

Tape 2, Side 1: November 19th, 2004

Session 2, 1pm – 2:30pm

Sonny – Okay, there is one additional thing that we learned through the relationship that we've established through working together, and that is to, I guess, respect the integrity of our culture and history, and at the same time, ensure that all aspects of our culture and history is examined and looked at and placed within the proper context. And that includes things that people don't really like to talk about, as well. For instance, we have slavery in our background, where our people had slaves. Some of our enemies would come and take some of our people as slaves and some of our people didn't like to talk about that. It was like a bad thing about our history, but it is a true part of our history. There was a class system that we had that allowed, that showed where those people fit in, and so a lot of people, our own people especially, couldn't really deal with that. And a lot of our own people would even criticize me when I talked about it because it is something they hadn't reached the place where they could deal with that part of our history. So there are things that, so we eventually learned what one or two of our chiefs, Lester Ned and Grand Chief Cap Pennard, always said that you need to tell us what we need to know, not what we want to know.

And I think about that first expert that I mentioned earlier. How when he came about and he was always telling us what we wanted to know. He was always painting a pretty picture of everything, and if there was anything bad it was something that would be shoved aside and set aside, and not really brought out into the open. Keith has his own experience as well with how that fellow actually ripped up some of his field notes because there was a sensitive issue that was being discussed in there, and that's what he did. And I've had my own experiences as well, where that person steps beyond a line where he should be maintaining his own integrity, his own spirituality, maintaining my spirituality as well, but he stepped beyond that where he felt that he was so expert that he knew more about culture and history than myself.

And there's this one case where we were working with some field school students, and we were out on the river and these field school students were with us. And just out of the blue, he came out and right in front of the students, he says to me, he dug in his pocket and passed this tobacco to me, and he says, "Sonny, why don't you go down and make an offering to the river." And right away, it's like, there is a spiritual part to that. I was never

taught to do that by the elders to make an offering to the river. You know, there's always a prayer there I was taught to say, but never really an offering or tobacco. But he did that, but I still maintained my respect to him because I didn't want to make him look bad in front of the students, so I did do that. I took the tobacco and walked down to the river, but instead of saying a prayer and offering the tobacco, I said a prayer to my ancestors, asking them to forgive me for what I was doing. I felt really bad that I did that, but at the same time I had to respect him. Later on, I was thinking, *Why did I do that?* I should have said something else instead of doing what he asked me to do. And so that's what, that's the problem that we have with him, is he was stepping beyond this line, going over the line even to the point where he has received a name.

And Keith and I had our own discussions about that later on. Keith said if there ever comes a time where someone wants to give me a name—even though he would be honored to have it—it would be, he would rather not take it because it feels like he's stepping over a line. There is a line of maintaining his integrity as an expert witness and how he fits in the community, and so that's something that we had to maintain as well. Keith might have more to add to that.

Keith Carlson – It makes me think of that, sort of classic anthropological work by Clifford Geertz where he talks about “thick” descriptions. And he says that it's far easier to talk to and with Aboriginal people than it is to speak for them, although people don't know that. And I think something that we constantly have to remind ourselves as the outsiders, that we shouldn't speak for people, we can't do that. We usually try to diffuse it with a bit of humor or something, too. Like with the idea of white people getting Indian names. And you know there's sometimes in the past elders say where a celebrity, Michael J. Fox or somebody, comes in and they give, that's not a real case. But a celebrity comes in and they give him an Indian name and it's kind of a joke thing. Because like the government or someone has asked the local Native community out of the blue, “We want to honor so and so, give them a name.” And there's other cases where the name is very sincerely given, which is a really touching, meaningful thing, but as long as people know they're not Sto:lo necessarily.

And I made sort of the joke that there are a lot of Sto:lo people who have last names like Sonny's that are not an actual European last name, but someone, an Indian Agent or someone, has tried to make one. And often times, where Sonny's grandfather Antoine had

the name, rather than his last name, his kids' last name becoming Antoine, he took a combination of his Native names. A lot of Sto:lo people have last names that are European first names. Joe, Peter, these kind of things, and we would joke sometimes around the office, "Well, if you want, we'll organize a ceremony of white people where will give you an authentic white person's last name, it's a real last name, not a white person first name kind of thing." I sort of joke about those things a bit just to sort of ease the tensions a bit on those.

I think, trying to stop yourself, it can be very flattering. You know, you work with the Sto:lo community for awhile and people in the community start to turn to you. Turn to me sometimes for advice on a Sto:lo issue, and you feel very flattered: "Of course, let me tell you what I know." You become the expert, it's easy to fall into that, and it's a flattering position. And having to stop and reflect on that, and sort of stop myself and say, "I'll tell you what I've learned. I'll be very careful to cite the elders who have shared it with me." And then strongly suggest to that person that they go and talk to their relatives, and don't rely on me. I'm not Sto:lo and that's not a role that I want to be in. I guess it goes both ways, too, in terms of, Sonny has on occasions been asked, people will ask him a question, if he is doing one of his place name tours with, say, academics or school teachers or something. And people will ask—I was with him one time—and people will ask, "Can you tell us about that thing with the gold rush," and he sort of stops with a smile and says, "Well, that's a white guy thing. We'll let Keith tell you what the white people did on that." I think, we try to do it often with humor if it's in a situation like that, so no one feels awkward, the people asking the questions or whatever. But it's something that we try to respect each other's areas of expertise, or areas where they can speak as an insider, and then when you're not speaking as an insider to acknowledge that on those occasions we can both be outsiders at times. I think that's all that we had to say.

