

Sandy Bay - Tape 11

INTERVIEW WITH HARRIET McCALLUM

By: Keith Goulet

May 30th, 1984 at Sandy Bay, Saskatchewan - Side A

K.G. I am at Sandy Bay on May 30th, 1984. Today, I will be talking to Harriet in relation to the livelihood of earlier days. She will be reminiscing in terms of canoes, houses and medicinal plants as they were utilized in tea and medicine. The next item we will talk about is the aspect of the Hydro Dam itself, and how it changed the way of life of the people. Also, the effects the dam had on the plants, the fish, and the river.

I suppose I will begin by asking Harriet to talk about the livelihood of the people, during the early days. Exactly as you saw while growing up.

H.McC. The people long time ago, did not live in and utilize houses, much at all. Basically, they lived in structures similar to teepees, during the winters. I, as a child, also lived in these structures, during the winter.

K.G. How were they similar to teepees?

H.McC. They were called teepees. They were made from logs, right against one another. Then the cracks were chinked with mud, and small pine trees placed on top of this.

K.G. Were they approximately this close together (indicating distance by hand motions).

H.McC. They were as close together as possible. There were almost touching together.

K.G. Were they almost touching each other?

H.McC. They were touching together.

A.BEAR This was called a "log teepee."

H.McC. They called it a "log teepee."

K.G. A "log teepee."

What type of log was used to begin this structure?

H.McC. They began by tying three logs together, then stood-up and placed wide apart to begin the form of the teepee.

The way my grandfather use to do it was, to nail another log against one of the logs utilized as the frame.....

(Keith you will have to add on description)

A.BEAR Similar to a tent frame.

H.McC.Ah, ah, another stick. But, he was skilled in splitting logs in half and then planned, very similar to a board. He would then begin to build the roof, in this way (indicating by hand motions).

K.G. This way, or that. (Description of hand motions required.)

H.McC. This way. This is the way it was built and we stayed in it all winter. Whereas, others were built in this fashion....."but I will have to write on your paper."

K.G. Go ahead and write on it.

H.McC. They built the tents in this fashion, long time ago. (Description of tent is drawn.)

A.B. Some people utilized the three pole structure....

H.McC. Yes, some used their, actually, most used the three pole structure, as the erected frame. Isn't that right, Angus?

A.B. Sticks were bent, and used on top of the frame, to provide a structure, upon which the logs can be placed against.

K.G. But, the initial structure was made of these logs.

A.B. They were utilized, as the frame. Then they bent a stick in this way (indicating hand motions) and placed on top of the structure. Then the other logs were put against this round structure.

K.G. Where were the logs initially placed?

A.BEAR Then a chimney was constructed.

H.McC. Here, look at this. This is the type of structure my grandfather built, as I talked about earlier, and lived during the winter. On this opening, we used as a doorway were boards placed and with a canvas on them.

They were very warm. Mud was used....., do you understand what mud is?

K.G. Yeah.

H.McC. They made a stone, utilizing mud. It was quite large, and was used to cook in numerous ways. You could make bannock, and as if you were baking in an oven, by suspending the bannock above the fire. You simply had to move it around in this fashion, and the food was baked, as if baking in an oven.

K.G. Was it called a stove?

H.McC. It was called "mud stove."

K.G. "Mud."

H.McC. Yeah. Stones were used in the complete structure, along with the mud.

A.B. With a bit of sand mixed with the mud.

K.G. "Sand."

H.McC. Yes, with a bit of sand.

A.BEAR Along with flat stones.

H.McC. Once the structure was completed, it wasn't used immediately. The stove was allowed to sit until it was completely dry. Then a fire was made. Very large logs could also be burned, and usually kept burning all night. Similar to some stoves on the market now, that burn all night. These mud stoves were used in much the same manner.

They were much better than this stove here, (pointing to her wood stove). (Laughter) As there was nothing else available.

The people long time ago were quite

extraordinary. They were not at all like us, with manufactured items, such as bunk beds. They were also able to make similar beds utilizing logs. The old people were artistically skillful with their livelihood.

K.G. Pertaining to the teepees that were constructed; what was utilized as the outer barrier? They began with birch logs

H.McC. Yes, birch was used initially and put on in this manner. (Illustrating by some form) But, they did have alot of blankets, long time ago. So, they used blankets on the teepee, as a covering.

