

SIX MOOSE FACTORY CREE LIFE HISTORIES

SIX MOOSE FACTORY CREE LIFE HISTORIES:
THE NEGOTIATION OF SELF AND THE MAINTENANCE OF CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

Life histories, considered as simultaneously cultural and personal documents, are used to discern the patterning and individual variation within culture. Six Moose Factory Cree life histories illustrate how Native individuals adapt to and accommodate cultural changes. Through an individual developmental process, competence is acquired and biculturalism is achieved. The achievement of biculturalism, which incorporates the best from both cultural worlds, is considered as an adaptive strategy for ensuring personal and cultural survival. The usefulness of life histories outside the realm of anthropology is also considered and other modes of expression such as art, music, drama, all of which require language, are suggested to be, like life histories, stories about the self and identity.

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There is a longing in the heart of my people to reach out and grasp that which is needed for our survival. There is a longing among the young of my nation to secure for themselves and their people the skills that will provide them with a sense of worth and purpose. They will be our new warriors. Their training will be much longer and more demanding than it was in olden days. The longer years of study will demand more determination; separation from home and family will demand endurance. But they will emerge with their hand held forward, not to receive welfare, but to grasp the place in society that is rightly ours.

I am chief, but my power to make war is gone, and the only weapon left to me is speech. It is only with tongue and speech that I can fight my people's war

(Chief Dan George 1974: 91).

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I. The Life History Method In Anthropology

The life history method, a form of biography/autobiography used in anthropology, emerged from research on North American Indians. The collection of life histories from North American Indians commenced in the early 20th Century as a kind of "ethnographic salvage". Anthropologists sought to preserve these peoples and their cultures in the museum or the library, as it was believed that they would not survive. Classics which resulted from this research include, Radin's *Crashing Thunder* (1926), Dyk's *Son of Old Man Hat* (1938), Ford's *Smoke from their Fires* (1941), and Simmons' *Sun Chief* (1942).¹ Needless to say, these peoples and their cultures, despite rapid social and cultural change, have survived and continue to perpetuate themselves.

At the same time that life histories of North American Indians were being collected and presented, the school of 'culture and personality' in anthropology, was forming. This school, unlike its predecessors, who attempted

¹ An excellent review of this research is given by Langness (1965).

through the use of life histories to describe or portray culture, used life history material to discover the individual's perceptions of his or her experiences, and the personal meanings inherent in those experiences. However, these two approaches need not be mutually exclusive.

II. Culture And The Individual

A recounted life history is at once cultural and personal. Personal experiences, and memories of those experiences, are informed by a cultural context. Kundera (1988) speaks to this when he talks about Heidegger's characterization of existence, which Heidegger calls *in-der-welt-sein* (being-in-the-world);

Man does not relate to the world as subject to object, as eye to painting; not even as actor to stage set. Man and the world are bound together like the snail to its shell: the world is part of man, it is his dimension, and as the world changes, existence *in-der-welt-sein*, being-in-the-world, changes as well (Heidegger in Kundera 1988: 35).

On the other hand, the world is not only part of humans but humans are part of the world. And not only does existence change as the world changes, but also, existence and the world change as humans do.² Personal experiences inform and

² Please note that I do not alter Kundera's use of 'man' in his quote. I do this to maintain consistency with his intent. I do however assume that his quote includes both genders and use it that way. I will similarly treat all other quotes throughout this thesis.

reform a cultural context.³ As such, we can conclude that culture and the individual - and by individual I mean individual personality - are interpenetrating phenomena. Thus, life histories are vehicles through which culture at large, and the individual's experience of culture can be discerned.

Obviously, the greater the sample of individuals from one culture the closer that we can get to discerning the patterns within that culture. This in fact is the greatest shortcoming of many of the earlier Native life histories. Anthropologists would collect a life history from one individual and then use that to make generalizations about the greater culture, assuming that the individual was entirely representative of his/her culture. They did not account for, or rather, allow for the variation within culture. This is not to suggest however, that these individuals are not to some degree representative of the culture from which they descend.

Sapir points out that it is from the same observed behaviour that one abstracts the patterns of culture as well as the individual variations reflecting personal meaning. Connerton (1989) elucidates: "The narrative of one life is part of an interconnecting set of narratives; it is embedded

³ By 'cultural context' I mean the most immediate form of culture which is one's personal environment, which inevitably, through numbers and patterning, leads up to and includes our more abstract and macrocosmic notions of culture.

in the story of those groups from which individuals derive their identity" (1989: 21). Therefore, the information that is elicited from a life history is not only about the individual but also about culture. And as Sapir suggests, culture is not "merely abstracted configurations of idea and action patterns which have endlessly different meanings for the various individuals in the group..." but he argues, "...vast reaches of culture...are discoverable only in the peculiar property of certain individuals, who cannot but give these cultural goods the impress of their own personality" (1949: 201-202). From Sapir's argument we get a sense of the variability that exists within culture.

The individual variability that exists within a culture results from the fact that "the true locus of culture is in the interactions of specific individuals and, on the subjective side, in the world of meanings which each one of these individuals may unconsciously abstract for himself from his participation in these interactions" (Sapir 1949: 515). The "world of meanings" which each individual abstracts from the myriad of interactions in which he participates from birth is, of necessity, unique because the act of abstraction is unconscious and no two individuals experience exactly the same network of interactions (Sapir, 1949). Therefore, for Sapir, the unconscious patterning of culture "is not the grip of master (culture) upon a slave (the individual), but is

instead more clearly analogous to the felt need of the member of an orchestra to play his instrument in accordance with a musical score" (Allen on Sapir, 1984: 462). Therefore life histories can be regarded as "cultural goods" which have the impress of individual personalities.

III. The Use Of Narratives In Anthropological Research

The life history method and document have not been used extensively in anthropology due to their subjective nature; "Life history is a uniquely personal, subjective document. It is the mediated record of the immediate experience...One may retell, recreate the experience a number of times but one does not relive the immediate experience. Therefore replication and validation in the scientific use of these terms is not possible and not relevant to analysis of the document" (Preston, S. 1982a: 15).

With the acceptance of subjectivity in anthropology, [and other disciplines] and the appreciation that once you peel away quantitative variables of science such as, age, sex and height, you have people, the life history document is experiencing a resurgence. Connerton (1989) states that oral histories have also regained popularity amongst socialist historians who see "in the practice of oral history the possibility of rescuing from silence the history and culture

of subordinate groups." He also suggests that "oral histories seek to give voice to what would otherwise remain voiceless, even if not traceless, by reconstituting the life histories of individuals" (1989: 18). In anthropology, not only are more life histories being collected to give voice to people who are otherwise silenced, but also biographical and autobiographical accounts are being more systematically exploited.⁴

Kluckhohn (1945) concluded that there is considerable scientific potential for life history documents. According to Kluckhohn, what is important is the clarification and systematization of methods and records, the full enunciation of procedures employed, and the publication, in whatever form feasible, of notes, transcriptions and translations.

Perhaps more important than all this however, is that the published life histories speak as accurately as possible to the experience of those from whom they are collected, and that they represent and enunciate as clearly as possible that experience to others who are from within and without the particular culture of the narrators. In so doing, the presentation of the life histories should include detailed information about the fieldwork methodology and the ethnographer's experiences in the field, so that the

⁴ See Logotheti (1990) for a systematic exploitation of autobiographical literature.

representation of the individual's words and the biases inherent in them can be identified. This will be discussed in greater depth later in this chapter.

In keeping with Kluckhohn's suggestions, the intent of this thesis is to provide some insight into the uniquely human experience of a symbolic existence. Using six Cree life histories, a symbolic existence as created, and as perceived and experienced by individuals, through time, is presented.

The life histories in this collection expose us to the individual variation within the context of the general patterning of culture.⁵ They capture the symbolic nature of culture and the importance of culture, as understood by individuals and as expressed by them in their own words.⁶ Also, the adaptive strategies employed by the individuals, which have ensured their successful survival are elucidated and discussed. These strategies demonstrate the complex relationship between continuity and change. Beyond this, the life histories in this thesis "remind us that human life is **priceless**, not because of the glories of the past, nor the hopes of the future, but because of the irrevocable trivialities of a present that is always slipping away from us" (Sapir 1938: ix).

IV. Setting And Methodology

⁵ Recall Sapir's discussion of the individual and culture.

⁶ See Sapir (1949) for further discussion of this.

The research upon which this thesis is based was conducted over a two month period mainly in Moose Factory but also in Moosonee, Ontario; commencing July 11th, 1988 and ending August 31st, 1988. In August 1989 I returned to the area for a brief visit [ten days] and some follow up.

Located on the Hudson Bay Lowlands, Moose Factory and Moosonee are inhabited by both a Native and non-Native population. The Cree Indians in the area originated from the eastern and western coastal communities of James Bay. Traditional and contemporary lifestyles intermingle in this area.

Moose Factory Island is situated at the mouth of the Moosonee River on the southwestern tip of James Bay. Moosonee, three to four miles away from Moose Factory is situated on the mainland. They are connected by an ice road across the Moosonee River in the winter, and by canoes and boats in the summer.

Tourists flock to this area each summer to glimpse at the way of life.^{7 /8} Most tourists arrive in Moosonee on

⁷ Until 1932, when the rail line was completed to Moosonee, this area was accessible only by canoe or snow shoe, a trek which lasted several days.

⁸ I use the word 'glimpse' purposefully in this description because based on my experience in the area this is exactly what most of the tourists do. They arrive on the island from Moosonee either on the Polar Princess [cruise boat] or on locally driven canoes. Then they take a twenty minute jaunt around the island [usually on a bus which stops at all the major 'sites', or those who are courageous enough by foot] and then they depart. A photograph of me appeared in the 'Timmins Times' newspaper. This photograph was taken by a woman who told me she was a freelance writer. When I asked her what she was doing in Moose Factory she said that she wanted to write about life on the island. I asked her how long she had been there and she replied, twenty minutes. I was quite amused. I had been on the island for almost a month and I

the Polar Bear Express from Cochrane. Some arrive in the area by airplane. I arrived in Moosonee by plane.

It was not long after my initial arrival on the island (approximately three days later) that I realized that my research was not going to go as I had planned. Strategies devised in the south showed no northern utility. I arrived on the island expecting that my research would begin immediately. From the south, I had informed my contact person⁹ of my research and my objectives, and he had done what he could to facilitate my research goals. This was very much appreciated although it proved to be unsuccessful.

Although necessity required that I change my methodology and my objectives, it is important that they be mentioned here because though altered, my original interests influenced the final work that was done.¹⁰ Initially, I was primarily interested in looking at cultural continuity. I had read several books in a graduate Native studies course which discussed at great length the breakdown and potential extinction of Native cultures. Only brief mention was ever made of people who were successfully maintaining their

could not yet say very much, at least with any accuracy, about the way of life there, and yet after twenty minutes she could! If I sound cynical it is because I am.

⁹ My contact person was Randy Kapashesit, Chief of the Mocrebec First Nation. I had met him at McMaster University where he had been a guest lecturer.

¹⁰ For example, wanting very badly to see those elements which facilitated cultural continuity, I did not, at least not on my first visit to the area, pay much attention or even acknowledge the existence of forces which indicated or would be attributed to cultural breakdown.

culture, even in a modified form.¹¹ Examples that demonstrated the continuity of culture were not discussed. It was evident to me that individuals were very much influenced by their immediate environment, that is, family and community, and they perpetuated many of the beliefs and practices that were passed down to them, consciously and unconsciously. Convinced of the perpetuity and continuity of culture, I wanted, through my fieldwork, to demonstrate this.

My hypothesis was that despite rapid social and cultural change, Cree culture was surviving. It was surviving and it was not being assimilated into the Euro-Canadian culture. I believed that this could be demonstrated through the collection and analysis of life histories from one family which spanned across three generations. A family that spanned three generations and had a significant degree of interaction between generations, would give me the opportunity to examine how culture is maintained and perpetuated, at least within one family. Their life histories would indicate continuity in culture rather than discontinuity or cultural demise. The experiences of individuals, as embodiments of culture would indicate, I believed, that adaptation to change is continuous and harmonious with previous experiences, and that in fact people

¹¹ I do not mean to suggest here that culture is static. It is constantly evolving. However, in many of the books written about Natives and their cultures, culture is treated as if it were an unchanging static phenomenon; hence, any alteration in culture is considered to be negative and to have further detrimental consequences to the culture.

adapt to changes in ways that are meaningful to them, thus maintaining some continuity in culture, both on the micro, that is, individual level, and at the macro level of the group. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, my original plans were not to be.

My contact person found a family for me that spanned three generations and captured the different lifestyles which Natives have adapted; ranging from the hunting and gathering lifestyle to the sedentary lifestyle in a wage earning economy. Within this family there was also one member who could act as an interpreter for me, as many of her family members were non-English speakers. However, these informants were not there waiting to share their stories with me and it was quite difficult to set up a time for our initial meeting. Hence, it became clear to me that I would have to seek out other willing participants. Although in the end I did not collect life histories from individuals from one family that spanned three generations, the life histories that I did collect did come from two different generations and therefore could still be used to address the question of cultural continuity.

Through participant-observation, which proceeded at what often felt like a turtle's pace, I gradually gained entry into the community. Social interaction was difficult but I was not altogether avoided. Eventually I established

and maintained relationships with several people, who were both informants and non-informants. In retrospect, I believe that it was my gradual entry as a friend and researcher, admittedly a fine line to walk, which greatly facilitated my research. Radin (1933) claims that, "[e]very investigator soon realizes that the facts he is likely to secure depend, to a marked degree, not merely upon his knowledge and his interests but to a factor frequently overlooked, his personality" (1933: 113).

An informant, whose life history does not appear in this thesis once told me that the problem with the whites is that they are only interested in gaining knowledge, and it is knowledge without wisdom. As a result, researchers are not welcomed in this community and other Native communities. They are regarded as people who are there to extract information from these communities. Often researchers enter these communities and behave as if they know more about the community than the people who are there. I think that what I did right was that I was humble about my knowledge. My attitude was one which said, 'I don't know. Would you please teach me? Can we share this experience?' I am not for one moment suggesting that I did not make my share of mistakes while I was in the field. I am however pointing out what I think I did that especially worked.

I had the opportunity to observe and participate in many activities; craft work, domestic work, bush work, social gatherings and religious functions. It was near the end of July before I had my first scheduled interview. In the mean time I had heard several stories from people who were both willing and unwilling to participate in my research.

Sharing stories is not something that one can do on command. Storytelling occurs spontaneously in a conducive environment. This is not unique to my experience of collecting life histories. In a June issue of *Wawatay*, a northern Native newspaper, journalist Anne Maxwell writes about a Native elders and youth gathering in which storytelling did not occur as expected: "Storytelling was planned as the focus of the gathering, but this did not go as well as expected. Wesley [one of the elders present] says this was because many elders are not used to 'scheduling' storytelling" (Maxwell, 1990). By the end of August I had collected fifteen life histories, six of which appear in this thesis.

I initially approached my informants about sharing their life stories or experiences with me. I told them that I was interested in learning about their life experiences. In most cases a decision to participate in the research was not immediately reached. This I believe was due to the very personal nature of the research. The people required time to

become familiar with me and to trust me, before deciding to share their stories. Some people outright refused me. They doubted my motives and believed that I would make a lot of money with their stories.¹²

Those who finally did decide to share their stories, I believe, did so for several reasons: they had the self-confidence to speak about their experiences; they had the self-assurance that their stories were valuable and would possibly be meaningful to others; and they perceived themselves as representative, to some degree, of their community, on whose behalf they felt they could speak. Perhaps they even saw themselves as instruments of the collective. Of the six who shared their stories, four are men and two are women.¹³

As I noted above, of the fifteen life histories collected, six appear in this thesis. This is partially due to a length constraint. The six that were chosen are personal favourites of mine because of the intimacy that had evolved between me and the narrators. Of the fifteen narrators I came to know these six the best because we spent a lot of time together. The degree of familiarity which we achieved enables me to do their words justice. Due to the

¹² This is an accusation faced by many anthropologists in the field (see for example Edwin S. Hall Jr. (1989) for similar experience).

¹³ I asked an acquaintance in the community why it was that women seemed to be less willing to speak to me than men were. He replied that traditionally it was the man who spoke on behalf of the woman. And the woman stood behind her man in support of what he said (Sutherland, 1988).

degree of our familiarity I am better equipped to 'speak about' them and their experiences.¹⁴

Radin (1933) claims that the close bond which is created between ethnologist and informant is "apt to colour" the ethnographer's judgment about the facts: "No matter how objective one may strive to be, where there is such a close bond as the one existing between the ethnologist and his important informants, personal considerations are likely to enter which are apt to colour his judgment, if they do not occasionally, entirely warp it" (Radin 1933: 113). I would suggest that it is the lesser of two evils to be slightly wrong about someone that you are fairly familiar with than to be altogether wrong about someone you hardly know.

There are several other reasons why the six life histories were chosen. First, they were the fullest life histories in terms of content, and represented a full range of experiences. Second, the narrators of these six life histories focused more on personal experiences than on external issues¹⁵ which concerned them. This enabled me to more easily focus on their specific situations, feelings and perceptions. The issue-oriented discussions were also very

¹⁴ I am acknowledging here that I am not speaking on their behalf, but rather speaking about them. At a time of heated debate about the appropriation of voices and artifacts, I must state that the life history texts are the narrators' words as they were shaped by me. The interpretations are mine and I can only hope that there is a nexus for our shared and collaborative experience in this written presentation.

¹⁵ The term 'external issues' is defined by me. The narrators themselves may not necessarily describe some of the issues which they discussed, most of which focused on community, as external to them. However, I perceived them as external to what seemed to be the more immediately personal experiences of these individuals, in which I must admit, I was more interested.

informative and will be useful for future work. Third, the life histories represented the experiences of both men and women, which lends insight into their world views perhaps as affected by their gender. And finally, the six life histories represented two age groups; three were elders (above fifty years old) and three were adults (between thirty and fifty years old), and the individuals originated from both the east and west coasts of James Bay; three were from the east, and three from the west. This diversity in age and origin affords an opportunity to contrast and compare life experiences between and within these categories.

The life histories appear in the chronological order in which they were recorded. This fortuitously breaks up the narrators into the two age categories; the first three are the adults, and the last three are the elders. So that I do not have to refer to the narrators as life histories any longer I will now introduce them.

V. The Narrators

Mary Nootchtai, a woman in her mid-thirties, and mother of three, was born in Waskaganish, a community on the

east coast of James Bay.¹⁶ She has lived in Moosonee for twenty years.

Mary's early years were spent in the bush living a traditional lifestyle of hunting and trapping. Her recollection of this time is vague as she only spent her very early years in this environment. She does however recall the good times that she had. Although life in the bush was brought to an end when Mary's family moved to Moosonee, not all of their beliefs and practices were left behind. Beliefs about the Indian's special relationship with the land endured, and hunting as a means for survival continued. Mary and her family lived as squatters on the land until her family built a house of their own.

Mary was six when she was taken to residential school. She attended Horden Hall Residential School¹⁷ for a few years and then was taken to the residential school in Brantford. This is a period in her life that she would like to forget as many of her memories are bad ones. What was particularly bad about her experience was being forced to be away from home. In spite of the negative aspects of Mary's residential school experience she does also talk about the positive experiences that she encountered while in school.

¹⁶ Waskaganish was once called Rupert's House.

¹⁷ Horden Hall Residential School was located on Moose Factory Island and run by the Anglican Church. It served all the communities in the James Bay area.

After her years at residential school she went away to high school. At the age of sixteen she quit. Conflict-ridden and pregnant she returned home to Moosonee. Soon after Mary's return to Moosonee she married the father of her child. This proved to be a very trying experience for her, as her husband was very abusive. After some very difficult times Mary realized that she and her children did not have to live in an abusive situation. She left her husband and set out to make a better life for herself and her children. Her children kept her going.

Norm Wesley was born in his parent's house, in Moose Factory in 1950. His parents had just moved semi-permanently to Moose Factory from Fort Albany. In Fort Albany, they lived a traditional lifestyle, hunting, trapping and fishing. Fort Albany is situated just north of Moose Factory.

Norm, unlike the other narrators attended a day school on the Moose Band reserve where he lived.¹⁸ He did not leave his parents' home until he went to high school in North Bay. Like Mary however, he did not really grow up in the traditional lifestyle of hunting and trapping. His father

¹⁸ Moose Band Reserve is located on Moose Factory Island. The day school, founded by the government, opened on the reserve in 1955. It was attended by status Indians.

had seasonal jobs and his mother worked full-time at Moose Factory General Hospital.¹⁹

Norm's school years were quite favourable and he did not undergo any trauma while away from home. This was partially, if not entirely, due to the fact that Norm's brother was in his graduating year at Chippewa High School in North Bay, when Norm arrived. He was there to support and guide Norm, while he made his transition from life on the reserve to life in the city.

After completing high school, Norm apprenticed as an auto-mechanic in Toronto. Life in Toronto did not appeal to Norm and he soon returned home. Later, he attended Teacher's College and upon completion got a job teaching at the school in Moosonee. Since then, Norm has completed his Bachelor of Arts degree and has held several jobs.²⁰ His expertise created a demand for him. Norm's story is not one of hardships, but rather one of a lot of good choices. He states, "Perhaps I was fortunate enough to make the mistake of making the right move."

Norm, like Mary is very concerned about the future of his children and his culture. As a father of five, he uses his own personal experiences to guide his children,

¹⁹ In 1951 Moose Factory General Hospital was built on the island to cope with tuberculosis which was endemic in the area (Blythe, Brizinski and Preston, S., 1985). It served the communities of the entire James Bay coast, and still does.

²⁰ Recently Norm was elected as Chief of the Moose Factory First Nation. This office has a two year term (Wawatay Newspaper, 1991).

remembering at all times that he was once, where they are now.

Allan Jolly was born April 1950, the same year as Norm, in Waskaganish, Quebec. Until the age of seven Allan lived on the trap line with his parents. He remembers trapping with his father and the excitement which surrounded a kill, especially in a time of hunger. Although life in the bush conjures images of hardship for many, Allan feels that people were happy living in the bush, because they were in control of their lives. Everybody knew what they had to do to survive, and they did it.

In the spring of 1958, Allan and his family came to Moose Factory. It was time for Allan and his brother to go to school. Soon after, his parents took up permanent residence in Moose Factory.²¹ His father, like Norm's, did seasonal work, and his mother worked at the hospital. At the age of twelve Allan was sent out to the residential school in Brantford. Like Mary, he does not recall much from this period, except for the difficulties that he faced while away from home in a rough environment. However, his experience of being away from home prepared him for high school, which once again, was not in his parents' community.

²¹ After compulsory education was enforced, many native families who had maintained annual migration to their winter trapping grounds with their children, decided to settle on the island so that they could be near their children, who were in school.

Allan enjoyed school but quit in grade twelve. His involvement with alcohol impeded his progress. He returned home in an attempt to get away from the alcohol, but by this time the consumption of alcohol had become pervasive in his family and community and he was unable to get away from it. After struggling with the use of alcohol for some years, Allan quit drinking. Soon after, his wife and parents followed his example and quit drinking too.

Allan's decision to quit drinking was motivated by his desire to provide a good life for himself and his family. Like the other narrators, ensuring a comfortable future for himself and his family was paramount.

Canon Redfern Louttit is a retired Anglican Minister. He was born in Fort Albany. His father was an interpreter for the Hudson Bay Company for forty-five years. As a result, Redfern had very little experience in the traditional lifestyle of hunting and trapping.

At the age of nine, Redfern went off to residential school in Chapleau, while his other brothers and sisters stayed behind. Some of his brothers and sisters later attended the residential school in Moose Factory, and some attended the mission day school in Fort Albany. Redfern describes his experience at the residential school just outside of Chapleau, as enjoyable. He learned farming skills

which he found quite intriguing. Once he completed elementary school, he went to high school in Chapleau. Later, he attended the University of Toronto and became an Anglican Minister. He has worked many Native communities in the James Bay area.

Redfern also discusses the importance of looking towards the future. However, he does not do this in the same manner as the previous narrators. He does not focus on the children, *per se*, but compares the actions of the current generations with those of the past and concludes that present generations need to use more foresight to ensure their survival. Redfern's life history is presented in the more traditional narrative form of storytelling. He very rarely refers to "I" and speaks more about "them." This may occur for three reasons. One, Redfern's intent is to tell a story about the general past and so he talks in general terms of "them." Two, perhaps since he spent the majority of his years in the Euro-Canadian culture he does not perceive himself as one of "them." Three, he thinks of the community more than he does of the individual. That is, he regards the community as greater than the individuals who comprise it.

Beulah Morrison, a widow in her mid-fifties, was born in Waskaganish. As a mother of eight, and now grandmother, Beulah has led a very busy life; tending to the

needs of her children and her grandchildren. She is accustomed to having children around her and states that she would not know what to do without them. She loves having them around.

When Beulah was two, her father died. Soon after her father's death Beulah went to live with her grandparents in the bush. Her baby sister remained with her mother. She lived with her grandparents until she was nine. At the age of nine Beulah was sent to residential school in Moose Factory. She stayed there until she was sixteen.

Beulah enjoyed school but could not wait to finish it and get out. Once she finished she found employment on the island as a house-keeper.

In her early twenties Beulah was struck with tuberculosis and spent more than two years in the hospital. While in the hospital Beulah established friendships with the patients and the staff. Able to speak English, Beulah acted as an interpreter for the staff and the Indians, who otherwise could not communicate with each other.

Beulah did not have the opportunity to learn a lot of the things that other Native women did who lived in the bush, but she used what she had learned in school and in her work experience to her advantage. Her knowledge of English ensured her employment, and her house-keeping skills prepared

her to take care of the family and home that she and her husband established.

Munro Linklater was born along the banks of the English River on the west coast of James Bay on April 23rd, 1923. Munro's mother passed away when he was seven years old. His father, an employee of Revillon Freres, had to travel a lot and could not take care of his children on his own. So, Munro and his eldest sister were sent away to residential school and the other brothers and sisters stayed with their grandparents. It was, and still is, very common practice in Native communities to have the grandparents or other extended family take care of children, if the parents cannot. This is evidenced in Munro's experience and also in Redfern's and Beulah's.

Munro had a terrible time at school and wonders how he managed to survive. Munro enjoyed learning, but there was a lot of violence among the students. Like others, his residential school experience conjures up a lot of bad feelings. However, Munro also remembers the good things that happened while he was in school. He established some long-lasting friendships at the school and also learned some trades. After he completed school, he remained there for two more years and worked as a 'master of all trades.' He then

returned to Moose Factory. To this day he does not know why he came to Moose Factory but it has been his home ever since.

There was little employment when he arrived in Moose Factory but he did what he could to survive. He held various jobs. In 1943 he enlisted in the army and in July 1944, after his training he left for Europe. During the war he was in the front line and was very fortunate not to have lost his life. When he returned home he made his existence living in the bush, hunting and trapping.

A father of fourteen, he has always been politically active and was chief of the Moose Band for two terms. He presently sits on many committees. There has rarely been a dull moment in Munro's life. Even at retirement age Munro is very active politically and socially. He continues to work and states " I like to do what I can at any age that I am. I've always been like that for as long as I can remember, which is a long time ago" (Linklater 1991: 175).

Like the other narrators Munro is very concerned with the future, and ensuring that people have the foresight to see what the consequences of their decisions and actions are. As an active community member he does what he can to instill cultural knowledge in the present generations. He believes that if people know about their past, then they can use that knowledge to guide their future.

These six individuals share several experiences in common. All of them, except for Norm, were removed from their families to go to school. They all had to adapt to a new physical and psychological environment. Also, they directly or indirectly experienced a shift in lifestyle; going from a traditional hunting and trapping existence to a Euro-Canadian existence. Their successful adaptation to these changes as recounted in their life histories, has ensured their survival and ensures the survival of their group. From their experiences others can learn, not only about personal adaptations but also about cultural adaptations. Their life histories and the ways in which they are told are not only reflective of culture change and continuity but they also serve as historical information and as guidance for the future generations.

VI. Collecting The Life History Material

The life histories in this thesis are clearly the result of a collaborative and negotiated process between the narrators and myself, the ethnographer. Although primarily expressions of the narrators' lives and culture, they are

also to some degree expressions of my, the ethnographer/
editor's life and culture.²² As Keesing says,

We as aliens, catalyze and deflect talk, and we interpret it through eyes and ears filtered by distorted perceptual screens we can never shed. What we make of them and their talk, and what they make of us, and our talk, comes loose from the anchors of their cultural understanding and ours (1985: 29).

To capture some of the deflection created by me, I have included my voice in the life history presentations. My voice appears in capitalized text usually in the form of questions. Inevitably my questions influence the direction that the life histories take and therefore the life histories are just as representative of my interests as they are of those of the narrators. In spite of this, I must re-assert that the process was a collaborative and negotiated one.

It is difficult to explain, yet important to mention how much I was changed during the process of collecting and throughout the process of collating and writing these life histories. The experience was not only academically invaluable to me but also, personally invaluable. As Myerhoff explicates;

A story told aloud to progeny or peers is, of course, more than a text. It is an event. When it is done properly, presentationally, its effect on the listener is profound, and the latter is more than a mere passive receiver or validator. *The listener is changed* (1982: 116, my emphasis).

²² For further discussion on the collaborative nature of life history works see Krupat (1985) and Langness and Frank (1981).

The stories that my informants shared with me gave me the opportunity to share in their lives and also to learn more about mine. Frank and Langness (1981) aptly explain this process:

The acts of empathy that arise in attempting to understand the reality of people sometimes very different from ourselves can be a transformative process. Such acts of empathy whether successful or not in actually simulating the other person's experience, help us to break down the barriers of ego and identity that give us the illusion of somehow standing separate and apart from the flow of human consciousness through the millenia (1981: 154).

Aside from the time that we spent working together, my informants and I also spent a lot of time just visiting. We still maintain our relationships from a distance. Undoubtedly there have been some changes in my life and my outlook since I collected these life histories almost two and a half years ago. These personal changes undoubtedly affect the presentation of this work. Furthermore, the lives of the narrators included in this document have probably also changed. However, I can only speculate about the effects that these changes have had on their outlook on their lives. It is necessary to remember all the various influences that come into play in the final presentation of this work.

The context in which each life history was collected was slightly different. Mary and I met on several occasions for lunch; July 27th, August 9th, 18th, and 25th. The first of these meetings was tape-recorded. It lasted approximately

two hours and was recorded in her office at work, after our lunch together. At the other interviews, I made notes about our discussion after each meeting was over. It is the recorded meeting upon which her life history presentation is based. However, my analysis of her life history is informed by all our meetings, that is, all our shared experiences. I have of course excluded material that was of a very personal nature. This is true in all of the cases.

Norm and I met twice, July 28th, and August 4th. We met at his office and each session lasted two hours. The first interview was tape-recorded and the second one was not. I took notes during the first and second interview. It is the recorded meeting upon which his life history presentation is based, although I have inserted some of his comments from our second meeting into the presentation where appropriate. It may have been appropriate to indicate to the reader where I made insertions. However, I did not feel that my insertions greatly detracted from the authenticity of the life history. Also, I did not feel that indicating where my insertions occurred would greatly enhance the reader's understanding of the narrator's life history.

Like Norm, Allan and I had two meetings, each held in his office at work; August 5th and August 8th. Similarly each session lasted about two hours. The first interview was tape-recorded and the second one was not. Generally, the

second meeting, in all instances, was more issue oriented and dealt more with community concerns rather than with personal experiences²³. Second meetings were usually held upon the request of the narrator. Allan's life history presentation is also based on the recorded interview, however, I have inserted some comments from the second interview into the presentation.

Redfern and I formally met once. We met and talked many times while I was in the community but the scheduled meeting on August 6th, which took place in his living room and lasted about two hours, is the basis for his life history presentation. But, as mentioned before, the analysis of his life history is certainly informed by everything that he and I shared. I should mention here that Redfern and I were quite close. This is due to the fact that his wife, Agnes and I spent a lot of time together, so I had plenty of opportunities to see Redfern as well. By the time I left Moose Factory, Agnes was referring to me as 'daughter' in Cree, and I was referring to her as 'mother' in Cree. They are both still very special to my life.

Beulah and I met at her house twice, on August 12th and 15th. Each meeting lasted about an hour and a half. The first of these meetings was tape-recorded, the second was

²³ Recall my earlier explanation of what I considered personal versus external issues.

not. Her life history is based on the tape-recorded session. I visited her several times after that at her home.

The final life history, Munro's, was tape-recorded in his office at the Mushkegowuk Tribal Council on August 29th. The meeting lasted about two hours. Munro and I had casually met several times before that but we were unable to find a time that was convenient for us to meet. I interviewed Munro once again on August 23rd, 1989. This meeting occurred during my second visit in my place of residence. His life history is based on the first tape-recorded session, although I have inserted some parts of the discussion from our second meeting into the first. The second interview was pretty much a duplication of the first with some points clarified.

Despite the fact that each life history was collected under slightly different circumstances, I approached the task in a similar fashion at all times. At the beginning of each initial interview I requested that my informant tell me about his/her life, starting wherever and however s/he preferred. I interrupted as infrequently as possible, allowing the natural flow of the narrative.²⁴ Questions that I raised were for clarification, and if the story turned in different directions I let it, because these digressions and transgressions would lend insight into what

²⁴ The frequency of my questions is indicated in the life histories themselves.

the narrator considered important. "It is largely in this sense - in the choice of subject matter - that the presentation of self emerges most clearly" (Brettell 1982: 12). During the interview, I also made notes, emphasizing the points that the narrator emphasized and noting any physical gestures.

Before I go on to discuss how I assembled the life histories I would like to return to a point that I raised earlier in this chapter. I mentioned the importance of including a discussion of the ethnographer's experience in the field so that any biases inherent in the representation of the narrators' words and their situations could be more easily identified. The daily journal that I kept while I was in the field helped me, for example, to identify how my feelings influenced my work. Similarly, a detailed explication of my intentions and methodology will enhance the reader's understanding of my influence in the production of the life histories and this work.

I have attempted throughout this chapter to be clear and explicit about my involvement in the collection and creation of these texts. There is however one experience which stands out predominantly in my mind and is of utmost importance when considering this presentation and perhaps other presentations similar in nature.

My return to Moose Factory afforded me the opportunity to look more objectively at my initial research visit to the island . I have already discussed in some detail the preconceptions and theoretical framework with which I arrived and was functioning under while I was in Moose Factory in 1988. However, during my initial stay in Moose Factory I was unaware of my biases, and the imposition of my biases on the situations to which I was exposed. My second visit made clear to me the biases which were inherent in my initial fieldwork.

When I returned to Moose Factory for the second time I became aware of things that I was formerly unaware of, or perhaps more correctly, had turned a blind eye to during my first visit. Wanting very badly to find cultural continuity and to get away from some of the abysmal pictures which had been painted of Natives, I avoided seeing some of the problems which existed in the community, problems which could have been considered indicators of cultural breakdown. For example, my second time around I was more aware of the extent of drinking in the community. This does not mean that I was not exposed to it the first time, but rather that I did not really take it into consideration.

My convictions were that not all Natives fit into the stereotypic 'down and out on the sidewalk' pictures that had been painted of them. And I felt very strongly about

portraying the Natives who did not fit into this mold. What this means in terms of this presentation is that it is in fact quite coloured by what I wanted to see. However, it is different from many other presentations of its kind in that I acknowledge my near-sightedness and or narrow-mindedness and recognize and in fact point out how these bear on the presentation. Furthermore, I attempt, through the presentation of the life histories to represent the narrators' lives very much as they described them, thus avoiding, although perhaps not entirely, the distortion which might occur from either positive or negative attitudes which I may have towards them.

Some of what has been written about Native Canadians is quite distorted. Presentations have either painted idealized pictures of the "noble savage", or they have emphasized the dysfunctional side of Native life. Positive or negative attitudes, rarely stated explicitly, towards these people pervade these presentations.

It is difficult for anyone to be objective when they look out onto this world. It is especially difficult for ethnographers not to rely upon their ways of knowing when they find themselves confronted with 'Otherness'. Crapanzano best describes the process which occurs for the ethnographer in the field for the first time:

The ethnographer's entry into the field is always a separation from his world of reference - the world

through which he obtains and maintains his sense of self and his sense of reality. He is suddenly confronted with the possibility of Otherness, and his immediate response to this Otherness is to seek both the security of the similar and the distance and objectivity of the dissimilar. No longer bound to the conventions of similarity and dissimilarity that obtain within his own world of reference, he vacillates between an overemphasis on the similar or dissimilar; at times, especially under stress, he freezes his relationship with his understanding of this Otherness. He may become very rigid, and his rigidity may determine the 'texts' he elicits and the form he gives them. He may in his anxiety, attempt to arrest time. Fortunately, the field experience is a lived experience that perdures, permitting a certain learning and requiring a flexibility that militates against this tendency to freeze both the relation with, and understanding of Otherness. Fortunately, too, most ethnography encounters are, despite even the ethnographer, very human experiences. The savage is, so to speak, less cowed by the ethnographer than the ethnographer is by the savage (Crapanzano 1980: 137-138).

Therefore, we can approximate reality in our expressions of other, if we are aware of our influences upon what we see and what we experience, which, as Crapanzano states, influence how we describe what we see and our experience of it.

The primary element needed to create objectivity and self-reflexivity seems to be time. With time may come patience, understanding and distance; distance not only from the unfamiliar situations with which we are faced as researchers, but also distance from ourselves and our ways of knowing. This distance cannot help but lead to more

representational and less judgemental forms of writing about others.²⁵

VII. Assembling The Stories

The written performance is very different from the oral performance in the way that it is expressed by the narrator and received by the audience. In the written word the enactment of the life history is lost. We cannot hear the tone or volume of the narrator's voice, nor can we note the intonation, or attend to the accompanying facial expressions and other gestures.²⁶ These are lost to us. All that is left to us in the written performance, are the words and the meaning that we derive from them. But this is still a rich and active narrative. In an attempt to remain as faithful as possible to the narrator's account and to convey a sense of their individual personalities I have tried to

²⁵ As an example of a work heavily burdened by the author's preconceptions and her unawareness of them, see Anastasia Shkilnyk's *A Poison Stronger than Love*, 1985. It is not within the scope of this thesis to critique this work, but it is one of many examples of works which does not represent an all encompassing and unbiased picture of the Native experience, because it is heavily burdened with personal judgment. Shkilnyk's intent was to receive compensation for the Grassy Narrows community for mercury poisoning of the English-Wabigoon Rivers. This being her goal, and being well versed in underdevelopment, she painted a dismal picture of the people, suggesting their inevitable cultural demise as a result of the move of their community because of the mercury poisoning. She compares the community to a southern community which cannot help but give us negative impressions. And, she claims that the negative cycles of drinking and abuse for example, cannot help but repeat themselves; yet she does not even entertain the possibility of the replication of positive cycles. For example, grandmothers passing on their traditional values to their grandchildren. A further impediment to Shkilnyk's work is that she regards culture as a static phenomenon, and therefore she regards anything that deviates from traditional culture as destructive.

²⁶ It should be noted however, that I, whenever I listen to the stories which I collected, especially on tape, am taken back to the time and place where they were enacted. With time, my memory fades but I do hear their voices and remember their faces whenever I read, and especially whenever I hear, their words.

alter as little as possible in the written presentation of the oral performance.

I transcribed the tape-recordings in their entirety, including in the transcriptions all pauses, indicated by [...], and all digressions, "ums" and "ers". Also included in the transcriptions were any physical and voice expressions, which were described as 'laughs' and or 'gestures with hand pointing in certain direction.'

Once the transcriptions were completed I thoroughly read each life history several times. A certain amount of editing was needed so that I could present the material in a coherent way in the written form. I changed some of the grammatical structure, but only did so where it was absolutely necessary. I attempted to capture the uniqueness of the narrator's voice and his or her speech patterns. The focus was not so much on correct grammatical presentation, according to some predefined system, but rather on what was said, as it was said.

I excluded repetitions and digressions [made by the narrator or myself] which would not enhance the reader's understanding of the narrator's experience. These are indicated in the text as (...), (...), (....) etcetera. Where questions that I made are excluded they are indicated as such, (?), (?.?), (...? ?..) etcetera, the number of dots indicating the length of the passage omitted. The narrator's

verbal prompts for understanding or approval, such as "you know" or "you know what I mean" were also omitted. Although these clearly indicate my presence in the interaction, they do not add to the presentation of the material.

Aside from the omissions, I did not alter the length, feeling that the length would also be reflective of each individual. Only where I have already mentioned, in Norm's, Allan's, and Munro's presentations, have I minutely altered the length by adding some text from other interviews.

Some parts of the material were rearranged to follow a chronological progression. The need to do this was minimal as most of the life histories more or less followed a chronological progression. This is not necessarily the way in which an individual recalls his or her life or tells a story. It is more probable that an individual digresses and tells their story by association, recalling different time periods at certain points of the story. A chronological presentation, does however, make it easier for the readers of these texts to follow and to comprehend the circumstances that influenced the narrators' lives. Also, a chronological progression enables me, Euro-Canadian to more easily draw comparisons between the narrators' varied experiences.

Connerton (1989) posits that the imposition of a chronological narrative form alienates the narrators from their actual perceived cultural experience:

...The historian will only exacerbate the difficulty if the interviewee is encouraged to embark on a form of chronological narrative. For this imports into the material a type of narrative shape, and with that a type of remembering, that is alien to that material. In suggesting this the interviewer is unconsciously adjusting the life history of the interviewee to a preconceived and alien model. That model has its origins in the culture of the ruling group.....(1989: 19).

Similarly Eakin (1985) suggests that "no aspect of Native American autobiography escapes the shaping power of the discourse of the dominant culture; character, plot, culture, history - the influence of the white theories and models is pervasive" (Eakin in Krupat 1985: xix). To suggest however that the interviewer is altogether imposing an alien form on the narrative and on the mode of remembering over-states the case in my opinion.

