especially in the summer when the people came in for Treaty. They played hand games and gambled all day long, then towards evening there would be a tea dance.

In the evening, mother and dad played double solitaire. It was funny, dad used to beat her all the time and mother would get mad. They also used to play checkers. Dad would beat mother all the time and she would get mad and she would start throwing checkers at my dad who would be "ducking them checkers". In those days men used to wear vests. When my dad went to bed after a checker game he would unbutton his vest and "all them checkers" would fall out of his vest.

RF

My uncle knew how to tell old timer stories. We would ask him to tell us a story and he would sit down and talk for two or three hours. My aunt used to tell stories too.

JG

In the old days, there was hardly any dancing, only on New Years Day. The people would go to Rocher River and they would have a dance. In those days there were a lot of people in Rocher River.

FK

There were drum dances and drum games before. I used to drum for the people and they would dance. When I was in Fort Smith we used to do that. When the old man Pierre Bisaye was in Fort Smith, the people would gamble with drums when they came home from spring hunt.

Harold Balsillie who was born in 1917, is seen here relaxing in his log home.

VL

When I was young and there was no work to do we used to go out to set rabbit snares and go out hunting. That was how we passed the time in the bush. Sometimes the old people would sit around and tell stories to the people and the people would listen to them. In between stories they would play checkers, that was what they used to do for fun.

Only in the spring time, when the people came to town, would they sing and dance and gamble and play hand games. They didn't play games for money, they played for tobacco or matches or little things like that. They used to throw lead shots for little matches. Sometimes they would play with shots all day and the people who didn't play shots would have hand games. Some of them would go to drum dances and dance all night while the others were playing checkers and lead shots.

GS

In the spring time, the people came for Treaty at the end of June from Rocher River, Snowdrift and Yellowknife. When they came for Treaty they had drum dances and they played games.

Virginie Calumet, born in 1913 at Stoney Island, enjoys playing cards in her leisure time.



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W N W eather



AF

In the old days they knew how to tell weather by watching the sunset and the skies. They could tell the weather ahead of time; they would know if it was going to be warm or cold by watching the moon. Some old people, even old ladies, knew how to tell the weather by watching the moon and the sunset. People used to ask each other what the weather would be like the next day. They needed to know what the weather would be like, especially if they were going to travel in a boat. They had to know if the winds would blow the next day.

JJ

Some people used to watch the weather. They knew what the weather would be like by watching the clouds. If the sun had spots on both sides of it, in the evening, then it would be cold. If the spots were there in the morning, it would be warm. They knew if it was going to snow, so they wouldn't go to check their traps if it was going to snow.

MLK

Some people watched the sunset in the sky. If the sunset was real red then they said that there would be warm weather. If they saw black clouds beside the sunset, that meant that there would be bad weather.

Some people could tell what the weather would be like by feeling it in their bones or their body. If they had sore bones or if they felt tired, they knew that was going to be bad weather.

VL

Sometimes I listened to the people talking about the weather. In the old days, all the elders gathered around to argue about the sunset and the skies. They would argue about whether it was going to be warm or cold or things like that. The only person who really knew about the weather was Antoine Beaulieu, Henry Beaulieu's dad. He would watch the sunset and everything in the skies and whatever he told the people about the weather would come true.

GS

There was an old Slavey lady, Charlotte Sarcelle, whose son, Henry Jones, used to work on a boat with me. She used to tell us that if it is windy and you see little clouds moving like the waves then the wind is going to go down in the morning. In the winter, if you see light pink clouds and pink sky with a little bit of white clouds on it, that means there will be snow in the morning. Sometimes there is no wind but there are big waves coming to shore, that means that there will be a big wind.

NY

The old people used to watch everything. They watched the sky and they even watched the moon. If there was a new moon and it was facing upwards, they would say that cold weather was coming. If the new moon was facing downwards, they would say that warm weather is coming.

Every night when the sun set, they would be able to tell the weather too. They could tell the weather by the color of the sky. They knew if it was going to rain or snow or be windy. If it was kind of cloudy in front of the moon, that meant bad weather, maybe snow. In winter time, if there were white spots on both sides of the sun, that meant real cold weather, and it would stay cold for a long time. The old people always knew what kind of weather was coming.

Fred Dawson, born in 1916, saws wood in preparation for the long winter ahead.





reams and Ghosts

AF

I heard something like a ghost one time. We were staying at John Cree's old house in Rocher River and Madeleine Houle's house was next door. Michel Yelle lived in Madeleine's house with his family. One night when Michel wasn't home and there was nobody there, my mother went outside and she could hear something in that house next door. "I thought there was nobody there", she said. So we all went out and listened and we heard a new born baby crying. There was nobody there but still we heard a little baby crying. After that, in the winter time, Michel Yelle and his family went out to the Barren Lands and one of his little kids died. I heard that a wolf went inside his tent and killed one of his little boys. That was the only time that I heard something like that.

JJ

One time, when I was trapping alone in the bush, in wintertime, I heard a dog team coming. I heard the dog bells. I was so happy that I put more wood on the fire at my camp. The noise kept coming closer, then it stopped. No one came. In the morning, when I left, I didn't see any tracks on the trail. I believe that what I heard was a ghost.

MLK

I dream sometimes. Before I got my Old Age Pension, I dreamt about a whiteman who really liked me. After that I got my first Pension cheque. Sometimes I dream about something and it comes true. If one of my relatives is going to die I dream about it before it happens.

I had a dream about my husband a year after he died. He told me that he was going to leave me, so I asked him not to go away from me because I would be left all alone. He told me that he wouldn't worry about me anymore, even though I lived alone. He was walking on a really long road and I was holding him by the hand and walking with him on that road. While we were walking on the road we saw a little house so we went into the house and I woke up.

Sometimes, if something bad was going to happen to a family, the people would see something like a ghost. One time when I was young, I was visiting rat traps with another young girl and we heard a noise. We stopped and looked around and we saw three people paddling in a canoe. The other girl, Louise Louine, who later became Louis Beaulieu's wife, said that we should follow the canoe a little further up the river to see who was inside the canoe. We could see them paddling and we could hear people talking, but nobody came. I guess they were ghosts. That same year my grandmother and her brother died.

Sometimes you don't see ghosts but you hear them. My son told me, when his dad died, that he and his brother were sitting in their house and they heard someone walk up to them and stop. They didn't see anything there, they just heard someone walking.

VZ

When I dream about something it always comes true. Since last summer, I knew that I was going to live until fall because I dreamed about it. I also know ahead of time if anyone in my family is going to die.