Brenda Macdougall – So, we'll move to Ida and Jackie and however you want to work it.

Ida Moore – Okay. What we're going to do is that I'm going to talk about, I guess, should give a context as to why Jackie is here. When, as I've been doing my research over the years, I worked with a lot of really old people, many of them are gone now. Jackie's grandfather was one of the people that I worked with, except that he's been one hundred years old in March. So he couldn't be here, so I brought his granddaughter from home. Her and I now

have a working relationship that is very mutual, like working relationships that other people have talked about. So that's where we were coming from. The teachings that we have both received from her grandfather and other elders that we worked with in common. And the work we are trying to do in the North as far as helping, doing the work that we were given to do by our old people, which is to help our communities to find a place that will be, I don't want to use the—I have a dilemma with the term healing because, like many words, I feel it's, when I try, when I look at a concept like healing, I have to go back to my places of Cree, a Swampy Cree women, and what does that mean? And the term, the word, healing, has nothing to do with—well, it is a physical well-being, but it's not a, it means like going to see somebody and getting them to heal you, and that's not what, from the teachings that I've been given, that's not what the work that I do is about. It's about helping people find balance and well-being in life and being able to move on with the process of life. And rather than staying stuck in healing mode.

So, who am I? Like I said earlier, I'm from Opaska Cree Nation and I'm **(Unknown Word)**. I am the grand-daughter of **(Unknown Word)** constant, who's very much a powerful influence in my life, even though I only knew her in my early childhood. A lot of her influence is what's in my life now. And I'm the daughter of Charlie and Myra Moore, and my father was one of my guides, I guess. When I got to the point in my education after he was my primary guide in how do I get started in this, and he, until he died, he worked with me constantly as I was going through my research process. I guess, to do with that in that continuum, how life is a continuum, and it keeps going in circles. When I was a little girl, I remember being, people telling me that I had to get a education, and I didn't understand that. Of my father's eight children, I'm the one that he really, really pushed to go and get a university education. And when he would talk to me, he would say **(Speaks in Cree)**. I'm a little nervous. What he said to me, things that are destroying our people are within the white man's knowledge systems. And your job is to go there and to understand those knowledge systems, and then come back and to use that knowledge to help our people and our communities to get better and to come out of this thing that we're stuck in.

So, when I was finally well enough to understand those things, I went to university and I got the education that I was told to get. And of all the crazy things, I ended up being in psychology, studying psychology, which is, many people say it against our culture, and the field of psychology in much of the reading, they did a lot to contribute to harming First

Nations people in their writing. Destructive policies came out of psychologists studying First Nations people. It was rather unusual that I ended up in that field. And through that process the old people always told me that I had to stay there. I wanted to quit so often and I would go and talk to one of the elders, and I would want to quit and they would let me cry, they would let me whine, and then say, “Okay, go back now.” And my father would do that to me. They’d say, “Okay, go back now.” So I eventually got to the point where I did get my master’s degree, but that whole process was part of that teaching, of understanding those knowledge systems, and how today, in my work with communities like Jackie’s community, how I use that knowledge system, as well as the research that I did with the old people, and when I sit down and work with people.

I guess one of the things, too, is that when I did start doing my research, all of the work, all the research I done, has been totally in Cree. A funny thing happened to me when I started my graduate studies, was my very first term at the end of my first semester. I went home for my two-week Christmas break and got home, and I couldn’t talk Cree. I had been so immersed in reading psychology theory and white knowledge, gathering all that knowledge, and my family members are talking to me and I could understand them. But I couldn’t, I would try and say something back and this garble would come out, and people were looking at me really strange. That whole entire two weeks, I’m talking Cree again, so I come back at the end of the two weeks and come to my graduate studies again. And I’m talking, and I’m trying to say in our group. I’m trying to say psychology words and names of theorists, and I can’t even pronounce them because I’ve been immersed in Cree for two weeks. So that’s something that was important. It taught me the value of my language and how important it is for me, even though I had been told my entire life it is important. You have to be maintain your language, and that was one of the valuable things about the research that I’ve done, is that it really taught me how important it is and how important it is that we make sure that each of our languages survives. Because everything that I needed to know about Cree—I don’t want to use Cree psychology—but our Cree way of knowing and helping each other to be well is in the language. It’s in the stories, it’s in the land, but unless you say those things in Cree, the meaning is diluted, and unless we respect the uniqueness of each culture, or each cultural group, and our own way of knowing, the meaning gets diluted as well.