Many Native people, and certainly those included in this thesis, straddle both cultures and therefore are aware of and comfortable with both ways of thinking and acting. Moreover, my imposition of a chronological order through the actual interview and in the final presentation facilitates my understanding of the shared life history, the telling of which is negotiated throughout the telling between the listener and the teller; a process which would altogether be impossible if there were not some compromise and mutual understanding. Data is collaboratively reconstituted so that what emerges is a mutually agreed upon representation with

the ethnographer's perspective hopefully not being over-emphasized (Preston, S., 1982a).

The stories are presented in the first person remaining as faithful as possible to the narrator's account. The titles that I have chosen for each life history are drawn from the actual narrative of each individual. I chose a phrase which I felt most captured the essence of the life history. The use of titles is simply for stylistic reasons.

My analysis is restricted to the end of the life histories. The analysis, as separated from the text, leaves the stories open to interpretations other than those that I have given them. This allows each reader to derive whatever is personally meaningful from each story. To some extent, the reader's interpretation will have already been biased by the synopses of the narrators and their life histories earlier in the text. But the context which is provided through these synopses is helpful in the reading.

It is the collaboration between the narrator and the ethnographer that allows the ethnographer to translate implicit meaning into an understandable context, but if I have misrepresented someone or misinterpreted what they had to say, I extend my sincere apologies and only hope that I can learn from my mistakes.

The stories presented here were collected with informed consent from the narrators and they are published

under the same conditions; although none of them have had the opportunity to see the final manuscript. The narrators gave me permission to use their real names and I have done so, feeling it unnecessary to disguise them.

CHAPTER II

MARY NOOTCHTAI: "ALL THAT KEPT ME GOING WAS THE KIDS"

I don't remember too much about living in Rupert's House. I remember the good times, just being a kid (...) but I don't remember if my father was working or anything like that. I must have been only about four or five (...). All I know is that I had fun there. There was a lot of relatives, and my grandmother lived there. That's all I remember.

IS THIS IN THE BUSH?

No, it was right in the village. I do remember some of the stuff, like what it was like to live in the bush, and I tell my kids about it now. I remember this island that we used to go to in the summer. (...) Those were times that I remember the most because we had so much fun.

It was isolated and there were two families (...) that shared the tepee. (...). What's probably there right now is a cabin or a canvass tent, instead of a tepee (...) . It was a lot different. The other thing that I remember is (...) making floor, what you were doing (...) last week, making floor. ²⁷ That was my job. I remember that, and I remember

²⁷ 'Making floor' here refers to the act of laying freshly picked spruce branches on the floor of the tepee, creating a cushiony and aromatic bed. I had the opportunity to 'make floor' on two occasions during my fieldwork. After collecting spruce branches in the bush, with Agnes (Redfern's wife) and her daughter and

having to take the fish off of the fishing net when the tide went out; having to run out there and having to hurry up eh?!! I remember doing that with Marjorie and Mark, my oldest sister and brother. That's about all that I remember from Rupert's House.

DID YOU LIVE IN A TENT THEN, OR DID YOU HAVE A HOUSE?
 (...)It was more like a half tent. The sides were made out of boards and the top was made out of canvass. (...)We lived in a house in the winter months (...) with my father's grandmother, I think it was. I'm not too sure (...). I don't remember people too much. (.....)It's very hard to know (...) who exactly is related to you because I haven't been back there since we moved here. It's been twenty-five years (.....).

SO YOU STILL HAVE RELATIVES IN RUPERT'S HOUSE?
 (...)Yah, there's a lot of them. There's not too many of my father's family, or any of my mother's family who moved here. They've lived in Rupert's House for so long. They still trap (...), live in the village during the summer or go fishing for the whole summer. But they still trap to make a living.

WERE YOUR PARENT'S TRAPPING THEN AS WELL?

They were. (.....). (...)Another thing that I remember is being bundled up in this long open sleigh because we were travelling using dog teams. That I remember. There's just a

granddaughter, we returned them to the bannock tent next to the Anglican Parish Hall and lay them over the old withered and dried branches already on the ground.

few things that I still can remember. But I couldn't say what it looked like then as I remember it.

DID YOU STAY IN THE BUSH IN THE WINTER TIME AND THEN COME OUT IN THE SPRING?

Yah.

WOULD YOU BE IN RUPERT'S HOUSE IN THE SPRING?

Yah, (...) but my father would still be hunting close by after the river broke up, (...) or we would be at a fish camp for the whole summer (...) or we would be camping on an island for a couple of months.

SO WHAT WOULD YOU SAY A REGULAR DAY BACK AT RUPERT'S HOUSE WOULD BE LIKE WHEN YOUR DAD WAS STILL TRAPPING AND YOU WERE LIVING IN A HALF TENT?

(...)He would probably be out hunting and my mother would be at home looking after us kids and taking care of all the chores. (...)If there was anything to be cleaned, like game, you know, scraping moose hide, she would do that. It was still carried on too, what she did there. She was still doing that here when we moved to Moosonee. I remember the hide. She used to clean it outside and then smoke it. Except this was in a wooden shack now (...) but it wasn't that much different from a tepee. And just getting meals together. It took up the whole day with the stuff she had to do. And she was teaching us kids to do the same. Mind you, I don't know how to skin a beaver now, I'd probably put a

hole in it or something!! (.....). I know how to clean geese and make bannock. Those are not lost. (..)And my father today, he still makes tamarack. The only time he goes out hunting (..) it is still for survival (..). He fills up the freezer with meat for the winter, and it's shared with the family like it was a long time ago.

I think some people today see it as (....) just a sport (..) for my father and my brothers when they go hunting, but it's not. It's still for survival. (..)When they go out fishing too! A long time ago it was said that there was a use for every part of the goose. And to this day it is still the same. (..)Nothing is wasted. (..)I still say, whatever they kill, it's still the needs for survival, even though they're living in a house with all the modern conveniences and everything. So that part is still carried on, (..) although the women don't go out to goose camps at all. They don't even pluck, some of them! But it's still there. Like, my father, he's teaching my son, his grandson, to enjoy something. He's teaching him all the respect for nature, and that you don't kill anything that you don't eat, or you don't need. He's teaching my son that. Like, it's not a sport. It is a means of survival. So it's passed on, those kind of values about hunting (..) and respecting nature and not over doing it. It's sad to see that there's some people who do go out there just to say, "Oh, I shot a few

geese". But it goes to waste some of it. (...). So, when we moved here that part hadn't changed.

WHY DID YOU MOVE HERE?

(..)We had relatives living on this side. I think they were from my father's side and they thought that it would be better if we moved here (...). I didn't ever ask why we moved. They figured we would do a lot better over here. They figured my father could find a job on the railroad (...), but by that time my father was sick, I guess from the drinking, and he'd had TB before. He was a pretty sick man and things didn't work out too good.

We lived in either one of those half houses²⁸ (..) or we lived with somebody. We moved to different places. We were squatters. We didn't have our own lot or anything so we just moved here and there. (.....). Squatters are people who just set up (..) a house or a shack, on land that they don't own. So, when the land is needed, they have to move. (...). So that's what it was like living across the bridge there.²⁹ Eventually we bought a house. But we had to move it to another lot and that wasn't our lot either. My father got the house through CMHC.³⁰ (..). He bought his lot through

²⁸ As aforementioned half houses were made with boarded sides and a canvass top.

²⁹ 'Across the bridge there' refers to the location in Moosonee across the bridge, where a lot of squatters used to be located. The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation and other funders are now funding housing developments there.

³⁰ CMHC is an acronym for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

that way too. So they have been there for (..) at least twenty years.

Most of the people that live across the bridge now have lived there since Moosonee was here. (...). I used to wonder when I first moved here where these people came from because I knew they didn't originate in Moosonee. But it was people who came from up the coast.³¹ (...). They all settled here and made Moosonee their home. We're sort of a mixed group. There's a few of us (..) who would never go back to Rupert's House because we settled down here, our kids were born here and relatives are here (...).

WHY WOULD PEOPLE COME DOWN HERE?

(.)I don't know. I guess maybe for the same reason that we moved, to see if things were better here. (.?.). (..)Maybe some of them were looking for jobs. I know my father was looking for a job even though we...he did okay while living off the land. He didn't have a job in Rupert's House. (..)It was sort of a bad thing because you lost...you weren't busy all the time. You couldn't go out hunting every time you felt like it because your kids were going to school (...). And so you lost a lot of (..) your culture, I'd guess you'd say; like the way you do things, like hunting or what you teach your kids. You lost a lot of it.

³¹ 'Up the coast' refers to the coastal communities of James Bay, which include Fort Albany, Kashechewan, Attawapiskat and Winisk. These are located on the west coast of James Bay, from whence most of the inhabitants of Moosonee and Moose Factory first originated.

Out of our family there's (...) three of us who can speak fluently in Cree. (...) Robert is three years younger than me. He can speak pretty good but not where he can carry on (...) a conversation with my father where he could feel at ease, you know. (...). My father can just sit there and talk and it flows real smoothly. (...). There's three of us who can speak fluently but Robert has a hard time. And then the rest have a very tough time sometimes and it doesn't sound natural because it's (...) just what they have picked up, even though my parents spoke Cree all the time. I don't know how they lost it. My father speaks Cree. He doesn't speak English. He understands English but he doesn't speak it well enough to carry on a conversation with anybody. My mother spoke English but she was always very self-conscious about her English. (...). But he always encouraged her to talk English. So I don't know how they lost it. That's the time I guess that we were gone too. Maybe if we were around and we talked to the kids more too the younger ones would have picked it up. And I think it's sad to see. My children don't speak either Ojibway or Cree. Their father is Ojibway.

DO YOU SPEAK TO THEM IN CREE AT ALL?

Yah, now I do. Now I know how important it is. They can't talk to my father, their grandfather (...) and that part is sad.

SO HOW DOES YOUR FATHER DO THINGS WITH YOUR SON WHEN HE IS TEACHING HIM?

x I don't know, but he understands. My son understands. (...) I think it has a lot to do with how you're teaching kids. I know when he used to teach us ... I asked him to teach me how to make tamarack one time, so he said, "Sit down". So I said, "Okay". I sat down and watched him. So I said to him, "Maybe it would be better for me to understand if you were to talk as you go along". "No talking", he said, "Just watch!" So it was done a lot different. So maybe that's what happened to them, because it is just watching and not talking, really.

I think that (...) if I married somebody who was Cree there wouldn't be a problem there because we probably would talk Cree all the time and the kids would have picked it up. Maybe if we're here longer they can pick it up by just being around the family. Now I realize how important it is to keep up your language. It gives you a sense of (...) being Cree, you know, a part of it. (...).

I asked my father to take my son out hunting and to teach him trapping too, because (...) it's a way of life. It was a way of life and it still is to some people. I remember my mother saying, "Don't kill a bird if it's just going to go to waste. You're just killing something for the sake of killing. You should never do that". I remember her saying

that. There's little things we pick up that now when I'm older I can see back, but as I was growing up I didn't know that I was being taught something. Only when you have kids I guess, do you realize that, (...) that happened to me as a kid, or I was taught that when I was a kid.

So anyway, we moved here and things started to change quite a bit. My father was sick and we³² ended up in Horden Hall because he couldn't take care of us. I was in two boarding schools but I don't think there was any place that I liked, even though at Horden Hall I was only three miles across the river from here. It was very hard to be away from home, no matter how close the communities were! The whole idea of just being taken away when you didn't understand why... (...)Now they explain it. But at that time how do you explain to a six or seven year old kid why they can't live with their mom and dad?

SO YOUR PARENTS DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING TO YOU WHEN YOU WERE LEAVING?

I don't remember. All I remember is being upset because I had to go. And I was crying. Everybody was crying. Even she was crying! (.?.). The older ones were already there. But (...) the year that I went over, that's when they took my brother too. (...)He was just coming for the ride, and they said, "You're old enough to be in school", and they just took

³² 'We' refers to here to Mary's brothers and sisters and herself.

him. I don't think I felt hate, but I felt bitter about some of the things that happened. I wondered (...) about why we had to be taken away in the first place. I thought maybe our parents didn't care for us. But that wasn't true. I remember we would go hungry sometimes and I guess that's the reason why we had to be in school, because our parents couldn't take care of us. Nobody was working at the time. We were all on welfare, and there were just too many of us. (...).

SO HOW OFTEN WOULD YOU SEE YOUR PARENTS?

(...)The only time we would come over here [here being Moosonee] (...) was on the long weekends and Christmas. We would come as a group to Moosonee for long walks but we didn't visit home. You'd be lucky if you saw your parents at the store at the same time or something (...). Institutionally we had to do things. I think that's one of the things that was very hard to live with.

SO HORDEN HALL WAS A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL WITH ALL NATIVE CHILDREN?

Yah. I don't remember too much of that because I (...) was really young at the time. There's not too much I remember, and I guess most of the things that I do remember are unpleasant because I didn't want to be there and I didn't like it there. I wanted to be at home. When I was ten I was sent out to Brantford. (...)I was sent down there around the

end of September, and to this day I don't know why.³³ I remember that it was September because the leaves were changing colour. That's what I remember. And I remember crying and leaving on the train. (.?.). I was sick on the train all the way to Brantford. I remember it was really terrible.

WOULD THEY TELL YOUR PARENTS ABOUT THAT, OR WOULD THEY JUST SEND YOU AWAY AND THE PARENTS WOULD FIND OUT AFTERWARDS?

I think what happened is that sometimes they would tell them. I don't think they were asked if they could. (...). I think they were just told (...).

I was sick for about two months after that. It was mostly from being home-sick. They were getting to the point of wondering what they were going to do with me because I was losing a lot of weight.

AND HOW DID THEY TREAT YOU WHEN YOU WERE SICK?

(..)They got angry at me a few times and told me to stop crying. But it hurt so bad you know, to be that far. (...).

SO HOW LONG WERE YOU THERE FOR?

I was there for a year, a whole school year. I didn't come home for Christmas. (.....). I don't remember Christmas dinner or anything like that. But I do remember this huge

³³ According to one of my other informants who was also sent to the residential school in Brantford, he was sent there because he was fairly intelligent and he would have better academic opportunities at this residential school. Also, many of the children at the Brantford school were tough and it was believed that the Cree Indians might have a moderating effect on them. Mary's other brothers and sisters remained at Horden Hall.

box that arrived with all my presents from my parents.
(...?...).

WHAT WERE CLASSES LIKE?

(..)There's a couple of teachers that I remember. One was really awful and the other one was really nice. (..)I think the things that stand out most are the bad times (..) more than the good times or the fun. This is because of having to be there when you didn't want to be there. (...?...).

I don't know if anyone ever mentioned to you what it was like to be in residential school. The same things that can go on in jail, like gangs, go on there. (....). It was mostly your aggressive types with their (..) three or four followers behind them, and if you didn't do what they said (..) they'd get you somewhere and they'd beat you up or something. I remember one of the girls there, they dragged her around by her hair in the playroom (..) because she wouldn't go along with them in whatever they were doing, stealing or something. (...). That's one thing that I'd never like to see my own children go through. We would tell my parents all that, and I guess it was very hard for them to let us go again (....). I didn't go anywhere after that. I went to public school here in Moosonee for a couple of years. I was thirteen when I graduated from grade eight.

SO THIS WAS WHEN YOU WERE ELEVEN?

Yah. (...)By that time my father was working. He had odd jobs at that time. He worked for sixteen years at the public school as a janitor. He retired when he was sixty-one, so he started when he was forty-five.

DID HE STILL HUNT?

Yah, in the fall and in the spring. So that's when he would take his holidays. To this day it's the spring hunt and the fall hunt. Did you know that they take a week off in October?³⁴ That's why they start classes at the end of August. (...). They start a week early in the fall so that they can get that one week off, which is good. Mind you, we don't really use it as...maybe just my son (..) will go hunting. But to some of the families, it's just a break. (...)I guess with a lot of them. I don't think they see how important it is, you know. I don't think that it's what you do, but rather what you remember or pass along to your kids. (...)Like if my son wasn't hunting, I think I would try to teach them about what my parents taught me. I was telling you earlier about caring and how it's important in your children.

WHY WOULD YOU TEACH THEM THAT?

Now things are so different. (...)People are not living the way they used to live a long time ago. A lot of things are

³⁴ The school children on the western James Bay coast start school earlier in the fall than the school children in the south so that they can get a week off in October to go goose hunting, as it is goose hunting season.

lost, traditional lifestyles. We're living in a different world. At one time it could have been okay to let your kid go, but now society is changing. Here it's just drugs and booze and just everything. And I think you're asking for trouble if you send your kid out there, and you say, go out there and learn for yourself. I think that you have to sit down and explain to them that things are changing, that you can't live like that any more, the way it was a long time ago.

When I came to Moosonee there was not much drinking going on. You never heard about drugs. And when you saw somebody drunk, you'd stand there and stare at them. It wasn't a common everyday thing. So I think our parents raised us different. (...)I could go home at one o'clock in the morning, she'd ask me where I'd been and I'd say out with my friends, and she wouldn't have to worry, because at that time (....) it was sort of innocent. Even though you stayed out late, it didn't mean you did anything wrong. You were just hanging around (...). (.....). We didn't do anything, not that I remember, that we could get into a lot of trouble about (...). (...). I tell my kids it's different now. If nobody's home at ten o'clock or something on a school night I start to worry. (...)And there's a lot of drinking among teenagers today. It's tougher to raise a kid today than it was when we were kids. It was clean fun.

WAS ALCOHOL AROUND WHEN YOU WERE A TEENAGER?

Yah, it was around, but it wasn't so obvious. Like there was no liquor store here when we were kids. I can't remember what year it came in.

DO YOU THINK THAT'S THE PROBLEM? DO YOU THINK IT'S BECAUSE THERE'S A LIQUOR STORE?

I wouldn't mind seeing it somewhere else. (...). I know there's more trouble now than there was before when there was no liquor store here. There was booze coming in off the train, bootleggers and things like that, but (...) it wasn't everyday that you saw somebody drunk. And if you did, everybody would stare at them because this person was drunk. Now it's just an everyday thing. Everyday you see somebody that's drunk. And you don't think anything of it, which is kind of scary because it is so acceptable. Well, maybe not acceptable, but it's so common that you don't think about it at all. So what if this guy is drunk!

I only recognized that when I was taking a social work course in school. (...?). This book I was reading talked about teenagers and the way we think about teenagers and the self-fulfilling prophecy. Like if you tell your teenager, "you're no good" and you keep talking like that, then you usually end up like that. One day I was walking behind the post-office. There was a little trail there, which I used to cut across (...) and there were four guys standing

around there and passing a bottle around. They were passing a bottle around and it was before nine in the morning! And there was this little guy standing next to his older brother, who was drinking from the bottle. He was standing there laughing and joking around with them. And I thought, 'what a fine example to set for your younger brother.' Like, I don't know how he is today (...) but I know that I see him around late at night, like three o'clock in the morning. (...). There's a difference, you know, so times are changing.

I think that as a parent you have to change too. (...) I remember my mother trying to talk to my father that way, that as times change you've got to change with the times, like to be able to understand your culture. (...?...?). Like, I'm not that ancient but times are different. And if you just let them go like that, I think you're asking for trouble. You've got to set limits. You can let them grow up, it depends on what it is they're trying to do, whether it's harmful to them or not. (...). It's kind of tough you know. Sometimes I find myself too strict. I start thinking about all the things that are happening here, especially with my daughter when I see a lot of young pregnant girls that haven't even lived yet (...), that don't even know what it's like to be out of here (...), to be some place else. And this is just a small place. Like, I know if Sue was a little bit older, say seventeen, eighteen, if she

tried to go to some school somewhere she would last because she has been out there before, and she knows what it's like. (...) I think that a lot of them leave here with the impression, 'Oh boy, I'm away from home now!' What a big surprise when they hit the city. That's where you find a lot of them either dropped out or into all kinds of trouble. They don't know how to handle it, the change in culture and environments.

WHAT WOULD SOME OF THE CHANGES BE?

(...) When you're a teenager, you go through different feelings, your body changes. You've got that to handle or to cope with, and all these other things that are changing about you. Then you leave your home town and you're in this place where everybody is a stranger. Then you've got to handle that. And then, you've got to handle being in a school which is totally different from what you expected (...). And you've got to handle the way people treat you when you're down there.³⁵

It still exists today. There are people who won't have anything to do with you (...). And a lot of them will take things the wrong way. Like, I could be sitting in a

³⁵ 'Down there' refers to the high schools in southern Ontario. Not necessarily as far south as Lake Ontario just relatively south of Moose Factory. According to TASO Report No. 21, " 'I Was Never Idle': Women and Work in Moosonee and Moose Factory," by Blyth, Brizinski and S. Preston, many female students, and I add, probably male students as well, leave the communities of Moosonee and Moose Factory to attend high school in the south, not only due to the perceived inadequacies of the program available at Moosonee High School, but also due to the attraction of a "larger town, with shopping and other lures, [which make them] eager to go out. Homesickness, difficulty in adjusting to the new schools socially and academically and poor boarding situations are factors contributing to their return" (1985: 90).

class and I'm the only Native person there, and if I'm quiet, they figure I'm stupid. But it's just our nature. (...). You sort of sit back and wait till you're asked. So one time I got a low participation mark in class but whenever I was asked I gave the right answer. I tried to explain that to my teacher and he said that we were considered shy. Maybe we are, but we're quiet (...). (...)It goes against you as a person if you're like that. Then when you come back to your home town and you're talking too much people look at you kind of weird. "Boy she's got a big mouth!" I'd go out and I'd be kind of quiet and I'd do what I could in class just to get through, but when I came back I was outgoing to these people that are here, people that I've known all my life. (...). And it was really weird.

(...)The one time I think that I really sensed (...) prejudice and getting it both ways, from your own people and from them³⁶, was when I was walking down in front of the friendship centre where they held our classes. I was seventeen.

WHERE WAS THIS?

In Kenora. (...). There's a lot of heavy drinking there. (...). I was there for four months taking a nursery school course. (...)I boarded at this lady's place. She was one of the nicest landladies. (...).

³⁶ 'Them' refers to the white population usually encountered in the town or city.

WAS SHE INDIAN?

No, she had boarders there before and she used to take in foster kids. She was really a neat lady.

One time I went up town. I had just received my cheque from manpower to pay for my room and board. I didn't have too much left after that! I was walking home and I walked in front of this bank where this Indian lady was sitting and she yelled out at me. She said, "Could I have some money?"

And I said, "No."

"You think you're better than me eh? You're trying to act like a white man," she said.

I got so upset. Usually I don't say anything to anybody, I just walk by, but I told her. I said, "I'm trying to make a better life for myself." I found myself explaining why.

But she just said, "Ah, you're just trying to be a white man!"

She was telling me that. (...). And two or three years earlier when I was in school in North Bay, one of my classmates said, "Ah, you're just a stinking Indian, a dirty squaw!" That's what some used to call me. (...?..). So you get it both ways. Even if you try, they call you a dirty Indian or something, and the Indian that is down and out (...) says you're trying to act like a white man. (...). I said, "So what am I supposed to do, fall down drunk? It's not

Indian to be drunk," I told her, and she stayed quiet. As I walked home I wondered if people thought about me that way because I was trying to go to school and trying to find a job...I wondered why they were so bitter towards me. What had I done that was so...? I talked to my landlady and she said, "Believe it or not (...) we're treated the same too within our own culture, like with the white people. We have the bad ones that sit around drunk somewhere. (...) So it doesn't matter what race or culture you are, there's people like that."

And I said, "But it hurts."

It comes from both sides you know. I never had that happen to me before where an Indian person would say that to me that I was trying to act like a white man. And I wasn't. All I was doing was just going to school (...). So anyways, I took a good look at myself after and I thought the reason that she did that to me was because she was down and out and I guess nobody helped her, or she had so much hate for the white man.

AFTER YOU GRADUATED FROM GRADE EIGHT WHERE DID YOU GO?

I went to North Bay for two years. I stayed with at least six boarders in one home. Even though I was staying with my sister, I didn't want to leave home this time either. I came

home for the summer, and then the following year I went back to North Bay for grade ten.

WHAT DID YOU DO IN THE SUMMER?

I worked in the parks (...). We had to set up games for the kids. (...). When I was in grade ten I stayed in a different place in North Bay. And this landlady was really nice. The other one made me cut my hair (...), that's why I didn't like her.³⁷ There were quite a few kids from here. (...?...). We were sort of spread out between three different schools and we all stayed in private homes. Some of us were lucky, we'd be able to stay with somebody from home.

But my memories of North Bay are not all that great. I was still young at that time when I needed my family around me. It's a rough age you know? (...)Having to go to school in a different place and handle everything else? It was too much.

YOU DID GRADE NINE AND TEN THERE?

Then I went to Sudbury when I was in grade eleven. I stayed with my sister. She was married then. (...)But I don't know what happened to me. I was sixteen and going into grade eleven. I stayed till May. (...)I quit just before the end.

DID YOU LIKE SCHOOL?

³⁷ One of the landlady's with whom Mary had boarded made her cut her very long hair, short. She feared that Mary was dirty and had lice. Mary was neither dirty nor did she have lice, she was simply an Indian, and often times this was how Indians were regarded.

(...). I liked school even though there were only two Indian kids there. But there was a lot of Indian people in Sudbury. There's a lot of small reserves around there. I don't understand why I quit at that time. It's just that I'd had enough. I felt like I'd had enough of school. So I ended up quitting in May and I came home. (...)I worked that summer and then in the following year I tried again. (...?).

I went to Kirkland Lake. I lasted till January. (...)The town was okay because my aunt lived a few miles away from there. I lived in a boarding house. But this time it was a little bit different. We had our own entrance. I was staying with two other girls, one was nineteen, the other was eighteen and I was sixteen. I lasted till the end of January. I went home for Christmas. And then when I turned seventeen, I quit. I went to Sudbury to stay with my sister for awhile, (...) and then I came home for the summer. Then a course was starting in June (?.) in Kenora. By this time I was seventeen. I went to Kenora to take the nursery aid course. They [Mary's parents] wanted me to take it so that I could work at the day care over here [Moosonee]. After I finished the course I went back to Sudbury to live with my sister for awhile, (...) that's when I ran into Wes. I had met him when I was fifteen, when I was going to school in Sudbury. That's when I first met him and I didn't like him.

I told him to leave me alone. He had proposed to me when I was fifteen.

HOW OLD WAS HE?

He was nineteen. I told him he was crazy so I didn't bother with him. But I ran into him again when I was seventeen. In the mean time he had kept track of me. (...). Anyway, I ended up going with him and I ended up getting pregnant by him. I got pregnant right after I finished that course. I ended up going home at Christmas time. I went home pregnant. And from then on it was down hill!!! (laughs)

Susan was born just two months after he came down here. My mother liked him. They got along great. I didn't want to see him after I found out that I was pregnant. I didn't want (...) him to feel obligated to take care of me because I was pregnant with his baby, so I said I wouldn't marry him. (...). By that time I thought maybe things would be different for me. I was already making plans for what I was going to do; go back to school, and this time I had to stick it out because I had this kid I had to support. I wasn't thinking about him because I didn't want to get married.

WHO WAS GOING TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR KID?

My mother. They wanted me to go to school in Thunder Bay for the ECE (Early Childhood Education) course and that would take two years. I was already to give my okay, and then he

showed up. He nagged me and he nagged me. I sort of gave in after. There was a lot of family pressure, mostly from his side of the family. (.....). So anyways, I ended up getting married that same year. Susan was three months old. I got married in October. By the following summer we were living in Sudbury.

WHY DID YOU MOVE TO SUDBURY IN THE NEXT YEAR?

There were a lot of job openings over there at that time. My sister had come down and she had a huge house there and said we could stay with her till Wes found a job. He landed a job with Inco but he never stuck to it.

WHY DO YOU THINK HE DIDN'T STICK TO IT?

Well, he couldn't (...) go on with the kind of lifestyle he had and still hold down a job (...). He missed a lot of work, or he'd show up drunk.

WERE YOU DRINKING AT THIS TIME?

Yah, but not very much. I think the time that I drank most was in between Craig and Aaron. Those four years there, they were pretty bad. I didn't know what I was doing.

(...)EVEN BEFORE YOU MARRIED HIM YOU KNEW HE WAS A DRINKER?

Yup. Well, if I knew now what I ... (laughs). Anyway, I don't dwell on it any more. It was a mistake I made. I mean, I don't call my children a mistake. They were the best thing that ever happened to me, otherwise I think if it

weren't for them, like if I somehow lost them while I was doing all that drinking

So, by the time I was eighteen I was in Sudbury and I moved back here when I was (...) twenty-seven, six years ago (ie. 1981). (...) I moved back on my own six years ago. I was leaving him. He followed me here two or three months later and we tried it again for a couple of years.

TWO OR THREE MONTHS LATER? WAS HE WORKING?

No, he wasn't working but he landed a job not long after that here. There was always work waiting (...) wherever he applied. They always gave him a chance to learn whatever he liked. Like, when he worked at the arena, he did good there. It was always because of his drinking. I know when I talk to him a lot of times about how he was raised, he is very bitter towards his mother (...?) because she gave him up and he was raised by his grandparents.

IS THAT NOT COMMON HERE THOUGH? DON'T THE GRANDPARENTS HELP OUT?

It is, but with him, to this day he won't talk to her. (...). He doesn't have anything nice to say to her or about her. He's got no respect for his mother at all. The last time that I talked to her she was crying over the phone because she said that she realized that she was never a part of her grandchildren. (...) Like, they call her Dora, they

don't call her grandma. (...)It's only because she's not close to them. (....).

SO WHY ISN'T SHE CLOSE TO HER GRANDCHILDREN?

(..)Well, for a long time she was never allowed to come to the house. (...)Wes wouldn't let her. It was different with my mother. They really got along good.

SO HE WAS GOOD TO YOUR FAMILY?

Yah, and they were good to him too. (...)You know everybody tried to help him out. But, I don't know what happened. (...)I guess booze seemed more important then.

BUT AT THIS TIME WHEN HE WAS GOOD TO YOUR FAMILY HE WASN'T ALWAYS GOOD TO YOU?

No. They didn't know about that and I didn't say anything. But it took me a long time just (...) to build up my self-esteem a little bit about myself. Only then I could do something to change things around for me. I was looking at myself for a change. Looking at my children for a change instead of trying to cope with him or trying to help him. I gave up, you know. (...)Back in '83, sometime in the fall when we moved into a house I said, "We've got our own house now. This is the last time. If anybody's going to move, it'll be you. I'm not going through this again." I got the house through low rental because at that time there wasn't much money. We stayed there for just a few months. (...)By the spring things had really built up. All this tension -

him trying to stop drinking and things not working out, and me going to school at the same time.

WHO WAS TAKING CARE OF THE KIDS? YOUR MOM?

My sister mostly. (...). He didn't like the idea of me going to school. He felt very threatened that I had friends outside in the community that I was talking to. He always thought that people were putting things into my head. I was just discovering for myself. Like, I knew before. I had this feeling that I didn't have to live like that (...). I started reading about family violence and then I really knew that he had no right to do that to me. I didn't see what was happening to my children because of it. I always thought that it was important to have a mother and a father, but not to the point where your life and their lives are at stake; where they're unhappy all the time and tiptoeing around someone who's too strung out to even enjoy having them around. So I told him. I said, "That's it. You screw up once more and that's it." And I meant it. I don't think he did. He just went along his merry way and he ended up drinking again. So I said, "Well, that's it."

(.....?). The first year he left, that was March 1984, he called me up two months later and asked me if I was still mad, which was silly. I wasn't mad at all. I just said, "I'm not off on one of my silent treatments. I'm not. I'm not mad any more, but you're not coming home." For a

year it went on like that. He'd phone up and say, "Are you mad honey? Can I come home?"

"I'm not mad, but you can't come home." That's what I kept saying to him. He was still doing that two years later too. (.....).

We didn't see him again till two years later. We were on our own. We were able to take vacation for the first time because by this time I'd been working for two years. We went to Sudbury to see some of his relatives. (...)By that time things had sort of cooled off and he'd stopped raking me over the coals over there. But a lot of people didn't believe him. They knew what he was like as a kid and as a teenager.

DID PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT HE DIDN'T DO THAT?

They knew. He didn't have to tell anybody anything. But he said a lot of things about me that were not true. (...).

MOST PEOPLE DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT WHAT WAS GOING ON DID THEY?

They did. But they just didn't do anything about it.

AND IT WASN'T BECAUSE YOU SAID ANYTHING TO THEM?

No. They'd see it, actually. He would do it anywhere.

One time I was coming out of his grandparents' place. I went there to take Susan for a visit to see Wes' grandmother, who wasn't feeling too well. So I went there for the day. This time he hadn't been home for two days. I was coming out of the house and he was coming down the street

and he met me there. You could tell he was just boiling up. He said, "Where the fuck were you?" He was really mad. I said that I was visiting. He said, "Why the hell weren't you home?" And I said, "You hadn't been home for two days, so god knows when you were going to come home."

SO HE WOULDN'T COME HOME FOR A FEW DAYS TOO?

Yah. That's how he used to lose his job too. After getting paid, he'd never go back until the next day or so after the weekend or something. And I said, "All I did was just visit. I don't see why I have to tell you where I'm going to be. You're not there anyway." (...?). I know that if there's a lot of family violence in the home a lot of the men, most of the men, don't want it to be known outside of the family that there is abuse going on, so they isolate you from your friends and family. They don't want you going anywhere. They feel threatened, I guess, that as soon as you step out of the home maybe you're going to tell somebody what they are really like. But I didn't have to do that, they knew.

Anyways, he hit me right between the eyes. All I could see were stars. He was trying to take Susan. And he said, "Well, you can go out now and fool around if you want." It didn't make any sense. It was really weird. So I was just laying on the ground. When I got up I could see this big thing over my nose.

SUSAN WAS THERE?

Yah. She was only two at the time. That's the time he kicked her when she was crying.

SO, DID THEY SEE THAT?

The old man did. He came out and he was ready to kill him. He was just shaking. He was so slim and old. (...?). But he was willing to, you know, protect. He said, "Don't you ever touch her again. If you want to hit somebody, hit me." He was just a frail old man, you know (laughs). (...)I got up and I could just see this huge lump right here [signals to the middle of her face, in between her eyes]. So, I just had two shiners after that. And there were people standing across the road, just watching.

HOW DID YOU FEEL?

(...)I used to wonder (...) why somebody who cared, supposedly cared about me, would do something like that. Then I would sort of turn around and put the blame on myself. Like, if I had done this that way, or if I hadn't said this or ... (...). So I guess that's one reason why I stayed. (...?...). I don't know how I survived those years when things were tough. I know there were times when I thought that I didn't want to live any more (...). All that kept me going was the kids.

WHY DID THAT KEEP YOU GOING THOUGH? (...)MAYBE I'M WRONG BUT IT SEEMS THAT FOR OTHER PEOPLE IT'S EASY OR THEY DON'T TAKE THE TIME TO THINK, WAIT, I HAVE THREE KIDS, AND THEY KIND OF LET THEMSELVES GO.

Yah. I think (...) it goes back to my mother, I guess, where no matter what happened - like none of this was going on with her and my father, it never happened - but there were some rough times, but she always made sure that the children were okay.

YOU WERE SAYING THAT EVEN WHEN YOUR FATHER WAS OFF AND HUNTING OR WHEN HE WAS SICK YOUR MOTHER WOULD STILL HOLD DOWN THE FORT.

Yah. Yah.

WELL WHAT DO YOU THINK IT IS THAT MAKES A PERSON STRONG LIKE THAT, BECAUSE IT WOULD BE SO EASY TO JUST SAY, FUCK IT, AND JUST BUCKLE UNDER AND KIND OF GET CRUSHED BY IT ALL?

I think ... Well, I'll tell you something that happened, (...) why I started looking at my kids too. They were doing things (...) that touched me (...) even though I couldn't feel anything for Wes any more. Just mostly I had hate, you know. (...) I was crying one time, and my son, Craig was only about four or five. (...). He crawled up onto my knee and I just sat crying, and he was going like this to me [she gestures wiping off her eyes]. Like to me? And I looked at this kid and I thought, 'My god! I should be doing that to you, sitting there comforting you.' And I thought, 'Oh, I'm going to snap out of it. No more!' I also remember Wes saying something very degrading to Susan when she was eleven

(.....). He swore at her and called her a name or something. That really ... And I remembered him kicking her when she was two and making her pee. That's what I remembered.

WAS HE DRUNK AT THE TIME?

No, he was just irritable because he wasn't drinking eh! Because he had to watch himself, sort of. And he'd say, no you can't have that (..) or you can't do this. I turned around and I said ... I felt like jumping on him, but I said, "You are not going to do that to those kids any more. (...). You're irritable and you want a drink. Fine, go out there and find a drink!"

WHY HAD HE STOPPED DRINKING?

Because I had told him I would kick him out again if he did that.

(...)EVEN IF HE WASN'T DRINKING HE WAS STILL NOT PLEASANT TO BE WITH? HOW ABOUT WHEN, I MEAN, WAS THERE EVER A TIME WHEN YOU KNEW HIM WHEN HE WASN'T DRINKING THAT HE WAS LIKE, YOU KNOW, I HATE TO USE THIS WORD, BUT NORMAL OR NICE, WHEN HE WASN'T DRINKING?

Yah. And I think that's part of the reason he stayed too, because you see some of those things and you think, 'Wow, it's going to be okay,' you know. Or you're constantly hoping, you're wishing things could change. (...?...?...). After he left I knew that I had done something that I should have done a long time ago, because it did hurt my kids a lot.

(...)Up until last summer my daughter was still talking about things that hurt her. She's going to be fifteen in a couple of days. But I guess that it's good that she deal with it, right? That she get it out when she cries? I didn't even know that this was hurting her all that time. I guess you get so wrapped up (...) in yourself sometimes, your own hurts, your own (...) failures...When you look at it in a couple of years...But I've learned to deal with those things in the last four years. I don't look upon myself as a failure, even though some things go wrong with my kids. I don't look at myself as a failure as a parent.

WELL HOW ABOUT THOSE YEARS THAT YOU WERE DRINKING?
IT DOESN'T REALLY SOUND LIKE YOU EVER REALLY DRANK VERY MUCH.
Not really. I drank to sort of escape, I guess (...). My home life was the pits with my husband and I just got into the booze too, thinking that I could just forget about everything, you know. But it's just the opposite. It's a depressant (...). You forget for a while, I guess ...

SO WHERE WAS THE MONEY COMING FROM WHEN YOU WERE BOTH DRINKING?

Wherever. We were both on welfare. He didn't have a job at the time. But we had a house, a brand new house. I gave that up. (...?..). In 1982 we got it. (.....). We lived in it for two years, and that's when I left.

DID YOU SELL IT?

No, that hasn't been settled yet. There's (...) a lady living there. She's separated. She's living there with her kids. But I don't want it. (...). We stayed there for a week with her. She said that we could come and visit any time (...). I told her last summer that that would be the last time I was there. "I don't want the house. No thanks," I said. "It's got too many unpleasant memories. I'm happy where I am," I said, "Right here!" She said that you could really tell the difference. (...) Like what a change. Like financially everything is okay. Like I could use a little more money, but who couldn't eh?! But I'm surviving. I'm a lot happier with the kids now.

SO WHAT ARE YOU DOING NOW?

I'm a community legal worker. I've been here for four years.³⁸ (...?...?...). So it's only been four or five years that I really started growing as a person too.

HOW DO YOU GROW AS A PERSON?

Well, you don't have anybody doing all your thinking for you, for one thing, which is what was happening. (...) It wasn't that joint thing, it was what he said (...). When I went to school (...) it influenced me; what and how I thought about myself. That's one thing. And from there, (...) from feeling good about myself, I was sort of ... I could let go of him!? And he was just hanging on, you know, sort of pulling me

³⁸ 'Here' refers to her place of work which is Keewaytinook Legal Office in Moosonee.

back. So I said, "Fine, you can come with me or you can stay there where you are, but I'm going and I'm taking the kids with me." (...) Wes said at that time, "You wouldn't think of this yourself. Somebody is putting ideas in your head." And I said, "No, I always had these kind of feelings about myself (...) or the things I want to do. I have dreams," I said, "for my children, and you know, for us too as a family, but they're not...We're not getting anywhere. In fact, we're going down. And I think I've had enough", I said. "So you can either come with me, or you can stay where you are, or sink lower." (...). He said that it was really strange the way I was talking. It couldn't have come from me. "But this is the first time I'm learning to express myself," I said.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR DREAMS FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN?

(...)I'd like to see the kids get a high school education. (...). And I want them to know that there's another world out there and that they can survive there too, (...) without having the same problems I did. (...)It sounds good to tell your children I guess, not to forget what it was like to live as the old way, but that's the old way. Times have changed now and you're not living in a place now where everybody is living their traditional lifestyle. You're living in a place where you take the best of both worlds and you go from there. It sounds very...But I talk to them all the time. It's

important. I said, "You can come back here (...) if you want. This is your home town. It's always going to be your home town. Look at me," I said. "I'm thirty years old and I was out the last twenty years, here and there, but I came back here. So you can do the same, if that's what you want (...)." "

WHY DO YOU THINK YOU CAME BACK HERE MARY? LIKE WHY NOT TORONTO OR TIJUANA?

(.....). It's home, you know? There's the family ... relatives and friends.

IS THERE A STRONG SENSE OF FAMILY?

Within our family there's a lot.

SO WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? WHAT DOES A STRONG SENSE OF FAMILY MEAN TO YOU?

(...). That's very hard to put into words. (.....). Like there's a lot of family traditions in our family. Like, when anybody has a birth there's a big feast. My mother started that tradition when all these little grandchildren came along. (...) It's carried on. I do the same for my kids. (...). It's important, I think, to keep family together, even though I don't have...I'm a single parent instead of married, but the kids are very important to me.