GS

If you dream about something it will come true. If I dream about killing a moose, it comes true. A lot of times my dreams came true. If I had a dream that I was cutting up fresh meat, I'd kill a moose that day. If I didn't go out and hunt after I dreamt about meat, then we would get a little piece of meat from someone else.





Storytelling

VB

One time, there was a bunch of people living in one place. There were three sisters staying there. Someone asked the first sister, "Who are you going to marry?" She said, "I'm going to marry a cook so I won't go hungry." Someone asked the second sister, "Who are you going to marry?" She said, "I want to marry a rich person that has a store-a-trader." Then someone asked the third sister, the youngest one, "Who are you going to marry?" She told the people, "I want to marry Crow."

Later her dad told her, "You want to marry Crow, well Crow wants you right now." So her dad took her to where there was a little pond and left her there. When night came, she went to sleep. When she woke up, she was in a house with all kinds of things in it. There was everything in this house. Crow was a person, he only became a crow once in a while.

So the girl and Crow stayed together like that. Crow gave his wife a key for the house, but there was one room that Crow told her not to go in. He told her not to let anyone go in that room. The other two sisters used to laugh at her because she had married a crow, but when they went to see their sister's house, they said, "You sure live in a nice house." They wanted to see the locked room so they looked around for the key and they found it and they opened the door to the room. They saw in that room that the crow killed people and put them in that room. The sisters dropped the key in the blood and picked it up and tried to clean the blood off, but the blood wouldn't come off of the key.

When the young sister's husband came home, he asked for the key, so she gave him the key and he saw the blood on it. "I told you not to let anyone in that room," he said. His wife said, "My sisters took the key from me and I couldn't stop them" Crow said, "I won't live with you anymore", and he became a crow again and flew away. His wife tried to grab him but only tore a feather from his wing. Crow flew away from her.

So his wife started walking to look for her husband. She walked a long way. She got to a place where an old lady was living by herself. She asked the lady if she had seen her husband. "No", said the old lady, "all I saw was a crow. It flew by here not very long ago."

So the young sister kept walking until she found another old lady. That lady said the same thing that she had seen a crow fly by. She said that the crow went across the ocean. The old lady knew that the wife wanted to follow the crow, so she said, "I'll send for an eagle." The old lady gave the wife some bannock and told her, "If the eagle gets tired, feed him a little piece of bannock." So the wife sat on the eagle and the eagle took her across the ocean. Every time the eagle started to tire and fall, the wife would put a little piece of bannock in his mouth. If he got too close to the water, she gave him more bannock. When the eagle finally landed, he flew back to the old lady right away.

There was another old lady where the wife landed. The wife asked her if she had seen her husband. The old lady thought a while and said, "It must be that man who is supposed to get married, but you can't see him because his fiancée keeps him in the house. She put him to bed and he is still sleeping. If you want to see him, go there and say that you want to see your husband." When she said that, she gave the wife something to hold in her hand. The wife went there and cried and cried at the door, but no one answered her. So she went back to see the old lady and said that her husband was still sleeping, she couldn't wake him up. So the old lady gave her something else to hold in her hand. The wife went back and tried to wake up her husband, but still she couldn't, so she returned to the old lady. The old lady gave her a little doll this time and told her, "If you take this to your husband and he doesn't wake up, then I can't help you."

This time, when the wife went back to the door, the fiancée opened it for her. The wife said, "I want to see my husband." So the fiancée let her in and the wife saw her husband. Her husband said, "I was going to marry another girl but you followed me all this way. The people here are having a party, they are all gathered together. You should go there."

So the wife went to the party. She told the people that her husband had come here and that she had followed him. So the father of the fiancée asked that man to come. He took a ring off of the man's finger and dropped it into a cup of water and the father saw that the name of the man's wife was written on that ring. So he knew that the woman was telling the truth.

The father said to that man, "If you had a lock with an old key and I offered you a brand new key, which key would you want — the old one or the new one?" The crow said, "I'd keep the old key because I know that it works." "Well then," said the father, "you can take your wife back, too. You can't marry my daughter."

So the crow took his wife back again and never married that other girl.

People say that it is no good when you hear a squirrel at night. They say that it means bad news. If a crow caws at night, that means bad news, too.

I heard a squirrel when we were staying at Deskataway Lake. My sister-in-law, Mary Rose Beaulieu, was living there with me. I was fed up with that squirrel making noise at night, so I took a little gun and shot at him. I shot him and he fell out of the tree. He fell right beside me and I started laughing. After that, Mary Rose's dad died, and one of her brothers died, and her sister-in-law died, too. Three of them died.

AF

The old man, Honore McKay, told me a story. One time, he was hired to walk from Big Buffalo River to Paulette Creek, where the old man Paulette used to stay. They were about half way to Paulette Creek when they shot a moose. They cut up the moose and left it there and they went to the old man Paulette. Paulette told them that the lake had started freezing along the shore, so he gave them two dogs and one sleigh to go to Fort Resolution to get some tobacco and tea. They came to town here and they gave the Hudson Bay manager the moose that they had killed. So the Hudson Bay manager sent Michel Mandeville, who was working for the Bay, back with them to the bush for the meat. They gave the moose hide to old man Paulette's wife, so the old man went out to get it. That was a long way and a long time ago. They did that just to go and get some tobacco.

FK

The old people used to say that when there are a lot of rabbits all of a sudden, that the rabbits landed from the sky. That's hard to believe.

Moose sleep in the water, this is true. One time in Rocher River, Samuel Simon and I went out to hunt. We stopped where there was a stand of poplar and we went into the bush there. We shot a moose and we returned for the meat the next day. It was calm that day. It wasn't too far in the bush so we paddled our canoe. While we were paddling we saw a moose floating in the water. He was alive so we went there and shot him. People used to say that moose sleep underneath the water. Maybe they come from under the water.

My dad's father, Joseph King, used to work for the government. He made a trip to the Beaufort Sea on a boat with the government people. That was the time that some people working for the government went out travelling and they were missing. So they took my grandfather on a boat to look for the missing people.

They went towards Eskimo Land where they said there were hairy Eskimos. I guess a long time ago a boat broke down up there and the white people couldn't leave that place. An Eskimo woman gave a woman to each of those men and they had children from the white men. The children had hair on their chests so they were called hairy Eskimos. Only white people have hairy chests.

My grandfather knew the way over there, so they went and they found the missing people and brought them home. The Eskimos didn't kill the missing government people — they came home before they got killed.

When my wife died, we went way out east to trap. We went trapping but there was no fur. We caught only one red fox before Christmas. Everyone was talking about going further east, so I told them that I wanted to go with them. I had to go back to tell my mother-in-law, who was looking after my children, that I was going to go east again. I left for Big Fish Lake but when I got there the others had left.

