

# Tape Transcript

**Title:** Eliza Fosseneuve

**Media:** DAT

**Interviewer:** John Leclair – Translator- Charlie Fosseneuve

**Date:** June 23, 2001

**Location:** Cumberland House, SK

## Text

**John:** I'm Interviewing Eliza Fosseneuve in Cumberland House, and today is Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2001. Tansi? Where were you born?

**Eliza:** Budd's Point.

**John:** Did you have a big family?

**Eliza:** I was there in Budd's Point until I was 10 years old. My family traveled from there to different locations to make a living. I'm 98 years old now.

**John:** Did you ever have your own land?

**Eliza:** Yes, my father used to have land over there in Budd's Point.

**John:** How did they make their living? Did they work there?

**Eliza:** Yes.

**John:** Did they have a garden?

**Eliza:** Yes, they had a garden.

**Eliza:** They had cattle.

**John:** Just cattle?

**Eliza:** Yes.

**John:** Horses?

**Eliza:** No.

**John:** Did you go to school?

**Eliza:** No.

**John:** Did you have a log house?

**Eliza:** Yes, a log house.

**John:** Did you get your furniture from the HBC?

**Eliza:** Yes.

**John:** Your mother, what was her name?

**Eliza:** Margaret Cook.

**John:** And your grandfather?

**Eliza:** Donald Cook

**John:** Donald Cook from Opaskwayak? (The Pas)

**Eliza:** Yes.

*Note\* Likely Donald Cook, Jr., The Pas Band councilor and signatory of Treaty Five in 1875. Son of Charles Cook, aka Pupamekapow, interviewer's third great grandfather.*

**John:** Did you call yourselves "Apitakosan" (Half-breed)?

**Eliza:** Yes, but we never got any money so we must have been half-breeds.

**John:** Did your family always live at Budd's Point?

**Eliza:** Yes. We lived at Norway House too.

**John:** A long time ago do you remember if they had any dances? Did they dance then? Red River Jig? Or square dances? Drops of Brandy?

**Eliza:** (Laughing) Yes. My deceased grandfather used to dance a lot.

**John:** Did the Métis people dance in a special way? Did they have the sash?

**Eliza:** Yes they had them.

**John:** What language did you speak at home, besides Cree? Did you speak anything else like French?

**Eliza:** I only speak Cree, but the old-timers used to talk English.

**John:** Did you go to church regularly?

**Eliza:** No. We used to bring the canoe, paddle across to come to church.

**John:** Who was the Minister back then?

**Eliza:** Settee.

**John:** James Settee?

**Eliza:** Yes.

**John:** Do you remember a minister named Hunter from The Pas?

**Eliza:** No, just Settee. He was Anglican.

**John:** Was the church important in the community?

**Eliza:** They went to church regularly because they had to paddle five miles across the narrows.

**John:** I'd like to talk about racial discrimination for a while. I'd like to ask a few questions about that. Were the people ashamed of being Native here?

**Eliza:** No.

**John:** When the White people came up here were they separated?

**Eliza:** Yes, they were separated, in a different block like you know.

**John:** When the White people came here did they try to move the people off the land?

**Eliza:** No. There was no discrimination living together back then.

**John:** So you had good relations with your neighbours?

**Eliza:** Yes.

**John:** Did you share things? Like game or firewood?

**Eliza:** Well, Indian people helped each other building houses.

**John:** And White people?

**Eliza:** No, they were separate.

**John:** If you had no money were you able to see a doctor?

**Eliza:** There were no doctors.

**John:** When did the doctors come here?

**Eliza:** Oh, just in wartime I guess.

**John:** Did you use the old medicine?

**Eliza:** Oh, yes for sure. That's all we used was Indian medicine.

**John:** What kind?

**Eliza:** That Indian medicine could cure anything.

**John:** Do you remember any of the roots and any of their names?

**Eliza:** I never was around when they put the roots for medicine.

**John:** Do you use rat root now?

**Eliza:** Rat root, oh yes.

**John:** Does it work well?

**Eliza:** Oh yes, it makes me feel better.

**John:** Mide Maskeke (heart medicine)? The little bulb about this big? (half an inch).

**Eliza:** No, just rat root.

**John:** In the old days did they ever talk about spirituality before the church?

**Eliza:** It was a pagan world to start with.

**John:** Did some people practice the old ways during your life? Like using the pipe and the sweat lodge?

**Eliza:** Yes, some people still practiced that.

**John:** What did the church think of that?

**Eliza:** They didn't bother them.

**John:** So what did you do for entertainment?

**Eliza:** They went all over the place (my parents) for entertainment, but they didn't let me out much back then.

**John:** Your father, did he play an instrument?

**Eliza:** No.

**John:** Your canoes, were they birchbark back then?

**Eliza:** Yes, I remember. We used to fish with them.

**John:** A long time ago?

**Eliza:** Yes, a long time ago.

**John:** How big were they?

**Eliza:** They were big enough to use for sturgeon fishing with them.

**John:** Could they carry a moose?

**Eliza:** Yes, they would carry the meat. And we would use them for fishing. We made our own nets back then too.

**John:** With the string they bought at the HBC?

**Eliza:** Yes, the seaming twine.

**John:** What did you grow in the garden?

**Eliza:** Mostly potatoes.

**John:** Did you ever pick wild mint? Wild carrots?

**Eliza:** No. But we picked wild onions.

**John:** Do they taste good?

**Eliza:** Oh yes. In Sturgeon Lake there's lots of wild onions, even now. The grass looks about that long (2 feet), but the heads are small.

**John:** Did your father trap quite a bit?

**Eliza:** Yes, he was a good worker.

**John:** Well that looks like that's about it. Ekosi, ma ka.

**Eliza:** Ekwani, na?

**John:** Eehee, ekwani. I want to acknowledge you and thank you very much. Kinanaskomitin.

**Eliza:** Ekosi.