This one day when my father was talking to me, he talked about how all of us have our names. And when you meet someone, its, you give them, you exchange names. Who you're related to and where you're from, and where you're from tells you all about that person. So that if, so he said if somebody is from **Pedawagon (Unknown Spelling)** then that tells you that person is Rock Cree. They're not Swampy Cree like you, they're Rock Cree, and what do you know about Rock Cree people? This is what you need to know about Rock Cree people, so then you can respect that person and you have a way of relating to that person, and how important it is in terms of identity and how. And then, later on, as I tried to understand this work, as I was carrying out the work in the communities, those kinds of teachings become important when I'm sitting down as a Muskego women trying to work with a **Simi (Unknown Spelling)** Cree man, and understanding what relationships and how the teachings that those elders gave me, how do I use those now.

As I come to understand the teachings even more, one of the things that I keep talking about, my father, he seems to be really with me today. He said to me one time, oh, when I started, when I told him, "This is what I want to do now. I've got to get all this education now. I want to learn how to do counseling as a Cree woman, as a Swampy Cree woman. And I want you to help me how to learn how to do this. Like, where do I get the information?" He looked at me and went, "Hmm," and he said, "Okay," and that's all he said. So I stayed for the whole weekend and he never responded. Two weeks later, he phoned me and he said "**Danis,**" (**Unknown Spelling**) and I said, "Yeah," (which is "my daughter") and he said to me, he said, (**Speaks in Cree**). Which means, and what he said was, "I'm going to help you with this because you think too much like a white man and you can't do this work unless you think like an Indian. You have to be able to think like an Indian person." And I thought, *Okay*, and, but I was kind of insulted because at this point in my life, I had already spent, like, fifteen, twenty years talking and visiting with elders trying to learn about, trying to learn and trying to understand the cultural knowledge.

Which is actually a funny thing, too, because this other old man years before that had told me at Joe Duquette, he asked me one day, he says, "What do you know about your cultures?" I was in my twenties, I guess, and I said, "I know nothing about my culture." Nobody ever taught me anything about my culture. I was going "Hmm, okay," and he walked away from me. And then, as the week went on, he was doing this workshop and I

was with this group of young people. And at the end of the week, he says, “So what do you know about your culture?” he said to me.

And from listening to him, I realized that just living my life I had learned about being a Muskego person. Hearing people talk by the tripod[?], smoking fish, and because I was, I had to hang around there for some reason. And the way we lived our lives, I understood all those, everything that he was talking about because I had heard it throughout my life. And I guess in trying to do the research that I’ve been doing in terms of helping find a way of wellness in our communities, is that, trying to help people find their sense of identity and who they are without all these terms that we’ve heard in society like healing, being culture, being cultural. Because I found that a lot of people think they’re not cultural because they don’t know, they don’t go to ceremonies the way southern urban people do. But they have an intimate understanding of the land. They live like you were saying, they live the Cree way of life, and they carry it all inside them. But they don’t understand that. I guess in my job in helping, as a helper, is to help mediate their understanding of that and who they really are in finding their sense of themselves. And understanding that it’s not a magical thing that **(Unknown Word)** is something that you do on a daily basis, and you can’t, that life is a, not a healing journey it’s a process, its something that we carry on and do everyday.

Because even in remote communities like Kidoodle[?] Lake, they have the influence of western societies, says that you have to go on a healing journey. Well, what the heck is a healing journey? And today, I’m wondering, well, what the heck is a healing journey really? You know, because that’s not our way of understanding well-being, and what is well-being? It’s not this healing thing that you go to ceremony after ceremony. As one elder put it, “Life is a ceremony and everything you do is a ceremony,” so, like, its not going to a sweat here and there and offering tobacco here and there. It’s how you live your life. And that, I guess, is when, as people were talking, I found it funny because a lot of the same dilemmas that everybody has had in their oral research is very much the same experiences I’ve had.

And also making that translation from Cree to English because what I find, and I didn’t understand it at the time was, at the time I was thinking from my place as a Cree woman trying to think in English and trying to interpret it from a white-English perspective/framework. But I was actually a Cree woman and I was totally confused. In order to clear that up, I had to go back to the land and to the people and immerse myself back in the way my people live. And then I understood that I didn’t even understand it that

because I was trying to look at it from an English-speaking perspective, and in the meantime my spirit was trying to talk to me in Cree, you know. I guess that is one of the biggest dilemmas that I've had is that, and that is what my father told me, I was thinking, I was using my white way of thinking too much. And that I needed, once I had this education, I had to step back and go full circle and go back to where I started, and realize that everything I needed to know was right there. But in order to get there, I had to go through this process of the white education. And I'm not sure where in the world that came from.

I guess Jackie is going to talk more about the kind of work we do and using the language and the teachings that were given by the old people because what she's done with her community is she's actually set up a program that is cultural, it's a culturally based program, and it's done by the old people and as well as Jackie and her staff.

Jackie Walker – I guess I'll introduce a little bit about myself, too. When I first wanted to pursue my education and I wanted something that would help our community, something that would bring our community out of despair, and then I thought that maybe I should just go to school. Because I worked in the Child Family Services field before, where I saw a lot of children being abused and a lot of alcoholism and violence in our community. And during my upbringing, I was exposed to a lot of that, too. I decided I would go to school so I could come back and help our community. Well, when I went to go and see my grandfather, who, I was explaining to him why I needed to go, and he said, he told me, he said, "What you need to know is surrounded by you. You don't need to leave to go and learn about it."