That same night it started to snow and it snowed all night and through the next day. Louis Mercredi met me there at Big Fish Lake. Louis said that he would show me where to go. He wrote on the snow to show me where the little lakes were because we didn't have maps in those days. Then we went our separate ways. I came to a big road so I went on that road. I saw light in a house so I stopped there. My friends were there, they had stayed there one night to give their dogs a rest. The next day we stopped at Pierre Casaway's house. Before we left there we decided that we would stay out for four nights and that we would meet each other back at Pierre's house on the fifth night.

I stayed away for four nights and on the fifth night I went back. There was nobody there. As it happened, it had been snowing when we left the house so the others had gone back the first night to camp in the house. That night they decided to go back to Fort Smith. I was left all alone. I had no dog food and I didn't have any nets with me. The next day I got lucky, I saw caribou tracks. I figured that the caribou wouldn't walk forever, so I took my snowshoes and my gun and I followed them. I came out on a prairie and at first I didn't see the caribou right there, eating. I shot three times and they all went down. There were three caribou on the ground. I went back to get my dogs. I put two caribou in the sleigh and I tied one behind the sleigh. As soon as I got back to Pierre's house, I cut the caribou up and I fed my dogs. I was lucky to shoot three caribou there.

MLK

One time a family killed a moose in the bush. They heard a noise in the bush so they got scared and they wanted to move back home. They made a stage and they put all their meat and dry meat on top of the stage. It was late in the fall so they left their meat there. They were going to go back for their meat in the winter time. Later, after the river froze, they went up there with a dog team to get some meat but there was no meat left. Someone had taken the whole works. There was an old man who lived on the river and he told those people that the kidnappers had probably taken all the meat. I guess the kidnappers took everything.

After my husband died, my son Frank told me a story about his dad. Frank said that when he travelled in the bush with his dad, his dad taught him how to melt snow for drinking water when he didn't have a boiling pot. He showed him how to cut out frozen snow and put it on the end of a willow and stand it up by the fire. As soon as the snow started to melt and drip, they put a cup underneath to catch the water.

One time, Frank was staking claims in the Barren Lands with some other people. The other guys were picked up but they didn't pick Frank up because they didn't see him. The plane was flying around and he could hear the plane, but they couldn't see Frank. He stayed there overnight and he did what his father taught him. He was thirsty so he got some snow to melt for water, but he didn't have anything to eat. He had to camp there overnight so he made a little spruce house like his dad had taught him. His dad had told him that if he didn't have a tent and he had to stay overnight in the bush, that he should make a little shelter with spruce. He made a fire and he stayed underneath that shelter overnight. The next morning the plane flew over him and saw him so they picked him up. He would have frozen if his dad hadn't taught him how to make a shelter.

VL

One time, they took me out of school because my uncle came here from Fort Simpson to hunt rats. They didn't want him to hunt alone so I went out hunting with him. We went to Deskataway Lake to trap beaver.

He would go out to hunt all by himself and leave me on an island because he knew I was scared to stay alone. Sometimes he would stay out for two nights and then he would come back. We started to come back home when the beaver season was closed. We stopped at Rat River, then at Rocher River. In those days there were a lot of people in Rocher River. After my uncle went to the store to buy things, we left right away. The ice was still on the lake so we had to wait on our way back here. We were ice bound for about a week. After the ice went out we passed through Jean River and after that we came back here. After we got back home my uncle gave me twenty five dollars. Before we left here to hunt beaver he had bought me a gun, so that spring I earned a gun and twenty five dollars.

GS

A family was hunting for caribou and they came to a place where there were a lot of caribou tracks and they could hear a little baby crying. When the young girls went to look for the crying baby, the baby would stop crying and they couldn't find him. Then an old lady went to look for the baby and the baby cried until the old lady found him. She found the baby amongst the caribou tracks and she took the baby home. The young girls kept asking the old lady if they could hold the baby, but as soon as they took the baby he would stop breathing. So the old lady raised the baby all by herself.

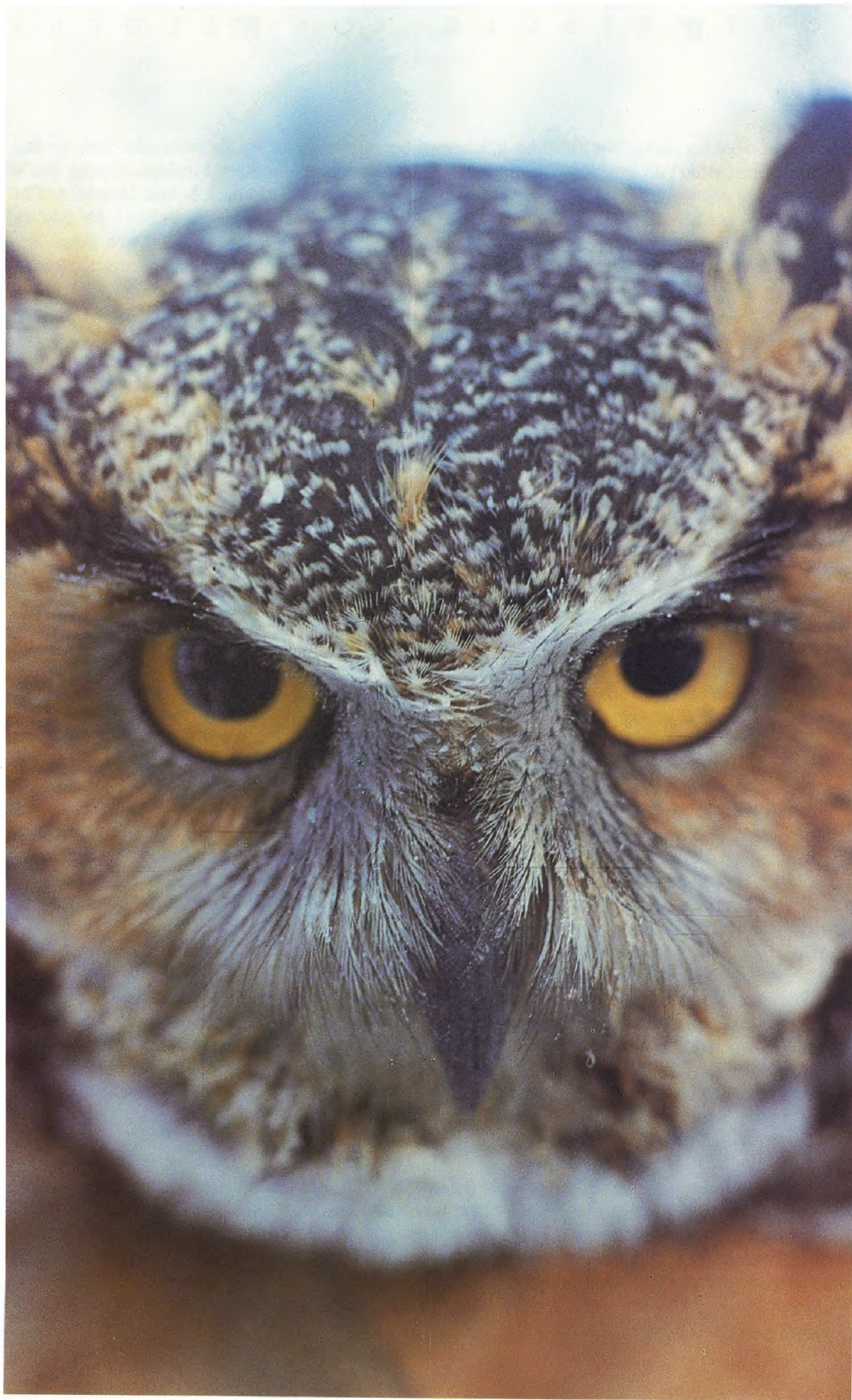
The old lady had three sons who were the baby's uncles. Every time her sons would kill a caribou, the baby would ask for the bone marrow. Finally, one of the uncles said, "He's not the only kid around here, but he always gets the bone marrow. He's not going to get anymore of that bone marrow." The baby got mad and told his mother, "We are not going to go anyplace. We are going to stay right here."

