

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: JACOB MCKENZIE
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: CUMBERLAND HOUSE,
SASKATCHEWAN
INTERVIEW LOCATION: CUMBERLAND HOUSE,
SASKATCHEWAN
TRIBE/NATION: CREE
LANGUAGE: CREE AND ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: 1976
INTERVIEWER: MURRAY DOBBIN
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD
SOURCE: SASK. SOUND ARCHIVES PROGRAMME
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JACOB MCKENZIE

Jacob McKenzie is an experienced trapper and bush man from Cumberland House. He was involved in the search for Jim Brady and Abbie Halkett.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Search for Brady and Halkett.
- Problems of tracking in the bush.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Discusses the raft found by the search party in search for James Brady and Absolum Halkett, 1967. Feels that trappers made the raft and not Brady. Says raft was made in spring before ice went out. Discusses why a trapper would build a raft. Says they couldn't have been killed by bears. Discusses tracking men in the bush and the difficulties involved.

INTERVIEW:

Murray: There was an old raft that was found on Lapointe Lake and I'm wondering whether or not he thinks that that raft was made by Jim Brady or whether it was made by a trapper. You know, some people think it was made by Jim.

(Interpreter asks question in Cree)

Murray: Does he remember the raft at all? Finding that old raft?

Inter: Yeah, it was those trappers' who were around in there.

Murray: He doesn't think it was made by Jim Brady then, eh?

Inter: No. Not by Jim Brady, no.

Murray: I'm not a trapper so I don't know. Why would a trapper build a raft? What would a trapper use a raft for?

Inter: Well, see, once in a while, you know, when you walk around in the spring or in the spring yeah, or in the fall, some damn thing, you got to have a raft sometimes when you want to cross someplace.

Murray: So he would use it for himself to cross?

Inter: Yeah. Sure, that's what they can do. They can do that anytime, sure.

Murray: What else did he say when you were talking to him, was he talking about the search and the raft?

Inter: No.

Murray: He talked for quite a while. I'm just wondering if he was talking about that.

Inter: Oh, you mean, you want to find out everything like that, eh?

Murray: Well, anything to do with the search, you know, because I'm trying to find out what happened to Jim. I want to find out what the native people think happened to him.

Inter: Well, they figured that, you know, just somebody must have come around there, one of those trappers there and...

Murray: And shot him?

Inter: Yeah, something like that. And put him in the...

Murray: In the lake?

Inter: Yeah.

Murray: So he thinks he's in the lake.

Inter: That's what he figures, yeah. He figures he's right in the lake there, somewheres around there.

Murray: Could you ask him if he thinks the raft was an old raft or a new one? Did he say that?

Inter: No, he didn't say anything about it but it's the same thing. Oh, no, they made it themselves, that's what he said.

Murray: The trappers, eh?

Inter: Yeah.

Murray: Do you know the names of those trappers? Could you ask him which trappers made the raft?

(Asks question of Jacob in Cree)

Murray: What did he say?

Inter: And then they, gee, I can't remember now. What, this is, the one you mean, the raft there?

Murray: Yeah.

Inter: It was a fellow just made it right there but he doesn't know.

Murray: He doesn't know the name of the fellow, eh?

Inter: He doesn't know the name, you know, of the fellow that made it.

Murray: Could you ask him when he thinks the raft was made? Was it made that spring or in the fall before that?

(Cree)

Inter: This was in the spring.

Murray: It was made in the spring.

(Cree)

Inter: When the spring, you know, before the ice goes out. That time I guess, must be the time.

Murray: It was made before the ice went out then, eh?

Inter: Yeah.

Murray: That would be probably in the end of April maybe? Something like that? Is that when the ice goes out, around there?

Inter: Something like that. (Cree)

Murray: End of April or May, somewhere there?

Inter: Somewheres around there, yeah. Well, sometimes you know...

Murray: Early or later depending on the year, eh?

Inter: Yeah. Well, you know, when the springs, sometimes they are a little early and sometimes soon.

Murray: Right, right.

Inter: Never know in wintertime.

Murray: Could you ask him if trappers make rafts very often? Is this something they make often or just a few times maybe?

