

Harry Morin

Wayne Morin: And your mom and dad? What did they do?

Harry Morin: Only trapping.

Wayne Morin: How did they make a living? Just by...?

Harry Morin: Only trapping in those days eh. They trap all winter, they make enough money to survive in the summer time. There was lots of fish. There was no law like today. We used to hunt ducks any time in front of your door, those days, same as moose eh. We even travelled by canoe and paddle, not by motor, 100 miles an hour. Those days there was no motor, just paddle.

Wayne Morin: And horse?

Harry Morin: Used to take two days to Beauval those days, paddling. Now it takes you half hour.

Wayne Morin: Used to follow that huh?

Harry Morin: Beaver River, all the way eh. Two to three hours to cross the lake only to the mouth of the Beaver, and if it's windy, you're stuck there eh.

Wayne Morin: Who used to buy those stuff?

Harry Morin: The Bay.

Wayne Morin: The Bay was around then?

Harry Morin: Oh yes. Another, there was two companies. There was one Ahenakews used to run. Alec, do you remember Alec Ahenakew?

Wayne Morin: No I don't.

Harry Morin: That Mary and ah, that was their dad, Ahenakew.

Wayne Morin: Yeah, okay.

Harry Morin: They had a store they used to call Revillon. Somebody heard of that? (asks people present at interview) Yeah, they had a store here. They sold, the Bay bought the whole works, and old Alec Ahenakew, he moves his whole family to La Loche by canoe eh. No road those days. Then after that, he move to Patuanak. That's the time he retired in Patuanak.

Wayne Morin: Was that a French company?

Harry Morin: Yeah, French.

Wayne Morin: And the Bay is like English eh?

Harry Morin: I think it's from France, over seas. I think so eh. He was the first to open up the business around here. Used to call it Northwest Company eh, and ah, but people around here, they don't believe you. We tell them, the young people, often that there was two, but they don't believe

you. They think it was the Bay eh? They thought it was the Bay that did everything, but it wasn't, it was the Revillon that open up the north country. The Bay eh, they had a little store across over there...they had a little store. They move in here, now they're rich. They got about 1000 stores all over the world.

Wayne Morin: The Bay eh?

Harry Morin: I work for the Bay for about four years. I ran an outpost after I move from Beauval, 1945. I stayed at Sandy Point for a couple of years. I move to Canoe, ran an outpost for the Bay eh, for four years.

Wayne Morin: Oh, what did you do there?

Harry Morin: Well, you just go by canoe, by water, and I run it. I didn't have enough education but I could do it. My wife, she could write eh, but there wasn't much writing those days eh. There was no credit, just straight cash eh, mostly on the reserve. It was easy, it wasn't hard.

Wayne Morin: They used to buy it eh, that outpost you ran?

Harry Morin: Yeah, I used to buy fur.

Wayne Morin: You used to buy fur? That's it eh? That's all you bought?

Harry Morin: Yeah, just fur.

Wayne Morin: How much did they pay?

Harry Morin: Well, that depends. They give you the list from the company, how much you're supposed to pay. Summer time, the owners have to follow the lowest price eh. What it's worth in Winnipeg, you have to follow the lowest price.

Wayne Morin: A beaver pelt would pay you... 1945 you said you worked there?

Harry Morin: About 6, 7 dollars.

Wayne Morin: That was a lot of money back then eh?

Harry Morin: There was a lot of money back then. I started working in 1955. I got 93 cents a hour for driving a cat all summer. I was a little over 100 dollars every time I got paid. I got paid a cheque twice a month.

Wayne Morin: But that was a lot of money those days eh?

Harry Morin: Yeah, it was a lot of money those days. I have four kids to look after, but the old lady she was working in the hospital part time eh. We made good. Till the next year, I got... I work for fourteen years. The last year I worked you know how much I was gett-, after the last year? Two dollars, ten cents an hour. That's what I was getting after fourteen...I spend, I spent about 3, 4 months at a time at the Hanson Lake road. I couldn't come home; the only time we could come home was when the weather was bad. It rained for 2, 3 days sometimes. We'd have to wait, shut down camp

for ten days eh. We had to come eh. They wouldn't feed us over there; we had to come home.

Wayne Morin: When it rains, they don't feed you guys?

Harry Morin: Oh, they feed us, but we have to pay so much again, and you don't make any money at all, the wages so small and we always travel together. There was a couple of guys from Green Lake. I used to come with them eh.