When the other people were leaving and going away, the little boy and his mother stayed behind. When everyone had left, he told his mother to make a fire and burn all the tipi poles that his uncles had left standing. So his mother did what she was told. After everything was burned, he told his mother to take him to where the fire was. Some of the burn poles looked just like caribou hooves. He told his mother, "There are caribou hooves here." He also said to his mother, "My uncles are going to have lots of meat. Some of them went different ways, so some of them will have nothing to eat."

After three nights, he told his mother to follow the people. So they did. The old lady packed the little boy all the time, wherever they went. He told his mother to make a hole in the ice and put a hook in the water. So she did that. The little boy laid down beside his mother while she fished with a hook. Then he told her, "There is a different colored coat that somebody is wearing and he is coming to us." So the old lady looked and there was a fish on the hook. When she took the hook out of the fish, she saw that it was a trout. He said the same thing he said before about the different colored coat and when she pulled out the hook she had caught a jackfish and a big one, too. He told his mother, "Leave it now, we have enough fish." His mother wanted to take him home but he didn't want to go with her. He just stayed there on the ice.

The old lady went up to the shore and went on land. She made a fire. The old lady went to bed crying, after she had made the fire. She fell asleep and then she felt something cold on her chest, so she woke up. The little boy had his hand on his mother's chest. He was wearing a little pair of mitts and his whole arm was full of ice. After the old lady got up in the morning, she made a fire. The boy told her to go ahead to a lake not too far from where they were. He said that he had played with a caribou and after he was finished playing with the caribou, he had killed the caribou. He told his mother to cut up the meat. When the old lady got to the lake, she saw a whole bunch of caribou dead on the ice. The little boy had killed the caribou by putting his hand inside the caribou's mouth. He told his mother to cook caribou for him, so the old lady did. Then she skinned and cut up all the caribou. Once in a while the boy would make a noise like he was crying. So the old lady went back to see him and there was a little whiskeyjack eating the head of the caribou with him and that was why he was crying.

It got dark towards night. The boy told his mother to make a pair of snowshoes for him. So she made little snowshoes for him. When the old lady fell asleep, the little boy took off again. The old lady got up at



night and followed his tracks. She found his little snowshoes on the tracks. By his tracks, she knew he had gone away. She couldn't do anything. The old lady had a lot of meat so she started making drymeat. While she was making drymeat, she saw the boy walking on the ice. When he came back he told his mother that he had gone to see his uncles. He had found their rabbit snares and had left his tracks there. He told his mother that his uncles were going to find his tracks and they were going to come to stay with them.

When his uncles went to visit their rabbit snares they crossed some caribou tracks and followed the tracks. When they got to the last tracks, they saw the tracks of a little young caribou. Right away they knew it was the tracks of the little boy, so they followed the tracks. They followed the tracks and found a bear sleeping in a hole.

I guess that the little boy told his mother that his uncles were going to be okay because they would find meat on the way. He had led them to that bear.

When my grandfather was a young boy, a Cree or kidnapper stole a young kid at Big Buffalo River. They hired Honore McKay to look for the kidnapper. Honore told the people that he couldn't go alone, so they got a Slavey to help him look for the boy.

The people gathered around my grandfather beside Big Buffalo River. He dreamed that there were two kidnappers and in his dream he saw where the kidnappers had crossed the river with the little boy. Honore and the Slavey went to the place where the kidnappers had crossed the river and from there they could see the kidnappers. Using Indian Medicine, Honore put the kidnappers to sleep. Before they fell asleep, they tied the little boy to a tree. While the kidnappers were asleep, Honore told the little boy to come. He tried to come but he was tied up with a rope. Honore went up and cut the rope with a little wire and took the boy back to the river shore. Then he brought the little boy back home. My grandfather said that when Honore grew old he couldn't do things like that anymore.

My grandfather told me a story about a man who was hunting in the bush. He got lost and he met a bear. He stayed with the bear all summer and ate berries and everything with the bear. The man and the bear came to a little creek and the bear said, "Do you hear the rapids over there? That is where my house is." The bear told the man to come home with him and sleep with him, so the man did. The bear's house was a long way from where they were, so it took them five days to walk there.

When it became colder in the fall, the bear put hay inside his house because it was where he was going to stay all winter. After the hole was prepared with hay, the bear went in with the man and told the man to sleep behind him. The man did what he was told to do. At first he was a little scared of the bear and after that he fell asleep. It didn't seem that long to the man when the bear woke him up and gave him a fish tail to eat. The man ate the fish and went back to sleep again. Once in a while, during the winter, the bear would wake the man up and give him some more fish to eat.

When it got warm out, the bear told the man, "They are going to kill me tomorrow. People are going to come here and kill me." The bear then told the man to put his hand on the soft snow to make a hand print. The man did what he was told. The next day the people came there. The bear and the man could hear the people outside, talking about the human hand print. The bear told the man to go out and tell the people that the bear was in the hole and that the man should go with the people. The bear also told him that when he got home, he should put the fat and grease of a bear on a fire. So when the man got home he put bear grease on a fire and he stood beside the smoke until the smoke covered him. Then the man went back to normal again.