That's the reason I could get out of what was happening to me before. And I found out I was important too. It was...It was really feeling good about it. Like not

having to...Living that way before for a long time, but you're able to go on, like you know? We're doing better too. I think my husband is starting to see that now. But he was very very threatened by it before, like he said, "Well, you take care of the kids yourself, since you're making so much more money than I am!" And I said, "Well, I could be making all the money that I want (...), but is that important? You don't realize that we have children," I said. And then the first time he saw them two years after he left, he couldn't believe it, to look at them. And he cried. It was sad to see. (...?). It was sad for him to miss out on all that. I mean, to have the kids right there but he didn't really know them. That's sad. (...)But after everybody's gone there's no chance of getting them back! That's what I realize. By that time it's too late. There were a lot of separations in between but I never went back (...). I tried and tried and tried!!! (laughs). You get tired after. Now I think that maybe by next year we'll be friends, not real good friends (...) but for the sake of the kids, (...) because the boys want to go see him eh? And it's just now, four years later that we can talk without somebody screaming their head off or something.

BUT NOW HE HAS TWO OTHER KIDS?³⁹

³⁹ Wes is living with another woman on the east coast of James Bay and has fathered other children.

Yah. I guess I'm going to have to talk to my kids and see how they feel about it. I had a rough time with Craig after his father left. The reason I had a rough time of him I think, is because he's the spitting image of his father. So, any time I felt angry about something - and I had all these feelings to work out after Wes left, you know - I probably took it out on him...(...). So anyways, all this had to be all worked out and everything. It's working out pretty good right now. (...?.). But it took awhile for that to work out.

There was one day when I came home and he was sitting on the couch. He was the only one home (...). And I said, "What's the matter?"

"You know mum?" he said, "I have something to tell you."

I thought, 'Oh god, what's happening to him now?'

And he said, "Sometimes I don't think you love me."

And I looked at him and said, "What makes you say that?"

"You're so mean to me. You pick on me. You're harder on me. I think you love Su and Aaron better!" And he started to cry.

'Oh my god', I thought, 'What have I done now?' "You know what?" I said, "You're right. You're absolutely right." I told him, "I'm going about this all the wrong way." I tried to explain to him. "I look at you," I said, "and I see your dad (...) and I feel so angry sometimes, and I take it all

out on you. I am harder on you than with Su and Aaron. You remind me so much of your father", I said. "You're stubborn, you're bull-headed." I told him.

"But so are you!"

"You know, you're right about that too." I said.

So we sat there the whole lunch hour and everybody was sniffing.

"You're absolutely right", I said. "I'll tell you something about parents," I said. "They don't know everything. It just looks like they do, but about feeling and things like that...what they can go through taking care of you and making sure you're in on time and all this, but with the feeling part..."

That afternoon I phoned work and said, "I'm not coming in this afternoon. I have to spend time with my kids."

CHAPTER III

NORM WESLEY: "IN THE LIFE I UNDERSTAND RIGHT NOW, YOU NEED A BOAT"

I was sitting down with Richard who was doing an article on the tribal council for "The Freighter" (...). He asked me where I was born and I said, "here in Moose Factory." And I told him the story about my birth.

It was summer, mid June, 1950. I was born just about four or five hundred yard from here (he points).⁴⁰ It was a small house that my parents lived in. (...). They had just moved kind of semi-permanently to Moose Factory after being fairly nomadic; hunting, trapping and fishing. They followed the animals for a good length of time and then settled here in Moose Factory. And that was the house we lived in.

WHERE WERE THEY ORIGINALLY FROM?

My mother is originally from, as she'd put it (...), three or four traditional trap lines up Fort Albany River just down from the forks. (...). That's where she was from. My dad was from Akimiski Island. Akimiski Island is that big island just off the shore from Attawapiskat on the Attawapiskat

⁴⁰ 'Here' refers to the Indian Affairs building in which the offices of the Mushkegowuk Council are also housed.

River. They met (...) I guess, in around the Fort Albany area and they got married.

Today marriage is considered an intrusion on an individual's freedom to enjoy life. Back then the idea of family was a lifestyle. It was a means of survival. It was a means of survival in the traditional sense; companionship with the opposite sex was necessary to work.

I can still remember the house that we lived in. It was a small one room house (...), and that's where I was born. I wasn't born in a hospital, I was born right in my house. It was my aunt who was the midwife that delivered me. My sisters tell a story (...) from time to time (...) about me in the process of being born. Of course my dad wasn't allowed to go into the house and neither were my sisters and brother. They were told to go out and play (...). (...?..).

WHY IS THAT?

Well, because it was kind of a private type of thing (...). (...)I was being expected meanwhile. (...). They'd come and check every now and again to see if I was born. So that's where I was born. Right in that spot just down the road there.

ARE YOU THE YOUNGEST?

I'm the youngest in the family, yah. (...).

ANY OTHER BROTHERS?

Yah, there's one other guy. Actually we had a very big family. (...)I have one brother that's alive (...) he's in Regina right now. He's on his way home right now. He was going to university there. And, I've got four other sisters that are alive, and my oldest sister is in her early sixties. (...?..). She lives in the suburbs of Montreal. (...?....). She's the only one that left. My three sisters (...) are here.

My brother, he left for a number of years shortly after he got married. He married a white teacher and they moved down south. He was a tool and dye maker (...) and he worked in industry (...). He wanted to move back home but his wife had different thoughts. She wanted to stay down there. (...). One thing came to another and they separated (...). So he went to Teacher's College and graduated (...) and came back here and started teaching. (...?.....). We taught together at Northern Secondary School in Moosonee. (...).

THEN WHAT HAPPENED? DID YOU GO LIVE OUT IN THE BUSH?

I grew up! My dad still spent quite a bit of time hunting and trapping (...) and moving around. My mother didn't really have a permanent job until later into my youth. But we'd go out. (...)My family by then had not really gone out and spent extended periods in the bush on the trap line as

they had in the past before I was born. (...). So I didn't have too much experience ... I wasn't brought up, if you will, directly in that environment. But certainly they spent quite a bit of time (...) especially in the summer and in the fall out in the bush (...).

My earliest memory of my childhood is of me sitting in a sled travelling across the river with somebody running on the right or left hand side of me, and I was looking forward and I could see dogs on the shore. What a time bundled up in a sled! I don't know how old I would have been then. (...). I must have been four or five, maybe even younger than that (...). That's my earliest recollection of my life experience.

SO WHAT HAPPENED AFTER YOUR MEMORABLE FIRST SLEIGH RIDE?

(.....). (...)The next sleigh ride I had that I can recall is sliding down the banks of the Moosonee River for the fun of it and all the play time as kids.

SO WHERE DID YOU GO TO SCHOOL? ON THE ISLAND?

(...)Where the band office is down on the reserve.⁴¹ That used to be the federal school, a day school. That's where I went to school. (...?). I started at age six and I went there grade one, grade two, and from grade two I went into grade four.

⁴¹ Not all of the land on Moose Factory Island is reserve land. Some of it is provincial land.

YOU SKIPPED?

Yah.

YOU MUST HAVE BEEN A BRIGHT KID EH?

Oh, they thought I was bright, but I had to repeat grade four again! (laughs) (...?..?..).

SO WAS IT ALL INDIANS AT THIS SCHOOL?

Oh yah, all Indian kids.

HOW ABOUT THE TEACHERS?

The teachers were all white. White teachers.

WHAT WAS SCHOOL LIKE? I GUESS YOU MUST HAVE LIKED IT IF YOU ...?

We were kids, and school was school. We liked it, we disliked it, depending on the teacher. (.?.). School was school. It was just regular school. (?). School was a place you had to go. It's because your parents said you have to go to school. So, you went to school to learn...

WHERE WAS YOUR DAD WORKING?

My dad never ... My dad never worked permanently any place. I know he worked at the hospital when I was a young kid, as a cleaner or something like that, but that just wasn't his kind of lifestyle (...). He was the kind of person who wanted to do whatever he wanted to do, and what he wanted to do of course, was hunt. (?). My mother was the only person who ensured that we had food on the table consistently. She was the wage earner as far as having a steady job goes. She

worked at the hospital in the kitchen as a dish washer. My dad of course, would do hunting and trapping (...). My mom would go to work at six o'clock in the morning (...), and we lived down by the village⁴² school area, so she had to wake up early and leave the house about twenty to six.

WAS THAT A PROBLEM FOR HIM?

I guess it was a problem for him. (...)First of all he didn't speak English and he was brought up in a traditional lifestyle of hunting, trapping and fishing. So that's basically what he enjoyed doing. So he couldn't see himself locked into (...) a standard wage earning economy lifestyle.

SO HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT YOU GOING TO SCHOOL? DID HE WANT YOU TO CARRY ON IN HIS WAYS?

When my mother left the house he would wake us up. He used to tell us, "Get up! Get up! Get up!" And we just hated it, absolutely detested it. He said, "One of these days you guys are going to be working and you're going to have to get up on time, and you have to learn how to do this (...)." (?). He understood the concept of us inevitably, in all probability getting into this wage earning economy or lifestyle. (...)And the first demand, the first order of the day is getting up in the morning in time for what you're supposed to do, or for where you're supposed to be. (...)He understood that very clearly. And we used to curse him for

⁴² The Moose Factory Band Reserve is often referred to by the locals as 'the village'.

that. My dad was deaf by the way! (...?...?). But anyhow, he understood that. (...)Both my parents of course were very influential in ensuring that we finished elementary and secondary school. Then after that, it was more us.

ARE YOUR PARENTS STILL ALIVE?

My dad passed away in 1977. He was 77 years old. Born in 1900. My mother is still alive and she's 82.

IS SHE LIVING ON HER OWN?

No, she lives with us. I had her move in with me. It must be at least three years now. She had her own place but she's a diabetic and my sisters and nieces were moving in on her. They were really getting into her hair and she was getting on in age and stuff like that, so I told her that if she wanted some peace, rest and quiet, she could come move in with us. She did (...).

Since then, she developed an infection in her foot which got bad on her. It got gangrenous and she ended up in the hospital for quite awhile. She had to get her leg amputated just below the knee. We had her sent out to Kingston and they amputated her leg. She was seventy-nine at the time that happened.

DID ANYBODY GO WITH HER?

Well, she's a remarkably strong woman (emphasis), a real tower of strength for us in our family, because she spent most of the time down there by herself. She was down there

for quite a long time. I think it was six or eight months. Of course my sister from Montreal would go visit her during the weekends. (...). She got a prosthesis shortly after her leg was amputated and she was back and walking around again.

SO SHE WAS ABLE TO DEAL WITH IT WELL?

Oh very, ... She's a very strong woman - very, very, strong woman!

WHY? HOW SO?

(...)I think it has a lot to do with her belief in life - how she looks at life. She always said, "if it's time for me to go, I'll go, and there's absolutely nothing I can do about it". But yet she has a very strong, a strong...she...she...I really don't know how to describe her, (...) her just being strong, not just physically but psychologically strong. We looked at her as a tower of strength from inside our family. (...)She's the kind of person who will not sit idly. Right to this very day she still gets around. And she still sews. She still makes clothes. She had problems with her prosthesis six months ago and that kind of restricted her into the wheelchair again. I said to myself, 'this could be permanent now', but it was only temporary. She's out of the wheelchair again and she's back around. (...)She doesn't walk around very fast of course, but she still gets around the house.

DOES SHE SPEAK ENGLISH?

(..)She understands English. She speaks mostly Cree. She's a remarkable woman. Of course she had a very religious upbringing.

WHAT RELIGION?

Anglican. And she knows that book inside-out. She reads it. I go to church service with her on Sundays from time to time when they have the Cree service (..) and it's really interesting because she can read that book just like I can read the English text of *The Bible*. (...). She can do that in Cree. And there's not too many older people like that in this community who can do that (...). (..)I go with her from time to time because I enjoy the Cree service, and of course it gives me an opportunity to read Cree syllabics also. I'm not very good at it but I've been working on it, a little bit here and there (..).

DO YOU FEEL NORM THAT...I MEAN, YOU JUST CALLED YOUR MOTHER A TOWER OF STRENGTH, AND THAT FEELING SEEMS TO BE COMING ACROSS A LOT IN MY MEETINGS WITH OTHER PEOPLE, THAT WOMEN REALLY SEEM TO BE THE ONES WHO ARE CREDITED WITH THAT STRENGTH, THE WHOLE, ALMOST PERPETUATING THE FAMILY, GIVING THE KIDS MORE, SOMETHING...?

(.....). My dad was also a very interesting individual. He was a very funny man, a very strong man. I can recall him one time, I was only young, around five or six, telling my brother, who was really sick at the time, (....) he was

sitting beside him and I can recall dad telling my brother, "You're not going to die. You'll be okay. If anybody is going to die, it's going to be me before you". That really sticks out in my mind, what he said then.

My dad got sick for an extensive period of time. I think it was six or eight months and he was in the hospital here. I got tired of going to see him because of the condition he was in. I personally refused to see him. My mom would go see him everyday, day in and day out. (.?.). He was going senile and he'd be in and out of consciousness. That really bothered me because some of the time I'd go in and he wouldn't be the father, the man that I knew. So, (..) I was afraid of walking into the room and seeing what condition he was in. And my goodness, I was twenty-seven then! You'd think I'd know enough then!

I can recall him telling me one time, "I'm going to die". And that was before that time. He told me, "This is it. I'm going." And he said, "There shouldn't be any real reason why people should get upset and all emotional because I'm dying, because we're all going to die. We're all going to die, sooner or later - we're all going to die. And, in my condition it's time for me to go. When I die, don't make a fuss, just let me go". I can recall him telling me that. And inasmuch as I didn't go visit him, as I should have, as

what the acceptable practice would be for going and visiting him ... I can still hear my dad talking to me. (...?..).

I can still hear my dad talking, crystal clear; the advice he had given me, what he told me, (..) even those things that I'd said, 'quit nagging me' about. Like when I'd borrow the boat and motor and he'd say, 'Don't do this. Don't do that. Don't do this. Don't do that. Watch out for this, and ...' I can still hear those things (..). (...). I can still hear the guy talking, almost to the point where I'm thinking about something, I've decided what to do and internally within his own voice he answers me. But it's in fact me, telling me (..). It's me answering myself internally, inside myself (...). But I still hear the guy talking to me. Inasmuch as he's not here physically, he's there, in my mind. It's really interesting because (...) he'll pop into my dreams every now and again, but I never see his face. (...? ?...).

DO YOU BELIEVE IN DREAMS? LIKE, DO YOU ANALYZE THEM OR ANYTHING?

I'm not sure. Do I believe in dreams, do I don't believe in dreams? I don't know. I do analyze dreams I suppose. But I'm very selective in what dreams I analyze. I will analyze dreams that stick out in my mind with a lot of detail. (.....).

SO WHERE DID YOU DO SECONDARY SCHOOL? I GUESS YOU
HAVE TO LEAVE?

Chippewa Secondary School in North Bay, that's where I went.
(...? .?. ?...).

WHAT WAS IT LIKE?

It was very interesting. I was very fortunate that my brother was in his graduating year, grade twelve, when I went out in grade nine. Like I can still remember getting off the train in North Bay and being very thankful that my brother was there. He had pretty well mastered if you will, the boarding home lifestyle. He knew all the tricks and that sort of thing. We stayed in the same boarding home the first year and he showed me the ropes, everything. He explained it all to me; what happens when you're out here, within school, outside of school and all the rest of it.

HOW WERE YOU ABLE TO KEEP UP YOUR CREE?

I lost a lot of it over the course of four years when I was in high school because we didn't speak very much Cree when we were out there. (...). We did speak a little bit of it, but not as much as we would have if we were home with our parents or in the community (...). So consequently, I lost quite a bit of the vocabulary. I didn't lose it all, but it wasn't until the last six or eight years that I was really able to build up my Cree vocabulary again.

WAS IT DIFFICULT FOR YOU COMING BACK AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?

It was in a way I suppose. You kind of get caught you know? (... ?...). The standard education you got in the province of Ontario at that time was of course to prepare you for life in an urban setting. Although we were educated for that kind of thing we knew for a fact (...) that it would be (...) harder for us to be socially accepted in that kind of setting. At that time there was not really too much for us here.

BUT YOU DID IT?

Yah. It wasn't easy though. It wasn't easy. I know there was a lot of us, a lot of us (emphasis) that went out there, and there's some guys that I see today, that I went to high school with, (...) walking around the streets totally unemployed, and they haven't been employed now for a good number of years.

WELL, WHY THE DIFFERENCE? HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCE? WHAT ENABLED YOU TO DO IT AND NOT THESE GUYS?

I don't know. I've asked the very same question many times. I don't know what the answer is. (...)I ask the question of myself especially when I see people that I grew up with in the streets here at home... Guys that I went to school with.

WELL, HOW ABOUT LOOKING AT IT FROM A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE - WHAT MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR YOU - INSTEAD OF LOOKING AT WHAT

DIDN'T MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR THEM, WHAT DO YOU THINK MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR YOU?

I think my parents had something to do with it. I'm pretty sure they did. They never directly encouraged me to do anything past high school. They never said go out and get a college education, or a university education (...). Never. It wasn't really something that they fully understood. (...)They weren't really that familiar with that kind of situation of that demand (...). But there was always that kind of lecturing that we would get about preparing ourselves for adulthood. I guess we had to kind of adapt what we were told, to how life would inevitably be when we got to be adults. (...)I can still hear my dad saying that the very first thing you need in adulthood is a boat. That's what he said, "If there's anything you have to buy Norm, it's a boat". (...?..).

I've got a boat. I plan on buying another one next year. But that doesn't make me that much more prepared for adult life. I think what he was telling me was that there are essential things in life that you need; "In the life I understand right now, you need a boat." When I was a teenager, maybe thirteen or fourteen years old, that boat, in that day, in that lifestyle my dad lived in, that boat was a very very essential piece of equipment. Without his boat he couldn't go anywhere, absolutely nowhere. And he didn't tell

us one (...) he told us a dozen times. (...)He just drilled that into us. (.....).

(...)So, as I said, because of the background of my parents, they couldn't very well give us that kind of direct guidance, if you will. (...)Maybe it was perhaps the kind of advice that we were given and my ability to perhaps translate it into the kind of lifestyle that we would meet. Certainly that boat to me right now, that boat that my dad wanted me to get, is that university education. That university education I've received now, although it's not a physical thing if you will, it's a piece of paper that hangs up (...), it is a very essential part of what enables me to put food on the table. Without that, it would probably make things a little more difficult for me (...) if not entirely impossible. But that's only part of the answer. I don't think it's the whole answer (.....).

I think a lot has to do with experiences and situations (emphasis) that people run into and how they handle those situations. Perhaps I was fortunate enough to make the mistake of making the right move. Some people make the mistake of making the wrong move. I say I made the mistake of making the right move because I probably didn't know I was making the right move. I know there have been a number of occasions over the last twelve or fifteen years where I said to myself, 'I must be the luckiest person in the

world. (...). Somebody's got to be looking after me. Something inside makes me capable of doing what I have to do, an energy, even when it's too difficult'.

One of the things that we were encouraged to do when I was graduating out of high school in North Bay, was to go into teaching. (...). I can remember our home-room teacher saying, "You guys can leave from here and go directly to Teacher's College and become a teacher after one year, and go directly into the classroom." (...). We were only about eighteen, nineteen then. And at that time we just laughed. Shit, we just finished going through (..) some twelve years of school (...). But when a few years later the opportunity of going to Teacher's College came (..) if I hadn't taken it, I'm not sure where I would be right now. I think that that was one of my main turning points in my life.

WHEN DID YOU DO YOUR B.Ed.?

(..)I can't remember! Dates are really bad as far as years go, when I did what. I think it was in the early '70s. I was working for the Department of Indian Affairs and at that time I was just drifting around looking for jobs. (...). That summer an advertisement came out for a program that the Department of Indian Affairs and the Ministry of Education were starting. It was kind of an experimental type of program, a Native teacher education program. They offered two summer sessions for Native students at McMaster

University in Hamilton, at the Faculty of Education. I applied for it and got in. I went in the following summer and came out and landed a job with the School Board as a high school coordinator, which is similar to a social counsellor. The next summer I went back to Hamilton and finished, got my teaching certificate and started teaching.

There were close to a hundred of us who went through the program. Some of the guys are still teaching. (...?). There were some guys that really bombed out. (...). But all in all it went quite well. (...). So that's how I ended up with my teaching certificate. It wasn't a regular B.Ed. program. From there I took part-time university summer school correspondence courses. Seven years later I got my degree! Seven years! I had quit taking courses for about two and a half years (...). I just got sick of it, until my wife talked me into it (...) again.

It was interesting you know. Once I had my teaching certificate (...) and once I got my degree, when I came back I wasn't worried. I didn't even look for a job. People came to me and asked me if I was interested in working ... (...). It's nice. As far as Native people go, two areas to get into once you have the academic qualifications are education and social services. You get into these two fields these days and people come knocking at your door for jobs. And it pays really good (... ? ...).

WHAT DID YOU DO IN BETWEEN GOING TO TEACHER'S COLLEGE AND GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL?

(...)What I did was work for Aamco Transmissions in Scarborough. (...)I had majored in auto-mechanics in high school. I was going to be the great auto-mechanic of the north, but I ended up in Toronto because that was the place to go. So I went to Toronto and looked around for work. In the process of looking for work I was getting desperate and I saw this article about this guy, the first Indian person to become an OPP⁴³. And I thought, 'that's great, maybe I can become the second guy?' So I went down to the recruiting station and I did a number of tests (...) but I failed because I had a criminal record. I had a shop-lifting charge, which is a story in itself! Because of that I couldn't get in. I couldn't become the second Indian guy to become an OPP! Too bad! Anyways, I was in the field that I wanted at that time. I was an auto-mechanic, so I became an apprentice auto-transmission mechanic out in Scarborough around the Warden station. (...)And I just got sick of Toronto. I didn't enjoy Toronto. It was kind of a novel thing with all the bright lights and all this sort of stuff (...) but after awhile I said, 'this just isn't for me. I'm heading back home'.

So I came up and I got my first job with Indian Affairs. That only lasted a short while. It was kind of a

⁴³ OPP is an acronym for Ontario Provincial Police.

temporary job. And from that I went to building houses (...) on a crew that built reserve housing. I can recall one winter (...) we were insulating the house floors and we were laying on our backs in the middle of winter, January or something like that, (...) and it was cold. We're talking forty below. (...) There were a number of us younger guys who were just a year or two out of high school and that's what we were doing for lifestyle (...). (.....). So that's what I did for awhile. And of course in Moose Factory I was probably one of the better educated people by virtue of the fact that I had a love for secondary school.

The band administration at the time was only a band welfare administration and they were hiring another person to come on board, an assistant. I applied for it and I got it. Shortly after that the guy quit. (...?...). So I became the band welfare administrator. I believe I was nineteen years old, twenty at tops.

SO YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD A JOB EH NORM?

Most of the time. I've never been on welfare, lets put it that way (...). But I was only nineteen or twenty at that time and I was issuing welfare to the people in the community, and at that time seventy-five percent of the people were on welfare. (...? .. ?...). But when I left, I spent about two years there, shortly thereafter the administration just grew in leaps and bounds. Now they have

about ninety people on staff. I can recall when I was the only person sitting there. Then a year after that there was another guy (...), he was my assistant. So that's what I did between high school and going to Teacher's College. (.....).

SO YOU COULDN'T BECOME A COP BECAUSE YOU HAD A SHOPLIFTING RECORD?

(...)It was in my last year of high school. It's kind of a silly story really. It was early spring of my final year, grade twelve (...) and we were really looking forward to the end of the school year, and moreso myself because that was it (...) I was a free man after this (emphasis). So one weekend (...) we decided to go shopping at Zellers (...). (.....). There were three of us. So we walked around just looking and being very innocent, or at least I thought we were (...). I didn't realize that the guys were lifting things. (...). The plan wasn't to go in and shop-lift. Lets get the record straight! (laughs). (...)I noticed these guys were starting to put some stuff in their pockets (...) and I said, 'Hmmm, I wonder what I can take?' I was just around the stationary section so I said, 'I need a refill for a pen. (...). I need one of those because mine is empty'. So I lifted one and put it in my pocket. (...). As we were leaving, the Zellers' store guy followed behind us and said, "Hey you fellows, have you got anything you haven't paid for?" And that was it! Security hauled us back in there. And I said, 'This is no

big deal. I only have a small refill,' and at that time it was only seventy-nine cents or something. (...). We started emptying our pockets and the only thing that I put on the table was the pen refill that I'd picked up. (...)These other guys they were just bringing out all kinds of stuff! (...)I was just as surprised as the security people. (...). Anyhow, we got charged with shop-lifting. It was theft under fifty dollars.

(..)We planned to keep this quiet of course and try not to get our boarding parent upset (...). So we just kind of kept it amongst ourselves. But we knew that the shit was going to hit the fan sooner or later. (...). I think it was a few days later when my landlady came down and said that there was somebody here to see me. (...)I kind of suspected who it was. It was a policeman issuing me a summons to appear in court. (...). So I took the paper and never said anything to my landlady. They were very nice people. (...). I didn't want to upset or disappoint them. (...). A little while later I decided that I'd better go tell these people. So I went up and said, "I've got something to tell you". And they said, "We know. We knew the day it happened. (...)You know the policeman that came to deliver the summons?" And I said, "Yah". "Well," my landlady said, "he's my cousin." (...).

(...)My counsellor at the time (...) found out about it and was very good about the whole thing. He handled the case rather well. And I said to myself, 'so long as he doesn't tell my mother or father, then everything will be fine.' Of course at that time we didn't call home that regularly. So I said, 'if I don't call home till June (...) everything will be fine because they wouldn't have called me'. They weren't the type of parents that were accustomed to that kind of fast communication (...). (.....).

The end of May we were hauled up in court and still there were no parents. So we were told we'd probably get a probation period. And we said, 'Fine, that's good. They won't lock us up'. So we went (...) through the proceeding (...) and our case was remanded (...) until June. Toward the end of June (...) I got really excited because (...) they were going to let me finish off my school year. They were not going to lock me up for stealing a seventy-nine cent pen refill! (...)So we ended up going to court and we got, I think it was a six month probation sentence. My mother, or one of my sisters later told me that they had found out very quickly. (...). And my mother tells me that I was very close to coming home (...).

If my parents would have said, 'send the guy home', there and then, I would never have finished high school. There is just no question in my mind. I would have never

finished high school (emphasis) because there is no way I would have gone back (...) to do that whole year over again just to finish. So I was fortunate. My mother said, 'I'll deal with him when he gets back'. (...?...).

But you know, that's the kind of experience I reflect back on in my life now and think that if my dad and my mom were irrational people and made (...) a spur of the moment decision without thinking about what the possible implications would be for me personally, then perhaps that would have turned events in my life to the point that I wouldn't be where I am now. I'm not sure whether it was a conscious decision on their part (...) to interpret it that way. I think it was. And I do the same thing with my boys.

I was in Toronto one time and I had to spend the night there. That very same night the phone rang. It was my wife telling me that the boys were kicked out of residence (.....) because they were involved in smoking grass and stuff.⁴⁴ So we decided that we wouldn't let them stay with Jean's sister in Moosonee. They would have to come back and forth on the skidoos. (...). When the boys got home Jean told them about the decision and that I was coming home the next day. Of course they were pretty nervous about that! (.....).

⁴⁴ The only high school close to Moose Factory Island, is in Moosonee. During break-up most of the students from Moose Factory instead of commuting everyday across the Moose River, reside in the dorms at the high school or with family in Moosonee. Some of them also stay there for the winter.

So when I got back they were pretty nervous about the whole thing. They really didn't know what to expect from me. But I played it cool. I said, "You guys made a mistake and I don't think you would make the same mistake again about getting involved in drugs (...)." We had a very adult discussion. One of the few discussion I've had with the boys in a very adult way, because they're getting older of course. (.?.). They were fifteen and sixteen at the time. (...?.. ?..). So we had a very adult discussion. My responsibility is to teach my children in such a way that he or she won't be turned off. I doesn't make sense to physically abuse your children. You just need to treat them with persistent [consistent] behaviour. And I said, 'if I come down hard on these guys and give them shit (...) it's just going to shut things out between me and them. They will think that I'm the bad guy and that I don't understand anything.' We have to keep the lines of communication open. The problem we have as adults is we don't listen to kids - to ask them what they're feeling inside. I can recall when I started talking to them I said, "Listen, I'm not a perfect man either. When I was going through your age I made a lot of mistakes." I was very honest with them. (...). I told them about some of the things I used to do when I was their age.

(.?.)We used to really get involved in all kinds of shit. We used to drink like fish (....). Friday, Saturday,

Sunday, we'd be on a binge all the time. I'd never go home. I'd wake up in the ditch. (.?.). When I was in high school we had the greatest summers (...). We'd have beach parties. There'd be booze flowing, everything. The only thing that we didn't get involved with was drugs. But booze, (..) we'd really get into that stuff. And I was telling them these things. And I said, "This is just a small thing that's happening. You know you guys are learning." So we had a very sensible talk. And the interesting thing was that just this past year my oldest boy got kicked out of residence again.

Again the phone rang while I was on the road. (..)Jean was pretty cool about the whole thing and said that Curt got kicked out of school. But he called me before the school called me and explained the whole thing. There was a party along the tracks at the high school, he had a couple of drinks and when he got back to the residence, they smelled booze on him and they kicked him out. So I said, 'well fine. No big deal.' So he just travelled back and forth. I didn't make a big stink over it. Shit, he's a grown man! He can drink as far as I'm concerned. He got kicked out because of a reason. They have rules. So I guess he can't stay there (...).

HOW ABOUT DRINKING RESPONSIBLY?

We have a lot of talks about drinking responsibly. We talk about that and some of the possible things that could happen. Our latest thing that we had a talk about was drinking and driving. (...). I tell them, "You guys can get involved in alcohol and you can really take your life away (...)." We also talk about sex, its outcome and what it does for your opportunities. Jean and I had our first child four months after being married. This limited our academic possibilities. We were just young and foolish. Our parents hadn't warned us. So we talk to them about our experiences.

I used to go to dances (..) and most of the times I would be sober and I can recall my buddy's mother saying, "Norm is the most responsible teenager around, because every time I go to a dance he's probably the only sober guy around". But it was after the dance that I got drunk!

SO WHERE ARE ALL THE ACTIVITIES NOW FOR THE KIDS?
(.....).

We used to have dances in the community hall. And we used to have a regular band that played the kind of rock music that they were playing back in the '60s (..) and we would do the modern type of dancing, and then we would have fiddle music, and we would do square dancing. (...). And we would have a great time, a great time because there was a mixture of both. And not only that, but when it came down to square dancing people knew how to square dance. And we were only sixteen,

seventeen, eighteen years old, and we knew how to square dance!

WAS IT OPEN TO THE COMMUNITY OR WAS IT JUST FOR THE TEENAGERS?

The community. There were adults, but a lot of teenagers went. Now (...) you could go to a dance, people put on square dances, but those guys don't know what they're doing. (...). A lot of people from the south⁴⁵, people from the hospital and stuff like that, they always join in and they really screw things up. There's nothing better than having a square dance when people know what they hell they're doing! (...).

SO WHY AREN'T THINGS LIKE THAT HAPPENING?
I don't know. It's just change. (...). It's just the southern influence you know, rock'n roll.

WHAT'S THAT INFLUENCE?

Radio, television ... and that kind of stuff. The communication is that much quicker and people in our area tend to want to imitate the south, and then they look that way only. (?). It's just the thing to do I guess. (...). They want to be like what they see.

WHERE DO YOU FALL ON THIS? PERSONALLY, HOW DO YOU SEE YOURSELF?

⁴⁵ 'People from the south' mainly refers to the transient health-care population in Moose Factory, many of whom remain on the fringes of the community, but do participate in some of the social events, particularly dances held at the community hall and or parties held at the nurses residence.

As an individual. I just want to be me and say that, I just want to be myself; know myself for who I am, I suppose, try to have some sense of identity. And try to make some contribution in terms of my people, the Cree, and my family. (.?.). I've gone through a phase in life (..) where I really asked myself who I was, as a Cree, as an Indian person. And I've more or less satisfied myself in terms of who I am, but I'm not necessarily to the point where I have a definite answer about who I am. I know a lot about who I am but not exhaustively.

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY YOURSELF?

I identify myself not in the physical sense but I identify myself in terms of the knowledge of who my parents were, who my grandparents were, the lifestyle they lived, the relationship they had with the environment, the values and the beliefs that they followed. To know that, not necessarily to practice the actual way of life that they followed, but to be able to get an understanding of their relationship between other living things, the different values and beliefs that they had and to try as much as possible to apply them to everyday life today. The rate at which one is successful is based on knowing your past - to take on challenges and make the necessary adaptations to succeed. The most dangerous thing that could happen is to have it swept away...You can't watch it dwindle and

disappear. Eventually someone will ask you why you let this happen. It could be my children or my grandchildren. What we do in life determines the future.

SO ARE YOU SAYING YOU DON'T FEEL THAT IT'S ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY THAT YOU KEEP SORT OF BEHAVING A LIFESTYLE, OR BEHAVING THE CREE WAYS, TO HAVE A SENSE OF BEING CREE?

It's a state of mind. If anything, it's a state of mind more than anything else. You will see Native people trying to identify themselves as being Indian by the way they dress, by the way they project themselves out to other people, perhaps by wearing braids, buckskins, or Indian jewellery or moccasins. I do that from time to time, but I don't go out of my way to put myself on some kind of a stage to say, 'here I am, because of the way I look and I dress, I am an Indian.' There's more to it than that.

(..)From time to time some Indian people have been accused of being an apple. They say, red on the outside and white on the inside (...). (...). But you know, you have to be able to take that same apple and cut it down the middle. You'll see that it is red on the outside, red on the inside and white in the middle. But that's not important. What's important is in the very centre core of what the apple is all about. And that's the seed that's inside the very centre of that very apple. And that seed, my seed, is the perpetuation

of the mind of who an Indian is; the values, the beliefs, the background...

HOW DO YOU GET THAT SEED THOUGH?

(...). You have to nurture it. You have to take the time to nurture that kind of state of mind... You have to be able to sort out millions of pieces of information in your life experience that you're bombarded with. How you sort that out, basically is who you become, what you value and what you want to be. So how you sort that information out in your mind basically is nurturing your state of mind.

BUT WHEN YOU SORT IT OUT IN A CERTAIN WAY THAT'S BECAUSE YOU HAVE A CERTAIN FRAMEWORK THAT YOU'RE WORKING WITH (...). WHERE DOES THAT FRAMEWORK COME FROM?

(..)Well, basically your framework comes from what you were taught initially as a young child, that bit of information that you were given at a young age. And you want to hang onto that (...). (.?.?..).

SO YOU DON'T GET YOUR IDENTITY FROM WHAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE SAYING?

It's my own state of mind that I believe in. I can prove to people, I can sit down with people and tell them what I believe in, in terms of who I think I am, and articulate it comfortably from inside and defend myself. And if a person says, 'you're just a middle class Indian who makes a lot of money', well, fine. But I had to work for that. (...)I had

to sacrifice a lot of my personal time to get to where I am. And that's why I am where I am now. It's the sacrifices I made. It wasn't given to me. I earned it. And perhaps if other people had done that... perhaps they would have been in the same position, regardless of who they are.

BUT IS THAT CONCEPT OF EARNING A TRADITIONAL CREE CONCEPT?

In a way it is. (...)If you want to talk about it in a traditional sense, it's putting food on the table for the family. That very concept itself is saying to survive. To put food on the table for yourself and for your family. That was a concept that was very strong in our people. You had to become a good hunter, a good trapper and a good fisherman (...) to put food on your table. (...). And there was a learning process that you had to go through in order to be able to have those skills to do it. And if you didn't take time to do it, or you didn't pay attention to do it, then you would not be able to do it. As a consequence (...) it wasn't easy for you to survive (...). There was a learning process. There was a whole process of educating, getting that education. It's different today. (.?.). It's a different situation but the same rules are there; to put food on the table, to become independent, to become self-sufficient for yourself and for your family you have to go through a process of education. If you're going to learn how to hunt, if you

want to be a trapper, hunter, fisherman, then you don't go to school, you go out there and do it. But there's still that learning process that is required. In the same manner as what I'm doing right now. You have to go through the educational process, which some of us did.

DO YOU THINK YOU'LL STAY HERE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE?

Yup. It's home. I don't think I'll ever move from out of this place.

HOW ABOUT YOUR KIDS?

It's their decision, not mine. (.?.). I suppose I'd prefer it if they didn't, but then again, you know that you can't force people to do what they don't want to do, cause if you do, then they're not going to be happy. And that's what basically both Jean and I believe in. (...)The guys will do whatever they want to do. But they have to be able to say that the end result will be for them to be able to make it on their own.

HOW ABOUT YOUR KIDS, DO YOU THINK THEY HAVE A SENSE OF BEING... LIKE HOW DO YOU THINK THEY IDENTIFY THEMSELVES? I KNOW YOU CAN'T REALLY SPEAK ON THEIR BEHALF BUT... DO YOU THINK THEY CONSIDER THEMSELVES, WHAT? CANADIANS? NATIVES? INDIANS?

I'm pretty sure that they're exactly at the same stage that I was when I was going to high school. They want to be just

like everybody else. They want to be just like what they see.

CHAPTER IV

ALLAN JOLLY: "IT'S A PERSONAL DECISION"

I was born in an Indian community in northern Quebec called Rupert's House. The name has now been changed to Waskaganish, meaning 'little house'. I was born in April of 1950.

(...)One of the things I remember my mother telling me is that when I was born I was four pounds. (....). I was premature. (...). But I've gained a lot of weight since then !!! (laugh). And yet, eleven days after I was born, my mother, my dad and myself got ready to go to our spring hunting camp. We travelled by dog team in those days. We had two dogs, or something like that. So my mom and dad and myself got all our stuff and toboggans ready and went out to our trap lines. (....).

YOUR PARENTS TOLD YOU ABOUT THIS?

Yah, my mom told me about it.

That says a lot about women in those days; how strong and tough they were. (...). (...)April is the time when we hunt Canada geese that migrate to the north. Usually when the Canada geese get here in the months of April and

May, it is one of the happiest times in a lot of the Indian communities on the coast of James Bay, because it means plenty of food and meat. So, there was no way we could miss out on that because we depended very much on that for our food for the spring time and the summer time.

I grew up on the trap line from the time that I was born until I was seven. I lived on the trap line with my parents. Often we would camp with one or two other families. In those days we had a wigwam type of shelter and all three families would be in that wigwam.

IS A WIGWAM LIKE A TEEPEE?

It's like a tepee but it's not pointed. It's round just like an igloo, but it's canvas covered. So one family would be on one side, the other one on the other side and the other one at the back.

WERE THESE FAMILIES USUALLY RELATED TO YOU?

In most cases (...) but sometimes there was no relation. (...). When I think back to that, I think that that was sort of good, especially if it was family, because it was more like family fellowship, extended family. Families were very close knit in that way back in those days. Sometimes there were quite a few children when we camped with other families. It used to be a good time.

Maybe some people would think that it's a very harsh life living in a canvas covered tepee shelter in the

winter time, but at that time I was very happy, and so were my mother and father. I think everyone was happy living on the trap line. It just seemed that that was the only life we knew and we were in control of our lives and the way we wanted to live. And we were very happy from it.

At that time I spoke the Cree language. That's all I spoke, my mother tongue, the Cree, the coastal Cree. My mother did not know English. She couldn't speak English. My dad did speak English, but of course no one spoke English in those days when we lived on the trap line.

I started going with my dad when I was about six or seven; I'd go checking his traps with him. I'd be walking with my snow-shoes and all that. One time we killed two moose. I was going on seven. I think that was the last winter that I lived with them. It used to be a really happy time when there was a lot of meat because sometimes it was difficult to kill animals and trap animals and we would go quite awhile, maybe a month, without meat. Those times all we would live on was tea and bannock. So it was really a good time when a moose was killed. It meant a lot of meat.

I guess the thing that I look back on in those days is my parents and all those who lived in the bush did not get involved with alcohol. I think that everybody knew and understood the roles that they had. Like my father was a provider, especially on the trap line and he was very happy

doing that. He knew that his job was to provide our food and all that. So he did that. My mom would basically be around the camp area, gathering wood, keeping house and providing for the camp. Of course, us kids used to help out as well getting wood sometimes. We didn't like doing it but... They used to make little toboggans for us and we would haul wood for my mother on them and we would cut the wood.

ARE YOUR PARENTS ORIGINALLY FROM RUPERT'S HOUSE?

Yah, they're from Rupert's House. (...? ?...). I've been told that the Jolly's originate from Point Blue, Quebec, but I've never traced my ancestry. My dad was an orphan at an early age, about three. He doesn't remember his parents. That's as far as I know about my father's background, just his dad's name and his mother's name. (.). He's got a brother here in Moose Factory, an older brother. There's just the two of them. Both of them were orphans raised in residential school. He had to stay in residential school till he was eighteen because he had no place to go.⁴⁶

HOW DID HE FEEL ABOUT THAT? HAS HE EVER SAID?

I think he had some bad experiences. I don't think it was so much in the school. But he did eventually go to live with an elderly couple who apparently didn't treat him too well at times, maybe because he wasn't part of that family. So I know that one of the results of the way that he was treated,

⁴⁶ In spite of all the negative things that are said and have been said about the residential schools, they did provide food and shelter for many children whose parents could not provide these necessities for them.

something that he decided that he would never do, is that he would never spank his children. He had this attitude. He would never hit or whip his children because he went through that kind of experience himself. (...). So he never did that to us. I can't remember him once ever hitting me.

HOW DID HE DISCIPLINE YOU?

Yelling at me (laughs). But when you're on the trap line - I think they did an okay job. But I think the fact that we were such a close knit family on the trap line made it that much easier for us kids to pay attention to what we were told. And that type of discipline worked okay because it worked in harmony with that type of setting, the natural environment setting.

WHAT KIND OF DISCIPLINE?

You know, just being talked to. Like, 'don't do that', without being spanked in other words.

HOW DID IT FIT IN WITH THE SETTING?