The birch did not get wet at all, even if it rained for two days. The material used was of such high quality, against the natural elements.

As you are travelling home, conduct a test on this one white tree (birch). Cut out a piece of birch and show to the southern people. Noting that this material was once used on teepees and wigwams. They were also lived in during the winter.

K.G. What were the blankets used for?

H.McC. As this is situated in this manner, if there isn't anything extended, it will in effect cause the smoke to linger about. Basically, the blankets are used to act as an extension, similar to stove pipes. then a fire can be made.

K.G. It has to be extended out?

H.McC. Yes, as you are aware it is pointed on top. But, the teepee poles were over-extended, as they were very long.

A.B. The poles utilized as the chimney's were moveable, and were faced towards the direction of the wind. Whereas, shaded from the wind, they were not as effective - in that the smoke did not raise. Also if the doorway was left open, smoke was drawn in from the chimney.

K.G. I would also like to ask you in relation to the teepees

H.McC. What was used as the floor covering?

K.G. Yes.

H. McC. These small pine trees that are standing out here.

K. G. What kind are they?

H. McC. These small pine trees that you see here.

A. BEAR Certainly, not spruce.

K. G. Pine trees.

H. McC. Yes. You simply laid them on thick. They made a comfortable bed, while sleeping.

K. G. What about towards the top of the teepee, was there anything used for hanging?

H. McC. In what way?

K. G. Did you, for instance, use it for smoking meat?

H. McC. That is exactly, as I have just told you. They tied poles together in this fashion, then placed over the fire, and utilized for smoking. Anything and everything was smoked. Including moose hide - do you know how moose hide is tanned?

K. G. Yes.

H. McC. They also tanned moose hides, in the teepee.

The people long time ago knew how to make a good living for themselves. Whereas, that is not the case, now.

K. G. During an interview with another person, yesterday - a difference was expressed between working and living in the traditional way.

H. McC. Oh, I see. How was it different?

K. G. They began working here.

H. McC. Do you mean at Island Falls?

K. G. Yes.

H. McC. Working on a job, was always an alternative. But, making a living in the traditional way Was it, Mathew, the old man?

K. G. Yes.

H. McC. But, he also was brought up in the bush (meaning traditional lifestyle).

A. BEAR Oh, yeah.

H. McC. That is the truth. But, he is not exactly like us.....

K. G. In the form of wages, only?

H. McC. Yes.

We are not exactly what you would call a true Indian, because we are not all Indian. We are more like half-breeds. Whereas, that old man (Mathew), is a true Indian. His father was a Chipewan, and therefore their lifestyle is somewhat different than half-breed Indians. There is definitely, a lot of difference.

A. BEAR Yeah, Mathew is half-chipewan.

H. McC. Yes, he is half-chipewan.

A. BEAR Mathew's father is a chipewan.

H. McC. That is why....., I am not too sure how he makes his living.

K. G. He is also a "Nateweyes."

H. McC. Pardon.

K. G. Originally, the "Nateweyes" are descendants of the "Iroquois."

H. McC. Yes.

K. G. I was aware of that.

H. McC. Yes, that is their background.

Also, in regards to establishing our livelihood in this area. There are alot of people residing in this area, that weren't born and raised here. Whereas, we were raised here. The person you interviewed is my brother, Moise. We were raised in that area, along with another man. Prior to this, we were raised down river at what is locally known as "Wahsakasic." If you were to see that place, now. You wouldn't be able to find the area, we once lived. Everything is completely gone and all the

structures have fallen down. This is the area we were initially brought up as kids.

K.G. What about this area, with respect to the time you lived here.....

H.McC. Beginning with the initial period, employment began in this area (specifically, Hydro Electric Development).

K.G. Yes. Were there people living by the reservoir?

H.McC. Yes. My late husband's father and some of the Morin's now here, lived in that area.

K.G. They lived within the reservoir area?

H.McC. They all lived within the reservoir area. There was approximately seven houses, I think. Isn't that right (referring to A.Bear). They are now all under water, since the area was flooded. Those houses are now, forever lost.

K.G. Who's houses were flooded?

H.McC. I don't think none of those people are now, alive. I would think, they have all died. Let me see, there was Antonie Morin, _____ Morin, Ansil Morin, Marcel Morin, my husband's father and plus another old man.....

A.BEAR "Horace."

H.McC. That's him. There was seven houses at the time, they were flooded. They are now, gone.