GS

There was a funny old man, by the name of Rabesca, who liked to joke. He told me this story. He said that his uncle Baptiste told him that he didn't have very many dogs, only three. Baptiste asked Rabesca to give him a few dogs. "I don't have money right now to pay you but later on if I get fur, maybe I'll pay you," he said. "You have a lot of dogs." So Rabesca thought about it for awhile, then said, "Uncle, if you do what I tell you to do, you won't pay for the dogs." Baptiste said, "What do you want me to do?" Rabesca told him, "If you fart 12 times, I'll give you the dogs for nothing." Baptiste asked for one day to prepare. "Sure I can give you time until tomorrow," said Rabesca.

Baptiste went home and came back the next morning. "Rabesca, I'd like to win your bet, that's why I came here," he said. "If you do what I told you to do, you can take all my dogs except the leader," Rabesca replied. "Well I'm going to try. Start counting," he told Rabesca. Rabesca counted 15 times then told Baptiste to go because he was smelling up the house. "You beat me, so take those dogs with their chains and all. How come you are full of air?" asked Rabesca. Baptiste replied, "When you told me to do that I went home and cooked myself some beans and raw bannock and that's what happened. I practised first, then I came here to get the dogs."





chiefs and Treaty Days

HB

Years ago, all of the people used to come to Fort Resolution for Treaty Days. A lot of people came from different communities, such as Rocher River and Snowdrift, to get treaty here. This was the place that treaty was paid to the people.

PB

They vote to choose the chiefs now, but they never used to do that. The people used to think about and talk about who they wanted and that way they would choose a chief. There were two sub-chiefs too.

They treated the treaty people okay but when I was young we weren't allowed to go to the bar and we weren't allowed to drink one cup of brew or whiskey. So I quit being a treaty. I got my own lawyer and I paid my way out of being a treaty. I did that so I could drink liquor, but the liquor was no use. I thought of that only afterwards.

VB

They would get a person who was smart doing things and make him the boss. When the leader told the people to do something, they would do it. I heard that when the leader talked to his people, if they didn't obey him he would punish them.

Francois Sayine used to be a chief and Boniface Boucher, who married Rose Smith, used to be a chief too.

Before they paid treaty some people were hard up. They didn't have very many things for themselves. After the treaty party came up here, the people were a little better off than they were before. They got rations, like a little bag of flour, bacon, tea and things like that. They got the rations from the Indian Agent. They also got shells, enough to last them a whole year. They only got rations once a year, at treaty time.

VC

People say that they had the first treaty here in 1900. They chose the chiefs when they paid treaty. If the chief was no good they would change him.

IE

Sometimes there were two or three chiefs. In Little Buffalo River there were two chiefs, Paulette Chandelle and Vital Lamoelle. In Rocher River there was one chief, Joseph Baptiste.

The only time we got rations was at treaty time. They gave out rations once a year, in July, then you wouldn't get anything till the next July. They gave out one cup of bulk tea, a narrow piece of bacon, a little bit of flour, rolled oats and a little bit of powder to make your own shells.

Drum Dance at Treaty Days, 1913.



Treaty payment Fort Resolution, 1903.

AF

They picked out the best man for chief, whoever they thought was smart and could talk for the people. If the people picked out a chief they would go to talk to Dr. Bourget because Dr. Bourget was the JP and Indian Agent. That was how they chose chiefs. It was done the same way when they picked chiefs for Little Buffalo River, Fort Resolution and Jean River.

I remember two Little Buffalo River chiefs whose names were Vital Lamoelle and Paulette Chandelle. After Vital and Paulette died at Little Buffalo River, the old man Pascal Nadjere became the chief, and after that the chief's name was Boniface Alphonse.

In Rocher River the old man, Francois Lockhart, and the old man, Joseph Baptiste used to be chiefs. In Rocher River, the people used to work for the chief.

Alexis Jean Marie Beaulieu used to be a chief and before him his dad was the chief. When his dad died, Alexis took his place as chief and after that Alexis' brother, Johnny Jean Marie Beaulieu, was the chief. They all took turns being chiefs in those days.

The chief was the boss of the people, so all the people used to listen to the chief. The chief would tell the people what to do and the people listened good to the chief. In those days, no one argued, they always agreed.

The metis and treaty families are all related. We are just like one family and we used to help each other in the old days. It's still like that. The Treaty didn't make a difference in how we got along. After the Treaty, the people did whatever they had done before.

PH

Only since the Treaty have they had chiefs. I remember chief Joseph Baptiste — people used to listen to him real good. Whatever the chief told the people, that's how it was.

JJ

The Indian Agent used to give flour, bacon, tea, sugar, raisins, salt, pork, gun powder and tobacco to the old treaty people at the end of every month. Doctor Bourget was the Indian Agent. He gave out gun powder once a year. The young people got rations once a year at treaty time. If you had a lot of kids, you would get a lot of rations. If you didn't have many children you would get less rations.

FK

Before the white man came there were no chiefs. When they first paid treaty they had a meeting and they chose a chief. Since that time, until today, they have had chiefs. They used to have a head chief and a sub-chief. They picked whoever they thought was a smart person, but not women, just men. They didn't vote in those days. They would have a little meeting and pick whoever they thought was smart.