Well, I think when you're in that kind of setting if you're told not to do something, for instance, not to walk on the river when the ice is thin (...), if you go ahead, you find out very quickly why you were told not to do it (laughs). So in that sense, with the natural environment, there was always the experience of some kind of physical pain if you disobeyed your parents, because that's what usually happened. So it's

almost as if it wasn't necessary for them to impose the pain on you because if you didn't listen it would come anyway.

(...). In the spring of 1958 I turned 8 years old and we made our way from Waskaganish to Moose Factory. We came by canoe.

WHY WERE YOU ON YOUR WAY HERE?

To go to residential school. There was an Indian residential school here in Moose Factory and that's where the majority of the kids were sent, especially those from the east coast of James Bay, northern Quebec. So we made our way here and we got here in the month of August on time. (...). I didn't realize it then that I was coming here to go to school (laughs). So they brought us here and by the end of the month my dad took me and my younger brother to the residential school. I was 8 years old then and my younger brother Joe was about 6 years old at that time. We were only a few years apart so we sort of grew up together.

HOW DID YOUR PARENTS FIND OUT ABOUT YOU HAVING TO GO TO SCHOOL?

They had been told a couple of years before that I was supposed to be in school by the time I was 6.

AND WHO WOULD HAVE TOLD THEM THIS?

The Department of Indian Affairs. (...)They would contact the chief of the band at the time. I remember the chief coming around our place and saying "you're going to have to let him

go to school", talking about me. But my mother refused to send me out on my own. I guess they had decided that they'd rather wait until my younger brother Joe was old enough to go as well, so that we could be together. So that's why I ended up starting when I was 8 years old, whereas I should have started when I was 6. So that's the way it happened in those days. Mind you, my parents were very reluctant to send me, especially my mother. But they knew, I guess, that at some point in time they would have to send me, so, we ended up here in the month of August and in September they went out to hunt geese before they went out on the trap line.

Rupert's House was our permanent home up until that time. I thought that things would still continue that way... When my parents went on the trap line they'd be on the trap line until the early part of June, they'd finish trapping at the end of March and then they'd go along the coastal area for spring hunting, and then they'd return to the community by the middle of June.

NOW THEY WOULD BE RETURNING TO MOOSE FACTORY?

They decided that they would come to Moose Factory because we were still in school at that time. We didn't get out until the end of June. They would pitch a tent along the river and we'd end up staying here for the summer. I guess they thought that it would be easier to come here instead of going to Rupert's House while we were having our summer holidays.

And then once we went back into school they would go out to their hunting and trapping area. So, I think that coming to Moose Factory, at least on their part, was to be a temporary thing. (...). But what they thought to be temporary became permanent. By coming here every summer for the next five summers they became more used to the idea of coming here and living here.⁴⁷ Then my dad couldn't continue his trapping because he was having some physical problems, so it was just natural for them to stay here. They began living here year round when my dad couldn't trap.

SO WOULD YOU SEE THEM DURING THE WINTER MONTHS?

By that time I was going to school in Brantford. I got sent out when I was about 12. (... ..).

HOW LONG WERE YOU IN BRANTFORD FOR?

I was there for four years, grade 5 till grade 8.

WOULD YOU COME BACK HERE IN THE SUMMER?

Yah. We would come here at the end of June. Then we'd go back again in August.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE IN SCHOOL?

We found it kind of rough. The kids were quite out of hand, some of them. So we found it quite hard compared to what we were used to here. And of course the kids down there spoke a

⁴⁷ A sedentary lifestyle was adopted by many Indians because they wanted to reside near their children who were attending school. "After compulsory education was enforced, the population of Moose Factory island further increased. Many of the Native families who had maintained the annual migration to winter trapping grounds and who had taken their children to the bush with them, decided to settle on the reserve [or nearby if they were not Moose Band members and their children were attending residential school] and remain near the school rather than leaving their children in residence" (Blythe, Brizinski and S. Preston 1985: 39).

different language. They were Mohawks most of them. I think the first time I began to speak English more often than ever was at Brantford. Because when I was here in Moose Factory all we would speak is Cree because all the kids were the same dialect. (... ..).

YOU SAID IT WAS PRETTY ROUGH THERE, THE KIDS WERE PRETTY TOUGH, WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT? COULD YOU GIVE ME SOME EXAMPLES?

Well for one thing, the kids wouldn't hesitate in terms of stealing. (?). They stole from us when all our luggage was in one room. (...). So it was rough that way. (...). The other way they were rough was that they were more violent than us in terms of beating up other kids.

WHY DO YOU THINK THEY DID THAT?

I think they were just trying to have somebody submit to them. That seemed to be the only reason (...). And they tried it on us but fortunately there were enough of us, plus we had enough big guys in our group that we didn't allow it. We fought back.

WHAT WOULD FIGHTING BACK MEAN, LIKE LITERALLY, WITH YOUR FISTS?

Yah, if they wanted to be rough in that way then we would just fight back. We just let them know that they weren't going to do the same thing to us. As a matter of fact one of the things that we changed there right away was this idea of

picking on little kids. These little kids they were only, five, six, seven years old. In fact I remember one time the supervisors found out that this kid's arm was all black and blue. They wanted to know who did it and they put us all in one big room. (...). Of course everyone knew who did it but nobody would say anything.

WHY NOT?

Well again, it's just one of those things; you don't squeal. But, we didn't keep quiet. We said who did it. It was sort of the first time that somebody, or some of the boys were willing to stick their necks out and say 'this guy did it'. (...)After that they didn't do that any more; (...)I guess because they knew that they couldn't have their way with us because we would fight back if need be, and because we weren't afraid to tell on them.

WELL, WEREN'T THE PEOPLE THERE AWARE OF IT?

(....). No, and if they were, I guess they weren't doing anything about it. We heard of instances where the supervisors themselves got beaten up. But we didn't see any of that when we were there. Apparently this had happened before we actually had gotten there. But...I stayed down there for four years. I didn't really like it. In fact I tried hard not to go down the second time. I wasn't successful, so they ended up taking me out again.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU TRIED HARD NOT GO DOWN THE SECOND TIME?

I missed the train that took the kids down (...). (...). But my dad knew the Anglican church Bishop that was here, (...) and his son, who's a minister now himself, and he went after my dad to send me down there. He even volunteered to take me down there on his way to university, because it was only about an hour's drive from Brantford. So finally my mother and father reluctantly agreed (...). A month later I ended up going down to Brantford again. I ended up going two more years after that. (.?.). When I finished grade 8 I ended up going to North Bay (...).

As far as Brantford is concerned, and looking back on it, in some way I feel proud of it; having been there, having gone through it, in spite of the bad experiences from it. I mean, it wasn't totally bad. But it was bad in the sense that I was sent out against my own choice. I didn't have any choice in the matter, plus being so far away from home. But, I think the new surroundings, the exposure that I got was good for me. It think it helped me.

WHY?

I think it helped me to adjust to that kind of life because I ended up having to go out anyway, for my high school, because there was no high school here. So by the time I got to high school I was pretty much used to the idea of city life. The

only difference when I went to high school was that I became my own boss. (...). I stayed in a private home, private billeting, me and a couple of guys. (...). And besides having house parents, I guess we were on our own, which is something we didn't really have in residential school where a lot of things were taken care of for us.

DID YOU WANT TO GO TO HIGH SCHOOL?

Yah.

SO YOU LIKED SCHOOL THEN?

Yes, in a way, I guess. I don't know for what reason. Maybe it was because a lot of my peers were going to school, so it was just the natural thing to go to school. Maybe another reason could have been that...Like my parents up till that time were here in Moose Factory still in a canvas covered shelter, or dwelling, with just a tent frame (...). Year round to be living in that! And there was no running water and thinking like that. Plus it was very cold in the winter time. Maybe for that reason too I said, 'maybe it's just as well to stay in school and live in a nice house down south.'

YOU'D GOTTEN USED TO THE OTHER LIFE NOW?

Yah, I guess so. I probably got used to it. (.?.). Well, I had been in school for about seven years and I was getting used to the conveniences of that kind of life; nice shelter and water and things like that.

I used to ask my mother, "Why do I have to go to school?" She'd tell me that I had to go to school to learn English. I learned to speak English within the first two or three years that I was in school, and I remember asking her again, "Can't I quit school now? I can speak English". And she said, "No, you have to keep going till you are 16." (..). (..)By the time I was 16 I was in high school, and went on my own really, after that. If I wanted to quit she probably would have let me. But remembering back, I think they sort of encouraged us to keep on going. I'm pretty sure there were a few times that we talked about quitting and I remember they didn't really like the idea. So I kept going to school. (.?.). I finished my grade 12 in North Bay. I was in grade 12 when I finally dropped out.

WHY DID YOU DROP OUT?

Well, I started getting involved with alcohol and I was getting into trouble. I guess what happened at that time was I was drunk and I was running away from the police and I got hit by a car. I wasn't hurt bad, except my leg. It was scraped pretty bad. I only stayed around for a week after that and then I went home.

DID YOUR PARENTS KNOW ABOUT THAT?

I think they knew about it but I don't think they knew how much I was doing that, (..) because when I was home in the summer time I never drank that much. (...). I think being

involved in alcohol like that, you just sort of get so involved that you don't concentrate on other things, like school, even though I did manage to pass school. But I think that's where my problem started, when I started drinking. And I came home after I got hit by a car (...) determined that I wouldn't drink again.

SO YOUR PARENTS WERE STILL LIVING IN A TEEPEE WHEN YOU CAME BACK?

They had a little house by then. They made a little house, not a very big house. When I came home, I came home in October some time, I said, 'I won't ever bother drinking.' In fact I was determined to go back into the life of living in the bush (...). But, by that time, my dad was only doing a little bit of hunting close to town (...) and my parents were very much involved in alcohol. It seemed to be almost every weekend, I guess, at that time that they would have drinking parties. It wasn't so much their doing all the time. It was just other people coming over and bringing that kind of stuff, you know.

HOW DO YOU THINK THEY GOT INVOLVED IN DRINKING?

At the time when they came to the community people could order liquor, meaning wine, from Cochrane. There was no liquor store in Moosonee at that time. So, (...) everybody would look forward to Friday for the weekend because that's when the liquor, the wine would come in. So people would

drink on Fridays and that's how they got involved. And then, when the liquor store came into being there was more liquor. It was easier to get, and there was a lot of drinking.

DO YOU THINK IT WAS BECAUSE (..) IT TASTED GOOD OR WHATEVER?

I think, yah. You know, like some people say that people drink because of poverty. (..). But I don't see that being the case here because most Indian people whether they lived in a tent or not, they didn't look at that as poverty. (..). They were happy in that kind of world. (..) So my conclusion is that people drank because of the feeling. It's just like people take drugs even though it's hurting them, (..) because of the feeling, you know. And I think the same thing is true of the Indian people here. They drank because of the feeling that they got from it.

BUT SOMETIMES THEY WOULD DRINK MORE THAN...THEY WOULD LOSE CONTROL EH?

Oh yah. Most often when they drank they lost control. I don't think there's an Indian person who drank socially (..). In those days people drank to get drunk. They would lose total control.

But, as I say for me, I wanted to get away from drinking. I never liked drinking. Even the first time I drank, I just didn't like the feeling. I just felt so awful. (..). And I said to myself, 'never drink again.' But I

couldn't get away from it. When you're living in just a canvas covered big room when everybody gets drunk there is just no peace. There is no way you can rest in a place like that.

HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU CAME BACK AND YOUR PARENTS WERE DRINKING?

I knew it was a periodic, weekend thing. I didn't realize it was going to be something that was really going to take control of the home. (...) When I got home that time it seemed to be every weekend.

BUT DURING THE WEEK, WERE YOUR PARENTS STILL (...) WORKING? DID YOUR DAD HAVE A JOB THEN?

He didn't really have a job my dad, my mom did. She was able to maintain her work in spite of that. (?). She was house cleaning at the hospital. My dad would have a job here and there at times.

But as I said, I had made up my mind that I wasn't going to drink. First of all I hated drinking, and I hated when my parents did drink because I knew that us kids would never have time to rest or sleep. I remember sitting there some times when everyone was drunk. I was young at the time, fourteen or fifteen. I hadn't drank. I couldn't sleep all night. I'd have to stay awake because every time I tried to lay down, if they were fighting or something like that, somebody would fall on me. (?). So I remember many times

when I wished that I could sleep. I would stay up all night just till everybody was finished drinking.

DID YOU EVER TALK TO YOUR PARENTS ABOUT THAT?

They knew how we felt. They knew we...(...). I think that somehow my parents didn't like it either because many times my dad would beat up my mom when he was drunk. Sometimes he would hit my mother and she would have a black eye or something like that. So they didn't like it because of that. But then they'd still do it again. You know what I mean?

WHY DO YOU THINK THEY WOULD STILL DO IT EVEN AFTER NEGATIVE THINGS HAPPENED? WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO STOP?

I don't know. I guess just the desire to (...). (...). I think there's more to it than we really see though. In my opinion now, and from what I know, I think it's spiritual warfare that's involved when people do things that are wrong and they can't seem to have control over it.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY SPIRITUAL WARFARE?

Like today I'm an evangelical believer. I'm a Bible believer. And what I understand from what the Bible teaches, Satanic forces are constantly at war in terms of destroying the very things that God created.

SO THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN BY SPIRITUAL...?

...people do things even though we know it's hurting us and yet we don't seem to have the power to break away from it. (?.). I know that to be true. In our case (....) we were

all brought up in that kind of home where there was drinking [seven children].

DID ANY OF THE KIDS TAKE IT UP?

Oh yah, I did. I finally (laughs) just couldn't ignore it, so I just pretty well joined in. Same thing with my younger brother Joe. And then the other ones were starting to get into it as well as they got older. So it was real hell when all were around and drunk. And I think what happened in many cases like this is that we took out our aggression against our own parents. I don't know...when you remember your father hitting your mother that's something that gets in your mind (...) and maybe hatred builds up sometimes.

SO YOU WOULD RELEASE THAT BY DRINKING?

By drinking and then sometimes we used to beat up my dad. (?).

WERE THERE EVER ANY REPERCUSSIONS FOR THAT?

No. I must say I admire my dad for that. I don't know if he remembers any of those times, I think he does. If he knows he's been beaten up, he never said anything. He never held it against anybody. (.?.). My mother too, I don't think she blamed him to the point of disliking him or hating him. I guess she accepted the fact, that he was drunk. (....). As I say, our home was really tearing apart because of the alcohol. It was like that - gee I was hitting about twenty-

one I guess - for a period of six years. Alcohol had pretty well taken control of my life and everyone's in our home.

WERE YOU WORKING ALLAN?

I was working at the hospital as an operating room technician. I started working there in '71. (...). For four years I worked there. For the first three years I was single. My schedule would be like this for the week: I would go to work from Monday to Friday. Friday I'd start drinking. (...). I'd be drinking the whole weekend pretty well. And by Monday, back to work, usually with a hangover. All the money that I made I just blew on drinking. I was living at home. I didn't pay for anything, except for buying clothes I guess. Most of it went to drinking. That's the kind of life I was living at least for two or three years, until the time that I got married.

SO HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU GOT MARRIED?

I was twenty-one I think. I got married on June 9th, 1972 (...) to Lorraine Linklater. (...) I guess we got involved mainly because of alcohol. I don't know if we would have ever met in that day, because it was mainly through drinking. I guess that was just the lifestyle by then of everybody, and the young people coming up. Even today things are still like that. The main thing is drinking. It's more drugs here too. It wasn't here during my time. It was only starting to come slowly. But I never got involved with drugs. (...).

SO YOU MET YOUR WIFE AT A PARTY, DRINKING?

Yah, it was through drinking at a party I met her.

When I look back on it, I guess it's not the best way of building relationships between a girl and her boy (...). I mean that's not the ideal way of meeting somebody. It's unfortunate, but that's the way it was. But even today it's still the same thing. Young people get to know each other through alcohol and so on. They never have time, even today, to really think about the relationship that they want to build, and the responsibilities that come along with it.

DOES THE BEHAVIOUR CHANGE LATER?

Usually it does. It's like all of a sudden you wake up and say, 'what am I doing?' Or, 'how am I going to provide for my family?' I think that's the way it was with me. I thought, 'gee, how can I raise my family, support my wife. How can I make my family happy?' I think everybody desires that. They want to make their family happy. You want to raise your family the right way. And I knew that drinking wasn't the way because I saw it in my own home and it wasn't doing any good. It was creating a lot of misery and unhappiness - a lot of pain. And yet I was in that same situation and heading in the same direction.

WHY DO YOU THINK YOU COULDN'T GET OUT OF IT?
(.....?).

Well, peer pressure for one thing. Or just the fact that it was just a natural thing that was happening here. And for me, one of the things that probably held me in grip too is that I played on the local hockey team here. In those years we did really well (...). And what happens a lot of times when you're successful is you want to celebrate!!! (...). One year we had a coach and the first game we played he said, "Okay guys, if you win the game tonight there'll be a couple of cases of beer at my house". (...). We won that game and it just went on from there.

HOW OLD WERE YOU THEN?

I was 19. (...). So what happened was that that bunch of guys that I got associated with because of hockey were just another stream for me to get involved in alcohol, aside from the home stuff.

SO IT WAS EVERYWHERE?

It was everywhere that's probably the biggest reason why I couldn't get away from it. It was everywhere. (.?.).

But I look back on it and wish sometimes, if only I had more power, if only I had more character, to say in my own way that I don't want that. But I guess it's not very many people who can do that (...).

WELL YOUR CHARACTER HAS TO COME FROM SOMEWHERE RIGHT, TO BE STRONG? YOU HAVE TO BE STRONG FOR SOME REASON?

Yah. That's what I found out in my life. (...) The last ten years, if not the last fifteen years, well since I got married I guess, I've gone through a process of character development, of character building, which I know I never had. It wasn't there. I had no character in the sense of my own thinking, or my own beliefs. (... ..).

SO HOW LONG AFTER YOU GOT MARRIED DID YOU STOP DRINKING?

About a year after. It was '72 when I got married and by that time I was really thinking about stopping somehow.

AND YOUR WIFE DECIDED AT THE SAME TIME TOO?

Yah, she agreed. I think we both decided to try and provide something better for ourselves and for our family, instead of drinking all the time.

WHY DO YOU THINK, I MEAN YOU JUST SAID YOU DIDN'T HAVE ANY CHARACTER BUT I THINK TO BE ABLE TO DECIDE THAT YOU CAN'T DRINK ANYMORE, AND TO DECIDE TOGETHER MEANS THAT YOU MUST HAVE HAD SOME STRENGTH. (...).

I think it was desperation, you know. Because like I said, we didn't like that life, even though we were young. I think just seeing the way it affected our parents and other people around, and the fact that it was getting worse all the time. We felt, I guess, that we just can't do that. There is no way we can have a marriage and maintain...

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE DIFFERENCE WAS BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS THAT WEREN'T ABLE TO TURN IT AROUND?

Well, there's a good number of them who have done it. I mean today in Moose Factory I would say that something close to one hundred families have turned it around, stopped drinking completely. We and I guess most of these people (..) turned to a spiritual answer, a religious answer (..). Well for me anyway I thought, 'I got to have something that's going to work.' Do you know what I mean? I wasn't just looking to stop drinking as much. I just wanted something that I would find purpose and fulfilment in. It had to be something that had a lot of meaning to me. (...). So I thought to myself, 'well maybe the answer is in God.' The answer didn't seem to be here, from what we can understand and see around us. And, I don't know, I felt I would try God, I would try the Bible. I mean, I just felt an emptiness about me. (.?.). I just felt empty about life and the way it was. (.)I just didn't see any point in continuing on in life sometimes. It just didn't seem to have very much meaning and purpose. (.?...). (..)I suppose I had some religious inclinations because I was brought up in the Anglican school system. And I kept thinking back to that because (...) it seemed to come half way and it stopped; for instance, you just can't know God (...) it's just something you have to believe in and whether you experience it or not that doesn't seem to be important.

But I couldn't accept that, (...) I wanted to meet Him. I thought to myself, 'if God is there and if God does love and if He created me in the first place, then He must want a relationship (...). I must experience Him in that way.' (...). So it was at this time that I started reading the Bible. I regarded the Bible as something sacred. Every night for two weeks I read. (...).

There were a few things that I understood from it and a lot of things I didn't understand, but a few things I did understand and one was that there was an answer. (?). There was an answer to the question that I had about life. The other thing that I got from it was that there was hope, even for a person like myself who was involved in the things that I had been involved up to that time and the misery that I seemed to experience from that. There was hope. It didn't matter what a person had done in a way, there was hope to a new way, to a different way of life. And I guess the other thing that I understood clearly was there seemed to be a personal message or invitation to me, something that didn't involve my wife as such. It wasn't a decision that I could make for my wife. (...). But I didn't accept it just like that. In fact I went through a period of one year sort of thinking about it.

YOU HAD A HOUSE HERE THEN?

I was still living with my parents at that time. But by then I had stopped drinking pretty well. I drank the month of January and then I didn't drink again till March. I was already slowing down. My parents were still drinking, especially my dad. (...?..).

SO YOU WENT FOR A YEAR?

A year I thought about it. We went to Ottawa one time. That's where my younger brother Joe was living. And I bought a couple of books written by Billy Graham. (...). He does a great job of explaining (...) some of the inner struggles that we have because of the spiritual warfare that is taking place. (...).

Even though I didn't know very much at that time I proved to myself that Satan exists. I said to myself, 'if God loves, then Satan must hate the things that God loves because he's the opposite of God. And,' I said, 'well is there any way we can prove that?' And I thought of the Jewish people. We understand that they're the chosen race in terms of the old testament (...) and we see so much that's happened against those people. And I have to say, if God loves the Jewish people that He's chosen, then Satan must hate them. He's doing everything that he can to destroy them. And that seemed to prove itself. That's one point. (...). And then finally I thought about me as a person. The Bible says God created man. That means He created me.

Then I thought to myself, 'the Bible tells us that God loves the world, that means creation (..), so God loves us and Satan is doing everything that he can to destroy our life.' That's his sole purpose, to destroy us. And he does it in so many different ways. Alcohol for one thing. And people do lose their lives. Here in Moose Factory there's been many people that have lost their lives because of alcohol. And the other thing that we can look at too, is that God is the one who created families. (..). And again, I think that the Satanic forces are doing a good job of breaking down families.

When I started looking at that it seemed to provide a rationale, to explain why my life had sort of taken for the worst up until then. I didn't know where I was going. I seemed to be doing things that I didn't like to be doing; things that didn't seem to have any meaning or purpose, things that were not good in that way. I mean, why was I doing them. (.). And I think reading the Bible I found out. I started realizing that this is something that's far beyond my control in terms of providing an answer for myself, or for my own power. I understood. After one year I had understood what was happening. But even then it wasn't easy to accept the answer because you started being concerned about what other people were going to think. (...).

But after one year I understood the answer was this; it's a personal decision. You make the decision on your own. You can't decide for your family. The very best that I can do is influence my family in this whole thing. And I decided to accept what god had to offer. (..).

There's a verse that I know really well now in second printing [in the Second Corinthians] (.) which pretty well summarizes the opportunity for people to turn around. And the verse goes like this; *Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold new things will come.* (.). And the key part of it is when it says, that any man or any person to be in Christ he is a new creature. That's a new beginning you know. And I think that so many of us have wished for new beginnings, especially those of us who've had a rough time up till now. (..). Well there is an opportunity for a new beginning. But you find it only in Christ. And how does a person get to be in Christ? It's understanding what God says in his word, in his Bible. (...). That's how a person gets to be in Christ, where you willfully decide to give your life to God, to Christ in other words. (..)Once that happens, once you're in Christ, it makes you a new creature. Now we don't experience a total turn around right at that moment but that's where it starts, from that moment on. It's a new beginning. And as you study God's word more and more everyday, then you

experience that change. Because that change has to come from within eh? It has to come from within. It's only God Himself, Christ Himself that can provide that. (...). We cannot fight against Satan with our own human strength with our own human wisdom. As a matter of fact, it's only through a lot of suffering and hard times that our faith in God increases. That's what the Bible teaches. That's the same principle in life in general, I guess. It's through painstaking processes that we learn, that we become successful.(.....).

(...)Now that I know God, now that I have that personal relationship, (...) I wish I could have known Him earlier. And it's not that I didn't try really (laughs). I didn't try enough, I guess, partly. And then having to go through a rough experience like that... (...).

SO WHAT HAPPENED AFTER YOU...?

Became a Christian? Became a Born Again? My life turned for the better. I stopped drinking pretty well right after that. I never drank again.

THIS WAS WHEN?

It was in the fall of '73 I made that decision. I said to my wife, "I think it's the only kind of life for us if we want to have a happy marriage. That's the only life. I can't see how else it's going to work". And she agreed more or less in her own time and in her own way. She did the same thing.

Like she didn't do it with me at the same time. It was good for us that we came along together.

WAS IT A PROBLEM THAT SHE DIDN'T DO IT AT THE SAME TIME?

No. I had understood then that it was a personal decision. If she chose not to do it then I guess I couldn't have changed that, other than to try and talk to her and encourage her. But the fact that she came along at the same time was good for us. Because going back to that idea that I didn't have character, if she didn't, and she gave me a hard time, I think I would have fallen off the wagon. So it worked hand in hand with us. We were able to do things together; study together, go to church together. (...).

My mom and dad did the same. My dad about five months after I had done it. My dad at that time was really drinking heavy. He used to have a nickname, "King of the Road" because he would stagger all over the road. When he accepted the Lord he stopped, just like that, cold turkey. Never touched alcohol again. So, it started with me, then my mom and dad and then eventually my brothers. In fact, our whole family, right from my grandma on, have come the same way, done the same thing. I think, well I know for a fact that I'm alive today because of what God has done for me. Now I understand spiritual life. (...). I don't think a person can truly understand the spiritual world until they're in Christ, or Christ is into our head (...)(...? ...).

Now I look back on alcohol and I hate it with a passion. Now I won't even touch it.

DOES IT BOTHER YOU IF OTHER PEOPLE DRINK?

Well yes, I guess it bothers me that other people are hurting themselves.

BUT YOU'RE NOT AGAINST PEOPLE DRINKING SOCIALLY THOUGH, RIGHT?

No, I'm not against it, but I would speak against it. But I'm not against the people as such. I know that if they choose to do that, follow that way of life (..), I know I can't change their minds. I think the only thing that I can do is to encourage them that there's a better way. That that's not the answer. But I have to do it in such a way... If I just come on strong (...) that doesn't work.

SO WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR LIFE AFTERWARDS?

It became...It got better. I turned...Things got turned around. Actually, a couple of years after I had made that decision, I went back to school and finished my grade 12. Then from there I went to Saskatchewan. I went to the Bible school there for three years. (.?.). I went there mainly to learn the Bible on a full time basis. That was my intention. But now I am prepared to be able to work in a church.

YOUR WIFE CAME WITH YOU AT THAT TIME?

Yah, my wife, Michael and Dianne. We had two then. We ended up having two more while out there at the Bible school

(laughs). So we've got four. Then we came back in '79.
(?).

WHY DID YOU COME BACK?

Well, I think that I mainly felt obligated to the local church where I had started going before I left from here.

WHAT CHURCH WAS THAT?

The Cree Gospel Chapel on the reserve. I thought that I should come back home and help out here before I go to any other place and offer my services since this is where I started going to church. (.). But I think now, having been here for ten years (...) that there was another reason, which I didn't understand at the time, and that was that in some way I felt some obligation to the community too. Not obligation, but I think that I had to prove to the community that my life had changed, that I had found an answer which all of us are looking for, and that my life had changed. I think people had heard at that time about the decision that I had made and were wondering if I was going to last. So I think in a way it was good for me to come back and prove to the community that the change or turn that my life had taken was for the better. (...? ?...).

SO WHAT DID YOU DO AFTER BIBLE COLLEGE?

I came here and I ended up getting a job for Indian Affairs for two and a half years. (.?.). That job gave me a chance to go up the coast and work with Indian bands. I think that

that was good for me too because up till that time I had been immersed in what you would call a western culture since the time that I went to school. That's about fifteen years. So after fifteen years, my way of life, my way of thinking was totally immersed in a western culture to the point that my traditional values or beliefs had sort of eroded over that time.

(..)Maybe that's another reason why I had to come back here, because now that I look back on it, I had to sort of get re-introduced, re-integrated into the traditional beliefs, values of my people, which I think I had lost in terms of my understanding of them. I think I didn't even understand myself that well till I got back (..). I think working with the bands really opened my eyes and my understanding of the way my people think, Indian people.

AND WHAT DID YOU UNDERSTAND?

Well, lets take a simple thing; like Indian people they live for the day. One day at a time. They're not used to looking far down the road - long term planning. (..). But even that, I didn't understand it eh! And there's probably still a lot of people who don't understand. But when I tried to work with them to try to help them plan, it was difficult, then I understood why. (..)Another thing is that they're not time oriented, in the clock. (..). So they don't do things

exactly on time according to the western culture clock.
 (...). So it was those types of things (...). (... ?...).

So I worked for two and a half years and then I got involved with Mocreebec. Mocreebec was closer to my heart because it involved my people, my people from the Quebec side who were living here. I felt committed or obligated to them, to try and at least do what I can.

YOU WERE CHIEF OF MOCREEBEC?

Yah, till 1982. I resigned from that. Well I more or less started the whole thing, so I ended up taking all the responsibilities as they came. (...). At the same time that I was doing my full-time work, I was working with the local church. I was the main person over-seeing the work there. It's been kind of hectic for me the last eight years. It's wearing me out. I'm going to take a long break - a year or something (laughs). But my priority in life is God first (...), even though it's hard sometimes. That's the way it has to be. (...? ?...). The Bible tells us that we should love our neighbour, but you can't have that love until you have it going up first. (...). They say, love God with all your heart first and then the other things will take care of themselves (...). (.....). I don't think people can find true love really until they experience that love in that relationship with God. (.....).

I guess moreso than ever, now that I've understood, now that I've come to know more about man, my own Indian values - I still don't know enough, I don't know if I ever will - it causes me to be concerned with the way that I'm going, which is probably accepting more and more of the western culture and values. And that concerns me in a lot of ways. I just fear sometimes that if I'm not able to sort of maintain a balance somewhere that eventually I will lose all my... (?.). I guess what I fear is that I don't know enough yet, I haven't learned enough yet about the distinction between my values as a Cree and the new ones that are coming upon us. For instance, my kids are not picking up the language and by the time they grow up, their generation and their children's generation, maybe the language will be gone completely. I guess in one way I fear it slipping away.

SO WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO GO FROM HERE ALLAN - PERSONALLY?

Me? Personally? That's a good question. My wife and I have been talking about that. I've been living here in Moose Factory now for about ten consecutive years, maybe fulfilling what I felt was my obligation to the local church, - since I got involved with the Evangelical belief, and got trained, through them, - and to the local community. But I don't think we'll stay here. Me and my wife agree that we'd like to move on, but to what I don't know. (...).

SO WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'D LIKE TO GO?

I guess the main thing that's going to influence me and my wife and my family is our concern for the kids, the older ones especially. In another couple of years it's possible that they will finish high school. And I think they have to move out after that if they want to keep going to school. In some ways we're reluctant to let them go on their own. We'd just like to be there when they go out, help them adjust, you know, thinking that it might give them a better chance to succeed in college or something like that. The other thing too is that being Evangelical believers we have a purpose, a mandate as such which requires us to be available to move and spread the gospel. But I don't know.

DO YOU FEEL THAT THAT WOULD BE LETTING YOUR PEOPLE DOWN?

No, I don't think so. If you look at the normal trend for full-time ministers or workers in the church it's usually ten years in one given location. And I've been here ten years.

WOULD THAT CREATE CONFLICT FOR YOUR IN TERMS OF YOUR IDENTITY? IS YOUR IDENTITY AT ALL DEPENDENT ON BEING HERE?

I don't think so. Not any more anyways. I think I've learned enough, I understand enough about who I am, and what's important to me in terms of my Indian beliefs, values or culture. In a way I feel like I've finished my purpose

here, my obligation. I think that for my own good and for my own sake that it would be good to move.

CHAPTER V

**REDFERN LOUTTIT:
"THEY'RE NOT LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE"**

Well, this is fur country, I guess they call it. All along James Bay and Hudson Bay there are many reserves - some small and some large. In the beginning there were many reserves on the islands where the Hudson Bay Company had their buildings. The natives spent their summers there in the summer time. In the winter time they were off in the bush, hunting and trapping. There were a few Indians that were employed by the Hudson Bay Company in the winter and summer times. Some were sailors, others were dog drivers and others wood-cutters. My father was an interpreter for the Hudson Bay Company for most of his life. He spent forty-five years with the Hudson Bay.

WHERE DID HE LEARN TO SPEAK ENGLISH?

His father was Scottish [and his mother was part Cree]. (...). Anyways, that's what he did at the Hudson Bay Company. He was also an interpreter for the missionary. He interpreted the sermons in the church. That was the set up when I was a boy. (...) We lived in a Hudson Bay company house, a small two storey house. Some of the natives themselves had houses that they had built themselves, others

lived in tents or wigwams. That's when I was a boy. Then of course the church had their buildings; the church, the rectory, the store houses. There was also a school house, a single room school house where the missionary rounded the kids in the summer time when they were there. So now and again when there was school there was an ounce of people there.

WHERE WAS HOME?

Albany. So that's the way it was. I left when I was nine years old to go to school, boarding school.

YOU WENT TO SCHOOL ONLY IN THE SUMMER TIME?

Yah there was school in the summer time, just a little bit, and some time in the winter time too. The missionary would have school and some of us would stay. At the post we went to school at Albany. There was also a Roman Catholic school. They had a residential school there and when the missionary was away we went there. He usually was away for three months. Sometimes he didn't go off.

SO YOU DIDN'T LIVE IN THE BUSH AT ALL?

No, I didn't live in the bush. The only time I lived in the bush was in the spring when the river flooded. Everybody had to abandon their homes and go back in amongst the trees. That's where they build stages. And they kept an eye on the river so that they wouldn't be taken unawares. (...). And

that was the way it was. And everybody had a good life. Prices of furs where good.

There were two companies then, Hudson Bay and Revillon Freres, the French company. There seemed to be enough business for the people. Freight came down the river (...) until the railway arrived here in 1932. Everything used to be shipped here by boat. Hudson Bay supplied the people. Sometimes the Roman Catholics had their own boat. (...). Life was pretty quiet.

Everybody kept dogs. Dogs were the transport. And the Catholics had some very bad dogs. They were all black. I don't know why. 'Cause the priest wore black I guess!!(laughs). They preferred black dogs. (...). They were kept chained all the time and they got mad. They got loose one time and some kids sliding down the banks got hurt. The men [parents of these children] decided they had to put a stop to this so they went down with their guns to the RC. They saw the Indians coming and they tried to hide the dogs, but the men found them in the barn and other places and they were all shot.

WHAT DID THE RC'S DO?

That I don't know. There was no court there, no judges, no lawyers, no nothing.

So there was talk of a school where Indian kids could go. I almost went there. My older brothers came here

to this school [this school being Horden Hall Residential School in Moose Factory].

HOW MANY BROTHERS AND SISTERS DID YOU HAVE?

There were six boys and four girls. Three of the older boys and two of my older sisters came on to school here. The others went to the mission school, the day school at home. But I went quite a way off. There was no way of getting there except by paddle, paddling down by canoe. You couldn't even hire a boat. There was no boat going up that way at that time. So they hired a canoe. The missionary hired a canoe and came on with us to the school. We arrived at the railway station about a week after we left Albany. Four days after we arrived at the school by freight train, or passenger train, or whatever. So we arrived at the school, a lovely school, a whole bunch of kids.

SO UP UNTIL THAT TIME DID YOU SPEAK CREE OR DID YOU...?

Oh I spoke Cree and English. I had learned both. So we arrived there and started school there. It was on a farm. There were cows, geese, chicken and horses.

WAS THIS HERE IN MOOSE FACTORY?

No, no, this was in Chapleau, north of Sudbury about 100 miles. There was a division of the CPR that passed through there, and we would sometimes run to the tracks and wave to the engineer. There were no planes back then. People

travelled by train; west and east, the trains were full. I remember that very well.

Some of the teachers and the supervisors used to go by boat to England. They came from England. Some came from Montreal. Anyway, a lot of boys came from here [Moose Factory]. Many had come from Waswanapi and Mistassini. Sometimes the bishop arrived with some kids; their mother had died, or their father had died, or both parents had died. Usually they were brought to this school. I remember one family of boys called Iserhoff. They were from Waswanapi. There were two brothers and a sister. They never went back to Waswanapi. They grew up there [at the school] and they graduated there. (....). Anyway some boys like that never went home because their parents didn't mean well, or some had died or they never wrote or kept up with their families, or they didn't know who their relatives were and they didn't speak Cree any more.

DO YOU THINK THEY FELT LONELY BECAUSE OF THAT?

Yes. As long as there were some of them living they didn't mind, they got used to living out there. But they couldn't do very much once they got back. They couldn't find work out there. They couldn't do trapping. They weren't trained for that. That's one fault; when lots of the boys finished school they were sent home and they didn't know how to live in the bush. They'd never been trained, or they couldn't

speak to their parents or friends or families because they lost their Cree on their way through. That's very bad. That's very lonely for them - very frustrating.

DID YOU LOSE THE CREE REDFERN?

I missed them growing up. I didn't miss speaking it. Everybody else spoke English.

WEREN'T THERE OTHER CREE KIDS AT THE SCHOOL?

Once you know English, everybody speaks English.

SO YOU DIDN'T GET TOGETHER WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND SPEAK CREE?

No, I didn't do that. Some of the older boys never lost the Cree, or the Ojibway boys, they never lost their language. If you were small you lost it because you didn't hear it and you had nobody to speak to you.

 Anyway, we had a good time there because there were animals at the school and we learned about animals and we saw it first hand. And we planted the gardens and the grain and oats for the cattle and horses, and all that sort of thing. We lived like farmers. The only problem was that we had to work half a day. Somebody had to look after the animals and the school was run by the church and they never had much money to hire people, just the teachers and the supervisors, but not enough to hire men to run the farm. So the older boys did that. They were assigned horses to look after and cows too. And they had to feed the chickens too. We had to

get up at six o'clock in the morning and go down to the barn to milk the cows and feed the horses.

On weekends, especially in July and August, they'd allow us to go out for a couple of nights. We'd borrow canoes from the Natives. Some of their sons were in the school and we'd borrow canoes from them for five cents a day (laughs). We'd push up off the river and we'd fish. It was good fun. The boys knew what to do. We never got lost. We'd be careful with the canoes. So we used to do that. In the winter time we played hockey on the street. We didn't have shoes then just a blade eh [type of an ice skate]? (...).

THERE WERE WHITE BOYS AT THIS SCHOOL TOO?

No, there were no white boys. This was strictly for Native kids. There were some who were Metis, like Grey Owl's son. And other boys were half-breeds. There was a mixture. There were Cree, Ojibway, Mohawks, all jumbled together there. There were problem kids. Some of them were pretty bad. But anyway, it was good fun. I always enjoyed that part of my life. I liked it.

HOW LONG WERE YOU THERE FOR?

Nine years. I went to high school there later on.

WHAT HIGH SCHOOL WAS THAT?

The high school in the town of Chapleau.

SO THIS WASN'T A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL ANYMORE?

No, the residential school was out in the country. The town had their own schools; the public school, the separate school and the high school.

SO YOU WENT TO SCHOOL IN THE TOWN?

We walked into town every day.

OH, AND YOU STILL LIVED AT THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL?

Still there. It was still operating at that time. We took our lunches. So it was good. We knew a lot of those white boys and they knew us pretty good. And we became friends and so on. I see quite a few of them when I go back (laughs). Not change much, that town. It's still small and everybody knows everybody. They're just older, that's all. More friendlier today than they were then. There were not many Ecumenical services at that time, just Catholic and Protestant (laughs). You were lucky if the priest spoke to you! Churches are getting together now but they weren't at that time. Everybody was separate, out for themselves and they proselytized; tried to make Protestants of Catholics and Catholics of Protestants. They didn't get on together too well.

BUT YOU WERE ANGLICAN AT THAT TIME WEREN'T YOU REDFERN?

Yah, we were Anglican. The church operating the school was Anglican. They had schools all across Canada. This was just one of them. Eventually by the 40's and 50's there was great

public outcry and a big change came over in the Department of Indian Affairs. They started to build bigger schools on the reserves, and they all began with the mission school. They were bigger schools but they were still in the day time. So kids didn't need to leave home when they went to school. So that changed things for the boarding school. There wasn't much they could do so they became obsolete. So they'd either close them down or tear them down and they'd have an auction of all the furniture and the beds. So that's what happened with the schools. But they played a big part in Native education.

A lot of these leaders today in the province of Quebec and in Ontario got their beginnings through the residential school, although they appear to have a bad reputation. Some of the kids were pretty roughly treated I guess. (...). But on the whole...well, I went, it was pretty good - kind teachers, well the odd one that we had was pretty strict. On the whole they were pretty good people. They were Christian people and they liked the kids, and they produced pretty educated people. In fact a lot of the leaders in Quebec went to boarding school here at Horden Hall as kids. They used to bring them out by boat plane. They'd stay here and after grade six they'd send them to Sioux Ste. Marie, Timmins, North Bay, places like that, for high school.

And they found foster homes for them. All their education was taken care of. It didn't cost their parents anything.

IN FACT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO THE PARENTS?

Yes, very helpful because they couldn't afford it. So that's the way they did it. Some of the schools served as home for the kids, especially when there was a big group of them. (...). The kids stayed there and went to city schools and high schools. So that's the way the situation was. And some people blame the schools for allowing the kids to forget them. It was the parents that wanted the kids to have an education, to learn English. (...). The problem lies in that Indian Affairs didn't rely on Native teachers to keep up the Native language too. They could have done that. And if Cree were allowed to be spoken we wouldn't have forgotten it.

