

**Elder Interview of Albert Gardiner (A:)**  
**Place: South Bay Camp Ground near Ile-a-la-crosse**  
**Date: August 17, 2001**

**Interviewed by: Wayne Morin (Q:)**  
**Transcribed & translated by: Wayne Morin**  
**Present at time of Interview: Albert Caisse**

**Type of equipment used: Sony minidisk recorder c/w attach microphone**

Time

005:00:22

Q: Where were you born?

A: Ile-a-la-crosse.

Q: When?

A: Ah June the 9, 1933.

Q: 1933, what are the names of you parents?

A: What are there names?

Q: Yes.

A: My mom and dad, Adelaide my mom and?

Q: Adelaide?

A: Adelaide Gardiner.

Q: What was her maiden name?

A: That was his real name, no Lariviere.

Q: Lariviere?

A: Last name is what you mean.

Q: Yes.

A: My dad is George I don't know his last name?

Q: Probably Gardiner.

A: Gardiner, their all Gardiners.

Q: And Isabelle. What's your mom name?

A: Adelaide Lariviere that's my mom's name, before.

005:01:10

Q: How about your grandparents?

A: I just don't know I use to seen them, but I don't know they had nickname.

Q: What nickname?

A: Aticamek was my grandfather's name.

Q: Aticamek, what is that?

A: Whitefish in CREE, Aticamek, yes. And my grandmother, I don't remember was tsi-magilit.

Q: Her real name was probably Margaret?

A: Yes, yes. I don't know last name tough eh.

Q: Where did your parents live?

A: As far as I know my mom is from Pinehouse.

Q: Lariviere?

A: Yes, Pinehouse. My dad was came from Winnipeg.

Q: Probably red-river area?

Q: Yes, they stayed in Quill Lake in Alberta they stayed there a long time than they moved to Ile-a-la-crosse. All of them and from there.

Q: That was along time ago?

A: Yes long ago.

Q: When were you born, 19?

A: 1933.

005:02:39

Q: So this must be early 1900's.

A: That's what I heard, my mom use to tell me that, they knew.

Q: How many in your family?

A: Rough guess to give you is ah there is still 4 men and 2 women?

Q: Who?

A: Me, Johnny, Harry and Jeffery and Margaret and Annette right now they're.

Q: 6?

A: Yes there are 6 of us. My mom lost others kids ah but I don't remember the names. Oh yeah I have a sister in Beauval, Axelia, married to John Roy she had died that's our sister too.

005:03:42

Q: When did you move to Sandy Point, is that were you lived?

A: Yes that's is were you know where Leon is living now there's a point just on the other side the bay, there's a point across from there that's were we lived in the bush all of us.

Q: Who?

A: All of us, Leon and us, Jamie Lariviere my uncle and my Uncle Charlie and them. The whole family lived there.

Q: Charlie is your uncle?

A: Yes that's the only uncle I have on my mom's side.

Q: That's alive?

A: Yes, he lives in Saskatoon. That's the only one alive, nobody on my dad's side.

005:04:34

Q: Did you help each other a lot over there?

A: All together, when we were teenagers people started to moved, they build house were Leon is living right now and us to we move to where Johnny is living now, that's were my dad moved and Ambrose the other place.

Q: How come they moved?

A: Probably for a change for school, my grandparents stayed behind they passed away there.

Q: How did they survive?

A: Trapping, Fishing, Moose thing like that fish, rabbits that's the life in the past nothing much from the store just sugar, flours what ever ah not like today chips, corn flakes and everything like that we never seen that. When we ate porridge in the morning we use to use salt instead of sugar, not like today children are fussy they want brown sugar or sugar they won't use salt.

Q: Did they grow gardens?

A: They grow potatoes, carrot things that. They would boil them and store them in jars, berries and we would use these all winter. They would make a basement in house and store them in there. If they needed something they would get in there.

005:06:19

Q: Who build the houses?

A: They did my dad, your grandfather, Ambrose, did to, they use to work together.