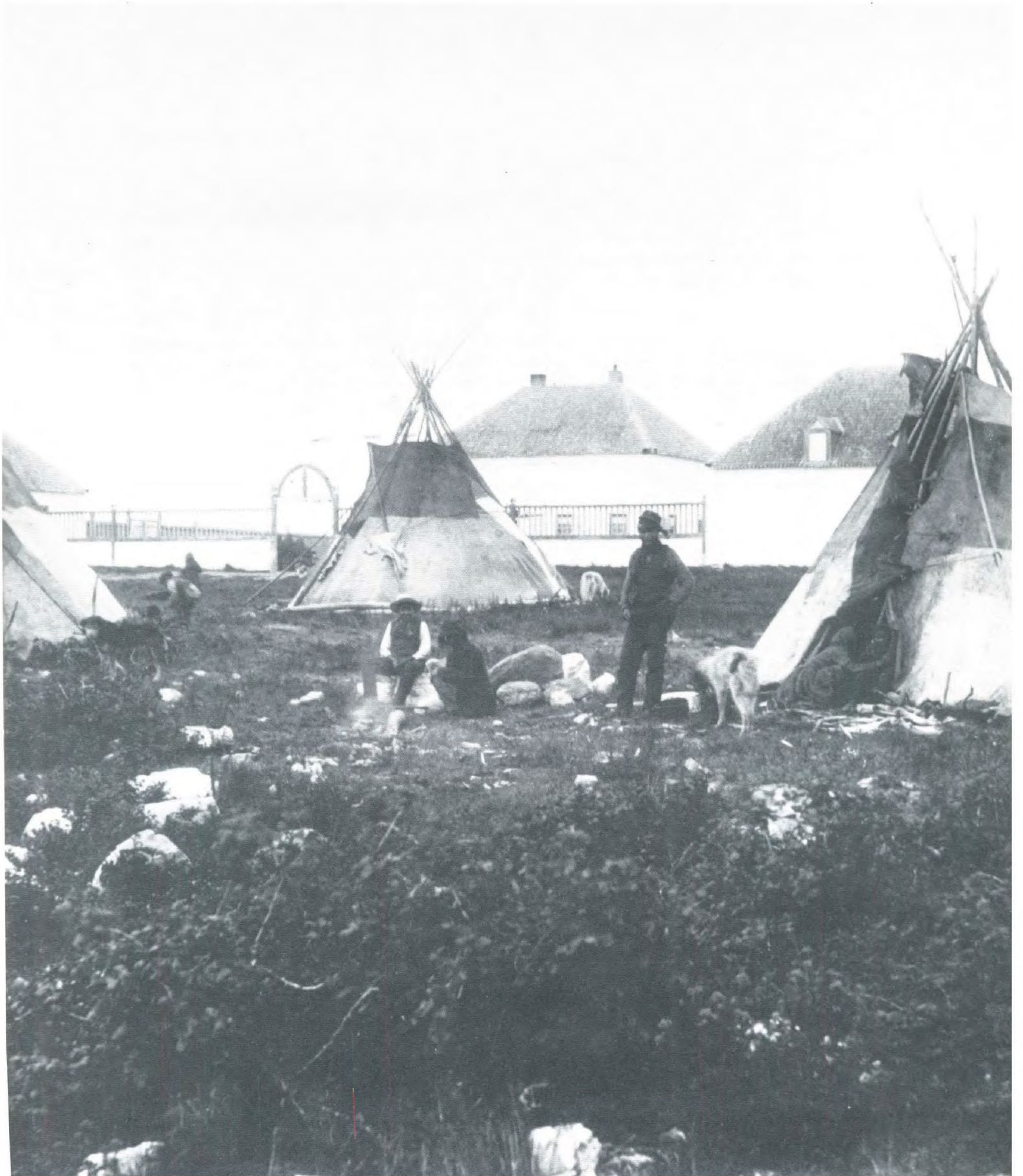
NY

They made chiefs after the white people came, at the time that they first paid treaty. They had sub-chiefs in those days, too. They would choose one elder and make him chief. He talked to the people and the people obeyed him.

People weren't smart in those days, so when they wanted to give out treaty the people said okay. The people didn't even know how to read and write. The people didn't know any better, they just took their treaty money.

Hand Games, Treaty Days, Fort Resolution, 1913.





Final Comments

HB

Yes, I had a pretty good life. I did a lot of travelling and worked on the boats for four seasons. Darn little pay but it brought you a long way. It was a good life going in the bush and living right off the land.

Compared to now it was a different life. I can't tell my kids, "Look here, you're not living right." They wouldn't live the way I lived my life, they wouldn't do it. The world is changing and they have to keep up with it.

PB

If you had all the things you needed to travel with, like good dogs, a hunting canoe and good guns; you could live a good life and your mind would be good. If you didn't have good things it was your own fault.

When I was 18 years old I made my own living. In the fall time I went hunting and in winter time I trapped. In the spring I would go hunting for beaver and rats. That's what I used to do before.

Your body has to be new to go out to do this and that. You have to be young to use snowshoes and make your own roads. Your mind doesn't grow old but your body does. I'm happy to be healthy and well off.

VB

I don't think anything is good for me right now because I am always sick. I get the Old Age Pension now, which is just enough to live on. Sometimes I get short of money because the price of food is so high.

AF

I trapped for a long time and then I started working for the government. I worked all the time until just a few years ago when I retired. I am getting old now so I don't want to go back to live my life over.

RF

When my mother died and I went into the Mission, that was an important thing for me because I lived good in the Mission. I was raised good by the Sisters.

Ever since I got married, my husband has taken good care of me. He treated me good — I had a good life.

JG

In the old days we didn't live like we do now, but it was okay. When my dad was still alive I wasn't short of food. My dad used to make a good living for us.

I'm not very happy today because I'm always sick. I'm in the hospital right now, in a hospital bed telling this story. I wish that I could go home soon.

Skin tips in front of Hudson's Bay Post.

PH

I used to hunt and trap, I used to make my own living, I never used to envy other people. That's how I lived. I had a good life. I used to go in the bush with snowshoes but now I can't do anything. I can't make my own living now, I'm too old.

JJ

The way I lived and what I used to do a long time ago was good for me. I lived in the bush all the time. I used to hunt all the time. I killed all kinds of things and I used to trap. I had lots of fun. Now I stay in town and I am lonesome for the bush. It's a nice life in the bush. I had everything I needed and I never wanted for anything. I would be happy if I lived in the bush like I did before.

FK

The only thing that was important for me was trapping. Trapping was important because you could make money for your children.

It was important to have dogs, too. You could use your dogs to fish and hunt. You could bring a load of meat home with your dog team.

I had a good life. Now, it's different because I can't travel. I would like to go out in the bush to hunt and trap, but I can't.

MLK

When I was living with my first husband, we went out to the Barrenlands and the wind started to blow hard. There were no sticks or wood or trees. We were using one dog team each. When the wind started to blow, we couldn't see a thing and we didn't know where to go. It got dark so we stopped and put up a tent. We had two children with us. We cooked a little piece of meat. Other people were with us but they were travelling ahead of us. My husband went out to look for tracks after he ate. He said he could see tracks, so he thought the people were around somewhere looking for us. There was a big wind so he told me to walk ahead of the dogs but while I was walking the snowshoe broke at my heel. My husband told me to sit on the sleigh, which I did. We had only one little piece of meat left to eat and he didn't have any shells. The dogs were starving because we didn't have any food for them. Then we saw a whole bunch of caribou on the lake. My husband didn't have any shells for his gun so he unhooked two dogs and let them loose. The dogs started fighting the caribou and threw it down. Right away my husband went to kill the caribou with an axe. God gave us food to eat that day because we didn't have anything. It was so cold but I tried to help. All we could find were two little sticks for wood. We stayed there overnight and we left the next day and followed the people ahead of us. We got to where there was a whole bunch of people living together, so we joined them. There was a lot of wood there. We were happy to be back there with the people.