BUT REDFERN, WHERE DID THE PARENTS GET THE IDEA ABOUT THEIR KIDS GOING TO SCHOOL? WASN'T THAT IMPOSED BY THE INDIAN AGENT? LIKE DIDN'T THEY SAY THAT THE KIDS HAD TO GO TO SCHOOL?

Well, it became through the family allowance.

SO IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT THAT INITIATED IT?

Yah, it was the government. They said the kids had to go to school no matter what they were, white kids, Native kids, in order to get the family allowance. So you had to abide by it. Everybody else was abiding by it. They didn't like the agents suddenly taking the kids away in the summer time.

They thought that they should stay longer, but suddenly a telegram would come and would say, 'please have your children ready for the next plane coming in.' It would be coming in by 12:00 or some time in the afternoon on a certain day. Well, there was a great hurry, and the kids would cry because they had to leave their homes and then attend a school far away, and they wouldn't come back from the school. (.). But they did eventually come home. The government provided the plane for the kids to come home.

So, today the Natives have a second language beside their own. And it's an advantage to run all their affairs. So now they're going to take over what the white people began and see what kind of job they make.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT?

How do I feel? Well, I think it's coming a little soon. But I guess it's bound to come some day. But it's going to be pretty tough for awhile. There's a lot they can do, but they still need to have the support of the government. They haven't got enough people out there speaking on their behalf. There's not enough people in the government, they should have more. And also, they haven't any funding of their own, unless they tax the people. That's what they'll have to do. But I think it can be done. I mean, the Native people are quite capable. They have good sides and bad sides. They

have to have more foresight than they do. I think they'll be more tolerant.

WHO WILL?

The Native people, of their own kids. (...). Also they need programs to fit the lifestyle of the Native people. (...).

But today, you know, the younger people, they don't look on things like their fathers did. The reserves were well organized long ago.

THEY WERE?

Yah, from the people side of it. There was one man who would keep an eye on the ice. He would measure the thickness of it and he would let people know when it was safe to cross the rivers, or go on the ice. He would do this early in the winter when the ice was forming and in the spring when the ice was bad.

There was also a man in charge to say when to hunt, because you just couldn't hunt every day. And then everybody went out and had a big hunt. It depended on the wind directions in certain areas some times. Usually a strong north wind was a good one. A very stormy day was the best kind for hunting. They could hunt on a day like this one when the sky was clear. Birds flew high on a day like this. But when it's stormy and bad and the clouds are there, the birds fly low and they don't hear the shot then. Long ago they used black powder and it made smoke. It scared the

birds. It also made a big bang but the birds didn't hear that on a bad day.

But today that's not observed any more. They don't do that. They hunt any place, any time. People are like that. They're not looking for the future. They're just making it bad for themselves because they're scaring the birds by not hunting them properly.

AND HOW WOULD YOU LOOK TOWARD THE FUTURE? YOU SAID THEY'RE NOT LOOKING TO THE FUTURE?

Well, they still have to depend on that for their food, you know - not as much as they used to, but still, they like Native food. And, if they don't do it, if they don't conserve by using it properly the birds are just going to disappear, or just go somewhere else. They have to treat them more like their fathers did; wisely, because they depended on them.

SO THEY'RE NOT USING PROPER TECHNIQUES, IS THAT WHAT YOU MEAN?

Yah. Today, you know, you can go to the grocery store if you need food - buy meat and steak. You couldn't back then. And you couldn't keep it over night because there were no fridges or cold storage. So, they don't really depend on Native food, but a lot of them grew up eating Native food and they like it. They miss it when they can't get it. Like, if we were to have a pot-luck supper the Native food would go

first. It was organized so you didn't just abuse it. Even white men long ago, they depended on the food themselves. They did hunting.

BUT WHAT DO YOU MEAN - THAT LONG AGO THERE WERE LAWS THAT WERE BEING OBSERVED THAT AREN'T BEING OBSERVED NOW?

Yah, that's right. There was this man who said, this is the day we hunt. And that was the day. Because he knew it was a proper day to hunt. And fall was in favour for the hunters. This saved the birds themselves. They didn't abuse them. I mean the birds were not frightened off.

SO YOU THINK THAT NOW IT'S BEING ABUSED?

Yah, a little bit today. (...). Once long ago when the Indians first got guns they killed off the caribou. There used to be a lot of caribou around here and up the coast. They'd migrate back and forth. And the Natives got guns and just killed indiscriminately.

WHY DO YOU THINK THEY BECAME INDISCRIMINATE, OR THEY DIDN'T HAVE THE SAME RESPECT FOR IT? WHY DO YOU THINK THAT HAPPENED?

There's plenty of elements. They weren't for the future I guess. If it's alright for today, don't mind tomorrow. So suddenly the caribou stopped coming. We put them in a bad way. So there was no food and there was no skin for clothing. They took a different way, the caribou. So the use of guns destroyed the caribou. But today, they don't

depend on that animal. You can buy even moccasins in the store, warm clothing in the store, and warm down-filled jackets. Today they got use from both worlds. They're pretty well affluent today. They get high salaries, very good salaries, sufficient, more personal cares and so on. Here the hunting life doesn't mean too much. It's when you go north. There they're still pretty good. Here it's sort of died off now.

DID YOU EVER HUNT AND TRAP?

Not me, just in a small way, not to make a living out of it. You had to be pretty good.

WHY COULDN'T YOU DO IT?

I was not trained how to hunt.

WERE YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS TRAINED?

Oh yah, some of them did, most of them did.

AND WHO DID THEY GET THE TRAINING FROM?

They lived at home with my father. I didn't grow up with them. I went to residential school. At the time that I should have been learning that, I was in school learning other things to make a living. So I made my living apart from them. They made their living by hunting and getting what jobs they could.

DID YOU ALWAYS KNOW WHAT YOU WANTED TO DO?

Yah, I always knew what I wanted to do.

WHEN CAN YOU FIRST RECALL KNOWING?

Well, when I was a teenager, I guess.

CHAPTER VI

BEULAH MORRISON:
"I ALWAYS THINK BACK TO MY FATHER GIVING ME THAT,
TELLING MY MOTHER TO SEND ME TO SCHOOL"

(...)I was born in Rupert's House. My father comes from there. My mother comes from (...) EastMain. There was only two of us, myself and my younger sister. (...). There's no boys in the family.

YOUR PARENTS ONLY HAD TWO CHILDREN?

Yes.

THAT'S DIFFERENT EH?

My father died when I was about three (...). My sister must have been a baby. I think we're about two years apart. I'm not sure. (....). So my father died when I was about three, and I stayed with my mother until I was four, I think. I didn't stay with my mother that long. I lived with my grandparents. They're the ones who brought me up. Till I was nine years old I stayed with my grandparents. My grandfather was a hunter-trapper, so we'd go in the bush in the winter time and in the summer time we'd go back to the settlement.

HOW ABOUT YOUR SISTER?

My sister stayed with my mother. (?). She married again.

DID YOU GET TO VISIT YOUR MOTHER, OR DID SHE LIVE NEARBY?

No, after I was nine years old I was put in residential school and I would just see my mother in the summer time, because she married a hunter-trapper too. And they were in the bush all winter and just in the summer they would come to the settlement. I was in school till I was 16.

AND YOU STAYED AT THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL HERE?

Yah. Hmmm. Just go home in the summer for a couple of months.

(..)YOU'D GO TO YOUR GRANDPARENT'S HOME IN THE SUMMER?

No. I went to stay with my mother because my grandparents were living at Waskaganish and mother lived here in Moose Factory.

OH, SO YOUR MOTHER MOVED HERE?

Yah, my mother moved here after she got married the second time.

When I was living with my grandparents they didn't teach me a lot of what other things Indian people do - like skinning beaver and all that.

WHY NOT?

Because I was too young I guess. Because I wasn't a man.

YOU'D NEVER DONE THAT WITH YOUR GRANDPARENTS?

I did it with my mother; my mother showed me a little bit - to skin a beaver, but not the other parts. Skinning a rabbit is about the only one. So I don't get around to making

moccasins or anything because I was in school, put in residential school.

HOW DID YOU LIKE THAT?

That's where I learned to speak English. I didn't know any English before I went there. (...)I didn't really like it first year. But second year wasn't too bad. And I really liked it when it was time for me to come out. [she didn't want to leave residential school. At residential school they were taught how to scrub floors, iron and basically clean. They were encouraged to work.]

WHEN YOU WERE 16?

Yah, after you were 16 you had to come out and make room for the others in the following year. I never did go back to my grandparents for the summer. My grandmother got sick and died, and shortly after my grandfather died. So when I was finished school I got a job, a summer job.

WHAT WERE YOU DOING?

Just ordinary house keeping in the mission. It was beside the residential school. First year was ordinary house keeping and then the next year I worked for another couple. The lady that I worked for started teaching me about cooking, white man's style (laughs). I never really learned any Indian cooking, just by watching. And this is how come I make pies and all that, because I had to make some for them.

I worked only in there for the summer, then I went back with my mother in the bush again. (?.).

DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU MISSED OUT ON SOMETHING?

No. You see, when my father died, my mother said that almost the last words he said to my mother were for her to make sure that I go to school when I was old enough, so that I can read a little bit because that is the thing you need. (?.).

AND YOUR DAD WAS A TRAPPER RIGHT?

Yah. He needed to have boys. At that time people were just living like... My mother wasn't living, just the ration supplies. And there were two of us and probably,...Going into the world and getting an education...then I was able to work with the missionary and his wife who had children. It was like a second home to me after I got used to it, working for them. (...?). After that I was in the bush for two winters with my mother.

DID YOU LIKE THAT?

No, not really. After getting used to living in a house and all that, and then to go back to live in the bush in a tent and everything where you have to cut wood because there were no boys in the family....I had to get those things, you know those things they put on the ground in the tepee. I had to do all that.

SO WAS YOUR SISTER WITH YOU AT THAT TIME TOO?

Yah.

SO IT WAS THE THREE, THE FOUR OF YOU I GUESS?

My stepfather had another family and one daughter was living with us. Then after two winters I was asked to work right on the island here as a house keeper again. But they didn't let me.

WHO DIDN'T LET YOU?

My mother didn't. We had a very strict step-father. He didn't want us to be on our own, you know, support ourselves. He didn't want me to stay here in Moose Factory and work. He wanted me to go with them in the bush. I guess to help my mother with all the work, skin beaver and.....

WAS YOUR STEP-FATHER GOOD TO YOU?

He was good in a way but he was very strict with us and we couldn't, you know, we had to obey.

Anyway, I got sick after two winters, two years in the bush. I got what was going around. Just me in the family. My sister had a very very mild case. So I was in the hospital, the Moose Factory hospital for eleven months.

SO 1950?

Yah, about that. Then they sent me to Hamilton for another eleven months.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE IN THE HOSPITAL?

(?) There were mostly Native people. There were lots from the Bay. This hospital was just for the Bay. And a lot of us were there for T.B., so we had to stay in bed all day.

SO YOU WERE IN THE HOSPITAL FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS?

Yah. That's where I got the operation, in Hamilton. The first operation was a TB lung operation. I had four operations altogether. (...). But there was still something there, so I had to take medicine.

SO DID YOU HAVE A CHANCE TO MAKE ANY FRIENDS WHILE YOU WERE IN THE HOSPITAL?

Well, I made a few friends. When I was in the hospital I made a lot of friends because I could speak English. I helped a woman with interpretation for non-English speakers. My mother doesn't speak English so when I visit her I must speak Cree, but my Cree is all mixed up. I knew some from school.

So when I came back from the hospital, this was after I got married, I didn't work outside of my home. I'd never really worked outside of my home, just house cleaning work once or twice a week and a little bit of baby sitting.

SO WHEN DID YOU GET MARRIED?

I got married about a year after I came back from the hospital. I met my husband before I was sick and I was away for two years so I met him after again.

AND YOU GOT MARRIED HERE IN MOOSE FACTORY?

Hmmm.

WHERE DID YOU MEET HIM?

He was on the island.

I don't have very much to tell you about trapping and all that because I really didn't go out in the bush and do all those things that the other women maybe had the chance to do.

THAT'S OKAY. JUST TELL ME ABOUT YOU, THAT'S WHAT'S IMPORTANT. But I'm really... I always think back to my father giving me that, telling my mother to send me to school.

DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR FATHER?

No, I don't remember him. I guess I don't have a good memory (laughs).

WELL YOU WERE REALLY YOUNG THEN.

I don't know if he had T.B., my mother tells me he had pneumonia.

IS YOUR MOTHER STILL ALIVE?

Yah, she's here. She lives way down, near my sister's.

DOES SHE LIVE ON HER OWN?

No, she lives with another lady who's as old as her - a friend from a long time ago. She took her in because she didn't have a home. Her father died and my mother took her in.

DID YOUR STEP-FATHER DIE LONG AGO?

Quite awhile ago - about three years.

SO YOU CAME BACK AND YOU GOT MARRIED?

So I came back and got married. I was about twenty-two then, maybe twenty-three. I had eight children. All alive.

YOU HAD EIGHT?

Yah, my youngest one is 15.

OH YOU STILL HAVE A YOUNG ONE EH?

Well he's a teenager now. I don't call him my baby any more because he doesn't like it. But he still is my baby. He came eight or nine months after the last one.

SO YOU MUST HAVE BEEN PRETTY BUSY?

Busy all the time. And we took in Children's Aid children too. So we had eleven kids for one summer. But the Children's Aid kids they didn't stay long, they stayed about six months. You end up getting attached to them.

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN HARD FOR YOU?

It was because I had a three year old in there and we wanted to keep them, but now I hear that the people that have them are Polish and in Toronto.

SO YOU KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THEM?

No, I don't keep in touch with them (...). I saw a picture of them in the paper. They look so big. They're clean looking and healthy looking. I'm so thankful for that. Both of their parents died.

WHERE WERE THEY FROM?

They were from Moosonee.

(...)I got used to church life after residential school because we would have prayers in the morning before we

go to school, and we would go to the chapel in the evening.
(...)That's the way it was run by the missions.

DID YOU ENJOY IT, SUNDAY SCHOOL, CHURCH AND ALL THAT?

Yes. But we didn't have all kinds of materials like children do now. We had only the materials for Sunday school. So I had the church, working there, and looking after my family.

SO YOU WORKED WHEN YOUR KIDS WERE GROWING UP?

No, I wasn't working outside of my home. It was full-time. I would take the children and go to readings.

ARE YOU A MEMBER?

Yah, I'm a member. I'll be a member until I'm... (laughs). That's a part that I always look forward to going. (...). But since these two girls left home, one lives in North Bay and one lives in Waskaganish for the last two years, I go to other places too. But then I had a nervous breakdown, last November, December. Then January to February I was really sick.

HOW DID THAT COME ABOUT?

Well the doctor tells me that I was really all mixed up, everything was too much for me. My younger son had an accident, a shot gun accident. And then I had...

IS HE STILL AROUND?

Yah, he's still here. He goes to London for his operations. I stay with him when he's down. (?.).

SO HE'S DOING OKAY?

He's doing okay but he still had to keep going to London for his operations. And as you know on the island there's a lot of drinking among the young people. The boys have drinking problems.

THAT WAS TOO MUCH FOR YOU?

That was too much for me. [all this occurred recently - 1988] (...). Then Trudy asked me if I'd like to go to North Bay and have a rest away from everything. (.?.). So I spent time in North Bay. I had a lot of rest. Gradually everything was getting better for my boy.

SO ARE ALL YOUR KIDS IN MOOSE FACTORY?

Except for Yvonne, she's in Waskaganish [Yvonne returned to the island the following year 1989 to teach at the Ministik School]. All the five boys⁴⁸ are with us and Trudy and her son are also living in this house.⁴⁹ (.?.). Trudy is the oldest. She's about 31 (laughs). From there it goes down like that. (... ?...).

HOW ABOUT YOUR HUSBAND, HAS HE PASSED AWAY?

He passed away about nine years ago (?). My husband was a tragic case. He was sick. We miss him very much.

SO YOU HAD ALL THE KIDS BY YOURSELF?

From then I had them myself. Trudy was going to school, Yvonne was going to school and one of the boys went to school

⁴⁸ In the winter of 1989, one of Beulah's sons died in a snowmobile accident.

⁴⁹ Trudy and her son were at her mother's home for the summer, otherwise Trudy lives in North Bay where she is studying.

for awhile. So they weren't always around me. We built our home but it was torn down last spring.

WHY WAS IT TORN DOWN?

Everything, even the floor was starting to rot away (...). It was time to have a new one. It's been there since thirty years. (...)Now we're getting a new house with a basement put on it. (....).

SO WHO WILL BE LIVING IN THAT HOUSE?

The boys will be living there, till they decide to...One of them has already bought another house that he's going to fix, and the other one is talking about it (...).

AND HOW ABOUT TRUDY WILL SHE BE LIVING THERE?

Trudy will be living there when she comes down at Christmas. She goes to school in North Bay. (...?). Then my other daughter, Dorothy lives way down in the village. She's the one who's an artist. She used to work at a gallery in Moosonee, but it's closed. She's got very high hopes for starting a little business on her own. (...).

So when I got sick there, I decided to slow down, not really be involved in a lot of things, cut down some of the things. But what with having grandchildren and them coming to my house - 'grandma can I play at your house, grandma can I do this?' (laughs)

HOW DO YOU LIKE BEING A GRANDMA?

Okay. I don't know what I would do without them, with no children. I'm so used to being around with them all the time. (....).

CHAPTER VII

MUNRO LINKLATER: "I LIKE TO DO WHAT I CAN AT ANY AGE THAT I AM"

I'm a Cree born on the 23rd of April 1923 (...) along the banks of the Mamatow River which is the English River. (...)My father was employed by the French Company, Revillon Freres. We lived where his employment was at that time. (...). My first recollection of myself is of me running about at Fort Albany or Attawapiskat, but mainly Fort Albany, where I gathered my faculties, so to speak, to chart my sojourn of life. (...).

You know, my recollection of them early years is not that bad. It's a little fuzzy but I can remember going to school when I was six years old, a one room school that they had there. At that time there was no paper, no pencils, no nothing. There were no exercise books. There was just a piece of slate and chalk. Those were my education supplies. Ironically my teacher was my grandfather. He was the chief of Albany when the people signed the pledge. After that, around when I was six or seven years old we were moved to Attawapiskat. I had four other siblings, two brothers and two sisters who lived up there. We used to play a lot.

Unfortunately I didn't go to school there because there was no school up there at Attawapiskat.

That spring there was a big epidemic and people were dying. Unfortunately we lost our mother. So that particular spring when my mother died - we weren't even aware of it - (.?). We weren't even aware she'd died till the Roman Catholic priest came and told us she'd died. I don't know what...There was something wrong there...I mean I could recollect her lying there, and us kids we didn't know about to grieve or anything because we were just so small, although we were attached to her. (...). She was buried fifteen miles on the south side of Attawapiskat, a river called Awashi River (...). Of course there were no Anglican cemeteries in the area, in the village. So that is where she was laid.

Of course after her death dad didn't know what to do with us. There was no sitter or extended parents here, all were down in Fort Albany. I guess he wondered what to do with us because as a traveller he was away from home all the time and he couldn't just leave us. In the winter he used to travel by dog team and in the summer he moved around in the sailing boats delivering supplies. He didn't know what to do with us because he was a traveller. So he saw it fit to send some to school and leave the others with my grandma and grandpa.

They took me and my older sister Elsie (...) by dog team, supposedly in consultation with the bishop of the area, Anderson, to the Horden Memorial School which was situated here in Moose Factory. So this diminished his responsibility of caring for us anyway (...). When we arrived, the place was filled up. There was no room in the Inn!! (laughs). No room! There was nothing here so they contacted another residential school which was in Chapleau, which is in the Sioux area. Sioux Lookout Pelican School, that's where they sent us. And to this day I don't know how we ever got there. I think I was eight at the time.

I recall using a horse over the ice to catch the train and the conductor taking us to Cochrane first, where we stayed in the infirmary for about a week (...). Of course we had a tag on us saying that we were going to the school in Sioux Lookout. They decided to start shipping us west on the train, going from the passenger to the freight train. I don't know how long it took, but I recall one particular night the train stopping at, I don't know, what I like to call Ontario Siberia, and letting us off there. There was a team of horses that picked us up and took us to school (laughs). I still can't figure out what kind of connections they had.

YOU MUST HAVE BEEN FRIGHTENED?

Oh yah. It was no man's land, although the teamster, Mr. Nichols was a very nice man. But as far as I'm concerned my name was mud there for the next eight years. I had a terrible time there because I was Cree.

WERE YOU THERE WITH ALL YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

No, just one, myself and Elsie.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE OTHER ONES?

They were taken care of by my grandmother at Fort Albany.

WERE YOU AND ELSIE THE ELDEST?

Yes, and of course we were sent out. It wasn't by design that we were sent out, it was by circumstance. We were the only Cree in that school, all the rest were Ojibway from the surrounding area. We had a terrible time, at least myself for the next eight years. It was a trying time.

WHAT HAPPENED?

You talk about discrimination! When I went to school we were really discriminated against. Cree were dirt. It was nothing for us to get beat up by Ojibway. They used to beat us up like hell. (...). It was terrible, a nightmare as I recall. I managed to survive that place. When I got a little bit older they didn't touch me that much. We started holding our own. My sister and I, we would visit each other maybe a couple of times. We were segregated. (.?.). I had a terrible time. In the summer months there was no such thing as summer holidays. That's where we stayed. Of course

it wasn't worth it then to send us back because there was no funding from Indian Affairs. It was funded by the church. So there we stayed for eight summers. There were about half a dozen of us that couldn't get away and sometimes when we were younger we used to cry at the sight of the kids going home for the summers. It really cut the heart. But we got used to it in the end (.).

What we used to do was go to school for half the day and work half the day. In that era schools were self-sufficient. We used to draw in the resources that would sustain us. We used to do manual work like cut wood, farm, get ice from the ice house, and that type of activity. The girls did the same thing. They'd go in the laundry or in the kitchen. And there were the white supervisors, they were missionary types - Anglican.

DID YOU MAKE FRIENDSHIPS THERE?

Later on, yes, when I grew older, especially with some of the teachers who'd been around for four or five years. In fact I still talk to one of my former teachers. (...). We used to have a lot of activities, no doubt about that; tending the garden, the cows, etcetera.

It was a good life in the summer time. There were only half a dozen of us. We could go anywhere. There were no highways. When we had nothing else to do, especially in the evenings, we would go to the railroad tracks which were

about a mile away, and wait for the freights to come so we could see the hoboes. In that era, the thirties, being the depression there were a lot of them. They aren't bums you know. A bum refuses to work, a hobo is looking for work. (...). We used to see them by the hundred on top of the box cars when the box cars would go by, either riding east or riding west. On occasion when the freight would stop, especially in the summer time we used to have four or five come to the school and we would give them scads of grub. (...). There was all kinds of food at the school. We used to do that stuff three or four times a month when there was food available. So the summer months were occupied.

In the winter time of course we used to occupy ourselves inside doing our manual chores and we used to play hockey quite a bit.. Hockey was a favourite pass-time then. (...). It was nothing for us to pick up our hockey gear and with 25 cents in our pocket and go challenge the boys at Pelican. We were situated at Pelican Lake and Hudson was on the west side of us, a little transportation town. We would walk seven miles to play hockey. (...). There was no highway. We just used to walk the tracks. And on occasion, when we were good boys we used to get Saturday afternoon off to walk the town, watch movies or what not. Of course 50 cents used to take care of us all then!

WERE YOU GOOD BOYS OFTEN?

Well, we tried to keep out of trouble. They had a remedy for boys and girls who were defaulters, or were bad kids, breaking the rules and regulations. One of the features of our system in that era in terms of dispensing discipline was the bench party. Once a month there used to be a bench party. There used to be a defaulters parade. The sexes were usually segregated but once a month we would all meet in the big dining room. The supervisors of the different sexes used to draw up their lists and they would present them in front of a gathering of the whole school. Staff and students would watch while the punishment was dispensed to the children that were breaking the rules.

WHAT WAS THE PUNISHMENT?

Bench party. There were these long dining room benches and if your name was read the principal ordered you to pull your pants down and straddle against it [the dining room bench] and then you were strapped. Girls and boys, it didn't matter - you had to straddle. Girls pulled down their bloomers. There were no panties then. And they would be strapped ten times, fifteen times. And after that you would pull up your clothes and if there were any cuts or anything the nurse in the dispensary or infirmary would throw some iodine on your cuts, which used to hurt more than the strap (laughs). That was the normal affair. And some of the children used to dare you know? Some of the diehards used to challenge them to be

strapped. It was the thing to do for some of them anyway. What a party! (...). That was still in existence when I left in 1940. And of course we were strapped in school with a ruler or a strap for punishment too.

DID YOU EVER GET STRAPPED MUNRO?

No. Broke windows once. Well, they strapped me on the hands. They'd strap you on the hands in class. (...). Of course religion was really...they used to push us into the chapel three times on Sunday. Some of us came out pretty good. Some of us just forgot about it I guess, when we left school.

GOING TO CHURCH ON SUNDAY WAS ALMOST LIKE AN EVENT WASN'T IT?
Oh yah, Sunday morning, Sunday school and then Sunday service. (...).

WAS THERE MUCH RESISTANCE TO THE SCHOOLS THEN?

Some of them used to run away, but no resistance. I recollect in the fall when the new kids came to the residential school they would take off, run away from school. I thought I would never see them again. The police used to chase them. I recall once two kids ended up in Regina. That's quite a way from Sioux Lookout. Girls used to run away too, but not as much as the boys.

WHY DO YOU THINK THEY RAN AWAY?

Home-sick mostly. Different environment.

This reminds me of a book I recently read in which it was said that the teacher used to wash your mouth out with soap if you spoke Cree. That's a bunch of crap!

WHAT WAS THE BOOK?

Diamond's book there, by MacGregor.

OH, I HAVEN'T READ IT.

It's a colourful book, but that part of it there is crap, as far as I'm concerned. (...). I never seen that in the school that I was in. I saw a ruler stick on the hands, sideways too, but not that. Even then, at Christmas we used to have concerts. It was better during the school. Not too many kids used to go home for Christmas, most used to stay at school.

YOU STAYED ALL THROUGH THE EIGHT YEARS?

Oh yah.

YOU NEVER WENT HOME?

No.

DID YOUR FATHER EVER COME TO VISIT YOU?

Never. Never.

DID YOU KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FAMILY?

No. For the life of me I can't figure out why I came back, other than that I was born here, because when I came back I was a complete stranger and I hardly recalled how my father looked when I left. I was only about eight years old. My sister came back once. (...). And of course I started

working when I was fifteen. Finished school in 1938 when I finished grade 8, or whatever it was. I worked there for two years.

WHERE DID YOU WORK?

At the school. I was a master of all trades, doing whatever. I earned one hundred dollars a month. At any rate, when it finished the principal saw to it after, that me and my sister came back. It was a life! I wouldn't want to play it over again, especially those beatings we used to get. (...). We used to get abused all the time. Those who weren't Cree would try to beat us up and stick our head in a toilet with excrement.

DID THE TEACHERS OR SUPERVISORS KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS?

Some of them did, but they were sometimes afraid for their own being too, like, being ganged up on.

SO NOTHING WAS EVER DONE ABOUT IT?

Not really, no. If we did squeal we would get even worse treatment. In fact there were three kids that died on account of being flogged from the boys themselves, not from the staff. (.?.). But I don't know how time evolved and I came back this way. I don't know what would have happened if I would have stayed there. I may not have been around here now, cause most of the boys I was with then went overseas in the Japanese war in 1941 (.) and some joined army outfits.

Most of them never came back, either by fighting in action or by their own demise. I can recall later on in the years there was a lot of drinking and alcohol abuse. I heard, you know, later on. So I came back and started working under my father's own business on the boats etcetera for a couple of years. (.?.).

WHAT DID YOU SPEAK?

Ojibway out there. Completely forgot about Cree and I spoke Ojibway. I came back and I couldn't converse in Cree. I spoke English till I got a hold of Cree again. It took me three months I guess (.). I just started working. I did seasonal work in the area. There weren't too many people, maybe 200 - 250. And they would disappear in the winter because that's the only way that they could make their livelihood - trapping. Some were working for the residential school and the Hudson Bay Company. There was no hospital here then. There was a doctor. Employment was very limited. Till I joined up [the army] I worked with a dog team with my father and I sailed up the coast with the schooner to deliver supplies up the coast. I think that that was one of my better times when I used to travel. It was challenging. You never knew what to expect. No day was the same. Every day was different.

When it was time to join up, there was a whole bunch of us. I think seven of us attempted to join in the fall of

'42. And in October of '42 everybody was accepted except for me. I still worked around here, doing odd jobs, cutting wood, fishing, hunting. Then I tried again in January '43 and they accepted me then.

WHO TAUGHT YOU HOW TO HUNT?

That's another one of those things we used to do in school. We used to go in the bush at the end of the year and shoot deer or rabbit, or fish. There was lots of game out there. It was fantastic, fantastic!

A LOT OF SCHOOLS ONLY HAD FARMING.

That's right yah. (....).

SO IN 1943 YOU GOT ACCEPTED?

Yup, I did some training, usual training schedule.

WHERE DID YOU GO FOR TRAINING?

Well, there's this little place north of Newmarket, just north of Toronto, Borden. Then for some reason they thought, based on our testing, that I would be a good tradesman, so in the fall of '43 they stuck me in a trade school course in Hamilton. In the mean time I got married. I got married in '43. I got married before I went overseas. I was there from July '44 till February '46. It's hard to believe you know. It's been forty-six years since I got married. Time flies!

WHERE DID YOU MEET HER? IS SHE FROM HERE?

Yah. We got married. She was 15 and I was 20. I don't know, it was just fate. She's a Cheechoo. Grew up mostly in

the bush when she was small. And of course in that era they'd spend ten months in the bush. There was nothing here for them. They'd come here and get married or something and then they'd go back out into the bush. They'd paddle out to the Missinabi, Mattagami Rivers to the bush 130 mile.

Anyway, I went out there to trade school.

DID SHE COME WITH YOU?

No she stayed with her parents here.

So, when D-Day was declared in 1944 I was on my way overseas. I think I must have been only 18 or 19 when I hit the beaches with the police. I think I was there, in Europe, for 19 months. I hardly knew England. Lots of guys were stayed over for three or four years, five years in England waiting for war to start, but I just seemed to pass right through.

WHERE DID YOU GO?

Mostly France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. I was there till '46. It was February '46 when I came back. We were eleven days on overseas coming back. We were on the Queen Elizabeth. The boat couldn't be in operation either, because they had four major surgeries to do, and so we just floated around. So we hit New York in one particular day in February then I caught a train to Toronto. And there was a big reception for us in Toronto at the CNE⁵⁰ stadium. And that's

⁵⁰ 'CNE' is the acronym for Canadian National Exhibition.

where I ran into James Quechigon who just pushed me back on the train. (...).

Anyways I came back here and did the usual type of job, I guess, that everybody was doing here.

WHICH WAS WHAT?

Usually it wasn't very much then, after the war. We stayed in the bush for five summers, I think it was, doing summer jobs, working on the boats.

SO WHEN YOU WERE IN THE WAR YOU WEREN'T RIGHT UP IN BATTLE?

Oh yah, I was in battle from late June till April. That's when I suffered a concussion. I was a machine gunner and a shell landed in front of us in a slit trench. As I recall, I was sick and I was sitting in my part of the slit trench and my assistant, my number two man, my stand-up, was just decimated. A shell exploded and his body and everything fell onto me. When the orderlies were trying to pick up whoever they thought was dead, they thought I was dead, and they pulled me up, but I started breathing. So they sent me to the hospital. I was unconscious for a couple of days.

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE AN EXPERIENCE?

Yah. At any rate I was pushed back to the Special Service Company until the war was finished because they weren't sure if I was quite stable. I developed some relationships with some of my landladies and some of the people that I knew from

the village. And there's correspondence still. (...). But I came back and started raising my family.

WHERE DID YOU LIVE?

My in-laws. Approximately where I am now in a house like the houses that are at the old museum now. That's what the houses were like then. We used to live in the upstairs and her folks lived downstairs till I got my own house. Not that one, another one that I built with the assistance of the veterans. I lived in that one a few years, about ten years. Then I stuck that one up to accommodate all the additions to the family.

HOW MANY DID YOU HAVE?

14.

THEY'RE ALL STILL AROUND?

I had in total sixteen, but we lost the third and forth one. It was an epidemic or bad water or something. Back then, after the war, there was nothing much doing here and I did my apprenticeship, so to speak, in the bush with my in-laws for about five seasons. I used to spend time in the bush trying to keep existence intact.

WOULD YOU TAKE YOUR FAMILY WITH YOU?

On occasion, not that much. (...). And then when the family started to get large they started going to school at the old band office down there. Well, they started here at

the old parish hall, that used to be a log house where it is now. Continued there till they build this place here⁵¹.

SO WHAT'S THE AGE SPAN OF YOUR CHILDREN?

There's twenty-two years between the eldest and the youngest. My youngest is twenty and the oldest is forty-two. And then by and large, most of them are, I'd say not all of them but the youngest ones are still going to school. And some are really obsessed with going to school. Some have been going to school for twenty-two years (laughs). This Floyd he's just going to university and he's twenty-six (laughs). They have a variety of occupations. Some of them are mechanics. The girls are mostly aggressive in my family. They are all in the management field, the social service field. They raise their families. I only have three boys that have gotten married. Two have children the other one is still trying. However...they all seem to be...you know, they're not on welfare. At least that is for sure. Not my family. They're all doing something.

WHY NOT?

Cause it's not my type, for any of my children anyway. I think I'd have to stoop real low to.....

SO YOU ENCOURAGE EDUCATION?

⁵¹ 'Here' refers to the Indian Affairs building which used to house the school but presently houses the Indian Affairs Office and the Mushkegowuk Office.

Oh yah. That's the key to having been warden over the years in the school board in educational endeavours. In fact I acted in the education part.

HOW MANY CHILDREN DO YOU STILL HAVE AT HOME?

Four boys. Lets see now, Lindy, Allan, Victor and Floyd. Four.

ARE THEY STILL ALL GOING TO SCHOOL?

Except Victor. I can't get a grasp of what he wants to do. He never touches a drink, - hog wild on rock music etcetera. He's a good singer. He practices. He plays in a local band. I'm trying to encourage him to try to pick up my work load at the shop, the little shed I have there, because I had planned to do four more canoes before freeze-up. I already did seven. Now, since my involvement here [as acting chairman of the Mushkegowuk Tribal Council] I'm going to lose time on them. (...). In my so-called retirement years I'm still very busy. I like to do what I can at any age that I am. I've always been like that for as long as I can remember, which is a long time ago.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED POLITICALLY?

Well I guess I was very involved way back. Even when I came back after the war I was concerned with people and their well-being.

WAS YOUR DAD THE SAME WAY?

Well, on my mother's side they were like that. Elsie is very involved, not politically but with the church. (...). She's very active socially.

AND HER KIDS ARE DOING QUITE WELL TOO AREN'T THEY?

Well, they're all on their own. I see my other peer group that had kids that grew up in a different environment. All their families are fragmented and socially they're, you know, they have single-parent families or the families are broken up with no solid social...their well-being was not set up I guess, the way it should have been.

HOW ABOUT YOUR OTHER BROTHERS AND SISTER WHO LIVED WITH YOUR GRANDPARENTS, HOW ARE THEY DOING?

They did pretty good. (...). Another significant thing perhaps that I should mention is that back then my father was status Indian but in 1946 I think it was, he got out of Treaty and all the rest of the family were dragged along, and they were all non-status Indians, except for me. I was the only guy who was married already and had a band number which I held. All the other kids lost their status. They are all doing their own thing. They're all fairly productive people.

SO BOTH YOUR PARENTS WERE CREE?

My grandfather, who's my mother's father, he was the first chief in Fort Albany in 1905. Emily Wesley is my mother's name. Another thing that I should mention is that since my father couldn't cope, I guess, with having all these kids

around they were mainly with their grandparents. One girl was stuck in the school here in later years till she got out of school and got married. Then again in 1935, that's when my late father got married again. He remarried and raised, I don't know, ten or eleven children with his second wife. She lives down here just beside the Catholic church there [on River Road], in the new tall building they're putting up. That's where she is now. She's all by herself. All her children are raised now and on their own. (..).

SO YOU HAVE HALF-BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

That's right, yes. And ironically the same situation occurs there - all the girls, I think there's seven of them, they're all productive and aggressive and doing their own thing and raising their families and the whole bit. And by in large it's the boys who.....

SO YOU'RE SAYING THE GIRLS ARE MORE AGGRESSIVE THAN THE BOYS?

Oh yah.

WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS?

I don't know. The characteristic. I don't know if it's the mother's side or.....

DID YOUR WIFE EVER WORK MUNRO?

Well when we were raising our children, my mother-in-law used to baby-sit. She worked for about five winters in the hospital being a ward aid when the kids were growing up. (.?.).

ARE ALL YOU KIDS LIVING HERE IN MOOSE FACTORY?

No, three are. There will be two going to school next weekend, Floyd and Allan, leaving for Toronto. One married a lad in Sioux, the Pas, the youngest girl who is a twin to Victor. But she's still shooting for an accountant's license. She thought that she would practice for three or four years. She has a good offer to be an accountant here at the hospital. We asked her, me and mum why she doesn't want to live in Moose Factory and she says that Moose Factory is too big (laughs)!

WHAT DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT? HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT MOOSE FACTORY?

I think under the present circumstances it's the best we can make of it by virtue of its location. There's a lot of interaction with the outside world and what not, through the communication centre, although there is no resource space other than human resources for the economics of the area. I think it's a pretty good place. When you go to the village you have communication seven days a week, or go up north for that matter. But one of the things that bothers me is that a lot of young people are losing their culture very fast. I'm very surprised. I've even lectured the high school kids across the road that technology is going too fast and their culture is slipping away. These Native programs that they

see, they just might help.⁵² Their attitude toward Native life might change later on once they know where they're from. Right now it's going out very fast.

WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S SLIPPING AWAY SO FAST?

Because technology is moving ahead too fast in terms of what is available now. I'll give you an example. The economics of the area, even eight to twelve years ago, there were only about, besides the departmental vehicles, you could put the private cars in one hand. There were only half a dozen, ten at most. Now, according to the OPP stats this spring, there's over one hundred and fifty vehicles in the area. That means that the economy is rising. It's better than it was ten years ago. Also, the facilities in terms of the groceries, or the Bay, or that sort of thing, the populace looks very well. They can consume more. That Bay store is thirty years old and today it's still dispensing the same quantity wise and the population has increased dramatically. To give you an example, when I was chief, there were only three hundred members. That means that I could only have three councillors - one councillor for each one hundred members, including me in that. Now Ernie⁵³ told me two or three weeks ago that the band has hit over two thousand, not necessarily in residence here on the island. (...). So in

⁵² The Native programs that Munro is referring to are the programs put on by Wawatay Native Communications Network. These air on the television and the radio. Also there are community programs such as 'Indian Days' which demonstrate the way some things were done traditionally.

⁵³ Ernie Sutherland was Chief of Moose Factory First Nation at this time.

that sense, economically we've grown dramatically and yet people don't notice that unless they take stock themselves of what it was like ten years ago. (...).

WELL WHAT DO YOU THINK IS NEEDED SO THAT CHILDREN DON'T LOSE THEIR CULTURE?

They should saturate them with Indian culture.

WELL WHO WOULD BE SATURATING THE CHILDREN?

The leaders of the communities. But they're so held back in getting caught up with the technologies too, that they can't be bothered to take stock and say, this is what we should do to our children. They don't think of that. I try to instil it but even my chiefs there, they're twice as young as me and they're caught up in that. I'm not saying that everyone is, but certainly some of the councillors are quite naive about trying to maintain the culture. I'll give you an example in self-government in trying to be self-sufficient or keep your own pride in the question of housing. The federal government kicks in a subsidy, 41,000 dollars per house. I'm not saying the house costs that much. That's pretty substantial though. And there are band members that approach the council in that they'd kick in sweat equity, or whatever, maybe another 10,000 dollars to build their house. Historically, up to a couple of weeks ago, we said no. We'll build our house here, we'll just build your house and you contribute 135 dollars. That for me is very counter-productive. It's self-

perpetuating paternalism. Even the band, the people themselves are their own worst enemies.

HOW SO?

Because they are so... they have the idea that if we allow that to our band members they are going to get ahead of us. Like, if I kick in, or request help because I'm planning on building a new house, if they see a basement with a standard bungalow on top of it, and they see me putting up a good home, they get jealous, since they don't have it, and I'm sure ordinary Joe on the street never had it. That's how they are.

MAYBE THAT'S JUST A HUMAN CHARACTERISTIC THOUGH?

Maybe it is but I hope it doesn't perpetuate itself.

WHY DOESN'T THE NORMAL JOE HAVE IT, ISN'T EVERYONE PRETTY MUCH ON EQUAL FOOTING HERE? OR NO?

Unfortunately no, there's cliques. It was more prevalent way back then, than now. If you don't give this guy a drink and it's Friday night, or it's the festive season and you don't let him in, even though you didn't invite him, you're the number one poison. For two terms I was chief in the late '70s and once I didn't open my door to the kicking and I was shot two times. (...). Booze, it's a curse as far as I'm concerned, for anyone.

It's really depressing when I think about it. Ever since they put in that liquor store here in '73 at least four

or maybe five, maybe even six people died in the area every year. What I'm saying is if that liquor store wasn't there by no stretch of the imagination would liquor be eradicated but what I'm saying is that instead of six dying, maybe only two would die. My father was a victim of alcohol.