I never understood what he meant by that until one day we were sitting in the classroom, and I took a botany course as part of an extra credit, and then they started doing presentations on plants, medicinal plants. And they used a lot of our elders in their presentation. And I got upset because my grandfather's words came to me and right there. And then I realized that I was in the wrong place, that where I need to learn is home. I did continue on with my education, and I did correct that professor that was teaching the course because he wasn't doing it properly, because I knew some of the plants and he wasn't using the Cree word properly, so I assisted him a bit. And so, from there, I went home right after my studies.

I went back into working in the CFS[stands for?] field, but I wasn't comfortable working there because I wanted to work in a field where it wasn't crisis. But working in the

CFS field is very crisis-oriented. And I wanted to do more. And then, what gave me the idea was, I did a home visit with this young lady. You know, they put it in the crisis format, that I really had to go and attend, so I went and this women said, “Well, all I need is help because I don’t have Pampers or milk or any food to feed my kids because my husband took off with their social assistance.” And I was thinking in my mind, *Okay, how am I going to assist this woman, how am I going to council this women when their basic needs haven’t been met?*

So that’s when I thought about some of the theory that I learned in university like [psychologist Abraham] Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, to be able to move to the ladder of different stages, but we couldn’t do that unless the basic needs were met. So then, again, I got pulled into a chief and council meeting. There was a bunch of young boys that were causing a lot of disturbance in the community, and they asked me, “Well, what can you do?” And I was thinking, *Well, I don’t know*, and they talked about, well, maybe we can send them out for treatment or maybe we can send them out to a boot camp or stuff like that. And I’m sitting there listening to this and I thought, *Wait a minute here*. I said, “These children that are misbehaving, that are acting out, is a symptom of a family breakdown. We need to work with the family in order to help that child, and then, maybe, what we need to do is develop some sort of program that could help families.” Well they said, “Well how can you do it?” And I thought, *Well, I don’t know*. I’m going to have to think about it, right. So I couldn’t give them an answer there and then.

I went back to my grandfather, and then he said, “Well, you’re going to have to go back to the old ways. And then your going to have to teach the people to live again” is what he said. And I said, “Well, how can I do that?” He says, “You’ll get your answers.” So I was thinking, *Okay, what do I need to do now?* And then, so then I remembered a couple of years ago when I went to a camp, and where I learned a lot of traditional ways of living off the land with some of the elders that were there. And I said, “That’s it, we can do it.”

So I developed a proposal to try and get funding so we could take families out to this camp. And in this camp they have a nice big structured teepee and about five cabins, and we recently built another cabin. And that’s where we take the families out, too, to work with the families out there. Not healing. We actually help them live. We go back to the basic surviving. Going back to living off the land with our hunting, our fishing.

And I cannot speak much on some of the teachings that I have gotten from my elders because I haven’t got their permission, because this is being video recorded and I

want to honor and respect the teachings that they pass down to me. So I'm going to avoid talking about some of the teachings the elders gave to me. But, anyways, the program itself. And I hate to say it's a program because it's really not a program, it's a way of life. Because that's one of the things that our community is very confused about exactly, what is culture? People get mixed up that culture is going to ceremonies. Well, that's part of the culture, but there is a bigger piece to our culture, and that's living off the land and learning to survive on that land. Our elders, when they provide our teachings to us, and when they go into the bush and they provide the teachings that we can cure, like using the plants to cure a common cold or using the plants to cure diabetes. When they go through the bush, it's like going through a drugstore for any other normal person because they can identify any little plant, but you really have to keep up with them. And there's so much involved and what we teach our community.

There's like, I was just explaining to one of the young ladies that's in the audience. She was giving us a teaching on her little purse and I gave her a little oral teaching on the thread that's used to make the bag, the legend behind that. And I also want to acknowledge my relative over here who talked about how a lot of her elders don't get recognized for the work that they do. Like, they aren't Ph.D's the way like a lot of us here are today that have that degree, that paper, that gives us that. I don't know what it gives us, but it gives us that something. And I know that you work very hard for it. I'm not putting it down or anything. But that's just it, a lot of the non-Aboriginal people that have their Ph.Ds that work in the university setting has a Ph.D. on tanning hide, has a Ph.D. on botany, has a Ph.D. on language. Yet our elders and our community, people in our community have all that knowledge, and that's what that program is about, is we build on the strength that exists in our community. And a lot of people have that.