VL

In the old days, I could travel in the winter or summer, anytime I wanted to. I could go my own way, I could do whatever I wanted to. I used to hunt and trap and everything.

GS

The only way I made my living was by trapping. If I wasn't sick, I could make my own living. In the springtime I get a few ducks or geese, but I can't chase moose now because my legs are sore.

NY

I made my own living by trapping and it was good for me. A lot of people did that. The most important thing was trapping. People made a living for their children by hunting, too. Even if it was really cold, we would still go out hunting and trapping because that was the only way we could eat good. That's how we used to live.

**FAMILY TREES
OF**

Isaac Edjericon
Hilaire Frise
Jean Herbert Fabien
Joseph King
Jean Louine
Alphonse Nattaway
Jerome Pierrot
Henry Sanderson
Pascal Smith
Michelle Yelle

Isaac Edjericon
Suzanne Dliedhez 1832-1917

FIRST GENERATION

SECOND GENERATION

THIRD GENERATION

Petit Jean Edjericon 1864-1922
Adele Pierrot

Alice Edjericon 1907-1922
Antoine Beaulieu 1897-1961

Henry Beaulieu
Mary J. Sayine

Rose Ejdericon
Albert Fabien

Eddy Fabien
Lawrence Fabien
Rita Fabien
Henry Fabien
Katie Fabien
Angelina Fabien
Donald Fabien
Georgina Fabien
Helen Fabien

Olivier Edjericon
Suzanne Dziedin

Francois Edjericon 1893-1920

Isadore Edjericon
Margaret Nadjere

Henry Edjericon
Lorette Sanderson
George Edjericon

Adeline Edjericon
Modeste Mandeville

Mary Mandeville
Henry Pierrot
Harvey Mandeville

Paul Edjericon
Madeleine McKay

Judith Edjericon
George Fabien

Clara Fabien
Alexis Lafferty

Victoria Edjericon
Fred Martel

Suzanne Edjericon
Honore McKay

Hilaire Frise

FIRST GENERATION

Paul Frise
Sophie Snuff

Hilaire 1863-1928
Madeleine McKay

SECOND GENERATION

Pierre Frise 1888-1977
Mary Tsanaghe

(later married)
Elizabeth Naghus
Rose Lockhart

Marie Sikiye

Catherine Hilaire 1895-1949
Pierre Nataway

(later married)
Isidore Buggins 1900-1969

Honore Hilaire 1899-1941
Marie Louise Yelle
(later married Philip McKay)

Pierre Hilaire
Bella Smith

Elizabeth Hilaire 1907-1945
William Norn

Alisette Hilaire 1909-1946
Jimmy Pierrot 1906-1961

THIRD GENERATION

Marie Frise
Pierre Smith

Johnny Frise
Rosanna J.M. Beaulieu

Philip (Buggins)
Marie Field

Antoinette (Buggins)
Edward Beaulieu
Jim Buggins
Annette J.M. Beaulieu

Alec Hilaire
Georgina Norn
Alfred Hilaire
Boniface Hilaire

Rosa Norn
William Unka

Henry Pierrot
Mary Mandeville

Jean Herbert Fabien 1828-1856
Anne Nattaway

FIRST GENERATION

SECOND GENERATION

THIRD GENERATION

Honore Fabien 1853-1895
Alisette Mandeville 1859-1933

Marie Fabien 1877-1955
James Balsillie 1877-1940

Johnny Balsillie
Margaret Simon
James Balsillie
Marianne Peter
Harry Balsillie
Yvonne Hugdson
Clarence Balsillie
Annie Lacorde
Ernest Balsillie
Corrine Bouvier
Harold Balsillie
Christine Lafferty
Fred Balsillie
Beatrice Balsillie
Hughes Balsillie

Madeleine Fabien
Joseph Houle

Beatrice Houle
George Daniel
Florence Houle
Loutit

(Joseph later married
Madeleine Cayen)

Sarah Houle
Francois King

Johnny Fabien 1883-1963
Helen Sibbeston

Joseph Fabien
Victoria King
Caroline Erasmus
Marie Rose Fabien
Joseph Tourangeau
Bernadette Fabien
Louis Beaulieu
Frank Fabien
Madeleine Beaulieu
Liza Tourangeau
Albert Fabien
Rose Edjericon
Elizabeth Fabien
Grant Beck
George Fabien
Rosa Lafferty

Helen Fabien
Henry Lafferty

George Fabien
Judith Edjericon

Clara Fabien
Alexis Lafferty

F O R T  R E S O L U T I O N  E L D E R S



FIRST GENERATION

Marie Fabien 1856-1890
Michel Mandeville 1853-1910

SECOND GENERATION

Madeleine Mandeville 1877-1922
Joseph Burke

THIRD GENERATION

Ernestine Burke
Gordon Cumming
Joseph Burke
Adeline Lafferty
James Burke
Mary Jane Shot
Georgina Burke
Dan Hugdson
Yvonne Burke
Harry Balsillie
Madeleine Burke
Peter Evanoff
Fred Gibot

Francois Mandeville
Margaret Lafferty

P.X. Mandeville
Helen Villebrun

Elizabeth Fabien
Victor Mercredi

Xavier Mercredi
Peggy Loutit

Joseph King 1837-191
Marie Anne Flamand

FIRST GENERATION

SECOND GENERATION

THIRD GENERATION

Paul King
Noemie Desportes

Pierre King
Marie Louise Cardinal
Alexis King
Victoria Cardinal

(later married)
Elizabeth Tatadise

Margaret King
Samuel Simon
Francois King
Mary Rose Benwell
Judith Cree

(later married)
Sophie Lafferty

David King

Joseph King
Flora Hope

Moise King
Elizabeth Snuff
Harriet King
Louison Beaulieu
Alexandre King
Veronique Tourangeau
Liza Martin
Francois King
Sarah Houle
Louise Desjarlais
Johnny King
Anne Robillard
Pierre King
Mary Rose McKay
Virginia King
Louison Beaulieu

Louise King
Michel Mandeville

Emerence Mandeville
Gus Collins
Pascal Beaulieu

Elise King
Jean Baptiste Cardinal

Madeleine King
Moise Mandeville

Mary Rose Mandeville
Victor Lafferty
Victor Mandeville
Albina Bouvier

Rose King
Alex Mercredi

Jean Louine 1864-1921
Josephine Tchele

FIRST GENERATION

SECOND GENERATION

Olivier Louine 1888-
Helen Batsina 1884-1943

Jimmy Louine
Isabelle Fat

(later married
Madeleine Smith)