Q: Nothing like that now?

A: No, They build log houses.

Q: They assisted each other a lot?

A: They worked together, they hauled and peeled the logs, and they build the floor everything.

Q: Today there's nothing like that?

A: Nothing today, people don't help each other they don't even visit today.

Q: Was that a good life?

A: Yes is was good. We lived comfortable, good life. I never had it rough growing up, just like hunger there was nothing there was always something to eat.

Q: That's because they assisted each other, extended family?

A: Yes, yes, if they run out of something they get it from other house and when he has something he gives in return, you know.

005:07:34

Q: Nothing like that today?

A: Nothing, nothing.

Q: What did you do growing up?

A: All sorts of things, we played a lot.

Q: What did you play?

A: Things like ball run around the bases hide and go seek.

Q: How did you play ball?

A: It was bare were we lived.

Q: What did you use?

A: Ball rubber ball, sometimes we would make one from rags. We would run fast (laughs).

Q: When did you get married?

A: Me, I got married, boy gees I'll tell you ah 1953.

Q: Where?

A: Here in Ile-a-la-crosse, let me see it'll be 50 years in 2003. We'll have 50 anniversary.

005:08:39

Q: So 1953?

A: Yes, 50 years will be 3000, 2003. In January, right after New Years is when I got married. Right after new years, new years the next day.

Q: January 1<sup>st</sup>, January 2<sup>nd</sup>?

A: Yes, January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Q: Here in Ile-a-la-crosse, in church?

A: That old church?

Q: Where were you living that time, Sandy point?

A: Sandy Point. All of us.

Q: How did you get here?

A: With my legs.

Q: Boat and motor?

A: My dad had one but the elders were possessive of their things. You can't just take things if they lend you you can go across but if they don't your stuck.

Q: Did he ever lend you?

A: I would go with him once in a while. In the wintertime was easy you can go across by legs.

005:09:38

**Q:** Oh yeah that's right you were married in the winter, January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**A:** In the summer you got to have a boat.

**Q:** Who did you marry?

**A:** Irene (laughs).

**Q:** What was her maiden name, it wasn't Gardiner?

**A:** Irene Daigneault, Lawrence his sister, Lawrence Daigneault.

**Q:** Who's her Parents?

**A:** They both passed away. He was in the army Tom Daigneault was his name and his mom I don't remember her name, but he died when red measles was around.

**Q:** Red measles when was that?

**A:** About 1937 she was small her mother and father-in law raised her. And she sometimes stayed with Leo Belanger's dad. That family lived in Sandy Point too. There were a lot of people there it was a lot of fun we would play together in the fall.

**Q:** How many children do you have?

**A:** 5 of my own the rest I raised.

**Q:** How many did you raise?

**A:** Lets see, Sherry, Christine, Eric and Ronda that's 5.

**Q:** You raised 5 and 5 of your own?

**A:** We lost one he drowns, Bobby. I'm raising one right now a boy, Deaden, Tavia's little bot he won't live at home.

005:11:29

**Q:** Do you teach him?

**A:** Yes he could speak CREE, he speaks fairly well.

**Q:** Did the elders talk about land Script?

**A:** Not often.

**Q:** Its like they signed something?

**A:** No I never heard them, maybe they did, but when I was growing up we didn't stay home often we played around all over the place and when they went across they would leave us. Maybe they attended meeting but we didn't know we would be across. The oldest one would look after us.

**Q:** Who are your brothers and sisters?

**A:** My oldest one Axelia before she got married that's my oldest sister she kept us and Harry too.

**Q:** Did you work hard?

**A:** Oh gees, there was nothing in past like today you had to haul water, wood and in return you don't spend no money for your house, unless you buy things like tables, this and that, after you paid everything what you make is all clear its all yours. Gas for lamps, cold oil whatever, kerosene.