K.G. What was their names, again. "Antonie Morin."

H.McC. "Ansil Morin", let me see, who else was there. "Horace Morin", was the name of that old man. Then, there was "Marcel Michelle." As for myself, my father-in-law was from that area. His name was "John McCallum."

Some of the people had two houses. One of which was a warehouse, they had built for themselves. That is after all, similar to having two houses. The warehouses and everything else was flooded. Everything is gone. They weren't even given time, to haul away their tools.

As is the case, when we are living here during the winter. During this time of the year we use to move to the island, you see out there. Sometimes for a month, or longer. Then we would move to Pelican Narrows, for a period of three months. After which time, we would return here.

We usually planted a garden within the area, Jim Russell is now residing. We usually planted potatoes and upon returning from Pelican, we would dig up our potatoes. This was prior to Island Falls existing as a power station.

K.G. You had a garden, prior to Island Falls?

H.McC. We already had a garden prior to Island Falls' existence. That was a long time ago.

We were the first people in this area, because we were raised here. That is partly due to the reason.....the old man was my grandfather and Chief at the time. He knew the rapids and the area was about to be destroyed. That is why he wanted to establish a reserve. This area towards the last bay, is the location of one of the markers. You know, one of the poles that are erected to identify the boundary, of a person establishing a land claim. That is the last known area they claimed between his son and himself. He was to begin establishing his claim, when he died. As such, nothing became of it. The people, such as myself were too ignorant of the facts, to do anything.

By rights, we should have established our claim for a reserve. I have often stated that was the last established area, for such. We should be given the land, towards this end of the community. But, in actual fact, we are quite limited. As I see it, it is as if the area is a small dish, in that it is so small. We should be allowed a reserve in this area, but of course, that is not the case.

K.G. This then was the case long time ago.

H.McC. Yes, I am referring to a period, quite some time ago. Certainly before Island Falls was established as a power generating station. I would imagine, it is time Angus spoke about. In which, he comments, "I know when the white man began working in this area."

We, the people weren't aware of the period, in question

- K.G. The surveyors arrived during 1919, to survey the reserve at Pelican Narrows. It was probably during this period they began _____.
- H.McC. It was probably during this time, the land claim was about to be sought. If he (Grandfather) had lived a few more years, he probably would have accomplished his task. But, as is the case, he died prior to establishing a concrete base. Therefore, nothing became of it.
- K.G. What was he called?
- H.McC. "Cornelius."
- K.G. "Cornelius."
- H.McC. "Bear", was his last name. That is the name of the Chief. He was the Chief, during that period and was about the size of my uncle Angus.
- K.G. Does he originate from the same place as the "White Chief."
- H.McC. Yes, he is from the same place.
- A.BEAR That is his grandfather.
- H.McC. I tend to think that is his father, isn't it?
- A.BEAR Oh, yes. Your right, that is his father.
- H.McC. Yes, that is his father. We are, as a matter of fact his grandchildren. Since, my father is also Angus's father; Angus, is therefore my uncle. My father's father is the old man that was the Chief here, back then.

My grandfather had very good insight in regards to the future. But, he was sick with his leg and as such, was amputated below the _____.
(Indicating by hand motions) He had an artificial and wasn't well at all. He was never very well. Partly because I suppose he didn't have a good..... If only he had had a modern Doctor, as they are very good.

As is the case, he was usually escorted on a canoe, right by here. During which time, he laid claim to land. But then, no one paid much attention to him. Then once he died, since his children were still quite young. They were not able to do

anything. So then, nothing became of it. As a result, we have lost our claim to the land.

With respect to "Wasakic", which is where we grew up from. We should be able to build ourselves a camp, but that is not possible because the land is already taken. There is presently a camp, in that area for juvenile delinquents sent here.

K.G. Oh, is that where they are kept.

H.McC. Yeah, that is the area they are at. I have only one relative, who is living across of here, who built himself a cabin, quite a bit north of here, for summer use. Whereas, in our case, we have nothing.

I had expressed my desire to acquire land, for the purpose of a trapline. As that is the same area, my late husband had trapped. They had always remained within the same area. So, I wasn't successful

K.G. Where, do you mean upstream of the reservoir area.

H.McC. Yes, upstream of the reservoir area. That is the area, we had formerly inhabited as a trapline. Another place commonly referred to as "Mukoman" was the initial camp for the juvenile delinquents. There are four houses in a row.