Paul Louine 1890-1938
Anne Ethizen 1896-1928

Virginie Louine
Pierre Calumet

(later married)
Judith Tsanaghe

Sophie Louine

(later married)
Marie Lamoelle

Marie Adele Louine
Louison Desjarlais

Alec Desjarlais
Joseph Desjarlais
Anne Desjarlais
Celine Desjarlais

Louise Louine 1906-1980
Louis Beaulieu 1901-1981

Lucia Beaulieu
Pascal Buggins
Solomon Beaulieu
Therese Beaulieu
Paul Biscaye

Alphonse Nattaway
Suzanne Anlze

FIRST GENERATION

SECOND GENERATION

THIRD GENERATION

Isabelle Nattaway
Pascal Nadjere 1882-1942

Victoria Nadjere
Henry Rymer

Elise Nattaway
Louison Dosnoir

Pierre Nattaway
Catherine Hilaire 1895-1949

Philip Nattaway (Buggins)
Marie Field

(Catherine later married
Isadore Buggins)

Antoinette Buggins
Edward Beaulieu
Jim Buggins
Annette J.M. Beaulieu

Boniface Alphonse
Victoria Goulet

Jerome Pierrot
Tsekwi Betjere

FIRST GENERATION

SECOND GENERATION

THIRD GENERATION

Jerome
Therese Naghus

Joseph Jerome
Charlotte Simon

Isadore Simon
Eileen Jerome
Henry Beaver
Charles Jerome
Margaret Jerome
Denise Jerome

Suzanne Jerome
Louis Biscaye

Paul Biscaye
Therese Beaulieu

Rose Jerome
Johnny McKay

Paul McKay
Albina Beaulieu

Victoria Jerome
Pierre Beaulieu

Louison Beaulieu
Mary Rose Hilaire
Mary Madeleine Beaulieu
Paul Simon
Noel Lockhart

Pierrot
Adele Landry

Jim Pierrot
Alisette Hilaire

Henry Pierrot
Mary Mandeville

Suzanne Pierrot
Joseph Buggins

Pascal Buggins
Lucia Beaulieu

Henry Sanderson 1836-1907
Isabelle Ghalyaze

FIRST GENERATION

SECOND GENERATION

THIRD GENERATION

Helen Sanderson 1876-1949
George Norn

Albert Norn
Dora King

Marcel Norn
Honorine Lafferty

(later married)
Ernestine Lafferty

Nora Norn
Joan Norn
Horace Delorme
Joseph Norn
Leona Norn
Poitras
William Norn
Trya Walton
Stanley Norn

Louise Sanderson
Alexis J.M. Beaulieu

Mary Jane J.M. Beaulieu
Joseph Tourangeau
Delphine J.M. Beaulieu
Pierre Petit Jean
Archie J.M. Beaulieu
Alice Delorme
Helen J.M. Beaulieu
Edward McKay
Marie J.M. Beaulieu
William Rymer
Rose J.M. Beaulieu
Johnny Frise
Alice J.M. Beaulieu
Harry Mandeville
Anette J.M. Beaulieu
Jim Buggins
Yvonne J.M. Beaulieu
Jim Rymer

George Sanderson 1878-1937
Catherine Norn

George Sanderson
Judith Benaya

James Sanderson
Violet Sanderson
Willie Sanderson
Catherine Sanderson
Clara Sanderson
Cecile Sanderson
Joe Sanderson
Annie Sanderson

F O R T  R E S O L U T I O N  E L D E R S

FIRST GENERATION	SECOND GENERATION	THIRD GENERATION

Honore Sanderson 1867-1921
Marie Snuff

also married
Adele Nataway

James Sanderson
Catherine Tche'a

(later married Leo King)

Pierre Sanderson
Rosanna McKay

Michel Sanderson
Mary Snuff

Bella Sanderson 1869-1935
Pierre Beaulieu 1859-1912

Catherine Beaulieu
Napoleon Lafferty

Antoine Beaulieu
Alice Edjericon

(later married)
Angelique Buggins

Solomon King
Shirley Overvold

David King



Louis Sanderson
George Sanderson
Nora Sanderson
Lorette Sanderson
Henry Edjericon

Isadore Sanderson
Victoria Abel

James Lafferty
Margaret McSwain
Victor Lafferty
Georgina McKay
Ernestine Lafferty
Albert Norn
Leonie Lafferty
Fred Dawson
Edward Lafferty
Victoria Casaway
Cecile Lafferty
Henry Jones
Alexis Lafferty
Clara Fabien
Norman Lafferty
Rosa Baptiste

Henry Beaulieu
Mary J. Sayine

Peter Beaulieu
Alice Beaulieu

F O R T  R E S O L U T I O N  E L D E R S

Pascal Smith (Etsachelle)
Judith Snuff

FIRST GENERATION

SECOND GENERATION

THIRD GENERATION

Helen Smith
Narcisse Beaulieu

Bella Smith
Pierre Hilaire

Alfred Hilaire
Boniface Hilaire

Suzanne Smith

Andrew Smith

Annie Smith
Frank Morrison

Mary Morrison
Mike Kolson

Brenda Kolson
Kenny Kolson
Cheryl Kolson

Elsie Morrison

Nancy Morrison
Augustin Beaulieu

Tim Beaulieu

Florence Morrison

Julienne (last name
not known)

Louise Smith
Joseph Cree

Judith Cree
Charlie Giroux
(later married
Francois King)

Wilfred Giroux
Elizabeth Chali
Annie Look
Jim Beaulieu
Tommy King
Mavis Lafferty
Roy King

John Cree

Rose Smith
Boniface Boucher

Narcisse Boucher
Cecile King

Matthew King

Michel Yelle 1884-1937
Marie Gageze

FIRST GENERATION

SECOND GENERATION

THIRD GENERATION

Henry Yelle

Margaret Yelle
Edward Sayine

George Sayine
Doris Sayine
Irene Sayine
Marie Sayine
Noella Sayine

Gabriel Yelle

Marie Louise Yelle 1923-1950
Honore Hilaire 1899-1941

Louis McKay

(later married)
Philip McKay 1921-1950

Maria McKay
Marcel McKay

Annie Yelle 1912-1935
Pierre Smith 1894-1968
(Pierre later married
Marie Frise)

Noel Yelle 1910-1984
Catherine Ekwozh 1910-1973

Emily Yelle