You know, you take, in our community we have, we don't really call them homeless people, but they do hang around our local store, you know, asking for money and stuff like that, and wanting to get their next dollar for a drink. But you hire those people and you take them out into the bush, and you give them a few days rest. And they're just gifted, you know, they work very hard and they survive and they're funny, you know, they're not the person that you see in the community. They are a totally different person when you take them out of their environment to a new environment where they belong. So that's what the "Rediscovery Families" is all about. It's also about going back, like it's all going back to the

basics. And that's like building on the relationship that exists in the community . One example is, is very disrespectful. I think I've heard a few people mention it here today. It's very disrespectful to refer a person by their name. You have to refer them by their relative, you know, and if you're not related to that group, somehow and somehow, you end up being related, like all my—I have 4 children and all my kids are married off. So, when the elders that I work with, it's not really married married, or arranged marriage, or shotgun wedding, or anything like that. It's a way of life. A process that our people follow, and I don't know if there's a word for it, but if you were to say it, it means different, but to say it in English it's way out of context. And so, so I have a lot of **(Unknown Word)**. I have a lot of daughter-in-laws, brother-in-laws. So, if I had grand-children, I think they would already be married off. And so that's what I mean by building that relationship when we're looking in our value system.

Or, I also, when we talk about building relationships, too, we also talk about when we're working, when we're setting the fish net, and we're filleting the fish, and we're talking with people. You know, you're talking about getting to know them and that's when they start opening up as you're working with them. Even tanning hide, picking medicines, you're getting to know that person. That person is getting to know. That's building relationship.

What else is there? And our value system. When we look at our value system, just recently, this summer Ida and I facilitated a women's retreat, like we have men's and women's and youth retreats, also. And we facilitated a women's retreat, and we focused around our value system like respect, love, caring, humility, but we used it in Cree. We took it in the Cree approach, and then we asked, like, "Where did you learn these from? How did you learn them? How do you use them? How do you apply them to yourself? And how do you pass those on to your children?" And you find that a lot of, a lot of, you know, there is a lot of work going on in there. There's a lot of people, women start talking about the relationship that they had with their parents and their grandparents before that. So that's what we try to do. We bring out that strength that they have.

And none of this information has ever been published. One of the elders had asked me to work on trying to get it videotaped so we can pass this on to our children in the school system, but because it's costly I can't do it. I can probably do it if I work really hard at it, but at this point I'm busy working in our community, that it's very difficult for me to do that. And this program, or this project, or this way of life is community funded. We didn't

depend on the government to fund this project. It comes all from the different organizations within our community, and we use a lot of the elders in the community to deliver it.

And I don't even like to use the word elders because it's not our language, you know. So we would always refer them by how you're related to them. So, and I think I want to also mention one of the teachings my grandfather gave me again. Because when I would go out and learn about different things and I'd learn about picking medicine and stuff like this, so I'd take a lot of this stuff to my grandfather to honour him for setting me in this path. And I would give him some medicine, and whatever I bought I would give him, pemmican, or beewagon (**Unknown Spelling/Word**), like that I've made, or hard work that I've done out there. I'd take it to him, and then he and I said in Cree, "Grandpa, you should come with us. You know, it would be so nice if you could be out there with us." But he's really old. It's very hard for him to move around, and he says no to me in Cree. I've walked that path already, and I said, "It's okay, grandpa. We'll take you on the plane," and then I thought and he just kind of nodded his head. But he, after a while I thought about it, I said, "Oh I know what he meant." He's gone through that, that journey, that experience, that way of life, and he's at the point in his life where he's back to being a child, or a baby. So, it was very interesting.

I would like to talk a lot about what we do out there. There's like, our community is very rich in resources, we're very rich. In other communities that we go to, it's poor. Like, I wouldn't say poor, poor, poor. Like, there must be a strength that exists in that community. But when I talk about resources, what I mean, we have a lot of historical sites in our community. We have the plants, we still have our trees. We come out here, it's flat, there's nothing. So that's what I mean as by that we're rich, you know. And that I haven't been to B.C. yet, so your trees must be big (**Inaudible because of laughter**).

So, not only that, you know, there's so much, there's so much to learn. There is, when, like, I don't have a Ph.D., or a master's degree, but I really have a lot of experience by working with the land and I can't weigh that with a Ph.D. because I think that my experience is higher than that. Because even when you look at the land and the lake, you know, we talked a little bit about this last night, about how can you map that? Our elders know the different lakes, the different lands, the different medicines and different areas, and for me, I'm just a little baby when it comes to that. And having to travel through there and having to know where to go in the bush. I was told once about where our dancing circle was, and each

time I go by that area I don't know which bush it is in. I want to know, but I know eventually it will come to me. And there's a lot of spiritual experience that I have gone through out at this camp...

Tape 2, Side 2: November 19th, 2004

Session 2, 1pm – 2:30pm

Jackie Walker –about that spirituality aspect of things, and I'm sure a lot of the, like our relative here has probably tried to explain it, but it's very difficult. And so when we work with our Aboriginal people, when we provide counseling, it's not one on one. It's getting them to live as Ida talked about, because culture is a way of life and that's what we try to do with our community members, and I believe that's the kind of work we've been doing for going on three years now. That concludes my presentation, I guess. If you have any questions or comments.

Brenda Macdougall – We'll deal with those tomorrow. So...(inaudible and random chatter – break ensues)

Cheryl Troupe – Okay, we have one presentation left before we take another break, so I'll turn it over to Richard and John, if you want to start.