Inter: Just a few times, yeah.

Murray: Would they ever use it for getting a beaver out of the water or anything like that?

Inter: Oh yeah, oh yeah. You got to. See, in the spring, well you don't have no canoe and you just pack around with a pack sack and you go and shoot a beaver or maybe a prairie hog in the lake. You got to make your raft right there.

Murray: And you go out and bring it in.

Inter: Yeah. Right there, yeah. That's all you got to do, yeah.

Murray: Could you ask him if he thinks it would be possible that Jim and Abbie Halkett, who was with Jim, could have been attacked by bears, because this is what some people think.

(Cree)

Inter: This is what, when they come home in that timber area, where they found that tent there.

Murray: At Foster Lake.

Inter: Right on the shore, lake or...?

Murray: Yeah, yeah.

Inter: Well, they come out from there and somebody saw them right there.

Murray: That's where he thinks they got shot? As soon as they came out, eh?

Inter: And then that fellow, that fellow saw them and put them in the water.

Murray: And they just sank. It was a deep lake.

Inter: Yeah.

Murray: Right. Could you ask him, I'm just curious - I believe him but I'm just curious about - like, some people say

they could have been killed by bears.

Inter: No, can't be, no.

Murray: He says no, eh.

Inter: No.

Murray: Ask him if he's ever known a trapper to be attacked by a bear.

(Cree)

Inter: No.

Murray: He's never known one to be attacked by a bear?

Inter: No.

Murray: Ask him if they had gone into the bush, ask him if he thinks he would have been able to track them, you know, as an experienced trapper.

Inter: As a tracker. (Cree) No. No, the only thing he found out is a policeman and a dog went around there, I guess.

Murray: Right.

Jacob: (Cree)

Inter: Even had dogs there, right on the muskeg there.

Murray: Ask him if he has ever traced a man who has been lost. Has he ever tracked a man who has been lost in the bush? Ask

him if that's a hard thing for him to do, not the police and a dog but for an Indian trapper?

Inter: Well, this is pretty hard to...

Murray: Yeah. Jimmy Izbister says that the dog is no good but that Jacob could find a man if he was in the bush, you know, because he's such a good trapper. Could you ask him if he thinks that he could, himself, could have found him?

(Cree)

Murray: What does he say?

Inter: Well, you know, there is moss. You see those white moss once in a while.

Murray: Right on the rock.

Inter: Yeah, well them, when you stepped on them there, they last so long, you know.

Murray: You see the footprints.

Inter: Yeah. And then that's where you get your footprints right there. Even if it's raining or something like that, still they are right on there.

Murray: They stay.

Inter: Yeah. On those the other ones there, the other ones, they just, you know, they are all different. But they find out right there if there is footprints right there.

Murray: Where did he find the footprints?

Inter: Same place, right there, you know.

Murray: Where the tent was?

Inter: Yeah, right in the bush there.

Murray: So does he think that he could follow a man in the bush by following footprints?

Inter: Well, it's pretty hard to say. See, there is only one place to find out.

Murray: Right. Just where that white moss is.

Inter: Yeah.

Murray: Otherwise the tracks would be gone after a few days.

Inter: Yeah, after say, when you step on the other moss there...

Murray: It just goes back up.

Inter: Yeah. That's right, this ones here, the white ones is still right on there.

Murray: Does he remember seeing some of this white moss on a sort of a hill? This is what Jimmy Izbister remembers, and he says that there was some white moss on a sort of a hill and it

looked like something had been dragged down on this moss to the water. Could you ask him if he remembers seeing that? And that was on Lower Foster Lake too, it was sort of a little hill with white moss.

(Cree)

Murray: He doesn't remember that, eh.

(End of Side A)

(End of Interview)

PROPER NAME INDEX

PROPER NAME	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
BRADY, JIM	IH-391	JACOBMCKENZI	94	2-11
HALKETT, ABBIE	IH-391	JACOBMCKENZI	94	2-11
LAPOINTE LAKE, SASK.	IH-391	JACOBMCKENZI	94	2

INDEX

INDEX TERM	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
SEARCHES -for lost people	IH-391	JACOBMCKENZI	94	2-11