005:13:16

**Q:** Do you still practice the old way?

**A:** I never left that life I was at my cabin two nights before I came here. My cabin is at Half Way Lake.

**Q:** You have a cabin and a house in Sandy point?

**A:** I currently extend it, extending it by 12 feet, 12 x 20. Spoil had promised me some boards so I waiting for those, Louis Morin's boy. Maybe I'll go get them Monday or Tuesday than I have to haul them across for the roof.

005:14:12

**Q:** Rough lumber?

**A:** Yes, It will be solid, when I built my cabin I stood up logs all straight 12 x 16 but I extended by 8 feet.

**Q:** How?

**A:** It looks really good.

**Q:** Halfway Lake, you stood then straight up, horizontal?

**A:** Yes, I put insulation in between and put strip to cover the insulation. Its really warm not even the wind comes through. And in the inside I put plywood walls and ceiling. I painted it with white paint oh its bright inside.

**Q:** You don't need light?

**A:** Even when I use the cold oil lamp it's bright.

005:15:13

**Q:** Your parents did they tell any stories of Wesackedjack?

**A:** When the old people gather, they visited lots, Ambrose, my dad and that old Kypplain that lived at Half-way Lake they would tell all sorts of stories, but we were sent to go and play and we would not disobey not like kids today, they even play in church.

**Q:** Why is that?

**A:** New generation.

**Q:** Why do they that?

**A:** I don't know. You see them in church.

**Q:** No respect at all.

**A:** They don't even listen to elders. I don't know it'll get even worst.

**Q:** You know what I think they don't work hard enough, everything giving to them.

**A:** That's it, that's it, welfare that's what, even these young guys there over 16, 17 year old if you take them trapping, fishing they'll probably go there for a week if they get paid than you won't see them again. There well off with welfare. They don't have to suffer in the cold.

005:16:53

**Q:** How about in the past?

**A:** I still trap today. Long ago in Sandy Point cold or not cold we had to go when the elder was ready.

**Q:** Did you go with them?

**A:** Oh yes we fished, winter fishing.

**Q:** Who bought the fish?

**A:** Hudson's Bay did they use to be were the RCMP are now. Frozen fish only.

**Q:** Who would pick them up?

**A:** They would with horses.

**Q:** Who would pick up the fish?

**A:** They did they had horses, my dad and.

**Q:** With horse?

**A:** Yes, you know those big racks they would put a tent on one of those and a little stove when it gets real cold we would eat in there.

**Q:** Right on the horse, I mean sleigh?

**A:** Inside that, it looks like this it was big, right on the sleigh with and tent.

**Q:** Right on top?

**A:** Yes right there with a stove.

005:18:08

Q: Little wood stove?

A: Yes, small wood stove if you got cold you would go and warm up in there and we would eat in there too. They knew how to survive they never suffered like today.

Q: Where did they fish?

A: Around different area of the lake, Black Bay, towards Halfway Lake.

Q: Who come to get the fish?

A: They would take them with horse and sleigh, when they think they have a load, big boxes back then no tubs like today, wooden boxes, they would fill those up nail them shut and as long as they mark jacks, pickerel, whitefish then when they brought them in.

Q: They knew how to write?

A: Not a lot but they knew how to do things they would open one side and the guy who buys them would see what was in the box.

Q: How much did they pay for the fish?

A: Not much.

Q: Leon was telling me 10 cents a fish.

A: Something like that, yes.

Q: He fished with his dad.

Q: He told me that they use to pick up fish?

A: Sometimes, they had a snowbug.

Q: 10 cents a fish frozen.

005:19:55

Q: Was there people living here when you guys lived in Sandy Bay (point)?

A: I don't know, I can't say.

Q: You did come across often?

A: No, but there was people living here in Ile-a-la-crosse when we lived at Sandy Point, there were homes here not a lot, log houses mostly.

Q: How about Sucker Point?

A: Yes, that's treaty land there, that's treaty land.

Albert Caisse: That's treaty land, yes.

A: That's why Joe stays there

Q: He's treaty from Patuanak.