Dick Preston – I've been thinking about how I could follow these very interesting presentations, and I don't think it would make sense for me to give you the story of my community origin, partly because I had a very nomadic life. It's many communities and probably because I don't think it's particularly relevant now. But I would like to give you, instead, is a chronology of two collaborations. The first one was with my mentor at Waskaganish, John Blackned. And I'd like to tell you just a little bit about John's life. He was born, probably 1894, in the East Maine River region, the oldest of the children in his family, and he had the great good fortune to be able to listen very deeply to his grandmother's stories when he was small, and John didn't lose things. John was a man that, once he had something, he kept it and he kept his grandmother's stories. His grandmother's mother was a grown woman before she saw a Hudson's Bay post, so that gives you some idea how

isolated that part of the world was in the middle 1800's. He married Harriett, who was a cousin, in 1919. They had ten children, only three lived to adulthood. And the two sons never married. The daughter died before she had any children of her own. So there are no descendants from John and Harriett's marriage.

When I first met John, he would have been almost what I am now. He would have been sixty-nine in 1963. And my meeting him was thanks to the man who was working as my interpreter and advisor during my first graduate student's summer training experience. This was Willy Wishgee (**Unknown Spelling**) and John and Willy were friends. And at the very, nearly the day of departure for myself and my wife and three children, Willy decided that he would risk me on John, and so we went to see him. And John told a story which I can still remember pretty clearly, and my tape recorder ran out of tape in the middle of the story. And I was so excited because the summer had been such a crashing failure and I had gone through the sort of characteristic things of self-doubt, and the certainty that anthropology was fraudulent, and that this was all a big mistake, and I didn't understand what was going on. And all of a sudden, I found myself in the middle of a really fascinating story and the tape recorder ran out of tape. And so I ran back to get another tape. And it was about a quarter mile and it was soft sand, so by the time I got back to John's house, I was pouring sweat and gasping for breath and I got a laugh from John out of that. But I think it also conveyed to him just how hooked I was on hearing stories from John.

And so I went back the next summer and the next summer and the next summer and so on. Seven consecutive summers and some brief winter trips. I'd come up the day after Christmas and spent a little time there. And a friendship developed. John on his own terms with me. Me on my own terms with him. But although John's English and my Cree were similarly minimal, you do get to understand a person when you watch their face long enough and listen to their voice long enough and listen to enough stories. And so we developed a mutual understanding, and at some point during the third summer I would write the stories down as well as tape record them, partly because it focused my mind. And that was very important. My methodology is deep listening and that's, as far as I know, my only methodology. So as I was writing things down, I would think to myself, *Oh, that makes sense. Oh, that makes sense.* And then there was a point—and I don't remember just what the point was and what story—when I had a kind of second surge of recognition, where I said to myself, *That makes sense,* and I thought, *and it really does!* And I had discovered culture.

Okay. It really made itself experientially known to me. And that was a very important experience from my point of view. I don't know whether it showed on my face, but it certainly showed in the rest of me. So, I was an apprentice, I was a scribe. John wanted the stories preserved. At one point when I had typed one out and I was reading it back to him to insure that the interpreter had got it right, because this was a young fellow who hadn't worked as an interpreter before, a different man, John stood up and put his finger on the page while I read it to him. And then when we were finished with that page he put his finger on the next page. So he was over my shoulder ensuring that it was respectful and accurate. And the thing that made John stand out in terms of people I talked to had to do with the detail, the accurate detail that he gave. I've talked to other people who were able to pass on stories of great value, but I've never run across anybody in my life anywhere who knew things with the kind of fine detail that John did, and he had that reputation in Waskaganish and beyond Waskaganish.

So, over a period of time I got a kind of, I moved from understanding particular stories to thinking, and they really do make sense, to being able to see the way the stories cohere with each other. And that was the point at which I could begin to write about them and to present them to other people. I believe it was after four summers a young woman in Waskaganish, who was the first high school graduate ever, had been doing a little babysitting for us, and she wound up coming to live with my family for a couple of years and transcribed my tapes, which was a big job. And in doing that, she was also able to check for slips of translation or things omitted and so on. And that was Geertie[?] Diamond, and after two years living with us she married this fellow over here around the corner of the table. She married John.

John was a teacher and John was keen on providing more relevant curriculum materials and teaching in a more relevant style for Cree children, and so I wound up starting a collaboration with John, a curriculum project. And he and I have collaborated off and on now for five years. And so that's the second collaboration. And it was a way of, John did go into the school when John Murdoch was principal at Waskaganish and told stories, but through the curriculum materials that John produced and illustrated, John Blackned's stories and other peoples stories became a part of the school curriculum, and this was a big success. It was a success in that it got the enthusiasm of the children, it got the interest and enthusiasm of parents when the children would take these booklets home and parents would

go through them and like what they saw. And John brought people from other communities in for a workshop, and they tried formulating the booklets, too, and found it a good thing. And the Cree school board then, at some point, formally recognized this by adopting it, or incorporating it, or something. Which was the beginning sort of the end that hit the level of bureaucracy and slipped a bit. But the idea was there, the experience was there, the ability to do that was there, and so they, the project, I think, was quite a success. Can I pass it over to you?