Ten years ago on the 12th of next month [September] a couple of punks bludgeoned him to death. He used to be a watch-man at Moosonee Transport Ltd. He always called one of the boys [that is, one of his sons] to talk to at 7 o'clock in the morning. On this particular morning the transport manager went there at 7:30 and he was dead. He was dead. The punks over there, or bandits were looking around trying to get money from him for booze. The old man next door to my father didn't let them in, but him being good-natured did let them in but he got bludgeoned to death. That's how it is. He would still have been around I guess if it hadn't been for that. That's the thing about...It's even worse up at Attawapiskat with people that are drinking. Policemen's houses are burnt down to the ground. In Fort Albany over the last four years over thirty houses burnt. No questions asked. (?). It's the booze that does it. It's completely the booze, beating each other, shooting each other or breaking up and the whole thing, it's the booze. Two weekends ago at the big wedding here, I seen at least fifty kids here just below the band office where the machinery

compound is, the road there, maybe they were not drinking but they were kicking, punching, fighting, screaming the whole bit - on account of booze.

BUT IT'S ALL FORGOTTEN ISN'T IT?

Well it may all be forgotten the next day but certainly the ones that are dead are not forgotten. In fact I am contemplating putting an In Memoriam piece in the Freighter when our late dad was so unexpectedly taken by a bunch of punks. And them guys are walking around laughing now. They only got two or three years.

DO YOU KNOW WHO THEY ARE?

Oh yah. That's one thing that seems to me...especially the authorities, even the judge and the crown attorney just laughed. Just sweep it under the rug so to speak.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE DONE?

Unless the whole judiciary changes nothing's done. Because it's a different culture, different value system, everything is different. And I won't say all the cops but some of them gleefully rub their hands when there's a pile of natives going to court. It's just bang, bang, bang. (.....).

WELL WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE DIFFERENTLY?

Have to revamp the whole judiciary system. Cause that's the only way it's going to perhaps rectify itself.

CHAPTER VIII

ANALYSIS

I. Introduction

The preceding life histories are Cree life histories. They are Cree in so far as the narrators are descendants of Cree parents, and their experiences within their particular environments were mostly Cree. What is it about their experiences that is Cree?

Firstly, all of their predecessors if not they themselves led the traditional Cree way of life; they lived off the land, hunting, trapping and fishing. The land and the animals were the source of the Cree's self-sufficiency. As such, the Cree had a special relationship with the land: The land and the animals were considered sacred and were thus treated with the utmost of respect and care. The Cree knew that their existence was dependent upon the land and the animals and if they did not treat them well then their existence would be at stake. The land was thus the spiritual centre of Cree culture and values, and for many still is. Their relationship to the land shaped and informed their social relationships and to a large extent still does.

Each of the narrators had the opportunity to experience some aspect of their traditional existence even if it was not their predominant lifestyle. If they did not have the opportunity to engage in that mode of life they had the opportunity to witness and learn about it from others who did. From them they also learned about the sanctity of the land.

Secondly, all the narrators had the opportunity to see their traditional way of life subside. They learned other ways of living besides depending on the land. The land was no longer the source of their self-sufficient existence.

The arrival of the fur traders introduced the idea of hunting and trapping for trade and profit. The Cree adapted to this system of exchange. The establishment of schools, both denominational and non-denominational, which the children had to attend, brought on a more sedentary lifestyle. "Residential schools began to wean the younger generations from the land, and community schools eventually drew whole families to settlements. [These] changes began the process of separating the Cree from their historical connection to the land, the land that still provides their source of identity" (Simpkins 1990: 7). The signing of the Treaties further increased the pace of change.

The pace of change was rapid and the accommodation of a new lifestyle was difficult. The experiences that many

of these narrators faced, - and or the experiences that their parents more directly faced - speak directly to the difficulty of adapting to the impositions of the Euro-Canadian culture. These include for example, the moral decline experienced by Mary's, Norm's and Allan's fathers, who were unable to successfully make the shift from a hunting and gathering lifestyle to a more sedentary lifestyle in a wage earning economy.

However, as is evidenced in their life histories, each of these individuals has successfully adapted. Their adaptation however, was not without many problems, problems which were not only experienced by the Cree but also by almost every Native group in Canada. Although their life courses were problematic, it seems that their experiences both troublesome and not, laid the groundwork for their successful adaptation. They appear to have had the wherewithal to learn from their experiences so that they could increase their potential for successful survival.

Thirdly, as a result of the rapid social change and the enforcement of education, each narrator had to attend a residential school. The schools were usually some distance away from their homes and their Native communities. Norm did not have to attend a residential school as there was a day school on the reserve where he lived. However, to attend high school he had to leave his community.

Even though Norm did not have to leave his home until high school, there was still a psychological distance created between himself and his Native community, for in the day school, which was based on Euro-Canadian culture, he was taught with Western principles and learned values which were unfamiliar and foreign to his environment. Admittedly, the narrators who had to also endure a physical distance from their homes, in a foreign environment, experienced even greater feelings of isolation and alienation.

The fourth aspect which these narrators and other members of their group share as Cree, is related to their school attendance; all of them had to adapt to not only a new way of life but also a new culture, a culture which some would say was attempting to assimilate their Native culture. Their school attendance left them with little opportunity to participate in the traditional Cree lifestyle. Furthermore, the skills and knowledge that they acquired at school were not always applicable back home, at least not in the form in which they had been taught. Adjusting the knowledge that they had acquired at school to their Native environment was a difficult task. They were faced with the incongruity between Cree ideals and Euro-Canadian ways.

The time and place of education can create rifts between family and generations that are not easily bridged. They can create an alienating process between children and

parents, and more expansively between the individual and their community. There are many Natives who were unable to bridge the cultural discontinuity that occurred at the interface of the Cree and Euro-Canadian cultures. These Natives however, were able to bridge the discontinuity between the two cultures, and they did so in a way which was meaningful to them. Often times maladaptive strategies such as alcoholism were employed to ease the cultural dis-ease that they felt between the two cultures, but eventually the maladaptive strategies were recognized and altered.

Adapting to the new culture in ways that were meaningful to them means that they were able to incorporate and combine the Euro-Canadian culture with their Native culture in such a way that the combination facilitated successful survival in their changing environment. For example, Norm states in his life history that although he was not providing for his family in the same fashion that his father did; through hunting and gathering, he was still providing for his family. He provided for his family through his careers which he gained as a result of his education and his experience. Therefore, although the means by which he provided for his family were different than those of his father, he still maintained the fundamental Cree principle, of being a good provider. So, in this case we see how the Cree ideal of being a good provider is maintained through

Euro-Canadian means. In other words, Norm and the others adapted and incorporated new ways of acquiring the same goals. The ends were the same, only the means were different. Necessity required that these changes be made if the ends were to be successfully met. Their recognition of this ensured their success.

Their simultaneous adaptation and accommodation of two cultures resulted in the creation of something new; a culture which incorporated and accommodated Cree and Euro-Canadian ways. This process of the creation of something new clearly illustrates that individuals in culture are "more than mere purveyors of pre-existing forms. They are creators of culture as well, and serve in this capacity as active agents of cultural change" (Basso 1979: 80). What this means for each of them as individuals is that they are bicultural. As bicultural individuals they are able to comfortably straddle both cultures, choosing the best from both worlds so to speak, and thus ensuring their livelihood and the perpetuation of their modified Native culture.

The comfort with which they straddle both cultures is not only indicated in their life experiences but also in the way in which they shared their stories with me. Although storytelling is very common to Cree culture, the way they negotiated their telling with me, a person from without their culture, tells of their biculturalism. Hutcheon and Richmond

speak to this experience when they talk about the Canadian immigrant's experience in the Canadian literary world. "Doubleness, as many commentators have pointed out is the essence of the immigrant experience. Caught between two worlds, the immigrant negotiates a new social space; caught between two cultures and language the writer negotiates a new literary space" (Hutcheon and Richmond 1990: 9). Although the Natives are clearly not immigrants to this world, the type of negotiation that they undertake in the process of co-existing with the dominant culture closely resembles that of the immigrant writer. Both create something that is comfortable and meaningful to them, which incorporates more than one cultural experience. Thus we are able to communicate and to share the experience.

I stated at the beginning of this chapter that the life histories included in this thesis are Cree life histories. The narrators' appearance in this thesis grants them representativeness. But even as members of the same group they have had different experiences and therefore they have formed different opinions/interpretations about their shared and varied experiences. Thus, the life histories are not only embodiments of the Cree experience, but also, they are records of individuals and of Cree ideals as experienced by individual Crees. Therefore, they not only represent Cree culture, but also, they illustrate the variability within it.

They capture the essence of living a life. They vivify individual experience and thereby reveal the manner in which the individual adjusts to and acts upon the continuities and discontinuities in his/her physical, mental and sociocultural environment (Little, 1979). In this way, life histories capture the creativity that goes into creating a life. Needless to say, life is always more than the expression of living it!

II. Creating A Life History

The life history narratives in this thesis are not complete life histories, that is, they do not cover the entire life of each individual from start to finish. Each is a life history in progress and in process; unravelling with the passage of each day. They are the narrators' remembrances and personal interpretations - culturally informed but personally integrated - of their lives and of their culminating selves.

The life history narratives are the selected reminiscent representations of the narrators and their edited interpersonal relations with others (Preston, 1988). They are the narrators' recollected life experiences and feelings associated with those experiences as they are remembered, and as they are presently felt.

Throughout these six life histories we see several instances of the selective nature of memory. For example, Mary states, "(...)There's a couple of teachers that I remember. One was really awful and the other one was really nice. (...) I think the things that stand out most are the bad times (...) more than the good times or the fun. This is because of having to be there when you didn't want to be there" (1991: 51). In this statement, Mary not only tells us what she remembers but she also tells us why she thinks she remembers, or does not remember what she does. In her statement we see the intermingling of past events and feelings, with present feelings as affected by present events.

Connerton (1989), in his book *How Societies Remember* talks about the process of remembering, a process involving the interpenetration of the past and the present:

Concerning memory as such, we may note that our experience of the present very largely depends upon our knowledge of the past. We experience our present world in a context which is usually causally connected with past events and objects, and hence with reference to events and objects which we are not experiencing when we are experiencing the present. And we will experience our present differently in accordance with the different pasts to which we are able to connect that present. Hence, the difficulty of extracting our past from our present: not simply because present factors tend to influence - some might want to say distort - our recollections of the past, but also because past factors tend to influence, or distort, our experience of the present. This process, it should be stressed, reaches into the

most minute and everyday details of our lives
(1989: 2).

Therefore, in so far as reconstructing experience is to some degree an abstraction, removed from the immediate experience, in time, space and perception, each life history narrative is only one version of the narrator's life story, a story which is modified through time and with changing self-perception.

"With retrospective reflection come reconstituted fictions of perception, a perception which can vary depending on time, place and interaction. Furthermore, reflecting about experience is a transcending process. It not only includes a type of reconciliation with experience but also with the creation of something new" (Kundera 1988: 89). "Clearly [then], life cannot be represented as a single absolute truth but as a welter of partially contradictory truths. Truth is elusive, for experience is chaotic and order comes only after the experience of disorder/chaos.

Therefore, in life history narratives, and in everyday existence in general, form is imposed on that which although not totally without form, takes on form only in the process of its re-construction and re-creation" (Logotheti 1990: 100). Ostensibly, memory is not simply a matter of reconstruction and reproduction; it is construction. Creating a life history is indeed an imaginative and interpretive process.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ For further discussion of the imaginative process in storytelling see Momaday's essay. *The Man Made of Words* (1975).

"Composing a life [history] involves a continual reimagining of the future, and reinterpretation of the past to give meaning to the present" (Bateson 1989: 28). With culture as the backdrop and language as the medium, individuals create life histories from which a sense of self emerges. In this sense, a life history is a collaborative process, not only between narrator and ethnographer, but also, between narrator and culture, "for the...[narrator] is obliged to negotiate the terms of the expression of his or her sense of selfhood by drawing on the discourse of the person in the ambient culture; culture is the silent partner in the transaction" (Eakin in Krupat 1985: xxii). The life history as creative process should be kept in mind when reading life histories.

III. Interpretation Of The Six Life Histories

The narrators of the six life histories are competent, bicultural individuals. They comfortably straddle two cultures, choosing what is best from both. They are competent because they interact effectively within their environment, maintaining a balance between individual autonomy and social responsibility.⁵⁵ They can do this

⁵⁵ 'Maintaining a balance between individual autonomy and social responsibility' means "the ability to assume responsibility for others when the need arises, while at the same time recognizing individual

because they have the ability to (1) recognize their actions, intended or unintended, (2) assume responsibility for their actions, and (3) alter their future behaviour in the light of acquired knowledge (Preston, S. 1982a: 22).

Competence is obtained through a developmental learning process whereby "newly acquired knowledge and skills build upon and broaden previously gained knowledge, thereby developing ability [competence]" (Preston, S. 1982a: 21-22).^{56/57} The six life histories illustrate the narrators' acquired competence and the process involved in the attainment of competence.

Mary, Norm and Allan indicate turning points in their lives at which time they assume personal and social responsibility. The analysis of their turning points lends insight to their development of competence.

Mandelbaum (1973) describes a turning as a transition that a person must make during the course of his or her life. He states that a turning is accomplished "when a person takes on a new set of roles, enters into fresh relations with a new set of peoples and acquires a new self-

autonomy and avoiding interference with others. One must understand the difference between ignoring social responsibility, interfering with others, and assisting when one is needed" (Preston, S. 1982: 23).

⁵⁶ For consideration of competence from a linguistic, biological and behavioural perspective see Chomsky, 1965; Hymes, 1971; Keesing, 1971; White, 1963; and Foote & Cottrell, 1955. Their definitions of competence are not to be confused with Cree competence.

⁵⁷ For further discussion of Cree competence see Preston, R. 1975, 1976 & 1979; and Preston, S. 1982a & 1982b. Although I am using the Cree definition of competence, I am using it in a broader sense than the Prestons and suggesting that it is not only the definition for Cree, competence, but also the definition for human competence, in general.

conception" (1973: 181). Mary's, Norm's and Allan's turning points do not meet Mandelbaum's qualifications in his prescribed order.

During their turning points each narrator did enter into a new self-conception. Indeed it was the process of this changing self-conception which enabled them to make the turn. As a result of this changed self-conception they took on a new set of roles, or at least modified versions of their old roles and hence entered into new relationships with people.⁵⁸

At the time of their turning points the narrators' thoughts were translated into action. They became more aware of their situation, they defined their situation, and then they chose to do something to change it. Furthermore, they accepted some responsibility for their situation. Having done so, they realized that they could do something to change it. This shift was often influenced by an impending birth and or the presence of children, and or the realization that they could not continue in the same fashion if they were to be able to ensure a good life for their families.

Redfern, Beulah and Munro, the elders of these life histories, do not indicate any turning points in their lives,

⁵⁸ Mandelbaum suggests that one element that marks a turning is an individual entering fresh relations with a new set of peoples. I would suggest that the individual does not necessarily enter new relationships with new people, but rather that as a result of a new self-conception, the individual interacts differently with people. This process however, cannot be viewed as following a cause and effect linear trajectory, rather it is a cyclical and interpenetrating process.

though it is entirely possible that such junctures did occur. It is quite possible that their turning points are less explicit in their life histories because they do not look upon and discuss their lives in the same terms as the adults. I will return to this point later in this section.

The narrators' competence is demonstrated through their actions, in which a balance between individual autonomy and social responsibility is consistently maintained, and through their beliefs, which they not only preach, but also practice. Therefore, there is a coincidence between their beliefs and their actions. In other words, their beliefs inform their actions. Preston (1975, 1976, 1979) points out that one is more or less competent depending upon the degree to which one's actions, and the outcome of those actions, reflect one's beliefs.

Their competence is clearly evidenced in their concern for their children, where their concern for their children (social responsibility) directs their personal choices. They assist their children when they feel that their children are not yet capable of taking full responsibility for themselves. Simultaneously they remain non-interfering, thus encouraging the development of self-reliance and individual autonomy in their children.

Now to elaborate upon a point raised earlier, that the elders in this collection do not tell their stories in

the same fashion as the adults. For example, as I mentioned earlier, they do not specify any turning points in their lives, not necessarily because none occurred, but because that is not how they look upon their experience. The adults talk more explicitly about their journey to self-discovery and about the lessons they have learned, whereas the elders tell about the 'way it was'; what they did and what they do. The adults tell us about what they have learned and how they apply it, whereas the elders demonstrate their knowledge in their actions, which they describe.

What resonates from the elders' life histories is a reconciliation with the way things were and are. It seems that they have reached a time in their life where they can say that under the circumstances they did the best that they could do. They tell of the way things were with ease, emotional control and responsibility. They accept what seem to have been the inevitabilities of their life course, realizing that even the most competent individual cannot always alter the course of events. They are thus less analytical and questioning of their lives than the adults are. Furthermore, they do not romanticize and or idealize the past.

These differences I believe may be attributed to a generational and experiential difference. The elders come from a different generation and their life histories reflect

that. Moreover, as they are reaching the winter of their years, they have many more experiences and therefore wisdom to guide them. The adults on the other hand, are still involved in a process of change and becoming. Since they are still immersed in this process, it shapes the way they talk about their life experiences.

In Chapter I, I discussed ways in which Redfern's life history was different from the rest in that he emphasized "them" as opposed to "I". I gave several reasons why this might be. The other elders do refer to "I" more than Redfern does. However, the aforementioned elements are consistent in all elders' presentations. The similarities in their presentations are indicative of their experience of culture. Thus, these life histories not only tell us something about personal experiences in culture but also about change in culture as reflected in the life history form. This is most evident in the way that the narrators discuss their culture.

The adults seem to objectify their culture and to identify it as some entity; an entity about which they need to have knowledge to ensure their successful existence. They have a self-consciousness about it. The elders on the other hand, rarely objectify culture. Culture for them is implicit in their words which describe their actions. In other words, for the elders who take their culture for granted, as it is

rooted in their lived experience, culture is action; culture is living - it is a dynamic form.

Indeed, it is to the elders that the younger generations return to gain knowledge about their culture, which they feel is slipping away. They feel that to understand and appreciate their present struggle they have to have knowledge about the past. They need to know how they got to where they are now.

For the adults who feel that their culture is slipping away, culture is knowledge, knowledge which needs to be perpetuated in the minds of individuals. Thus, the difference in the expression of their life histories.

The analysis of the life histories begins with the elders and ends with the adults. The purpose for this arrangement is to demonstrate in practice the adults' acquirement and use of knowledge from the elders.

Redfern Louttit

Redfern's narrative and the other elders' narratives, tell about "the way it was" during their time. The elders do not trace their individual developments in the same fashion as the adults. They just talk about their experiences. They just tell us about what they did in light of the circumstances. The elders' life histories, and by

extension the adults', are therefore very much a sign of the times from which they are derived.

Although the elders talk about 'culture loss' they do not do so in the same terms as the adults. They simply regard some of the changes in their culture as natural. It might be that the elders, with their wisdom and experience to guide them are aware of, and have reconciled with, some of the inevitabilities of life, whereas the adults are still trying to devise ways to control life. It might also be that for the elders, culture is lived experience. It is in all their actions which are guided by their cultural beliefs. Therefore, they do not need to objectify it. What the elders do feel is declining in their culture is foresight. They feel that the present generations exercise little foresight.

In the adults' life histories we got a glimpse at how the elders regarded their experiences, as perceived by their children. The way Mary's, Norm's and Allan's parents regarded their experiences seem to be consistent with the way that the elders in this thesis regard their experiences. For example, when Norm talks about his mother's ability to deal with her prosthesis and her time in the hospital, miles away from her family and friends, he discusses the ease with which she handled that situation. He attributes his mother's ability to adjust to this situation, to her belief and outlook on life;

(...)I think that it has a lot to do with her belief in life - how she looks at life. She always said, 'if it's time for me to go, I'll go, and there's absolutely nothing that I can do about it' (Wesley 1988, 88 above).

Similarly, Norm's father informs Norm with dignity and acceptance when it is time for him to die;

I can recall him telling me one time, 'I'm going to die...This is it. I'm going...There shouldn't be any real reason why people should get upset and all emotional because I'm dying because we're all going to die. We're all going to die, sooner or later - we're all going to die. And in my condition it's time for me to go. When I die, don't make a fuss, just let me go' (Wesley 1988, 90 above).

These examples indicate the wisdom with which the elders face life. They welcome death acceptingly, as they regard it as a part of life. They realize and acknowledge the limitations of their control over life. They just do what they can. The narrators express this repeatedly .

Doing what one has to do for survival is clearly illustrated in the story that Allan told about his mother giving birth on the trap line. Immediately after giving birth his mother picked up and travelled with her family to their hunting ground as it was hunting season and they had to go if they wanted to survive. She could not just stop and attend to herself. She had to think about her family and their survival, which would have been impossible if they were unsuccessful in their hunt. So the elders did what they had to do to ensure their survival; no questions asked.

Redfern's family did not survive by hunting and trapping. But he still knows the rules for appropriate behaviour.

His father earned a living as an interpreter for the Hudson Bay Company. As a result, Redfern had little personal exposure to the traditional way of life. Unlike many of his contemporaries, however, he learned how to speak English at a very young age. His mixed ancestry, his knowledge of English and the lifestyle that his family led, eased Redfern's adaptation to boarding school.

Redfern left his community for residential school at the age of nine, and did not return until nine years later. Some of his other brothers and sisters went to residential school at Horden Hall, in Moose Factory, but he "went quite a way off" (1988, 153 above). Redfern's experience at school was enjoyable; "I always enjoyed that part of my life. I liked it" (Louttit 1988, 156 above). He does not express any distress for having to leave his family and his community. There are probably several reasons for this. One, the transition from his Native lifestyle to residential school were not markedly different and thus he did not feel alienated by the process. Two, at the time that he told the story he had reconciled with his experience of having left his family at such a young age. And three, he has already experienced the consequences of that act, and reaped the benefits from it.

Redfern feels that he benefitted from his education. Except for retreats into the bush when the river flooded, Redfern never lived in the bush. Thus, he never really learned how to hunt and hence found the knowledge that he acquired at residential school quite interesting. The applicability of that knowledge to the traditional lifestyle was not an issue of concern for Redfern as he did not intend to return to that lifestyle. Although he had had occasion to hunt, he could not make a living from it. He explains,

At the time that I should have been learning that [how to hunt], I was in school learning other things to make a living. So I made my living apart from them [from his parents and his brothers and sisters]. They made their living by hunting and getting what jobs they could (Louttit 1988, 164 above).

Redfern emphasizes the value of his education. It is what enabled him to provide for himself and for his family. Redfern, like Norm and Allan, maintains the fundamental Cree principle of providing for one's family, only he does it in a different style than many of his predecessors and contemporaries. Redfern feels that the education that a lot of the Natives received at residential school, was also invaluable to them; it is what has enabled a lot of Natives to become leaders of their communities:

But they [the residential schools] played a big part in Native education.

A lot of these leaders today in the province of Quebec and in Ontario got their beginnings through the residential school, although they

appear to have a bad reputation (Louttit 1988, 158 above).

In light of many of the negative attributes of residential schools, Redfern suggests that they did serve some functions for the Natives. Not only did the Natives learn how to speak a second language which helps them to "run all their affairs" today, but also, the schools "served as a home for the kids" whose parents could not take care of them:

Some of the kids were pretty roughly treated I guess...On the whole they were pretty good people. They were Christian people and they liked the kids, and they produced pretty educated people...Some of the schools served as home for the kids, especially if there was a big group of them... ..So, today the Natives have a second language beside their own. And it's an advantage to run all their affairs (Louttit 1988, 158-160 above).⁵⁹

Redfern suggests that what was most distasteful about the system was the separation, both physical and psychological that occurred between the children and the parents; "...some people blame the schools for allowing the kids to forget them" (1988, 159 above). The children were not only physically separated from their parents, but also, when they returned home they could not communicate in the Cree language and behaved in unfamiliar and inappropriate ways. This further exacerbated the rift between the parents and their children. But, Redfern points out, "it was the parents that wanted the kids to have an education, to learn English" (1988, 159 above). The Natives who were aware that

⁵⁹ Redfern had been a teacher himself.

the way of life would be changing wanted their children to go to school. So, Redfern feels that the responsibility for the children's absence partially rests with the parents and thus they should not just blame the schools. They should assume some responsibility for the course that their lives took.

There are many horror stories about residential schools, and I do not believe that Redfern is denying or attempting to undermine them. I do think that he has perhaps forgiven the individuals in the school system. He says that they were for the most part good people who were doing their job. I think that what he is implying here is that within the confines of that situation they did the best that they could do, which is really all that could ever be expected. He is also expressing the importance of carrying on by letting the past go and forgiving.

While Redfern points out that the decision for the children to go to school was partially the parents', as they realized the importance of knowing English in the lifestyle that their children would face, he also acknowledges that the schools could have more consciously tried to maintain the Cree language at the same time as teaching English; "The problem lies in that Indian Affairs didn't rely on Native teachers to keep up the Native language too. They could have done that. And if Cree were allowed to be spoken we wouldn't have forgotten it" (Louttit 1988, 159 above).

The impact of the residential schools on the students was twofold; they not only prepared them for a Euro-Canadian lifestyle, but also, in so doing, they diminished the knowledge of the Cree language and lifestyle. This loss was especially detrimental to those who returned to their communities unable to speak Cree and unable to sustain a living in the bush, as they had not acquired knowledge that was viable in their communities:

...[T]hey [the students] got used to living out there. But they couldn't do very much once they got back. They couldn't find work out there. They couldn't do trapping. They weren't trained for that. That's one fault; when lots of the boys finished school they were sent home and they didn't know how to live in the bush. They'd never been trained, or they couldn't speak to their parents or friends or families because they lost their Cree on their way through. That's very bad. That's very lonely for them - very frustrating (Louttit 1988, 154-155 above).

According to Redfern, the alienation from self and community that many Natives who returned to their communities faced could have been avoided.

It seems from Redfern's description that what he is describing was quite outside his own experience. This is probably one reason that in his life history he refers to "them" more often than he does to "I". For when he talks about what it was like back then for the "Indians", the reality is that it was not the same for him. It was part of his experience only in so far as he witnessed it. He was not however entirely and or directly, affected by it. In fact,

as a member of the Anglican church, he worked with the Indians. Nevertheless, Redfern is very much aware of what was and was not appropriate education and he tells us so.

If one were going to live in the bush then one needed to learn how to survive in the bush. If one were going to become part of the Euro-Canadian lifestyle than one needed to have a Euro-Canadian education. There was a training process that was necessary for success in either lifestyle. It was the training and the knowledge that one received from the appropriate source, that would ensure one's success. Redfern, like Norm, speaks to the importance of this training process for ensuring survival. Redfern sees the education that the Natives received as facilitating their take over of "what the white people began" (Louttit 1988, 160 above). They are working towards self-government and self-determination; "So now they're going to take over what the white people began and see what kind of job they make..." (1988, 160 above).

Redfern is aware of and quite prepared for the implications of Native self-government. Even though he recognizes the abilities and the potential that Natives have for self-government and self-determination, he also believes that they still need support from the government if they are to achieve their goals. The umbilical chord cannot be severed just like that. They need support. They may have

received an education, but to do what they want to do they also have to go through a learning process in the particulars of the situation. What Redfern is describing is the process of self-determination:

I think it's [self-government] coming a little soon. But I guess its bound to come some day. But it's going to be pretty tough for awhile. There's a lot they can do, but they still need to have the support of the government. They haven't got enough people out there speaking on their behalf. There's not enough people in the government, they should have more. And also, they haven't any funding of their own, unless they tax the people. That's what they'll have to do. But I think it can be done. I mean, the Native people are quite capable. They have good sides and bad sides. They have to have more foresight than they do (Louttit 1988, 160-161 above).

What Redfern is suggesting is that the Natives are fully capable of governing their own affairs. However, before they can assume total responsibility for themselves, they need sufficient support and guidance from the present government, so that they can effectively and successfully govern their own affairs in a different political arena.

The other narrators similarly signify the importance of their children finding their own path; self-determination. A parallel can be drawn here between the children and the Natives, and the between the parents and the government. The goal of the parents is to provide their children with sufficient nurturance in their developmental stages so that they can eventually become self-reliant and find their own path.

For example, when Allan's children leave the community to attend high school, Allan and his wife would like to go with their children so that they can help them adjust to the different lifestyle that they will face. Their premise is that once their children have made the adjustment then they will be better able to pursue their goals. The truth of this is evidenced in Norm's adjustment to high school in the big city. It was facilitated by his brother's presence. His brother, through his own experiences was able to help Norm adjust to his new situation. By sharing his experiences with him, Norm was better able to consider the consequences of his actions in this new and unfamiliar context. Redfern feels that the Natives similarly need support from the government before they can manage all their own affairs. They need more support so that they can better predict the consequences of their actions in the new political arena. He feels that the Natives need to have more foresight.

Redfern believes that foresight is generally lacking in the present generations. The younger people are not considering the implications of their present actions for the future;

But today, you know, the younger people, they don't look on things like their fathers did...
...They're not looking for the future (Louttit 1988, 161-162 above).

For example, when hunting, they do not abide by the rules which their forefathers used to ensure the return of the geese. In Redfern's day, people in the community were very cautious about sustaining a good relationship with the land, realizing that if they did not, their survival would be at stake:

There was a man who would keep an eye on the ice...and he would let people know when it was safe to cross the rivers, or go on the ice.....There was also a man in charge to say when to hunt, because you just couldn't hunt every day. And then everybody went out and had a big hunt.....But today that's not observed any more. They do not do that. They hunt any place, any time. People are like that. They're not looking for the future. They're just making it bad for themselves because they're scaring the birds by not hunting them properly (Louttit 1988, 161-162 above).

Redfern feels that the present generations do not observe the rules that their predecessors did because they do not depend as much on hunted food for their survival. But they do not realize how the same rules are applicable to their present day situation if they want to be able to enjoy something. They still like, for example, to supplement their diets with hunted food; "But today, they don't depend on [the animals]...Today they got the use from both worlds. They're pretty well affluent today. They get high salaries, very good salaries, sufficient, more personal cares and so on." [But] if they don't conserve by using it properly the birds are just going to disappear, or just go somewhere else. They have to treat them more like their fathers did; wisely..." or

else they will disappear like the caribou did (Louttit 1988, 162 above).

Redfern is pointing out the necessity for looking towards the future and treating things responsibly so that they will not only be accessible for one's personal use, but also, be available for the use of future generations. This not only applies to the animals but also to one's culture. The attitude, "if it's alright for today, don't mind tomorrow," is not an adaptive one (1988, 163 above).

Beulah Morrison

Beulah's life history is the shortest of them all. I think that this is partially because she felt that she did not have a lot of things to share with me that I would be interested in hearing. I think that she believed that I was mostly interested in hearing about experiences in the traditional lifestyle; however, I was not;

I don't have very much to tell you about trapping and all that because I really didn't go out in the bush and do all the things that other women maybe had a chance to do (Morrison 1988, 172 above).

Beulah, like Redfern, talks about 'what life was like'. She tells about what she did under the circumstances. She does not trace her development or point out any particular turnings in her life, like the adults do.

Beulah, like the other narrators, had little opportunity to experience life in the bush; although her opportunity may have been a little more extensive. When Beulah's father died she went to live with her grandparents. Her younger sister stayed with their mother. One child was all that her mother could handle while she was single. It is very common amongst Natives to have grandparents or extended family assume responsibility for children when the parents cannot. Extended family assist in the raising the children until the parents can resume their responsibilities towards their children. Often times the children do not return to their biological family unit. This is an example of social responsibility; assisting another when it is necessary.

Although Beulah lived in the bush with her grandparents for approximately five years, she did not learn a lot of the traditional practises. Her grandfather was a hunter-trapper but he did not teach her "a lot of what other things Indian people do - like skinning beaver and all that" because she was a girl and too young to learn (1988, 167 above). She did however pick up some of these skills later, when she lived in the bush with her mother.

At the age of nine Beulah went to residential school. Like most of the others, she did not initially like it, but as time passed she liked it better. She, like Munro, "managed to get used to it." The knowledge that Beulah

acquired at school helped her later in her life. Since she was not to lead the traditional lifestyle of hunting and trapping, her ability to speak English and do housework helped her to communicate with non-Cree speakers and also to find employment on the island.

Before Beulah's father died he demanded that Beulah's mother send Beulah to school;

...when my father died my mother said that almost the last words, he said...were for her to make sure that I go to school when I was old enough, so that I can read a little bit because that is the thing you need (Morrison 1988, 169 above).

Beulah's father was a hunter-trapper and things were difficult when he was alive. He could see that things were changing;

He [her father] needed to have boys. At that time people were just living like...My mother wasn't living, just the ration supplies. And there were the two of us probably...Going into the world and getting an education...(Morrison 1988, 169 above).

From his experiences, Beulah's father saw a need for Beulah to learn to read and speak English. He could see that life was changing and that if Beulah were to survive she would need to know about more than just life in the bush. He also knew that there was a training process that was necessary for acquiring the skills that Beulah would need to survive in the new environment. His personal experiences gave him the foresight to know or to predict the consequences of getting an education; it would ensure a better life for Beulah. "I

always think back to my father giving me that, telling my mother to send me to school," Beulah comments (Morrison 1988, 172 above).

Beulah may not have had the opportunity to learn life in the bush as well as other women may have, but she feels that she did not really miss out on anything because it was actually her education, or her knowledge of English, as she would say, that enabled her to adapt to the life that she faced. She found a summer job as soon as she finished school. "Just ordinary house-keeping in the mission," Beulah explains (Morrison 1988, 168 above). House-keeping was something that Beulah was required to do while she was in residential school. In fact, I would suggest that much of the time in residential schools was spent maintaining the facility, as the schools were self-sufficient. The following summer Beulah worked for another couple house-keeping, and the woman that she worked for taught her how to cook "white man's style". Ostensibly, Beulah was influenced by her immediate environment. She learned about things that she was exposed to;

The lady that I worked for started teaching me about cooking, white man's style (laughs). I never really learned any Indian cooking, just by watching. And this is how come I make pies and all that, because I had to make some of them (Morrison 1988, 168 above).

After working for the missionary and his wife Beulah returned to the bush for two winters with her mother. Her mother had

remarried and was leading the traditional life of hunting and trapping.

For Beulan, adjusting to life in the bush was not a simple task. It was difficult to get re-accustomed to living in the bush after having been away from it for some time and after having been exposed to living in a house with all the modern amenities;

After getting used to living in a house and all that, and then to go back in the bush in a tent and everything where you have to cut wood because there are no boys in the family....I had to do all that (Morrison 1988, 169 above).

Beulah faced the same difficulties that Allan faced when he returned to his Native community after having become accustomed to life in the city. Life in the bush seemed less convenient and more tedious.

Redfern talks about the difficulties that Natives face when they return to their Native communities; they feel caught between two worlds which seem incompatible. Redfern points out that re-adjustment to the Native lifestyle is especially difficult when the individuals have been away from their communities for a long period of time and have been educated in ways and about things which seem, and often times are, incompatible with their Native environment. Although reintegration into one's community would always be necessary after a period of absence, the dis-ease or difficulty of adjustment could be have been alleviated, Redfern suggests,

if the Natives had been allowed to speak their language at the schools and if they also had learned about and practised some of the traditional ways.

In spite of Beulah's dismay with life in the bush, she endured that lifestyle for two years [that is, winters]. Her step-father was very strict and would not let her take the job opportunity that she had on the island;

Then after two winters I was asked to work right on the island here as a house-keeper again. But they didn't let me...We had a very strict step-father. He didn't want us to be on our own, you know, support ourselves. He didn't want me to stay here in Moose Factory and work. He wanted me to go with them in the bush. I guess to help my mother with all the work... ...we had to obey (Morrison 1988, 170 above).

Beulah's stepfather did not give her the opportunity to make her own decision, as he thought that it was more important that she stay and help out her mother. Beulah seems to have resented her step-father's imposition but she just did what what was expected of her. While in the bush Beulah contracted tuberculosis and had to spend close to two years in the hospital.

Beulah made a lot of friends over her two year period in the hospital. She acted as an interpreter for the patients and staff. Her exposure to Euro-Canadian ways and her knowledge of English made what could have been an alienating experience, a comfortable one;

When I was in the hospital I made a lot of friends because I could speak English. I helped a woman

with interpretation for non-English speakers
(Morrison 1988, 171 above).

Beulah can comfortably communicate in both Cree and English, and she knows that nowadays that is what one needs. The ability to speak English and Cree gives one the opportunity to function within both cultures; "My mother doesn't speak English so when I visit her I must speak Cree, but my Cree is all mixed up" (Morrison 1988, 171 above). Although Beulah's "Cree is all mixed up", her ability to communicate in it keeps her tied to her mother, and thereby her past and her culture. In other words, her knowledge of her culture facilitates its perpetuation. She may not be actively living the traditional lifestyle, but she is still passing on the ideals of the culture through language and practice.

A year after Beulah returned from the hospital she got married, and she and her husband built a house. Once she started having her own family she stopped working outside of her home, except for some occasional house-cleaning and baby-sitting. Her acquired skills were not only useful to her for employment but also for the maintenance of her own family. She was able to use what she had learned in all aspects of her life.

As is evidenced from the priority that Beulah gives her family, she, like the other narrators has a strong commitment to her family. As a mother of eight, her youngest

being fifteen, she was always very busy and still is, with her children and her grandchildren. She says,

I don't know what I would do without them, with no children. I'm so used to being around with them all the time (Morrison 1988, 177 above).

She shares herself with her children, and with her children's children. She could not conceive of it being any other way.

Munro Linklater

Munro's life history, like those of the other elders, tells about the way things were in his time. The emphasis is on culture as lived experience as opposed to culture as knowledge. From his life history we learn about culture change and how Munro adapted to it. From his actions, and actually from the actions of the other elders as well, we learn what appropriate behaviour is. The appropriateness of the behaviour is signified in their successful survival. The adults' life histories also indicate what is adaptive and appropriate behaviour, but the emphasis is on the process of the attainment of appropriate behaviour more so than on its practice.

Munro's parents led the traditional hunting and trapping life, though his father was an employee of the fur trading company, Revillon Freres. When Munro was about six, he and his sister Elsie were sent to residential school. His

mother's death left his father with several children. Because his job required that he do extensive travelling, Munro's father was unable to assume responsibility for all his children. He took care of them through the only means that were available to him; extended family and residential school. Munro explains;

Of course after her death dad didn't know what to do with us. There was no sitter or extended parents here, all were down in Fort Albany. I guess he wondered what to do with us because as a traveller he was away from home all the time and he couldn't just leave us...He didn't know what to do with us because he was a traveller. So he saw it fit to send some of us to school and leave the others with my grandma and grandpa (Linklater 1988/89, 179 above).

Implicit in Munro's description is a tone of resolve. He does not question his father's motives for sending him to residential school, in the same way that Mary and Allan do. He recognizes, in retrospect of course, what his father's situation was and the choices he had available to him. He claims that his father made the best decision that he could based on the choices that he had. Munro states, "It wasn't by design that we were sent out, it was by circumstance" (Linklater 1988/89, 181 above). In other words, it was not that his father wanted to get rid of his children or that he had ever intended to. It was simply all that he could do, based on the situation.

Munro has many unpleasant memories associated with his school days:

We had a terrible time, at least myself for the next eight years. It was a trying time...You talk about discrimination! When I went to school we were really discriminated against. Cree were dirt. It was nothing for us to get beat up by Ojibway... ..It was terrible, a nightmare as I recall. I managed to survive that place... ..In the summer months there was no such thing as summer holidays. That's where we stayed. Of course it wasn't worth it then to send us back because there was no funding from Indian Affairs. It was funded by the church...There were about half a dozen of us that couldn't get away and sometimes when we were younger we used to cry at the sight of the kids going home for the summers. It really cut the heart. But we got used to it in the end(.) (Linklater 1988/89, 181-182 above).

In spite of the unpleasantness, Munro "managed" as he said, "to get used to it". He made the best of the situation and managed to gain something from it. Boarding schools have generally been the subject of horror stories, but Munro, while acknowledging the loneliness, the despair and the anger that he felt, also tells about the good times that he had and the friendships that he made.⁶⁰ Munro's explanation about why he could not return home for the summer and his understanding of that situation, lends evidence in support of his reconciliation with his situation, which he regarded as inevitable.

Unlike, most residential schools in which students only learned about agriculture, the school Munro attended also offered hunting. Learning how to hunt was useful to Munro because later he was able to apply this knowledge to

⁶⁰ See Basil Johnston's autobiographical work, *School Days*, for a frank presentation of a Native boy's experience, which incorporates both the good and the bad, of residential school.

make a living. Once Munro completed school, he stayed on and functioned as a 'master of all trades'. Munro's flexibility was invaluable to his future.

After his work term, Munro returned to Moose Factory. He states, "For the life of me I can't figure out why I came back, other than that I was born here, because when I came back I was a complete stranger and I hardly recalled how my father was when I left" (Linklater 1988/89, 186 above). Munro's return to his Native community as opposed to any other community suggests a level of comfort with his community. As is evidenced in these life histories, a lot of Natives return to their communities even after having been away for a long time. There seems to be a pull towards their Native roots.

Like many Natives who go away to residential school it took Munro some time to get reintegrated into his community. However, it did not take him long to get reintegrated because he got a job with his father and he had a basis for the Cree language. Getting a job with his father, and speaking the language, even just a little bit, provided Munro with a sense of belonging. Furthermore, it provided him with tangible support and nurturance until he was able to assume total responsibility for himself:

So I came back and started working under my father's own business on the boats...for a couple of years...I came back and I couldn't converse in Cree. I spoke English till I got a hold of Cree

again. It took me three months I guess (.). I just started working. I did seasonal work in the area.....Employment was very limited. Till I joined up [the army] I worked with a dog team with my father and I sailed up the coast with the schooner to deliver supplies up the coast. I think that that was one of my better times when I used to travel. It was challenging. You never knew what to expect. No day was the same. Every day was different" (Linklater 1988/89, 188 above).

Munro was well equipped to handle the limited work that was available in his community. Since he had been a 'master of all trades' in residential school, he was able to take on any job that was available. He was prepared to face the challenge of whatever came his way - even the war.