A: The people from Patuanak were going to take all that land from the highway to the lake but were not successful.

Q: How about Sandy Point?

A: I know, I think there is oil there someplace somebody read that somewhere about Sandy Point. I don't know if it's this Sandy Point or another Sandy Point someplace.

Q: Leon told me you guys never paid for that land and all of a sudden it was lease land and you had to pay just recently.

A: I always paid it.

Q: No, but before paid before?

A: Before I didn't pay, I know. But when I moved to that point that island I started to pay but the old people never paid. I even have to pay where my cabin is.

Q: Half way lake?

A: Yes but only 15 dollars a year, a lease. You can't sell you land, you can sell you house but you can't sell the land the ground.

Q: Who owns that?

005:22:14

**A:** The government probably, they decide that's were you pay you bills ah. I speak up about it but nothing ever happens. I feel like fighting sometimes.

**Q:** What do you enjoy doing now?

**A:** All sorts of things, I'll do any job if I get a job I'll work.

**Q:** What are your hobbies. Like trapping?

**A:** Trapping is my favorite.

**Q:** How about camping?

**A:** That's my life I didn't like staying in town to long, 2 or 3 nights is enough for me than I have to go across. I can't stay still here, hyper, but once I leave I feel well. When I can't go to the bush its like my heart stops. That's why I always have a motor, gas I soon as I feel that way I leave to the bush.

**Q:** Did you celebrate Christmas long ago?

**A:** They had Christmas but you never had a holiday living in the convent. You go in September you go out in June.

**Albert Caisse:** I remember that we stayed until June.

**A:** Yes, that's right, I tell you a story. My children when they were small I use to pull them on foot with a sleigh from Sandy Point to the mission and pick them up again on some weekends.

**Q:** In a sleigh?

**A:** Yes a little sleigh I would wrap them up good, I was like a dog team.

(Laughter)

**Q:** That's why you're a man?

**A:** Yes.

**Albert Caisse:** They made a horse out of him.

(Laughter)

**Albert Caisse:** He must have a lot of strength.

(Laughter)

**A:** That's true people didn't have much long ago, even when I get radio poles in the bush I would have to pull them out on foot.

**Q:** Those were long poles to ah?

**A:** You would drag them to the water then float them from there.

**Albert Caisse:** Even when they build houses.

**A:** We would put logs like this on the ground and fell the logs here.

**Q:** You would roll it?

**A:** Yes, just like nothing.

**Albert Caisse:** Especially when there are peeled.

**A:** They move even faster.

**Q:** For log homes.

005:25: 30

**Q:** So you never had Christmas?

**A:** No never, even New Years hey?

**Albert Caisse:** No never had any thing like that.

**A:** No drinking to, like today.

**Q:** Nobody drank?

**A:** Some had home made beer.

**Q:** Home made wine?

**Albert Caisse:** The elders, like our dads drank a bit they would go around visiting at this time. They used horses.

**Q:** Did they drink lots?

**A:** I remember this one time we stole some of there home made beer, did we ever get drunk. Leon knew where they hide it, we got caught, we got a good lick'en.

**Albert Caisse:** That's because they stole.

A: We never did it again.  
(Laughter)

005:26:46

Q: How about weddings?

A: Nothing like today, all this expense.

Albert Caisse: All they did was dance in a hall, it use to be where the fish plant is now, at the point.

A: The place where they have that school for them kids.

Q: Where Magoliare use to live?

A: Yes, there was a hall there.

Albert Caisse: They use to have a lot of fun, they never had a feast.

Q: Did anybody drink:

Albert Caisse: Yes, they drank.

A: They had a lot of home brew.

Albert Caisse: The cops were bad then.

A: I know.

Q: Who play music?

A: I wonder who.

Q: My grandfather was good fiddle played?

Albert Caisse: He was good, boy.

A: August too, August.

Albert Caisse: August too.

Q: August who?

A: August, Jean Marie's dad.

Q: Jean Marie who?