John Murdoch – I know it's a lot easier, you know, talking in this order because very much of what I've heard other people say that really makes me feel like I'm in good company. You know, as Jackie's already mentioned, too, I'm not comfortable speaking for other people. It's a lot easier, I feel a lot more confident speaking for myself. I think the first matters that I could claim as my own were FAS and ADD, and not too long before I met Dick. Family that I had grown up with moved every couple of years—they were with the Armed Forces, and it was sort of a hierarchy within the family. I don't, I want to be very careful about how I remember things because I know very well how intense feelings like shame, or anger, or regret, or anything like that can really distort memories, and they are my memories and they're still precious to me. I want to learn everything that I can from them. That was really the attitude that I learned in beautiful downtown Waskaganish, was you don't throw anything away. And in that sense protocols never been a big problem for me, because the protocol that I live by is much higher than every petty protocol that I've ever been asked to live by in a graduate studies program. If I can satisfy my, you know, the people that I've come to organize my life by, then I'm not really worried about meeting academic standards, because they tend to be a lot lower and a lot more easily reached.

But the situation that I found myself in was I had probably, I think from the earliest time—maybe I was as young as three, certainly by the time I was eight—organized my life around a dream of living somewhere where I belonged, where people didn't care they still hadn't settled on where I was born. You know, people didn't require membership to a club or the kind of protocol data that seemed to be the focus in a courtroom. But, really, just if I was treating people with respect, I would in turn be treated with respect, and I can earn belonging on that basis and this was very much the world that I fantasized. This was very much the world that I hoped was out there somewhere, and there were a couple of times I

just, I almost didn't make it. You know, I went from taking a lot of abuse from within family, which is much more insulting, but taking abuse on the street is just as likely to shorten the whole process.

And finally I got my dream, teaching in Moose Factory. It was the only place I ever applied to teach and I still remember it vividly. I didn't need a tape recorder to remember everything that I was told. It's still very much in my mind and at **(Unknown Word)**. That's my life, Geertie—the legend girl they used to call her, the old people in Port George, and even at Waskaganish it had caught on. And she was sitting at the Indian table in the staff dining room at Gordon Hall when I arrived, and I certainly remember, I don't know if it was her, but there was some awfully warm and friendly faces around that table and people were joking and laughing around. Whereas at the other table there was kind of an edge to it, and I really didn't feel comfortable there. If you can imagine, I used to walk eight floors in my job in an office building because I felt uncomfortable on an elevator. You know, I felt that people could see right through me, and I knew what they saw and I didn't feel very comfortable with it. And, naturally, when I'm supposed to be a man, I'm supposed to be a husband, I'm supposed to be a father, and I have a very vivid sense of what that shouldn't be. I don't know if you've ever tried to drive a car in the direction you don't want to go. You don't get much suggestion as to what to do.

But, at the same time, I was very much reassured by a lot of people around me that had even more painful stories to tell, and, but choose to look at those memories in a different way. They had a different attitude toward how they mattered and I learned very early on, thankfully, that memories are to be accurate. You run the risk of dangerous things happening if you don't remember things correctly. That's easy for me to believe at any time in my life. But you also have a responsibility of how you use those memories, and how your use of those memories affect the other people around you. And so what I'm looking back and having listened to people speak very, maybe nervous, but very eloquently of my own feelings, too, where there is this disharmony between what confident people, confidently because of the books they read are telling me, and your confidence is derived from affection that is derived from experience of people. And who wins in a contest like that? Well, to me there is no contest. I would much rather trust the advice of somebody that had something invested in me. If we're wrong, they'll still be around to help me out of this jam. Whereas if

I'm following some cold protocol, it's going to be pretty cold and lonely about the time I have to reasons to re-visit or look at it again.

I've tried very hard not to hate, especially the people that caused the most pain, and I'm very glad that somebody made that impression on me because, you know, if you can't have somebody's affection you sure don't want their hate. If there is some way of organizing things in your head in such a way that it makes sense to be affectionate, you know, to be supportive, to be compassionate, well, it sure works for me. I, a long time ago, maybe even while I was still small, I used to go away in my head to a place where I was much more comfortable. I've learned now there are some very sophisticated terms for it. I'll be careful not to talk this way in front of the psychologists. I wore a straight jacket as a kid and I have no intention of getting caught in that situation again. And, but what works for me, in my head, on the bank, on the rise looking down over a terrain, and everything that's important, either because of affection or because of practical value, or whatever, or because I've got 5000 hours of multi-engine **(Unknown Word/Word)** flying. A lot of times when I'm trying to figure out the solution to a problem, I'll take off and fly my head over the community and I can see everything that matters. I can see all the people that I would be very wise to consider and it's a very easy way to think, and it always has been. The academic training helps me articulate it a little bit better, so I don't get put away anywhere talking like that.

But uh, what I've especially enjoyed being under Leroy Little Bear's supervision is I know he thinks that way too. And his demands upon me to be a good researcher, to be a good scholar, don't require me to do the gymnastics, the mental gymnastics that I know everybody has had some kind of a struggle with. As a result, I feel invigorated. I feel, I feel very free and I don't think my confidence in which what was real was ever really shaken. When I felt sort of desperately stupid, not knowing how I should I behave as a man. Not knowing how I should behave as a father or whatever, I was also sensitive to the people around understood that.