Munro survived the war and returned from his service to Moose Factory only to discover that there were even fewer work opportunities than before, available on the island. This being the case he resorted to his hunting skills to sustain a living and provide for his family;

Back then, after the war, there was nothing much doing here and I did my apprenticeship, so to speak, in the bush with my in-laws for about five seasons. I used to spend time in the bush trying to keep existence intact (Linklater 1988/89, 192 above).

Once again Munro tells us that he did whatever he had to do to "keep existence intact". He was always busy and still is, even in his "so-called retirement years";

In my so-called retirement years I'm still very busy. I like to do what I can at any age that I am. I've always been like that for as long as I can remember, which is a long time ago (Linklater 1988/89, 194 above).

It is quite clear from Munro's experience that his diversified abilities and his biculturalism were advantageous to him. They enabled him to adapt to whatever situation he was confronted with in whatever place or time. This knowledge is obviously efficacious.

Munro has had an enormous influence on his children's lives, and as an elder on many other's lives as well. Espousing the importance of productivity, his children have claimed that as an important value for themselves. They, like him, are productive and take good care of their families. These are values that they picked up from their father.

Munro always ensured that his family was well provided for. He speaks proudly of the fact that his children are taking care of themselves and their families; "...they all seem to be...you know, they're not on welfare. At least that is for sure. Not my family. They're all doing something (Linklater 1988/89, 193 above). Munro is indicating here the importance of individual autonomy and social responsibility. His children are autonomous because they do not depend on welfare; they make their own living, and they are socially responsible because they provide for their children. In other words, they, like him are competent. Productivity and the ability to fend for oneself and for others, as an indication of competence is also

alluded to by Norm who similarly states, "I've never been on welfare, lets put it that way (..) (Wesley 1988, 99 above).

Munro believes that his children's success is a result of the environment in which they were raised. It was conducive to ensuring their well-being. He does not explicitly state this with regards to his own children, but he suggests this when he explains why he thinks that others' children have not been as successful;

I see my other peer group that had kids that grew up in a different environment. All their families are fragmented and socially they're, you know, they have single-parent families or the families are broken up with no solid social...their well-being was not set up I guess, the way it should have been (Linklater 1988/89, 195 above).

This statement emphasizes the responsibility that parents have towards their children. As the other narrators have shown, the future well-being of their children and their ability to 'make it on their own' is to a certain degree dependent upon the parents, and the social stability that they provide for their children. Munro feels that much of this stability is lacking, however, because people do not stop to take 'stock' of themselves. They do not consider what the implication of their actions are for the future generations;

But they're [the leaders] so held back in getting caught up with the technologies too, that they can't be bothered to take stock and say, this is what we should do to our children. They don't think like that (Linklater 1988/89, 199 above)

Therefore, they do not behave socially responsibly. This is exemplified in the rate at which change is allowed to occur in their Native community.

Munro feels that the pace of change is too rapid in his community. The technological advances, which are being opted for and which facilitate fast communication with the south are creating culture loss:

But one of the things that bothers me is that a lot of young people are losing their culture very fast. I've even lectured the high school kids across the road [Moosonee] that technology is going too fast and their culture is slipping away. These Native programs that they see, they just might help. Their attitude toward Native life might change later on, once they know where they are from. Right now it's going out very fast (Linklater 1988/89, 197-198 above).

Munro feels that people are not taking responsibility for their choices and their actions. They are acting without wisdom. They are not sustaining that which will later be useful to them, their culture, specifically knowledge of their culture and where they came from, which is of paramount importance for establishing a sense of self.

Like the other narrators, Munro explicitly states the importance of knowing the past for ensuring successful survival in the future. They need to know who they are, where they came from, so that they can have a strong sense of self. This, I believe, is one of the major reasons that all the narrators returned to their communities, because it was there that they had a sense of history. They had been

uprooted from their homes when they were young and immersed into a place which they knew was not their's, so they needed to obtain knowledge about their origins so that they could have a sense of self.

According to Munro, in order to ensure that culture is not lost, the children "should be saturated with the Indian culture [by] the leaders of the communities" (1988/89, 199 above). But to do this, the leaders have to assume partial responsibility for the changes that are occurring and then act accordingly. Their culture can only slip away if they let it. They need to have some foresight and think more critically about the consequences of their present actions.

It is this same lack of foresight which guides the Natives' interest in the liquor store in Moosonee. Many of the Natives do not want to see the liquor store go, in spite of all the deaths which occur as a result of alcohol:

Booze, it's a curse as far as I'm concerned, for anyone. It's really depressing when I think about it. Ever since they put that liquor store here in '73 at least four or maybe five, maybe even six people died in the area every year. What I'm saying is if that liquor store wasn't there by no stretch of the imagination would liquor be eradicated, but what I'm saying is that instead of six dying, maybe only two would die... ...It's the booze that does it. It's completely the booze, beating each other, shooting each other or breaking up and the whole thing, it's the booze (Linklater 1988/89, 200-201 above).

Munro realizes that people cannot be held responsible when they are abusing alcohol. However, like Allan, he is

implying that people need to take responsibility for themselves and they need to look at themselves, so that they can make decisions which are better for the future; their's and other's. Removing the liquor store will not eradicate the use of alcohol, but its absence might at least remove that which denies them their responsibility. It may supply the impetus for change. This is what Munro tells us.

The analysis of the elders' life histories shows their wisdom. The analysis of the following adult life histories shows in action the wisdom of that guidance. Though Redfern and Munro explicitly state that the present generations do not exercise foresight and do not stop to take 'stock' of themselves, the adults in this thesis do. As such, they are a select group of exemplary individuals, who not only use foresight and take 'stock' of themselves, but also, offer guidance consistent with the elders.

Mary Nootchtai

Mary's narrative begins with a description of her childhood experiences in the bush, where she and her family lived a traditional lifestyle; hunting, trapping and fishing. Although her recollections of this period are limited she recalls their daily activities and the fun that she had.

Mary's lifestyle was altered when she and her family moved to Moosonee. This shift in lifestyle resulted in the loss of 'culture', Mary claims. "[Moving] was sort of a bad thing because you lost...you weren't busy all the time. You couldn't go out hunting every time you felt like it because your kids were going to school (...). And so you lost a lot of (...) your culture, I'd guess, you'd say; like the way you do things, like hunting or what you teach your kids. You lost a lot of it" (Nootchtai 1988, 47 above). It was difficult for Mary's father to adjust to the change in lifestyle as he could not pick up and go hunting whenever he desired. But, their culture was not altogether lost because some of the beliefs about the land and their relationship to the land, were still carried on; it was the actions that were lost - although not entirely. Some of the actions were still maintained. Mary explains:

I know how to clean geese and make bannock. Those are not lost. (...) And my father today, he still makes tamarack. The only time he goes out hunting (...) it is still for survival (...). He fills up the freezer with meat for the winter, and it's shared with the family like it was a long time ago.....whatever they kill, it's still the needs for survival, even though they're living in a house with all the modern conveniences and everything. So that part is still carried on (Nootchtai 1988, 45 above).

Today, Mary's father teaches his grandson how to hunt, and Mary feels that it is important that her son know about hunting as "it was a way of life and it still is for

some people" (Nootchtai 1988, 49 above). Mary also tells her children about her parents' lifestyle. "I don't think that it's what you do, but rather what you remember or pass along to your kids...I think I would try and teach them about what my parents taught me" (Nootchtai 1988, 54 above).

Mary emphasizes the importance of knowledge of the past over past action. Ideally, she would prefer to see a balance between knowledge and action and or practice of the traditional ways. However, the emphasis is on knowledge of the past over practice of the lifestyle of the past because in their present lifestyle past actions are not always directly applicable. However, knowledge from and about the past can be applied to their present lifestyle in contemporary ways. It is a shift in balance between knowledge and action and Mary is aware that she needs to innovate upon her traditional cultural base to make it viable.

Mary elucidates upon the importance of knowledge and practice when she discusses the loss of the Cree language. She admits that she did not always speak Cree, to her children [practice/action], as she did not recognize that knowing their language was their link to their past and their Cree identity [knowledge]; "Yah, now I do [speak to my children in Cree]. I know how important it is. They can't talk to my father, their grandfather (...) and that part is

sad... ...Now I realize how important it is to keep up your language. It gives you a sense of (...) being Cree, you know, a part of it" (Nootchtai 1988, 48-49 above).

Culture as action is lost in the method that knowledge was traditionally passed down. When one was being taught something they were not told what to do, but rather shown what to do. For example, when Mary wanted to learn how to make tamarack birds she requested that her father explain what he was doing as he went along. But he requested that she only watch. There was to be no talking.

Demonstrating what is done as opposed to verbally explaining what is done facilitates communication between Mary's son and his grandfather, even though Mary's son cannot speak Cree. This capacity to transmit knowledge through demonstration facilitates the transmission of traditional culture and hence can be considered a culturally adaptive and advantageous practice. Needless to say, much of culture is transmitted through demonstration, only it is apprehended unconsciously and thus it is not always recognized. Furthermore, this method of teaching is less impositional and allows individuals to develop their own way of doing things, thereby enabling the development of individual style. This is of paramount importance in Cree culture, where non-interference and self-reliance are highly valued.

Similarly, traditionally children were taught lessons through stories. They were not punished and or told directly what to do or what not to do - that is, they were not told what choices to make - rather they were disciplined and or guided through the telling of stories which comprised lessons. Thus children were allowed to develop in their own directions. It is still common practice in Cree communities to communicate Cree ideals, norms of behaviour, and guidance through the telling of stories. However, this method is not always applicable in the lifestyle and community life which occurs today. Nowadays, Mary feels that children need to have limits on their behaviour and they need to be more directly told about things.

While Mary believes that it is important for her children to know about their history, she points out the importance of adapting to their new environment. Where her children are concerned, she believes that she can no longer practise the same form of discipline that her parents practised with her. That is, she cannot always be non-interfering and allow her children to learn from the consequences of their actions, because nowadays the consequences of their actions may be detrimental to their lives. Also, she cannot just tell them stories and hope that they will learn from them. She finds that with increased traffic, and an increased number of strangers around

children, and the widespread use and abuse of alcohol in the community, non-interference is inappropriate:

Now things are so different.....We're living in a different world. At one time it would have been okay to let your kid go, but now society is changing.....I think you're asking for trouble if you send your kid out there, and you say, go out there and learn for yourself. I think that you have to sit down and explain to them that things are changing, that you can't live like that any more, the way it was a long time ago. When I came to Moosonee there was not much drinking going on... ..it wasn't everyday that you saw somebody drunk. And if you did, everybody would stare at them because this person was drunk. Now it's an everyday thing. Everyday you see somebody that's drunk. And you don't think anything of it, which is kind of scary because it's so acceptable (Nootchtai 1988, 54-56 above).

Native parents have traditionally not interfered much in the lives of their children. Plenty of love and freedom characterized the parental attitude. These are values however, that many Natives, like Mary, are reassessing.

Dr. Clare Brant, a Mohawk from the Tyendinaga Reserve near Belleville states;

Indians can be successful and traditional at the same time, but they need to reassess which of their deeply held values are still appropriate to their lives. 'The times they-are-a-changing'. Non-interference by parents is not safe any longer. Increased traffic, more strangers around children and sexual perverts who could take advantage of them requires that they have constant surveillance and supervision.....[Native people] have to look at their old values and make a conscious choice between which to practice and which to discard (Brant in Mombourquette 1990: 15).

Aside from Mary's awareness of the changing times, and the necessity that she change along with them, Mary's personal

experiences also influence the way that she raises her children.

It was exceptionally difficult for Mary when she was taken away to residential school. Not only was it difficult because she had to be away from home, but also, because she could not understand why she could not live at home with her parents. Since her parents gave her no explanation, she just assumed that they did not care for her. They could not and did not explain to her at that time, that they did love her but that they could not take care of her because there were too many mouths to feed and just not enough money;

"I thought maybe our parents didn't care for us. But that wasn't true. I remember we would go hungry sometimes and I guess that's the reason why we had to be in school, because our parents couldn't take care of us. Nobody was working at the time. We were all on welfare, and there were just too many of us" (Nootchtai 1988, 51 above).

Of course Mary's parents were also legally obliged to send her to school.

Mary's recollection of how she felt when she did not understand why she was sent to residential school because her parents had not explained the reasons to her, makes her feel that it is important for her to have open lines of communication with her children. Thus, Mary's modified traditional Cree child-rearing practices result from her awareness of the changes in her environment and from her personal childhood experiences. Recognizing the changes in

her environment she makes the necessary adaptations to ensure survival; recalling how she felt when she was a child in certain situations, she applies that experience and knowledge to the way that she treats her children. Therefore her past experiences shape her present choices. The ability to alter future behaviour in light of acquired knowledge is one component of competence.

The importance of change for ensuring survival was not something that Mary simply stumbled upon. It had been part of her childhood experience. She remembers her mother talking about the exact same thing;

I think that as a parent you have to change too.
(...)I remember my mother trying to talk to my father that way, that as times change you've got to change with the times, like to be able to understand your culture (Nootchtai 1988, 57 above).

Mary's ability to successfully adapt to her changing social and cultural environment is indicative of her competence. She is able to apply what her mother taught her as a child to her present day experience. She appreciates the value and the applicability of her mother's words. This is evidenced in her attempts to transmit some of the values [knowledge] that she acquired from her parents to her children;

I don't think it's what you do, but rather what you remember or pass along to your kids. (...)Like if my son wasn't hunting, I think I would try to teach them about what my parents taught me (Nootchtai 1988, 54 above).

Mary admits that she did not realize the value in her parents' words and teachings until she herself had children. Once she had children of her own, her parents' beliefs and actions became meaningful.

The competence which Mary displays requires a considerable amount of self-confidence. Mary suggests that she only recently began to gain that self-confidence: "It's only been four or five years that I really started growing as a person" (1988, 75 above). Up until then Mary had not assumed personal responsibility, yet assumed responsibility for those who were capable of taking care of themselves. She let her husband do her thinking while she looked after all his needs. Mary explains,

But it took me a long time just (...) to build up my self-esteem a little bit myself about myself. Only then could I do things to change things around me. I was looking at myself for a change. Looking at my children for a change instead of trying to cope with him [her husband] or trying to help him. I gave up, you know (Nootchtai 1988, 67 above).

Mary recounts an event which she believes motivated her to make a change:

Well, I'll tell you something that happened, (...) why I started looking at my kids too. They were doing things (...) that touched me... (...) I was crying one time, and my son, Craig was only about four or five. (...). He crawled up onto my knee and I just sat crying, and he was going like this to me [she gestures wiping off her eyes]. Like to me? And I looked at this kid and I thought, 'My god! I should be doing that to you, sitting there comforting you.' And I thought, 'Oh, I'm going to snap out of it. No more!' (Nootchtai 1988, 72 above).

Mary signifies this occasion as her turning point. At this time she enters into a new relationship with her children and her husband. She recognizes the responsibilities that she has towards her children; to take care of them, rather than them taking care of her, and, she also realizes the limits of her responsibility with her husband. The balance between individual autonomy and social responsibility is changed. From this point on, she stops neglecting herself and her children. As Mary states however, it took her some time to arrive at this point. Her competence developed over a period of time in which she experienced many hardships.

At the age of seventeen Mary got pregnant, and from then on, "it was down hill!!!"[Mary jokes] (1988, 64 above). When she found out that she was pregnant she did not want to marry the father of her child. She did not want him to marry her just because she was having their child. In other words, she did not want him taking responsibility for her. In fact, she was prepared to take responsibility for herself and her child. She wanted to ensure a good life for her child so she planned to return to school and to complete her courses:

I didn't want to see him after I found out that I was pregnant. I didn't want (...) him to feel obligated to take care of me because I was pregnant with his baby, so I said that I wouldn't marry him.....I was already making plans for what I was going to do; go back to school, and this time I had to stick it out because I had this kid I had to support (Nootchtai 1988, 64 above).

Mary had quit school several times prior to her pregnancy. She was unable to commit to her studies. It appears that she had difficulties adjusting to the changes in her environment. Mary alludes to this when she discusses the compounded difficulties which teenagers have to face when they leave their communities to attend high school; not only are they confronted with their own physiological and psychological changes but also with strangers and an unfamiliar environment. Her baby's arrival however, awakened Mary to the fact that she had somebody for whom she had to provide; somebody who's survival was totally dependent upon her. She now had another person's life to consider when making her decisions.

Mary did eventually marry Wes. She gave in to his and his family's pressure. It was down hill, as she points out, from this point on. Mary and Wes were unable to establish a stable relationship. He drank a lot and could not hold down a job. He did not take on any responsibility for the care of his family, and he was very abusive. Wes' behaviour displays incompetence. He ignores any social responsibility.

Mary was unaware of the effects that their abusive situation was having on their children. She could not yet see the consequences of her actions:

(..)Up until last summer my daughter was still talking about things that hurt her.....I didn't

even know that this was hurting her all that time. I guess you get so wrapped up (...) in yourself sometimes, your own hurts, your own failures... (Nootchtai 1988, 74 above).

She was not behaving competently. Firstly, she did not hold Wes accountable for his actions and thus assumed responsibility for him. Secondly, she was not socially responsible enough to notice how Wes' abuse was affecting their children. She was too wrapped up in herself. We can see from Mary's behaviour that she had not yet achieved a balance between individual autonomy and social responsibility. In retrospect however, she can see the effects that her behaviour had on her children;

After he left I knew that I had done something that I should have done a long time ago, because it did hurt my kids a lot (Nootchtai 1988, 73 above).

Like many women in abusive situations Mary blamed herself for everything that was happening. She could not understand why her husband, treated her as he did. She concluded that it was her own fault, and believed that if she changed, then the situation would change as well. Mary obviously over-estimated her control of the situation. Unable to recognize that Wes was at least partially responsible for what was going on, Mary assumed too much responsibility for his behaviour. She states;

I don't know how I survived those years when things were tough. I know there were times when I thought that I didn't want to live any more (...). All that kept me going was the kids (Nootchtai 1988, 71 above).

Mary attributes her ability to keep herself going to her children. Her felt responsibility towards them gave her the motivation to carry on. Like her mother, she wanted to ensure that her children were taken care of;

...it goes back to my mother, I guess, where no matter what happened - like none of this was going on with her and my father,...but there were some rough times, but she always made sure that the children were okay (Nootchtai 1988, 72 above).

Mary's mother's behaviour with her children directly influence Mary's behaviour with her own. The example which Mary's mother had set, facilitated Mary in making her decision to change her situation. There were however, two other factors that helped Mary choose to change; reading and attending school.

Reading about family violence helped Mary to reflect upon her own experience. It made her more aware of the consequences of her abusive situation.⁶¹ It made her realize that she was not alone and that she was not solely responsible for the situation. She explains,

Like, I knew before. I had this feeling that I didn't have to live like that (...). I started reading about family violence and then I really knew that he had no right to do that to me. I didn't see what was happening to my kids because of it. I always thought that it was important to have a mother and a father, but not to the point where your life is at stake...(Nootchtai 1988, 68 above).

Reading gave Mary insight into abusive situations and enabled her to be more objective about her role in her relationship.

⁶¹ See Logotheti (1990) for further discussion on the effects of reading about others in abusive situations.

Attending school enhanced this objectivity and helped her to feel better about herself:

When I went to school (...) it influenced me; what and how I thought about myself...And from there, (...) from feeling good about myself, I was sort of...I could let go of him!? And he was just hanging on, you know, sort of pulling me back. So I said, "Fine, you can come with me or you can stay there where you are, but I'm going and I'm taking the kids with me" (Nootchtai 1988, 75-76 above).

Mary started feeling more autonomous, and at the same time less, responsible for Wes, who was an adult and presumably capable of taking care of himself.

Mary's school attendance threatened Wes. According to Mary there were two reasons for this: first he wanted to isolate her and ensure her silence; and second, he thought people at school were filling her head up with ideas:

He didn't like that idea of me going to school. He felt very threatened that I had friends outside the community that I was talking to. He always thought that people were putting things into my head... ...I know that if there's a lot of family violence in the home a lot of the men, most of the men, don't want it to be known outside of the family that there is abuse going on, so they isolate you from your friends and family. They don't want you going anywhere. They feel threatened, I guess, that as soon as you step out of the home maybe you're going to tell somebody what they are really like (Nootchtai 1988, 68-70 above).

Mary never did tell anybody, but she claims that people knew, only no one did anything about it. People did not interfere, although she implicitly states that it may have been appropriate for them to have done so; she claims that she

would help someone today if she knew that they were in a similar situation as hers.

Wes was convinced that people were putting ideas into Mary's head. He believed that she would otherwise not have considered leaving him. Wes did not acknowledge Mary's individual autonomy and therefore her capacity to make her own choices. Mary always felt that things were not quite as they should be in her relationship. However, she lacked the personal strength, which stems from self-confidence/ self-reliance, to make the decision to get out of that situation. School gave her that extra little bit of confidence and indirectly, support, that she needed to be able to decide to get out of her abusive situation, take control of her life, and make Wes' life, not of her concern:

(..)Wes said at that time, "You wouldn't think of this yourself. Somebody is putting ideas in your head." And I said, "No, I always had these kind of feelings about myself (..) or the things I want to do. I have dreams," I said, "for my children, and you know, for us too as a family, but...We're not getting anywhere. In fact, you're going down. And I think I've had enough," I said. "So you can either come with me or you can stay where you are, or sink lower." (..). He said that it was really strange the way I was talking. It couldn't have come from me. "But this is the first time I'm learning to express myself," I said (Nootchtai 1988, 76 above).

Mary's new self-determination is evident in this quote. She recognizes and assumes the responsibility that she has to herself and to her children. She also recognizes the limits of her responsibility for Wes, a full-grown adult.

Taking control of her life and reconciling with her present and previous decisions, enabled Mary to ensure not only her happiness but also the happiness and well-being of her children. She states,

It was a mistake I made. I mean, I don't call my children a mistake. They were the best thing that ever happened to me (1991: 65)... ..But I've learned to deal with those things in the last four years. I don't look upon myself as a failure, even though some things go wrong with my kids. I don't look at myself as a failure as a parent (1988, 74 above).

The confidence in this last statement is also illustrated in Mary's response to Wes a couple of months after they had separated. Wes called and asked her whether she was still 'mad' at him. But she was not:

The first year he left that was March 1984, he called me up two months later and asked me if I was still mad, which was silly. I wasn't mad at all. I just said, "I'm not off on one of my silent treatments. I'm not mad any more, but you're not coming home." For a year it went on like that. He'd phone and say, "Are you mad honey? Can I come home?" "I'm not mad, but you can't come home." That's what I kept saying to him. He was still doing that two years later (Nootchtai 1988, 68-69 above).

Wes still had not recognized the resolution in Mary's decision. He was still incompetent. Throughout their relationship, Wes took Mary's responsibility away from her, while Mary assumed responsibility for his beliefs, actions and the consequences of those actions. But this was no longer to be the case.

Mary's experience, although trying, left her whole. It is almost as if her falling apart and then her having to pick up the pieces again, enabled her to gain confidence in herself, and take on responsibility for herself and for others; taking responsibility for others only when it is necessary and appropriate to do so. Mary's experiences certainly laid the groundwork for her gradual attainment of competence, however, this process was facilitated and guided by her strong belief in family, to which she refers time and time again when she speaks about her children;

It's important, I think to keep family together, even though I don't have...I'm a single parent instead of married, but the kids are very important to me.

That's the reason I could get out of what was happening to me before. And I found out that I was important too (Nootchtai 1988, 75 above).

By acknowledging the importance of her children, Mary was able to discover her self-importance as well. Her concern for her children helped to direct her personal choices and lead her to herself.

Using her personal experiences to guide her, Mary tries to instill the value of self-importance in her children. She talks with her children a great deal more than her parents talked with her. She tries to let them know that their lives need not be like hers. She tells them about the opportunities that are available to them, both inside and outside their community, although predominantly outside. She

reassures them that these opportunities will never cut them off from their home. They can have both, just as she had. The following quote expounds Mary's beliefs and also illustrates her acceptance of the need for change, as she had to undergo some changes herself:

(..)I'd like to see the kids get a high school education. (.....). And I want them to know that there's another world out there and that they can survive there too, (..) without having the same problems that I did. (..)It sounds good to tell your children I guess, not to forget what it was like to live as the old way, but that's the old way. Times have changed now and you're not living in a place now where everybody is living the traditional lifestyle. You're living in a place where you take the best of both worlds and you go from there.....I talk to them all the time. It's important. I said, "You can come back here (..) if you want. This is your home town. It's always going to be your home town. Look at me," I said, "I'm thirty years old and I was out the last twenty years, here and there, but I came back here. So you can do the same, if that's what you want(...)" (Nootchtai 1988, 76-77 above).

At the same time that Mary gives her children support and guidance, she remembers, and reminds them, that she is not the all-knowing and all-seeing parent. She recognizes and acknowledges the limits of her competence.

Mary's son, Craig, forced her one day, to look at her behaviour and see the limits of her competence. He confronted her with his experience of her behaviour. She arrived home and found Craig on his own. At this time Craig accused her of not loving him; "'Sometimes I don't think you love me'" (Nootchtai 1988, 79 above). She questioned why he

felt this way and he replied, "'You're so mean to me. You pick on me, You're harder on me. I think you love Su and Aaron better!'" (Nootchtai 1988, 79 above). Craig's emotional and honest outburst forced Mary to stand back and look at and reappraise her behaviour. At this time she admitted to Craig;

You're right. You're absolutely right. I'm going about this all the wrong way. I look at you and I see your dad (...) and I feel so angry sometimes, and I take it out on you. I'm harder on you than with Su and Aaron. You remind me so much of your father. You're stubborn, you're bull-headed (Nootchtai 1988, 79-80 above).

But Craig did not accept his mother's characterizations unquestioningly. He retorted and stated, "'But so are you!'" (Nootchtai 1988, 80 above). Mary humbly accepted her son's accusation; "You know, you're right about that too" (Nootchtai 1988, 80 above). And then with confidence Mary explained her parental limitations to her son.

I'll tell you something about parents...They don't know everything. It just looks like they do...(Nootchtai 1988, 80 above).

Therefore, Mary not only recognizes the limits of her competence but she also shares that knowledge with her children.

Since Mary knows that she is not the all-seeing and all-knowing parent, she knows that she has to give her children the opportunity to discover and learn about life on their own, - just as she did - and she tries, within certain

limits, not to interfere with their right to do so. She says, "You've got to set limits. You can let them grow up, it depends on what it is they're trying to do, whether it's harmful to them or not" (Nootchtai 1988, 57 above). Mary tries to maintain a balance.

Norm Wesley

Norm is reflective, self-aware and confident. His confidence stems from his education and from his knowledge and understanding of the past; the lifestyle and relationship to the land that his predecessors had, and the values and beliefs that they followed. Norm's ability to apply the values and beliefs of his predecessors in a modified form, to the present, make him confident. He sees himself as a successful person:

I identify myself not in the physical sense but...in terms of the knowledge of who my parents were, or who my grandparents were, the lifestyle they lived, the relationship they had with the environment, the values and the beliefs that they followed. To know that, not necessarily to practice the actual way of life that they followed, but to be able to get an understanding of their relationship between other living things, the different values and beliefs that they had and to try as much as possible to apply them to every day life today. The rate at which one is successful is based on knowing your past - to take the challenges and make the necessary adaptations to succeed (Wesley 1988, 108 above).

Norm, like Mary, emphasizes the importance of knowing about the past as opposed to necessarily practising that way of life. Having knowledge about the past and applying that knowledge in some modified form, to the present is what Norm considers appropriate. Once again, the emphasis is on culture as knowledge and not necessarily practice.

Norm is consistent about his convictions as is evidenced in an interview with Maureen Simpkins (1990). This illustrates his competence and the depth of his belief:

But what's important is not that we live a lifestyle [like the previous generations who spent '365 days of the year outside']. What's important is that we search for that knowledge that these people had of the environment; the land, the values, the beliefs that we have, the source of that knowledge, that understanding, so that even in today's world, in no matter what we do, we will be conscious of that, that when we break away from sacred times we are slowly beginning to erode not only our cultural identity, but the land. If the land's not there, then we don't survive. It's as simple as that (Wesley in Simpkins 1990: 14).

Norm considers knowledge of the past, and the application of that knowledge, not necessarily that action, as the only hope for the future. Making the necessary adaptations to succeed however, is not a simple task, for often times one's successful adaptation to the two cultures is subject to public criticism from both inside and outside the community. As an example of such criticism, recall the incident that Mary recounted in her narrative.

She described an incident in which an Indian woman on the street asked Mary for some money. Mary replied that she did not have any. The woman retorted, "You think you're better than me eh? You're trying to act like a white man." But, Mary explained to her that she was just trying to make a better life for herself, an attempt which was neither white nor Indian. Furthermore, she explained, "So what am I supposed to do, fall down drunk? It's not Indian to be drunk" (Nootchtai 1988, 60-61 above).

In another incident, Mary was called "a stinking Indian, a dirty squaw" by one of her white classmates. "So," as Mary says, "you get it both ways. Even if you try, they call you a dirty Indian or something, and the Indian that is down and out (..), says you're trying to act like a white man" (Nootchtai 1988, 60 above). Such public scrutiny, which indicates an incongruency between the two cultures, can have profound effects on individuals who do not have a strong sense of self. This often leads to cultural dis-ease with symptoms such as alcoholism. Developing a strong sense of self requires a lot of nurturing.

Norm speaks to this experience and states that it is not what you do on the outside, but what you believe on the inside that makes you who you are:

If anything it's a state of mind more than anything else. You will see Native people trying to identify themselves as being Indian by the way they dress, by the way they project themselves out to

other people, perhaps by wearing braids, buckskins, or Indian jewellery or moccasins. I do that too from time to time, but I don't go out of my way to put myself on some kind of a stage to say, 'here I am, because of the way I look and dress, I am an Indian. There's more to it than that.

(...)From time to time people have been accused of being an apple. They say, red on the outside and white on the inside(...). (...). But you know, you have to be able to take that same apple and cut it down the middle. You'll see that it is red on the outside, red on the inside and white in the middle. But that's not important. What's important is in the very centre core of what that apple is all about. And that's the seed that's inside the very centre of that very apple. And that seed my seed, is the perpetuation of the mind of who an Indian is, the values, the beliefs, the background...(Wesley 1988, 109-110 above).

Here Norm once again makes a distinction between practice and knowledge. He claims that it is not only what you do on the outside, but also, and perhaps more importantly what you believe on the inside, that counts. The importance of the perpetuation of the 'mind', which he equates with knowledge, is what makes an Indian. And in Norm's case there is congruency between his beliefs and his actions, which is a clear indication of his competence.

Norm does not let what others think of him interfere with his strong sense of self. He is autonomous and does not depend on other's opinions of him for his personal definition:

It's my own state of mind that I believe in. I can prove to people, I can sit down with people and tell them what I believe in, in terms of who I think I am, and articulate it comfortably from inside, and defend myself. And if a person says, 'you're just a middle-class Indian who makes a lot of money,' well, fine. But I had to work for that.

(..)I had to sacrifice a lot of my personal time to get to where I am now. It's the sacrifices I made. It wasn't given to me. I earned it. And if other people had done that...perhaps they would have been in the same position regardless of who they are (Wesley 1988, 110-111 above).

One of the first sacrifices on personal time that Norm made in his life was attending the Native Teacher Education program set up by the Department of Indian Affairs and the Ministry of Education. He identifies this as one of the main turning points in his life:

One of the things that we were encouraged to do when I was graduating out of high school in North Bay, was to go into teaching.....We were only about eighteen, nineteen then. And at that time we just laughed. Shit, we just finished going through some twelve years of school (...)! But when a few years later the opportunity of going to Teacher's College came (..) if I hadn't taken it, I'm not sure where I would be right now. I think that that was one of my main turning points in my life (Wesley 1988, 96 above).

Norm demarcates this as a turning point in his life because numerous opportunities were opened up to him, which may have otherwise been unavailable had he not taken that course.

When Norm initially made the decision to attend, he was unaware of the positive consequences of his action. Indeed, when the opportunity first arrived at the end of high school he considered it quite ludicrous. He did not yet have any foresight. He thus attributes the fact that he made good choices to good fortune;

Perhaps I was fortunate enough to make the mistake of making the right move. Some people make the mistake of making the wrong move. I say I made the mistake of making the right move because I probably

didn't know I was making the right move. I know there have been a number of occasions over the last twelve or fifteen years where I said to myself, 'I must be the luckiest person in the world. (...). Somebody's got to be looking after me. Something inside me makes me capable for doing what I have to do, an energy, even when it's too difficult' (Wesley 1988, 95-96 above).

Norm's decision to attend Teacher's College and his completion of an undergraduate degree, provided him with many work opportunities. In other words, his education was the tool that Norm used to ensure his survival. He states,

It was interesting you know. Once I had my teaching certificate (..) and once I got my degree, when I came back, I wasn't worried. I didn't even look for a job. People came and asked me if I was interested in working...(Wesley 1988, 97 above).

Norm very quickly experienced tangible rewards for his discipline and his labours. The time that he took getting educated paid off, as it gave him the opportunity to obtain jobs which enabled him to put food on the table. His experience is comparable to that of a skilled hunter. A hunter who takes the time to learn the rules in hunting and practises patience and perseverance, obtains a good kill. Although the means to the end, providing for the family, are different, both means require a learning process. Norm elucidates:

...To put food on the table for the family was a concept that was very strong in our people. You had to become a good hunter, a good trapper and a good fisherman (..) to put food on your table. (...). And there was a learning process that you had to go through in order to be able to have those skills to do it. And if you didn't take the time to do it, or you didn't pay attention to do it,

then you would not be able to do it. As a consequence (..)it wasn't easy for you to survive (..). There was a learning process. There was a whole process of educating, getting that education. It's different today. (.?.). It's a different situation but the same rules are there; to put food on the table, to become independent, to become self-sufficient for yourself and for your family you have to go through a process of education. If you're going to learn how to hunt, if you want to be a trapper, hunter, fisherman, then you don't go to school, you go out there and do it. But there's still that learning process that is required (Wesley 1988, 111-112 above).

The ends are the same, "to put food on the table" only the means are different. Norm's parents facilitated Norm's acquisition of competence. From a very early age they encouraged him to go to school; "Both my parents of course were very influential in ensuring that we finished elementary and secondary school. Then after that, it was more us" (Wesley 1988, 86-87 above). Having received the necessary nurturance and support, Norm was later able to make his own decisions.

The indirect guidance that Norm received from his parents influenced him greatly, for he was able to succeed where many of his contemporaries failed. He, like Mary, was able to apply what his parents had taught him to his contemporary situation:

I think my parents had something to do with it...They never directly encouraged me to do anything past high school. They never said go out and get a college education, or a university education (..). Never. It wasn't really something that they fully understood. (..)They weren't really that familiar with that kind of situation, of that demand (..). But there was always that

kind of lecturing that we would get about preparing ourselves for adulthood. I guess we had to kind of adapt what we were told, to how life would inevitably be when we got to be adults (Wesley 1988, 94 above).

Norm was able to find value and application in the advice that his parents had given him. From a very young age, Norm and his brother and sisters were lectured about the importance of preparing themselves for adulthood. Although Norm's father did not fully understand the concept of going to school he ensured that his children were up everyday to attend school, because he realized that getting up was one of the requirements of the day. Norm explains;

He [his father] said, "One of these days you guys are going to be working and you're going to have to get up on time, and you have to learn how to do this (...)." (?). He understood the concept of us inevitably, in all probability getting into this wage earning economy or lifestyle. (...)And the first demand, the first order of the day was getting up in the morning in time for what you're supposed to do, or for where you're supposed to be (Wesley 1988, 86 above).

Norm's father may not have had a clear idea about the type of life that Norm would lead, but he knew about the requirements for survival.

Norm's father encouraged Norm to buy a boat when he became an adult because according to his experience and the way of life that he knew, a boat was an essential piece of equipment for survival;

(...)I can still hear my dad saying that the very first thing you need in adulthood is a boat. ..."If there's anything you have to buy Norm, it's a boat".....[I]n that lifestyle my dad lived in,

that boat was a very very essential piece of equipment. Without his boat he couldn't go anywhere, absolutely nowhere (Wesley 1988, 94-95 above).

Norm did get a boat, but as he states, "That doesn't make me that much more prepared for adult life" (Wesley 1988, 94 above).

Norm's preparedness for adult life is a result of his ability to take what his father told him and translate it into present terms; "Maybe it was perhaps the kind of advice that we were given and my ability to perhaps translate it into the kind of lifestyle that we would meet" (Wesley 1988, 95 above). Norm demonstrates;

I think that what he was telling me was that there are essential things in life that you need; "In the life I understand right now, you need a boat."...Certainly that boat to me right now, that boat that my dad wanted me to get, is that university education. That university education I've received now, although it's not a physical thing, if you will, it's a piece of paper that hangs up (...), it is a very essential part of what enables me to put food on the table (Wesley 1988, 94-95 above).

What Norm's father was talking to him about was survival; the concept of putting food on the table for himself and for his family. Although the means by which Norm would be 'putting food on the table' would be different than his father's means for 'putting food on the table', there was a similar learning process required by both. Norm had to go through a learning process so that he could 'earn' a living. That is what Norm's father encouraged him to do; to learn how to survive;

[Earning] if you want to talk about it in a traditional sense, it's putting food on the table for the family. That very concept itself is saying to survive. To put food on the table for yourself and your family. That was a concept that was very strong in our people (Wesley 1988, 111 above).

Norm's ability to continue his learning process at high school in the big city, was facilitated by his older brother's presence. His brother took him under his wing and offered him companionship and "showed [him] the ropes" (Wesley 1988, 92 above). Norm's brother behaved responsibly towards him, and he assisted him, as he was aware that Norm could not yet be autonomous in a new and unfamiliar environment. The support that Norm received from his brother ensured his ability to later become a responsible individual.

Similarly, the advice that Norm received from his father was also invaluable to his development. In fact, Norm has internalized his father. He has incorporated his father's words into his own being. He claims that he can still hear the advice that his father gave him;

I can still hear my dad talking, crystal clear; the advice he had given me, what he told me.....I can still hear the guy talking, almost to the point where I'm thinking about something, I've decided what to do and internally within his own voice he answers me. But it's in fact me, telling me (...). It's me answering myself internally, inside myself (...)...In as much as he's not here physically, he's there in my mind (Wesley 1988, 91 above).

Again the importance that Norm places on belief and what one is inside is evident. He carries his father on in his mind. Hence, his father's existence, although not physical, is

perpetuated in Norm's mind. This too is how culture as knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation.

Why is it that Norm was able to translate and apply the advice that his father had given him to his present day situation? The answer to this is partially revealed in the shop-lifting incident that Norm recounts, and in particular, in his parents' response to that situation.

When Norm and his friends were charged with shop-lifting they wanted to keep the incident to themselves. They feared the consequences that they would face if their parents found out. Norm's parents did find out, but they did not behave as Norm had expected. They did not take him out of school. Their refrain from such punishment allowed Norm to complete his classes and also to learn from his own mistakes. Norm's probation provided enough opportunity for him to suffer the repercussions of his actions. [Norm not only suffered by being on probation but also he was later denied entry into the OPP because of his criminal record]. His parents appreciated how frightened he must have been. Norm reflectively looks back on his parents' decision:

If my parents would have said, 'send the guy home,' there and then, I would never have finished high school. There is just no question in my mind...So I was fortunate that my mother said, 'I'll deal with him when he gets back.' (...?...).

But you know, that's the kind of experience that I reflect back on in my life now and think that if my dad and mom were irrational people and made (...) a spur of the moment decision without thinking about what the possible implications would

be for me personally, then perhaps that would have turned events in my life to the point that I wouldn't be where I am now. I'm not sure whether it was a conscious decision on their part (..) to interpret it that way. I think it was. And I do the same with my boys (Wesley 1988, 102-103 above).

Norm's parents displayed self-control in the manner that they made decisions that would influence their son's life. Their consideration of the possible implications of their decision on Norm's life, not only gave him the space to find his own way and to learn from his own mistakes (as in this particular situation there would be room to do so without any personal harm), but it also left a lasting impression on Norm.

Norm, like Mary, applies the knowledge that he gained from his own personal experiences with his parents, with his children. He thus interprets his knowledge into action. Like his parents, he considers the implications of his decisions for his children. Norm recounts two incidents in which his teenage sons got into trouble at their high school residence. His response to these situations demonstrate the same understanding and respect for his children that his parents had for him. He does not impose severe punishment, he simply reprimands his children and lets them suffer the consequences of their actions as decided by others whom they more directly affect.

In the first incident, the boys were kicked out of residence because they were caught smoking grass. Their eviction from residence meant that they had to commute

between Moose Factory and Moosonee, daily. This was sufficient punishment, as far as Norm was concerned, as life would be considerably more difficult and inconvenient for them because of their daily commute. In other words, the boys would have ample opportunity to learn what the consequences of their actions were. To the punishment he simply added; "You guys made a mistake and I don't think that you would make the same mistake again about getting involved with drugs (...)" (Wesley 1988, 104 above). Norm then shared some of his adolescent experiences with his sons; "I was very honest with them. (...). I told them about some of the things I used to do when I was their age" (Wesley 1988, 104 above).

This sharing facilitates open lines of communication between Norm and his children. Norm like Mary, considers open communication to be his responsibility and of utmost importance for ensuring his children's' present well-being and future success:

My responsibility is to teach my children in such a way that he or she won't be turned off. It doesn't make sense to physically abuse your children. You just need to treat them with persistent [perhaps what he meant here was consistent] behaviour. And I said, 'if I come down hard on these guys and give them shit (...) it's just going to shut things out between me and them. They will think that I'm the bad guy and that I don't understand anything.' We have to keep the lines of communication open. The problem we have as adults is we don't listen to kids - to ask them what they're feeling inside (Wesley 1988, 104 above).