A: Durocher, that's who. I use to dance a lot.

Q: The fiddle?

Albert Caisse: Yes, he was good. Ambrose and him there the best boy.

Q: How about the guitar, just fiddle?

Albert Caisse: Sometimes.

A: This one time the elders gave me some home made beer it made me crazy I was jumping all over dancing crazy.

(Laughter)

A: We had a lot of fun, it wasn't tough long ago if you think about it not like today.

005:28:43

Q: What kind of tunes did they play, Red River jig?

A: All sorts of things.

Q: Who called the square dance?

A: Anybody that could.

Albert Caisse: I remember this one guy, Pierre Daigneault.

A: He was good.

Q: Jean's Husband?

A: Harry Morin use to play to but all he played was rubber dolly.

Albert Caisse: That's it.

A: Nothing else.

(Laughter)

Q: That's it?

A: We would get tired of hearing that all night. He would try others but wasn't very good.

(Laughter)

Q: When did you hunt in the past, any laws?

A: Anytime, there was no law long ago, you would hunt when you needed it, make dry meat. We would hunt ducks any time too. Not like today.

Albert Caisse: My dad would hunt and always kill something.



005:30:16

**A:** They were good.

**Q:** No laws?

**A:** Even in the summer time. They use to tell me that when there is lots of bull dogs around it's a good time to hunt, because these bugs swarm the moose ears and nose so he can't hear or see anything and usually have to go the the muskeg to get rid of them so you hunt around muskegs. To many flies ah, they were good.

**Q:** There was plenty of game?

**A:** Oh yeah.

**Albert Caisse:** There was lots of place for the moose to live.

**A:** Today it's the highways that destroy everything. Even in halfway lake and Patuanak there was a lot moose after they build the highway everything is gone.

**Q:** Nothing?

**A:** There was even elk.

005:31:31

**Q:** Who passed down your homeland?

**A:** It was given to me by Abraham Maurice.

**Q:** Where is he from, Maurice?

**A:** I don't know, I think from Buffalo that's where JB Maurice is from.

**Q:** They were not the first ones though ah, in Sandy Point?

**A:** The old Hudson's bay was there long ago, they use to call in the Riverion the place here I live now.

**Q:** A trading post?

**A:** Dr. Hoffman once asked me that if I ever found anything around there, he says look for things you'll be a rich guy, but I never look I don't have time.

**Q:** What would a person look for?

**Albert Caisse:** Old coins, things like that.

**A:** Old coins, copper things like that. He told me to look for things you'll find a lot of stuff on that island..

**Q:** Is that where the trading post was I bet there's lots of stuff there?

**Albert Caisse:** It's probably all buried.

**Q:** But you can use a machine that beeps when it hits metal.

**A:** Then you mark the spot.

**Albert Caisse:** Maybe we step on things a bury it more we don't know.

**Q:** What?

**Albert Caisse:** When they mark land I bet there some there.

**Q:** Stakes?

**Albert Caisse:** Yes, stakes bet you there some there.

**Q:** But you said that?

**A:** But there is a lot of bush you won't know it if you step on it. It like the ground keeps getting thicker you'll never know unless you use that thing ah.

005:33:37

**Q:** You never with to the war?

**A:** No.

**Q:** Only at home?

**A:** In the bush hunting squirrels.

**Albert Caisse:** Only here in the bush.

**A:** When I go around killing squirrels that's war for me. No I never went.  
(Laughter)

**Q:** The old people what language did they speak?

**A:** The same, CREE.

**Q:** Like we speak now?

A: Yes.

Q: But we use French?

A: Us we do, were half-French.

Q: Like we say La-taup, table in French.

Albert Caisse: We speak like that but in the past they spoke straight CREE.

Q: Straight CREE?

A: Yes, like in Canoe Lake they talk CREE different, straight CREE.

Q: How come we speak half French?

A: Yes, we're half-French.

Q: maybe because of our French ancestors?