A.BEAR That is Norman's camp.

H.McC. I should actually be living in that area. But, I cannot find someone to build a cabin for me. This is my only son, that is living with me, and I also have another who is working, I have only two sons. No one will build me a cabin. I should be entitled to a trapline within that area. During the summer, I should be living out there. But, that is not the case.

The land initially was not expensive, whereas, now it is very expensive. I probably wouldn't be able to afford it, now.

K.G. This land you referred to as the "land base", is it similar

H.McC. This is what we refer to as the "land." But, with English it is somewhat different. Isn't that right? We refer to the "land", as the "land base."

K.G. You refer to the land, as the "land base."

H.McC. Yes.

During early times, the land wasn't recognized as being privately owned.

K.G. No one owned the land.

H.McC. No, no. You could live wherever you wanted, and take as much land as you wanted. For that reason, people long time ago, use to plant large gardens. There was also a very large garden at a place referred to as "Wapekwaskwasksic", which is over land and beyond. These were elders that had planted the garden. Certainly, they use to plant gardens. Basically, because the land was vast, abundant and they were overall in charge of it. Whereas now, no one could plant a garden because the land we are allotted is so small. Another reason is the kids they ruin anything a person does for himself. No one is willing to do anything for themselves.

K.G.

Do you remember if the people ever talked about that distinction?

H.McC. No. What do they mean by that?

K.G. I have done some reading about natives, during the sixteenth century. A period, in which there were no white men, at all.

A person who had attained outstanding qualities, such as being skillful, sympathetic, etc., was called a Chief. More recently, and dating as far back as two or three hundred years, ago. The terminology "Okimahkan" was introduced, to accomodate the role. The Chief and Acting Chief worked together, during the initial period, in which, Treaties were signed. However, prior to this period the Chief of the native people was already established. During the initial contact by the Hudson Bay and Northwest Company, in which, furs were traded with the natives.

H.McC. Yes. As I can remember, the first time a person was named Chief, was highly honoured.

A.BEAR Prior to this period, there was no such thing as Acting Chief. It wasn't until Treaties were signed,

which entitled them to an annual subsidy. Then the Federal Agent arrived and the government would pay. It wasn't until this period, the role of Acting Chief was introduced.

H. McC. Yes. They were also very proficient with their job.

A. BEAR But, prior to this period, there wasn't any.

K. G. Were they referred to by a different name?

A. BEAR He was called a Chief.

K. G. They were referred to as Chief.

A. BEAR I am not aware if they were called differently, one hundred years ago.

H. McC. The very next Chief was the old man, I spoke of earlier. This was my grandfather. After my grandfather died, nothing has turned out well, in our favor. Including the present day, nothing has turned out well, for us. Partly due to the fact that the leaders are inefficient.

We, the Treaty people are governed from a different community. We are being taken care of by a Band membership from another community and not directly from here.

A. BEAR There is no reserve here.

H. McC. We are not within a reserve, in this community. But, we grew up here and therefore the people are not prepared to ask us to leave the community. Instead, we live together and help each other. We are also closely related to the people including the leaders and therefore are unable to completely evict us from the community.

As I have been told, the community leaders are very sympathetic to us. Therefore, "they go on to state, they are unable to evict the treaty people." It is true, "we were born in Pelican Narrows, but left the community such a long time ago." And now, I feel as though it is someone else's community and therefore completely feel unfamiliar with the community. Whereas, that is not the case with this community, and feel right at home.

K. G. You have viewed the community as not your own, already?

H.McC. I feel, I am not from that community, already. Whereas, with this community (Sandy Bay)....., it is as if this is my country, as I grew up here.

K.G. You refer to the country as your own, from which, you were raised and have lived from since then?

H.McC. Yes, exactly. But, if you are asked to leave the area, you are very unhappy about that. You are reluctant, because you are not familiar enough with the people, in the other community. Whereas I am very familiar with the people in this community, because I grew up with them. While at the same time, I know all the young people who have grown up here. Therefore, I am very familiar with the people.

But that is not the case with Pelican Narrows. even when I do go and visit, I am unable to stay all day. I get very anxious to return home, which is Sandy Bay. That is how it has affected me. I don't see myself, returning.

A.BEAR What is the situation with the tape, is it still operating?

K.G. It is still operating.

A.BEAR Let's try it and see what you have?