This sharing also assures his children that he understands and appreciates what they are going through; "[t]his is just a small thing that's happening. You know you guys are just learning" (Wesley 1988, 105 above). This expression of understanding makes Norm, in the eyes of his children, seem approachable and supportive. While available to listen and share in their experiences, Norm will never take responsibility away from them and thus facilitates their development of a sense of self.

Sharing his life experiences with them also lets them know that he does not always behave competently himself. He is not perfect and he does not know everything. Moreover, it lets them know that incompetence is sometimes acceptable. "I can recall when I started talking to them, I said, 'Listen, I'm not a perfect man either. When I was going through your age I made a lot of mistakes'" (Wesley 1988, 104 above). Like Mary, he acknowledges the limits to his competence. By discussing his limitations with his children, as Mary does, he gives his children the freedom to learn for themselves. He also reaffirms their experiences by letting them know that what they are going through is really okay, as he went through it too.

Norm's child-rearing philosophy and strategy is effective, for in the second incident which he recounts, his son immediately tells him about what had transpired. He was

kicked out of school because school authorities smelled booze on his breath. This time his son was more confident about his father's reaction. The previous time, the boys were as scared of the consequences that they would face at home as Norm had been when he was a teenager.

Norm did not react 'irrationally' to what his son had done. Norm understands that his son got kicked out because he did not follow the rules. He realizes that the irresponsibility which his son displayed is reflective of his age. He has not yet reached maturity. Nevertheless, he still feels that his son is old enough to learn from his mistakes by suffering the consequences of those mistakes. In other words, although Norm feels that his son is young enough to make irresponsible decisions he also feels that he is at the same time old enough to assume responsibility for his decisions and therefore learn from his mistakes; "He's a grown man," Norm exclaims. "He can drink as far as I'm concerned" (Wesley 1988, 105 above). Norm obviously feels that his son is at an age where he can begin to exercise individual autonomy and social responsibility. Norm just has to facilitate this process.

Clearly, Norm's personal experiences inform his relationship with his children. He puts what he has learned from his own experiences into action. He tries to be

reasonable because he remembers that he was once young and irresponsible too:

We used to really get involved in all kinds of shit. We used to drink like fish.....I'd never go home. I'd wake up in a ditch... ...Jean and I had our first child four months after being married. This limited our academic possibilities. We were just young and foolish. Our parents hadn't warned us (Wesley 1988, 105-106 above).

Here, Norm refers to what he and Jean did not know because they had not been warned by their parents. He is suggesting that their irresponsibility was a direct result of knowledge that their parents had not imparted to them.

Because the outcome of ones actions are not always as tangible as they were in the more traditional lifestyle in the bush, Norm, like Mary, feels that he has to inform his children about more than his parents informed him. In this instance Norm feels that had he had knowledge about pregnancy and the responsibilities that go along with having children, he and his wife could have avoided some of the obstacles that they faced. Norm and Jean's parents had not yet modified their child-rearing practices to the same degree that Norm and Mary have; using their experience to guide them, they now impart that knowledge to their children.

The sense of responsibility that Norm feels towards his children, is similar to the sense of responsibility that his parents felt towards him; he wants them to one day be

able to make it out there on their own. He wants them to have the essentials for living a successful life.

He recognizes and appreciates the stage in life that his sons are presently at; "I'm pretty sure that they're exactly at the same stage that I was when I was going to high school. They want to be just like everybody else. They want to be just like what they see" (Wesley 1988, 112-113 above). And for the mean time, as far as Norm is concerned, that is okay, so long as they eventually realize that "the end result will be for them to be able to make it on their own" (Wesley 1988, 112 above).

He shares with them what he can to ensure their success. At the same time he gives them the personal space to discover their options for themselves. Norm firmly believes, that "what we do in life determines the future" (Wesley 1988, 109 above), and he is doing what he can to perpetuate his beliefs.

Allan Jolly

Allan knew two ways of life; life in the bush where existence was harmonious with the natural environment and people knew their roles and were in control of their lives, and life in the community, where family and friends had

become addicted to the use of alcohol and no longer knew their roles nor were in control of their lives.

Allan's life in the bush was interrupted when he had to attend residential school. His parents were reluctant to let him go, but they had to. They did however, delay his entrance so that he and his brother could attend together and provide each other with companionship and support. Allan's and his family's separation from the traditional lifestyle marks the beginning of changes in their lives.

Allan contrasts the lack of control that his family experienced under the influence of alcohol, to the amount of control they had when they lived in the bush:

Maybe some people would think that it's a very harsh life living in a canvass covered tepee shelter in the winter time, but at that time I was very happy, and so were my mother and father. I think everyone was happy living on the trap line. It just seemed that that was the only way of life we knew and were in control of our lives and they way we wanted to live. And we were happy from it (1988, 115-116 above)... ...I guess the thing that I look back on in those days is my parents and all those who lived in the bush did not get involved with alcohol. I think that everybody knew and understood the roles that they had. Like my father was a provider...and he was happy doing that. He knew that his job was to provide our food and that. So he did that (Jolly 1988, 116-117 above).

Life in the bush was more consistent. As Allan says, one knew what one had to do and one did it. There was a direct link between belief and action. The outcome of one's actions were more immediately tangible and congruent with what one

believed would happen. Therefore, people felt - and actually were - more in control of their lives. The environment which reaffirmed the individual's control - and also the limits of this control - lent itself to a natural form of child discipline that was conducive in that environment.

Parents could demonstrate their control to their children by predicting and usually immediately verifying the consequences of their children's actions. The threat of punishment was unnecessary in the bush because if the children did not listen to their parents' warnings, they would soon discover the consequences of their actions, themselves. This usually involved some form of physical pain which was induced by the environment. Interference by the parents was therefore unnecessary, for the environment would generally teach the children a lesson. Allan explains:

But I think the fact that we were such a close knit family on the trap line made it that much easier for us kids to pay attention to what we were told. And that type of discipline worked okay because it worked in harmony with that type of setting; the natural setting. You know, just being talked to. Like, 'don't do that,' without being spanked in other words...when you're in that kind of setting if you're told not to do something, for instance, not to walk on the river when the ice is thin (...), if you go ahead, you find out very quickly why you were told not to do it (laughs). So, in a sense, with the natural environment, there was always the experience of some kind of physical pain if you disobeyed your parents, because that's what usually happened. So it's almost as if it wasn't necessary for them to impose the pain on you because if you didn't listen it would come anyway (Jolly 1988, 118 above).

This form of child-rearing as Mary and Norm mention, is not always applicable to their new environment and therefore it is often necessary for parents to set limits to their children's actions. This can create heightened tension between the parents and the children, because the children cannot, as in the bush, readily see and or experience the outcomes of the actions against which they are being warned. Therefore the parents beliefs may seem unwarranted and unrealistic.

Allan, himself, never experienced any form of physical discipline from his parents. This was not only due to their traditional child-rearing practices, but also due to the fact the Allan's father had been abused as a child by his adoptive parents. Having experienced such abuse, his father decided that he would never impose such forms of discipline on his children. Allan's father, similarly to Mary and Norm, used his childhood experience to guide his beliefs and his actions towards his children.

Allan now leads a physically and psychologically comfortable lifestyle. However, this was a lifestyle that for several years seemed unattainable to him. For several years, Allan struggled with the use of alcohol, and sought, with varying degrees of conviction, the stability and control of his childhood days. Allan's acquirement of competence is demonstrated through his struggle with alcohol.

Allan's marriage commenced a period of serious attempts to quit drinking and a process of character development;

The last ten years, if not the last fifteen years, well since I got married I guess, I've gone through a process of character development, of character building, which I know I never had. It wasn't there. I had no character in the sense of my own thinking or my own beliefs (Jolly 1988, 134-135 above).

Allan's problems began in his final year of high school. Although it was his own decision to attend, he quit midway through grade 12.

Allan did not enjoy attending residential school. He, like the others, was encouraged to do so by his parents. It was not that he did not enjoy the education, but, he claims that "it was bad in the sense that I [he] was sent out against my [his] own choice" (Jolly 1988, 124 above). Allan resented the fact that he did not have any say in the matter. Admittedly, he was too young to decide whether or not he should attend residential. What is most important however, is that he feels that he was not taken into consideration at all; "I didn't have any choice in the matter, plus being so far away from home" (Jolly 1988, 124 above). Like Mary, Allan felt that he denied control over his situation. Others were making decisions on his behalf.

Even though life away from home was difficult and not having a choice in the matter was distasteful, Allan

discusses what he did obtain from his experience at residential school;

...I think the new surroundings, the exposure that I got was good for me. I think it helped me...I think it helped me to adjust to that kind of life because I ended up having to go out anyway, for my high school, because there was no high school here. So by the time I got to high school, I was pretty much used to the idea of city life. The only difference when I went to high school was that I became my own boss (Jolly 1988, 124 above).

Although Allan rejoices in the fact that he could be his own boss in high school, it is obvious from what ensued that he was unprepared to carry that responsibility. Allan explains, "I started getting involved with alcohol and I was getting into trouble.....I think that's where my problem started, when I started drinking" (Jolly 1988, 126-127 above). At the time, Allan lacked the foresight to predict the effect that his actions would have on his life.

After an accident which occurred while Allan was drunk and running away from the police, Allan returned home, determined never to drink again;

When I came home...I said, 'I won't ever bother drinking.' In fact I was determined to go back in- to the life of living in the bush (...). But, by that time, my dad was only doing a little bit of hunting close to town (...) and my parents were very much involved in alcohol (Jolly 1988, 127 above).

What started off as weekend drinking parties soon took "control" over his parents' home (Jolly, 1988). Beside Allan's mother, who in spite of her drinking kept working to provide for her family, all the rest of the family members

were totally out of control. Living in confined quarters with them, Allan was unable to get away from their influence and soon joined in; "I finally just couldn't ignore it, so I just pretty well joined in" (Jolly 1988, 131 above).

Allan was unable to follow through on his own beliefs because he did not yet have a strong sense of self. He was thus very susceptible to his parents' influence. He was unable to take action. His inability to act on his beliefs meant that he would not be in control of his life for a great length of time. He was not yet competent.

Allan's mother's ability to continue to care for her family is illustrative of the ease with which the women shifted into their new lifestyle. Traditionally the women were responsible for taking care of the home and the children. This was a responsibility which they carried over into their new lifestyle. Both Mary and Norm discuss the continuation of their mothers' responsibilities towards their children even in their new lifestyle. Norm's mother, like Allan's was the only wage earner in the family; "My mother was the only person who ensured that we had food on the table consistently. She was the wage earner as far as having a steady job goes" (Wesley 1988, 85 above).

The men on the other hand, who had traditionally provided for their families through hunting, trapping and fishing, were less able to make the transition and provide

for their families within the demands of the new lifestyle. A sedentary lifestyle and a regimented wage earning economy were hard to get used to. The men could not just pick up and go hunting whenever they deemed it necessary. Perhaps the women were better able than the men to make the transition in lifestyle because there was less of a break between their traditional and contemporary roles.

Alcohol dominated and controlled Allan's life, his parents' life and the lives of his brothers and sisters for six years; "As I say, our home was really tearing apart because of the alcohol. It was like that...for a period of six years. Alcohol had taken control of my life pretty well, and everyone's in my home" (Jolly 1988, 131 above). None of them were held accountable for their actions while under the influence of alcohol. Often times Allan's father physically abused his mother, and in response Allan and his brothers physically abused their father. There were never any repercussions for this, as it was believed that the alcohol was responsible for this situation. The alcohol which had greater power than them, impeded their ability to take action on their beliefs. Allan explains, "...people do things even though we know it's hurting us and yet we don't seem to have the power to break away from it" (1988, 130 above).

At the time, Allan did not have the personal strength and conviction to commit to not drinking.

Furthermore, in spite of the "misery and unhappiness" that it was creating (1988, 133 above), getting away from alcohol became next to impossible as it had become a part of everybody's lifestyle. It was condoned under all occasions. Allan explains that alcohol was not only liberally used in people's homes, but also, it was used as a reward in sport; if the team won a game then the coach would reward them with beer. "It was a natural thing that was happening here (1988, 133 above)," Allan comments, and "it was everywhere" (1988, 134 above).

Mary also discusses the availability and extensive use of alcohol in her community. Its pervasive use makes it seem like normal behaviour and she did not want her children witnessing it as she did not want them to believe that it was either normal or acceptable behaviour. Allan's experience directly speaks to Mary's concerns as it was difficult for him to resist participating in something that *seemed to be* considered quite normal. "Even today," Allan adds, "things are still like that. The main thing is drinking.....Young people get to know each other through alcohol...They never have time, even today, to really think about the relationships that they want to build, and the responsibilities that come along with that" (Jolly 1988, 133 above).

It is believed that excessive alcohol consumption impedes one's ability to take on personal and social responsibility. Like the younger people that Allan talks about, he too, met his wife "through drinking at a party." He states,

When I look back on it, I guess it's not the best way of building a relationship between a girl and her boy (...). I mean that's not the ideal way of meeting somebody. It's unfortunate but that's the way it was (Jolly 1988, 133 above).

He too never had the time to consider the relationship that he wanted to build with his wife and the responsibilities that went along with that. Reflecting on his past, Allan wishes that he had been more responsible;

But I look back on it and wish sometimes, if only I had more character, to say in my own way that I don't want that. But I guess it's not very many people who can do that (Jolly 1988, 134 above).

But he realizes how difficult it is for one to assume responsibility. Allan illustrates the extent of his irresponsibility while he was drinking, through a description of a typical week. This behaviour lasted for about three years;

My schedule would be like this for the week: I would go to work from Monday to Friday, Friday I'd start drinking. (...). I'd be drinking the whole weekend pretty well. And by Monday, back to work, usually with a hangover. All the money that I made I just blew in drinking. I was living at home. I didn't pay for anything...Most of it went to drinking (Jolly 1988, 132 above).

Allan's marriage initiated a process of reevaluation. Both he and his wife had witnessed and experienced the negative effects of alcohol within their own families and they did not want that type of life for themselves or for their children. They decided to try and do something to change their situation. They felt some responsibility for their children's lives;

I think we both decided to try and provide something better for ourselves and for our family, instead of drinking all the time...[W]e didn't like that life, even though we were young. I think just seeing the way it affected our parents and other people around, and the fact that it was getting worse all the time. We felt, I guess, that we just can't do that....(Jolly 1988, 135 above).

Allan's impending family awakened him to the responsibilities that a family entailed. This awareness helped Allan to quit drinking;

It's like all of a sudden you wake up and say, 'what am I doing? Or, how am I going to provide for my family?' I think that's the way it was with me. I thought, 'gee, how can I raise my family, support my wife. How can I make my family happy?' I think everybody desires that. They want to make their family happy. You want to raise your family in the right way. And I knew that drinking wasn't the way because I saw it in my own home and it wasn't doing any good (Jolly 1988, 133 above).

Allan wanted to be a good provider for his family. He wanted to find something that gave purpose and fulfilment to his life. His desire to provide a better life for his family, and himself, led him to a spiritual answer;

I wasn't just looking to stop drinking as much. I just wanted something that I would find purpose and

fulfilment in. It had to be something that had a lot of meaning to me. (...). So I thought to myself, 'well maybe the answer is in God.' The answer didn't seem to be here, from what we can understand and see around us. And, I didn't know, I felt I would try God, I would try the Bible. I mean, I just felt an emptiness about me. (.?.). I just didn't see any point in continuing on in life sometimes. It just didn't seem to have much meaning and purpose (Jolly 1988, 136 above).

Allan started reading the Bible and found in it answers that were meaningful to his personal experience. He pondered those answers for a year before accepting the word of God.

In the Bible Allan found answers to his questions about life. He learned from the Bible that what was happening to him was far beyond his personal control, as it was the result of the "Satanic forces," which fought hard to destroy the very things that God had created;

When I started looking at [the power of the Satanic forces] it seemed to provide a rationale, to explain why my life had sort of taken for the worst up until then. I didn't know where I was going. I seemed to be doing things that didn't seem to have any personal meaning or purpose, things that were not good in that way, why was I doing them (Jolly 1988, 139 above).

The Bible also gave Allan hope for a different way of life. From it he learned that everyone, regardless of what they may have done could attain a different way of life; and it was a different way of life that Allan was seeking.

By following God's word one could attain a different way of life. However, the Bible clearly stated that following God's word had to be a personal decision. One had to want to do it and could not do it on another's behalf. It

was thus not only a personal choice but also a personal responsibility. It was a commitment to oneself;

...[R]eading the Bible I found out, I started realizing that this is something far beyond my control, in terms of providing an answer for myself, or for my own power.....But after one year I understood the answer was this; it's a personal decision. You make the decision on your own. You can't decide for your family... The very best that I can do is influence my family in this whole thing... (Jolly 1988, 139 above).

From the Bible Allan learned that with God's assistance he could take responsibility for himself. He could not however, take responsibility for others in their own personal search, all he could was influence them. To take responsibility for their own personal search would be denying them their individual autonomy and their sense of self. Maria Campbell in her autobiography entitled *Half-Breed*, beautifully describes the importance of never denying an individual's responsibility, especially when the individual is capable of assuming responsibility for him/herself. At this point of her story, Maria is reunited with her grandmother [Cheechum];

I explained that I didn't believe that I could help anyone solve their problems, but if I could give them a home and friendship, then they would in turn find their own answers. She [Cheechum] said, 'I'm glad you believe that and hope you will never forget it. Each of us has to find himself in his own way and no one can do it for us. If we try to do more, we take away the very thing that makes us a living soul (Campbell 1973: 175).⁶²

⁶² Please note that Native language is gender neutral and I am certain that Campbell is in the translation using 'himself' and 'his' in an all inclusive way.

There are therefore limitations and boundaries to one an individual's responsibilities. An individual can provide comfort and support to another individual so that that individual can find his or her way. But one individual cannot and should not find another individual's path. This would be interfering.

God was the One who would provide Allan with the support that he needed in his personal struggle. Accepting what God had to offer meant that Allan could have a personal relationship with Him, a relationship that with His assistance would ensure Allan's control over his life. By studying the word of God, Allan experienced a turn around in his life, "a new beginning" (Jolly 1988, 140 above). This signifies a turning point in Allan's life. He explains,

Once that happens, once you're in Christ, it makes you a new creature. Now we don't experience a total turn around right at that moment but that's where it starts, from that moment on. It's a new beginning. And as you study God's word more and more everyday, then you experience that change. Because that change has to come from within...It's only God himself, Christ himself, that can provide that. (...). We cannot fight against Satan with our own human strength with our own human wisdom. As a matter of fact, it's only through a lot of suffering and hard times that our faith in God increases...That's the same principle in life in general,...It's through painstaking processes that we learn, that we become successful (Jolly 1988, 140-141 above).

Allan's faith in God, indirectly gave him faith in himself. He realized that this faith had to come from within himself. This coincides with Norm's attestation that who one is

depends on what s/he believes inside. Once one is sure what their internal beliefs are, or in other words, once one has a sense of self, then they can start behaving accordingly; doing things for themselves that they really believe in and doing things for others, that are within their capacity.

Allan describes the struggle that seems to be involved in finding a sense of self and a sense of wholeness. He claims that there is an enormous amount of difficulty involved in getting to the stage where you can learn from your experiences and become successful. His description of this hardship is very similar to Mary's experience. Before Mary got her life on track everything fell apart and she was left with picking up all the pieces. However, the process of picking up all the pieces seemed to be a process that she had to undergo to find herself. Having to reconstruct and to some degree re-create her life, put her in a position to more critically and objectively assess it. Allan underwent a similar process. Through this process he developed character and took on the responsibility of caring for himself and his family.

Allan and his wife accepted God together. They also stopped drinking together. Their mutual support of one another in this venture enabled them to succeed. Though they independently decided upon this path, going through the

process together meant that they could share and reaffirm each other's experiences, thereby avoiding any relapses;

...the fact that she came along at the same time was good for us. Because going back to the idea that I didn't have character, if she didn't, and she gave me a hard time, I think I would have fallen off the wagon. We were able to do things together; study together, go to church together (Jolly 1988, 141-142 above).

Having successfully achieved their personal goals of sobriety and a better and more productive life, Allan and his wife became examples in their community. Soon after, others followed in their footsteps. Allan knew that he could not deny anyone individual responsibility by telling them what to do about their drinking. He knew that all he could do was encourage and influence others through his behaviour. He would lead by example;

I know that if they [people] choose to do that [drink], follow that way of life (..), I know I can't change their minds. I think the only thing that I can do is to encourage them that there's a better way. That that's not the answer. But I have to do it in such a way...If I just come on strong (...) that doesn't work (Jolly 1988, 143 above).

His behaviour had a more direct impact on other's lives than his words could have ever had. His experience was tangible for others to see. This is a trend that occurs in many Native communities.

Theresa Strawberry, Chief of the O'Chiese band of western Alberta, in an article entitled, *In the Spirit of the Family*, talks about the impact that her decision to quit

drinking had on her family and friends. "A week after she entered a Native-run treatment centre near Edmonton, her husband checked in, followed closely by a few relatives and friends" (Kaye 1990: 131).

Once Allan's life got turned around, he returned to high school and completed his grade twelve. After that he attended Bible College for three years. He then returned to Moose Factory. Mary, Norm and the other narrators also returned to Moose Factory [and or Moosonee] after having been away for some time. While Allan reasons that he returned because he wanted to be re-introduced and re-integrated into the traditional beliefs and values of his people, from which he had been away for a long time, the others do not provide any explanations. In fact, some of them, such as Munro for example, state that they have no idea why they returned to their Native communities. I would suggest that this occurred because their Native communities were an integral part of who they were. Their identities were very much tied up in their communities, only they had to find out how.

Allan felt that he had to get reimmersed into his culture, as he believed that the values and the beliefs that were held by his people were an integral part of who he was as an Indian. He wanted to know and understand more about them, so that he could know and understand more about

himself, thereby maintaining his Cree identity and his Cree culture.

Allan, like Mary and Norm, fears that his culture is "slipping away," and he wants to do what he can to maintain a balance between his Euro-Canadian and Native ways. For Allan, as with the others, this involves gaining knowledge about his culture. Once again the emphasis is on knowledge as opposed to practice. But that cultural knowledge will inform practice. By learning more about his culture he can learn more about himself, and he can thereby assist others in doing the same. Allan's sobriety and belief in God obviously enabled him to assume responsibility for himself and others. This experience is not unique to Allan.

As Theresa Strawberry's community slowly returned to sobriety, they "began to rediscover other traditions.....Gradually, shakily, with a few relapses, the O'Chiese community began the arduous process of rebuilding,.....Unlike the more vocal political action, which aims to heal Native social ills by imposing external changes through the Constitution, land allocation and aboriginal self-government, this other, quieter, more subtle, movement concerns itself with working from within, through the most basic social unit, the family" (Kaye 1990: 132).

Allan returned to his community to gain something from it and also to give something back to it. He felt a certain "obligation" to return;

Not obligation, but I think that I had to prove to the community that my life had changed, that I had found an answer which all of us are looking for, and that my life had changed. I think that people had heard at the time about the decision that I had made and were wondering if I was going to last. So I think in a way it was good for me to come back and prove to the community that the change my life had taken was for the better (Jolly 1988, 144 above).

Allan felt that he had a responsibility to show his community that there were other ways of leading one's life that did not involve alcohol. This is a clear example of social responsibility.

It is quite obvious from the O'Chiese story, and from these life histories, the impact that the coincidence between belief and action can have not only for the individual but also for others. Leading by example, either consciously or unconsciously is the most effective way to help others to learn and to make changes. People require evidence that something works. Admittedly, it is not always possible to provide that evidence.

Today, Allan's main concern is his children. Like Allan, they will have to leave their community if they decide to pursue studies beyond high school. If and when they do leave their community, Allan would like to go with them so that he can be there to offer them support, the importance of

which he learned from his own experiences. He knows that they will have to find their own way, but he would like to be there to assist them so that they will have a better chance of withstanding the obstacles that they will confront;

In some ways we're reluctant to let them go on their own. We'd just like to be there when they go out, help them adjust, you know, thinking that it might give them a better chance to succeed (Jolly 1988, 147-148 above).

Allan, like the other narrators, reflecting on his own experiences and struggles, wants to help his children to be able to one day make it on their own.

CHAPTER IX

THE PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF LIFE HISTORIES

Originally, anthropologists collected Native life histories to preserve in the museum or the library, the cultures of these [believed then to be] disappearing peoples. Native artifacts were similarly treated. Native life histories are however no longer being recorded to preserve these cultures, but rather to perpetuate and convey individual experiences and personal meanings, to future generations.

Storytelling has been, and is, of paramount importance to Native cultures. Through storytelling, whether orally performed or textually recorded, and more recently through art, drama, and music, the legends, myths, pre-history, history and personal history of these peoples is transmitted and assured endurance. These creative modes of expression create a circle of communication. Each mode embodies and transcends the past, present and future. From these outward expressions of intellect, emotion and values, come understanding and appreciation. These modes of expression, like life histories are stories about the self and about the creation and emergence of identity. In other

words they are all narratives of identity. The relevance of this comparison is clarified when we look at Native art.

The importance of storytelling is captured in many paintings by Cree and Ojibway artists. In these paintings, the mouth is emphasized. This is because it is believed that "[t]he mouth is the most important part of the face, for out of it come the words that reveal the character within" (Bell In Southcott 1984: 47).⁶³ Northern Ontario Cree and Ojibway artists, who believe that inner reality is paramount and "outward appearance is only an incidental attribute to being" (Hallowell 1960: 35)⁶⁴, graphically illustrate the importance of inner reality in their paintings by emphasizing both the mouth and physical interior design and content.⁶⁵ Therefore, in a literal sense, the mouth, and by extension life histories, reveal the character within and ensure cultural survival. They ensure cultural survival because the shared stories embody and transcend the past, present and future.

The life history narratives in this thesis show how individuals define self and accommodate culture change by integrating the past with the present, thereby maintaining continuity. Similarly, Native art works tell of the

⁶³ Leland Bell's admonition to his pupils made in Beth Southcott's presence at the Summer School Art Program of the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation held at Rainbow Lodge, Birch Island, 1978 (Southcott, 1984).

⁶⁴ This view is in contrast to the Western view that 'the eyes are the window to the soul.'

⁶⁵ See artwork of Norval Morrisseau and Carl Ray for example.

negotiation of self within culture, and thereby maintain cultural continuity.

Just as the adult narrators in this thesis, return to the elders, or to their predecessors for knowledge and guidance about the past so too do Native artists. Norval Morrisseau and Carl Ray⁶⁶ depict in graphic form the sacred legends of the Ojibway people (Southcott, 1984). Allen Angeconeb, Roy Thomas and Saul Williams,⁶⁷ though influenced by Morrisseau and Ray in technique and style, "tend to use symbols with a personal meaning rather than adhering rigidly to a preconceived code" (Southcott 1984: 58). The variability in their style and choice of motifs speaks to the variability in their personal experience. The continuity in style evidenced in their works speaks to the similarities in their experiences and their shared ideas.

Saul Williams, in a brief autobiographical sketch, eloquently describes how continuity is achieved through sharing;

I like an artist who likes to learn or exchange ideas with another artist. I don't think it's right to keep one's own ideas to oneself, but to share that knowledge with their fellow artist. Watching is learning; learning is practising; practice is perfect (almost) (Williams in Southcott 1984: 60).

Williams suggests that sharing enhances both the work and the experience of the artist. Experience, shared is wisdom

⁶⁶ These artists are classified as the Pioneer Painters (Southcott, 1984).

⁶⁷ These artists are classified as the Northern Ontario Painters (Southcott, 1984).

gained. The validity of this statement was witnessed in the life history narratives.

Contemporary artists such as Blake Debasigge and Leland Bell⁶⁸ also return to their predecessors for knowledge of the old ways. They ponder the meanings of the stories that the elders tell them in order to communicate their insights in graphic form:

The life of one man is short. I am a link in the chain. I try to paint what I feel about life.....(Debasigge in Southcott 1984: 128). I go to visit the old people, the elders. We talk about the weather, we joke a bit, we pass along the news, and they tell us how things used to be a long time ago. They tell us a legend. It's one long rambling conversation. But the things that come up over and over again in the conversation are important. They do not tell you that you must do this or that. They tell you a story. You go home and think about it and you know that they have been telling you a truth (Debasigge in Southcott 1984: 158).

Debasigge sees value in learning from those who have come before. Leland Bell elaborates upon how this process of learning occurs;

As you grow up, you learn different things from legends at different stages. It stays with you all the rest of your life. You learn something out of each story each time it is retold because if you are growing as a person, you are ready for a new truth each time. You learn something new from a legend each time, just as you learn something new from a painting each time (Bell in Southcott 1984: 158).

These artists demand from their audience a new way of 'seeing.' By combining the elders' wisdom with their

⁶⁸ These artists are classified as the Manitoulin Painters (Southcott, 1984).

knowledge they become the instruments for renewal. They answer the call for the survival and renewal of their culture, a culture that has endured many hardships yet continues to perpetuate itself, by returning to their predecessors for cultural information. The stories that they illustrate in their artwork, just like the stories that the narrators tell, are reflective of both their community and their personal struggles for renewal. Separated from their communities at young ages, they now reimmerge themselves into their culture and attempt to learn about it and incorporate it into who they are. Though their⁶⁹ artwork displays much individuality there is also consistency. The consistency stems from their common roots;

They are a group and yet retain their individuality. They are like sparks struck from a rock, each going out in a different direction, no two alike, or even on a parallel course, but each on his own tangent. The rock from which they are struck is the Anishnabe heritage (Southcott 1984: 126).

A current group of Native painters, called the Variationists, epitomize a progressive state of development. Their artwork shows the adaptation and incorporation of Native and non-Native ways. They are represented by such artists as Daphne Odjig, Don Ense, Norman Knott, Michael Robinson, Del Ashweke and Carl Beam.

⁶⁹ The Manitoulin Painters' artwork.

Like the Manitoulin painters, the Variationists seek to make ideas from the past meaningful to the present. Del Ashweke states, "I am concerned with setting out in contemporary terms the beliefs and understanding which have been passed down to us and must not be forgotten" (Ashweke in Southcott 1984: 179). Interspersed in amongst the Native ideas are ideas from the western society, with which they co-exist. Their art bridges the gap between the two cultures and often makes broader statements concerning the state of all humankind. Carl Beam explains, "I try to convey the same spiritual message as the other Manitoulin painters but I try to develop new symbols relevant to the age in which we live. I feel that the role of the artist is to be an alchemist transmuting old truths into new symbols of relevance for contemporary man" (Beam in Southcott 1984: 182). Carl Beam's comment clearly illustrates that individuals in culture are "more than mere purveyors of pre-existing forms. They are creators of culture as well and serve in this capacity as active agents of cultural change" (Basso 1979: 80).

The act of painting is an integrating process for the artist. Personal interpretations as expressed on canvass engulf the past, present, and future, and incorporate both artistic influences and personal experiences. This is especially evident when artists' works are studied in

progression. This is surely also true for literary artist, for we all are artists and storytellers. We are interpreters and creators of experience, simultaneously. Daily we weave the complex fabric of our lives.

Storytelling and painting are ways of exploring self and other. Through introspection, knowledge and wisdom about self are gained. Through sharing, knowledge and wisdom are also gained. By learning about the past in general and the personal past in particular, one can better understand the present in light of the past, and thereby prepare for the future. Daphne Odjig in the following statement indicates her transcendence and incorporation of the past to settle with self;

Painting legends is important but you will get past that...Today I am doing my own thing - expressing myself as a person. I want my recognition to come as a good painter, but not because I am an Indian painter. I am a painter that happens to be Indian.....(Odjig in Southcott 1984: 162).

Like other bicultural Natives, Daphne Odjig comfortably straddles two worlds and has a strong sense of who she is, a personal definition which is based not only in her Indian roots, but in her Euro-Canadian ones as well. Tomson Highway, a Cree playwright, captures in the following quote the importance of merging influences from both the Native and Euro-Canadian cultures:

It is impossible for me to live in a tent for the rest of my life, even though I was born in one...
...I live in downtown Toronto, in a house with a

microwave oven, and a piano and a washer and dryer. I take the subway to work. All these are things which I appreciate, but what I really find fascinating about the future of my life, [and] the life of my people...is the searching for this new voice, this new identity, this new tradition...It is the combination of the best of both worlds, wherein you take a symphony or a string quartet by Beethoven, study it, utilize the best of what you get from it, the best knowledge you get from that structure of that instrumentation, and apply that structure, utilize it for the telling of Cree myth made contemporary - in downtown Toronto. That kind of stuff - taking the best from both worlds, combining them and coming up with something new - I think that's the most exciting thing (Highway in Hutcheon and Richmond 1990: 354).

The merging of cultural influences results in the creation of something new; a viable existence which combines the best from both worlds and incorporates the past and the present. Like the narrators in this thesis, Tomson Highway has created a viable alternative to the practice of the traditional way of life. Combining his knowledge of Euro-Canadian ways and Cree ideals he contemporizes Cree ideals and thus perpetuates them. In so doing, he sustains a living. Tomson Highway, like the narrators in this thesis is a successful bicultural Indian.

The narrators' biculturalism enables them to function in two worlds that intermingle. They choose what is best from each. They have access to both cultures and do not have to choose one over the other. Within them, the two cultures co-exist. Their ability to combine both cultures ensures their successful survival. They use Euro-Canadian ways to achieve Cree ideals. Same ends, different means.

Some Indians, who are unable to bridge the gap between the two cultures experience rage and become cultural misfits. As the narrators tell us, these Indians get caught between two worlds, and belong to none. Finding it difficult to negotiate an existence in changing times, these Indians are often seen down and out on the streets. They are the "stereotypical" Indians.

As is evidenced in the life histories, competence and biculturalism are not easily obtained. They are often arrived at through painful struggles, which require confrontation and reconciliation with one's past and present. The struggles, and or the negotiation of an existence, are indicative of how individuals adapt to the impact of culture and culture change. From this negotiation and or struggle, a sense of self/identity emerges. The sense of self which emerges facilitates a viable bicultural existence.

The Michif language, a unique blend of French nouns and Cree verbs, spoken by Metis in Manitoba, embodies a bicultural experience. It makes for an interesting comparison between individual achievement of biculturalism and linguistic and or group achievement of biculturalism. Therefore, as a language it can be considered as a narrative about bicultural identity.

Michif is one of the youngest languages in Canada (York, 1990). It was born during the first half of the

nineteenth century during an extended period of contact between Manitoba Indians and French fur traders. When two languages come into contact, one of the languages usually becomes dominant. In this case, however, the two languages gelled and Michif took on a strong identity of its own and continued in a stable condition over many years. It is extremely rare for an entirely new language to be created in this way.

John Crawford, a linguist studying the Michif language suggests that Michif was produced by "some sort of sympathetic co-existence or balance of prestige between Cree and French groups," which resulted in a unique blend which incorporated both languages and provided its speakers with great flexibility for expression (Crawford in York, 1990). The combination of cultural experiences made more depth and breadth descriptions of experience possible.

A similar process occurs in the attainment of biculturalism. Individuals who have a strong sense of self and can combine and incorporate both Euro-Canadian and Cree experiences in the creation of something new, have greater viability. Their viability is only at stake if they feel that there is potential for loss of one culture over another.

The speakers of Michif are presently very concerned with the loss of their language. There are very few elders that speak the language fluently. One Metis women believes

that their language must be preserved and perpetuated as it is the very essence of who they are. Their language, as a unique blend of two languages, captures a cultural experience that embodies two cultures, and is a source of their identity.

Experts feel that the Michif language will disappear within a generation. With only a very few fluent speakers left, the biggest threat to the language appears to be English. English is what the younger generations mainly speak. The Metis feel that the only way to counteract this threat to their language is to have Michif speakers teach it to the younger generations. They are thus assuming some responsibility for the maintenance and perpetuation of their language. Individuals who achieved biculturalism and competence similarly assumed some responsibility for their situation. By assuming some responsibility for their situation they were able to take control and do something to change their plight.

Clearly then, the impact of change or external imposition does not always have to be destructive. Modern technology, for example, can help Native cultures to survive. Through telecommunication programs such as Wawatay, traditional values and practices can be transmitted to a wider audience, thus enhancing their knowledge of their Cree

past. Modern means need not necessarily be destructive. They can only be destructive if they are allowed to be.

For the Metis, and for the life history narrators in this thesis, the loss of the Michif language [or the Cree language] means the loss of the culture. Not wanting to see their language slip away they are employing means to preserve and perpetuate it. Aside from teaching it to their young, they have agreed to let John Crawford create a dictionary of the language. They are employing contemporary and Euro-Canadian ways to preserve and perpetuate traditional ideals. Similarly, bicultural Natives modify traditional beliefs and actions thereby preserving and perpetuating traditional ideals. Their stories tell us this.

Many Indians have said that only when their myths fall silent will their people die. Their cultures will survive as long as their heritage is remembered. Some, like the narrators in this thesis, feel that it is their responsibility to share with the future generations their experiences. Their recorded voices provide them with a sense of personal and by extension, cultural immortality. For the future generations, the recorded voices of their predecessors provide them with the opportunity to learn from their predecessors' experiences and to use that knowledge in their own life:

For those who are bearers of tradition, the opportunity to tell their story can be a gift,

reassurance that they are indeed still alive, that their voices will be heard, and that their cultures can survive. It is a gift of equal importance for those generations to come who will take up that tradition and shape it to their own needs as the future unfolds (Langness and Frank 1981: 136).

Through the life history mode of expression, whether it be in collaborative life history narratives, art, drama or music [all of which of course include language] life gains permanence and persists in the minds of generations to come. Fei Xaitong in a conversation with Burton Pasternak (1988) eloquently describes how culture is perpetuated through the minds of individuals:

So what can I do for the next generation? I can let them know what we, during this period in my generation...what level of self-awareness, self-consciousness we have attained. Through my mind I will leave something for the coming mind. That is culture. It is in the mind of the individual. The biological mind disappears, but through society it continues cumulatively. Each individual must contribute to culture. Therefore I will not die (Fei Xaitong in Pasternak 1988: 654).

In addition to facilitating the perpetuation of culture, the life history mode of expression also facilitates cross-cultural communication and inter-cultural understanding. Shared life histories create fertile ground for the development of bridges between people.

"Cree narratives have had the traditional purpose and function of offering guidance, through the experiences of what others have done and what the consequences were, for living one's life competently and wisely" (Preston and Preston 1988: 3). In addition to learning from others'

experiences, life histories in so far as they embody the processes of change and adaptation, as experienced by individuals, rather than abstracted collectivities, provide and can provide the impetus for personal, and on a broader level, community, rediscovery. They are vehicles through which individuals from a particular culture can establish roots and discover and or re-discover identity. This has been evidenced in many incidents where people have read about others who come from backgrounds as themselves.⁷⁰

As repositories of knowledge, life histories provide useful historical and cultural information for both the anthropologist and the non-anthropologist. From them the anthropologist can discern both cultural patterns, as the life history "is embedded in the story of those groups from which individuals derive their identity" (Connerton 1989: 21), and, the variation that exists within culture, due to the personal impress that the individual makes on his or her cultural experiences. In this sense life histories can be regarded as "cultural goods" which have the impress of individual personalities. From life histories the anthropologist can also discern the processes of social and cultural change and individual adaptation and accomodation to these changes.

⁷⁰ For an example of this process at work see Logotheti (1990).

The non-anthropologist, and in particular the culture member, can as aforementioned, use the life history as a source of culturally historical information and guidance, and as a tool for self-discovery. Listening to, or reading life histories is useful for gaining insight into another's internal reality and thereby reflecting on one's own inner reality. The listening and reading provide a means for objectification and self-reflection. The process of life historicizing reconnects the past to the present and the future. Moreover, it transcends time and being and enables reconciliation with self. Life histories also demonstrate, through individual experience, adaptive and maladaptive strategies for dealing with change.

As mentioned earlier, many Native artists return to their elders and other storytellers for cultural information. They then take the stories about the past and adapt them to present. They express the stories in ways which are meaningful and useful to their contemporary situation. That is, they reinterpret the past to meet the needs of the present.⁷¹ The whole process is carried forward and culture is carried on.

It is fittingly eloquent to end this thesis with a song written and explained by Arnold Cheechoo, a Moose

⁷¹ Recall how the narrators in this thesis modified their knowledge of the past to make it useful to the present.

Factory Cree Indian. It is clear that his song is a personal story.

Bay Life

Bay Life
It ain't easy to survive
Crazy winds are blowing in
the sky

The tide's rolling in
Another lesson's about to
begin
Like our fathers way before
us
We shall carry on

Our woman are at home
Strong, but not alone
Their hearts are always with us
When we roam

Bay Life
It ain't easy to survive
Crazy winds are blowing in
the sky

Bay Life,
It ain't easy to survive
Crazy winds are blowing in
the sky.
Bay Life
A chill runs through your
mind
When you realize, you're
life is on the line

There are many who have tried
There are few that have died
Our lives continue onward
With our pride

Bay Life
It ain't easy to survive
Crazy winds are blowing in
the sky,
blowing in the sky.....

This song was written while I was spending my time in the bush at a place called Kesagami Lake, 65 miles south of Moose Factory. The year was 1987 and I spent fall, winter and spring at this place. In terms of dates, it was from October '86 to May '87.

My reason for being there was as a caretaker for a fly-in resort camp. However, I was my own boss even though I had an employer. I sharpened my survival skills and became very aware of my surroundings. My routines varied because I was in control.

Gradually, I felt inspired to pick up my guitar and write a song. I tried different cords and put different words as I played along. I thought about my homeland and the people and wild life that shared this land. I started to think about, why not try and write a song about our area. One of the titles, I remember thinking about was James Bay Life.

I tried many times to put words to James Bay Life but somehow it never sounded right. Finally one evening I forgot to say James Bay Life and out popped Bay Life. I started using Bay Life to the song. As I was trying to bring out words to Bay Life I suddenly realized that I had discovered another way to shorten the long dark hours as I sat in my cozy cabin (Arnold Cheechoo, July 31, 1988).

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