A: Even if you go to a different place like La-Ronge and speak your language tell end up laughing at you. Because they speak different.

Albert Caisse: Pinehouse same thing, Sokhem they say and we say Laport.

A: Yes, same thing.

005:35:00

Q: How come we speak differently nobody else speak this way, not even Pine house?

Albert Caisse: Yes, they speak straight CREE.

A: Yes, Straight CREE.

Q: How come were different?

A: Were crazy.

Albert Caisse: I don't know.

Q: My grandma spoke French.

A: You know why that happened is because the nuns only taught French. We went to school there I was there to for 4 years. Just nuns that's all.

Q: In the mission here?

A: Yes.

Q: Were they mean?

A: Oh boy they were mean.

Q: What did they do?

Albert Caisse: They weren't mean.

Q: They were strict?

A: Yes, strict.

Albert Caisse: We would be in bed by 5:00pm it was still light out. I use to hate that.

A: Boy I use to get good straps on my ass, it hurt.

(Laughs)

Q: Why would they do that?

Albert Caisse: We couldn't make any mistakes.

A: With a strap my ass would be just red.

(Laughs)

Q: What were you guys taught there?

A: Mostly French ah.

Q: Just French?

A: That is why we speak this way, I understand French but can't speak it.

Albert Caisse: There were lots of us in school we still don't know how to read there was lots of them we didn't know nothing.

Q: But you went for 4 years, what did you learn there?

005:37:10

A: Just to speak French and get beatings.  
(Laughs)

Q: Do you speak French?

A: I few words. I should know a few for the beatings.  
(Laughs)

Q: How old were you went you went there?

A: I wasn't that old, I left when I was 16 year old, they beat me enough.

Q: You left?

A: Yes I went home I told my mom I didn't want to go anymore, my dad said you'll trap then. It was a better life he taught me and didn't beat me. (Laughs)  
My dad walked really fast, walks fast. I would run just to keep up, sometimes I would shot a muskrat, stop and skin it, by the time I was done he was gone I would have to run again to catch up. (Laughs) I was afraid to get lost ah.

Q: A lot of nicknames long ago?

A: A lot of nicknames, different nicknames.

Q: What your nickname?

A: Bird.

Q: How come bird?

A: I'm early riser.

Q: Early bird.

A: A lot of them, this one time in Patuanak I went to a forest fire there were 3 Albert as foremen so when the copper pilot ask for Bert's portable we would all answer. So I told him to call me bird, so I know you're calling me and the other foremen will change names too.

005:40:00

Q: What else to you want to talk about, do you know of Wesackedjack?

A: Wesackedjack?

**Albert Caisse:** Wesackedjack the devil.

A: This old man told me of how Wesackedjack turned the weasel part brown, in the spring. Wesackedjack needed to go to the washroom but had no toilet paper he waited until a weasel came by, it was all white, he grab it at wipe himself. To this day the weasel turns part brown in the spring and stays that way until fall. If you see a weasel October 31 it will still be part brown but if you see that same weasel on November 1 it will be all white, its strange. I see that all the time. You have to trap these the right time to make money. In the winter the fur is thick and worth more money. The beaver to is worth nothing in the spring or fall because they wreck their fur while making dams. In the winter they are worth more because their fur has grow back and thick. I remember seeing this one big bloody tree at Kazan that they fell, a popular. They know were to fell trees too, mostly all the trees they fell land in the water.

005:44:04

**Albert Caisse:** The beaver teaches their children very well. This one time I saw a family in the river the mom beaver was teaching the children beaver how to carry material while keeping float. The mom had a piece of log in her mouth and the children had branches, this one child beaver kept releasing his branch jumping ahead and grab something else that floated by, the mom saw this and went back to scold him, she did this by knocking him under water with her tail, he continued to cheat she continued to scold him, until one day he learned to keep his place. I saw this with my own eyes.

A: Today you can't discipline your children like the beaver did or you'll end up in court. Is that it, that's it.

005:45:16

End of Interview