And one of the first jobs that I was given was to be the father of an abused niece, to treat her as my daughter. And she wanted to be held as much as I wanted to hold. So we were really well matched. And my late father-in-law, mother-in-law understood that, and so did my niece, who still treats me like her father. My wife and I, we made our oldest one—I see him and I see what my life might had been had I not been started the way it was. And that makes me feel that the baggage that I still carry, it belongs to somebody else, it doesn't

belong to me. And he speaks four languages, he's graduated from a law school, he has a Bachelor's in criminal and civil law. And in a way I envy him, but in another way he doesn't have a deep appreciation of a family, the awe, if you like, of a family that I have. Runs a little short of energy when I'm the pink rabbit. I just keep on ticking and that's my ADD degree kicking in there. But I've been able to learn how to change what that means, and in addition my wife and I adopted, first, two, and then another two children, and basically rescued them the way I would have liked to have been rescued, and the way sometimes I fantasize about how I would feel had I been. And I see them raising their children with a compassion that I know that they learned from me, they learned from my wife and I, they learned from their adoptive relatives, but because their mother didn't have. So they have very good lives ahead of them. They are in a position where they've got the role models and they've got the skills and everything else. I would say they are doing very well.

Wednesday night, I stopped at Piapot reserve. My oldest daughter, the oldest of the first two we adopted, wanted me to take a picture of her biological mother's grave. And so I said I would. Actually, I was ready to do that a long time ago, but I waited until it was something that she wanted. No surprise to me, I found myself sitting with her uncle by blood. And damned if we didn't begin telling **(Unknown Word)** time stories. As always, he remembered stories—not words, but images. He remembered the weather. He remembered the way the story was told to him, why the story was told to him, who told him that story. And I don't think he had a tape recorder. I don't think faithful reproduction was ever a problem. And if the Aboriginal protocol is respected, I don't see that faithful recording is ever likely to be an issue.

While my memories, I have to be careful in the times leading up to Christmas. I realize that's not just me. Anybody who has got off to a rough start in the beginning, they face the same thing. But what I've learned to do is distract myself without really distracting myself, by engaging what I've learned and engaging it as learned with people that are going through the same sort of a thing. In my dreams, wide-awake dreams, I see myself putting my hand on my shoulder, and it makes me feel much more powerful than I felt during the times when I developed the worst memories. Just this way of thinking, this way of looking at the world. It's so much a part of my life in Waskaganish, but it's also been a part of my life in Piapot. It's been very much a part of my life in the Outback in Australia. It's been a part of my life in Greenland. It's been a part of my life pretty well anywhere where I've been asked

to do fieldwork or followed somebody home. What Maria and Winona were saying about fieldwork techniques, it really struck home for me.

What I'm doing now is I'm trying to basically use my memories and what they've been turned into so the children of parents that I know, who were very much like me when I was first married, when I first became a part of a family, part of a community. I'd like to turn it into something that happens a lot more often than it happened to me. The most distracting part of this time of the year is, it's when I remember the people that didn't make it. The people who, for whatever reason, weren't touched the same way. And when we start talking about oral history, my god, it's a lot more than oral isn't it? I'm expecting the Crown to show up in a court case some day with a throat specialist to try and argue against oral traditions and I'll be ready. The problem that I have with the notion of oral traditions is that it focuses only on one feature and it really doesn't speak to what those stories mean, where they're remembered. And I would have no problem with what I've gathered over the years and what I've learned particularly in the last several months showing that those stories are at least eight, nine, ten thousand years old. I found stories that were told to me and I can tell you all the events around the telling of that story that go back to the same story that was told by Lejeune, a Jesuit missionary in 1632. And I've heard those same stories from people like George **Papanakeese (Unknown Spelling)** from Cross Lake, or Joe Custard from Pelican Narrows.

In terms of methodology with Joe Custard, it was a ten-hour drive to a trappers meeting down in Saskatoon, and we had nothing to do but tell stories all the way. You can get more privacy and opportunity with somebody in a situation like that, and that's why I say that attitude towards protocol goes way beyond anything that might be asked in an academic setting. And if anybody doubts that, give me a call because I'm getting to be quite an expert at packaging doctorate dissertations and master's dissertations and so on. And it's, I don't feel like I'm tricking anybody or cheating anybody. I've never had a professor or a mentor that I have ever depended on complain that I didn't do enough to warrant the degree. But, anyway, I am very glad the turn that this conference is taking. I feel a lot more at ease, a lot more at home here. I didn't read any of my notes at all.

Brenda Macdougall – An example of the oral tradition.

John Murdoch – Stay tuned for the next exciting chapter....

Brenda Macdougall – So, what we'll do now is we'll go look at the hand games and Cheryl is going to coordinate the students, get them in here, get them thinking about questions they want to ask, and then we'll come back down and field one or two of those questions from students.

Cheryl Troupe – And there is some fruit and stuff in the coffee room...