

**Memoirs of the Elders  
Volume 8**

**Abraham Bird,  
John Colomb  
and  
Charlie Hart**

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## Abraham Bird, 1933-

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Pukatawagan, August 4, 1999

Interviewer: Robert Castel

### Feeding the Sturgeons – (Track 1—01:34)

Abraham: pikôtân nâ na-mâcihtân ciyi? m...  
At anytime I will start, right?

k... î-... î-nisto-pîsimohkân â-kî-...  
It was just for three months that

nimosôm â-kî-otinit â-... kita-pamihit.  
my grandfather took me and took care of me.

akwâni pâtimâ mit... mit...  
And then it [when I] was

mitâht-nîsosâp mwâc mitâht-nistosâp  
twelve... no, I was thirteen

î-tahtwâskîwinîyân kâ-kî-... îkâ â-pimâtisit. akwa, akwa îkota  
years old when he passed away. Then, then that is when we

ohci â-kî-at... ôtî nikî-pakitahwânân *in the island in...*  
started... fishing out there on the island during

î-nîpi î-ayât... î... â-pôni-wanihikî niko... o... ôta  
the summer. He stayed... When he finished trapping...

nikî-pî-misakânân. akwâni kapî-nîpin ôta [nik]î-... ayânân.  
we came in here by canoe. Then we stayed here all summer.

akwâni â-ati-takwâki nikî-pôsinân okâwi-miðihkânâni isi.  
And when autumn came we went out to Granville Lake.

na... nan... nikî-ati-namî-pakitahwânân. kî-ati-tâh-tahkopitîw  
We set a sturgeon net along the way. He tied up the sturgeons along the way

namîwa wîða îkâ îkospî âhkwatihcikan î-kî-ohci-ihtakwa. akwâni  
because there was no freezer at that time. Then he

îkosî isa â-apisîs... kî-asamîw anihî nikî-pî-asamânânak anikik  
fed them a little bit... We used to come and feed those sturgeons.

namîwak. namîpiða îyakwani â-mowâcîk kasisk... kasis... asiskiy  
Suckers are what they ate. ... In a muddy area

â-kî-sakahpisocik nântaw nîw, niyânan. akwâni nikî-tîpîpaðihikonân  
they were tied up, about four or five of them. Then we had



iðiko î-pipo ka-ta-mowakihcik isko ayihi isko... isko â-tî-ayâhk  
 enough to last us through the winter until... until we were... until it

kî(y)-a... î-ati-sîkwa.  
 was... started to be spring.

### The Mimikwisiwak – (Track 2—01:02)

akwâni nimosômpan ayahâwa mîmîkwîsiwa, mîmîkwîsiwa  
 Then, my late grandfather, uh let's see... the *mîmîkwîsiwak*,

â(y)-itihcik. wîpac kîkisîp î-nâtaðapît kâ-wâpamât  
*mîmîkwîsiwak* is what those little “merpeople” were called. Early one morning as

î-sasci-sâkîwaha kâ-wâpamât î-nâtaðapîðit. akwâni mwâ  
 he went to lift up his net, he suddenly saw them. He came around a bend and out

mîna kî-kanawâpamik ayamihik îða. mwâc, mwâ kî-kanawâpamik.  
 into the open when he saw them lifting the net. And although it(the *mîmîkwîsiw*)

akwâni â-pî-kwîskiskwîðit. môða aya... ayâw pî...  
 did not look at him, it talked to him. No, it did not look at him. And then

iðiniw îða isinâkosiw mâka môða okotîwak kî-itwîw môða okotîwak  
 it turned around. It didn't have... It looked like a human, but it did not have a

kîkwâðiw, kî-itwîw. akwâni kî-itâh... î-kîsi-nâtaðapîcik akwâni  
 nose, he said. Then, right there, after they had lifted the net,

aspin nipî itâmi â-kî-ispadîcik. akwâni mwâ kîhtwâm  
 it went into the water, under the water it went. And then he did not

kî-ohci-wâpamîw anihi mîmîkwîsiwa.  
 see that *mîmîkwîsiw* again.

kîyâpic anohc ayihîw namihtâwak anikik ayisapiwak anima ita  
 Still today (though),uh, (it can be seen) they left traces where they sat

â-kî-ayâcik. akwâni ispî â... ayihi îkota â-kî-ayâcik.  
 and where they once lived.

akwâni ispî â... ayihi îkota â-kî-ispicîcik. akwâni  
 Then, finally, uh, they moved from there. And

mihcît pîðisk iðiniwak îkota kî-ayâwak. akwâni  
 eventually a lot of people were living there. And then

â-kî-âhcipicîcik kotak anima ministik. îkotî akwa ayâwak.  
 they moved to another island. That's where they live now.

### Dying Beavers – (Track 3—01:01)

akwa ayahâw *Eli Sinclair* nikî-wîcîwâw ôta  
And, let's see, with Eli Sinclair I went

î-papâmi-wanihikîyâ. *Bob Burns* kî-itâw ayahâw *Game Branch* îkospî.  
around trapping here. A man named Bob Burns, uh, worked for the Game Branch

akwa akwâni â-kî-sipwî... â-kî-sipwîtisahokowâ mahti tântî  
at that time. And then he asked us to go and find out where ...

ta-kî-kis... mah... mahti tâpwî amiskwak ta-nipahihcik.  
if beavers were really being killed (by something).

akwâni â-kî-sipwîyohtîhowâ. nîs... nîso-ispâðiw  
And then we travelled out. We were gone for two weeks.

nikî-namatînân. *Russell Lake* ôfîsi akwa nikî-pî-matâmîhînân ayihi,  
We were over here at Russell Lake and came out, uh, uh,

ayihi *Island Falls* ôma â-ohcipaðik sîpiy. misinipiy îkota  
to Island Falls where the river came from. We

nikî-sâkitawâhînân. akwâni nî... nîso piko amiskwak  
came out to the main river (Churchill). There we killed only two beavers.

nikî-nipahânânak. akwâni ita, ita ôma â-matâwisiyâ kâ-ayâcik  
Then where we came out onto the shore where the beavers stayed, they were

ita amiskwak akwâni kahkiðaw is... waskitakohcinwak. akwâni  
floating on top. Then

nikî-wâpam... akwâni â-kî-mâtisahkwâ anikik mahti, mahti tânisi  
I saw ... and I cut them open to find out what

â-isi-ayâcik. oskonî, oskon anima mitonî kî-osâwâw. îkota ohci  
had likely happened to them. It was in the liver, in his liver he was really

îtokî â-kî-nipahikocik animîðiw.  
yellow. Maybe that's the cause, it's what killed them.

### Grandfather Kills a Wihtiko – (Track 4—01:21)

akwâni nimosômpan pîyakwâ nitamatison itwîw. “âw... ministiko  
And then there was one time that my late grandfather said “I feel

kayi... ka(y)-itahoðitin,” nitik. “îkotî tay... niwîhtikow îyako  
something. Okay, I will take you to the island,” he said to me, “over there

kî... wîhtikowa îyako.”  
to... It's my wihtiko, that one. It's a wihtiko, that one.”

akwa ôhokok nitîmimânak toni... nîso atimwak nikî-posihânânak.  
And our dogs were very... We were transporting two dogs inside our canoe.

mitoni î-sihkwîpaðîðihkwâ wîstakâwawa. akwâni “piko ta-pîyakowin”  
Their hair was really standing on end. Then he told me,

nitik “ministikwâpisko.” m... na-kakwî-nântawi-tôtawâw.  
“Just wait here by yourself on this reef. I will try to do something to him.”

akwâni aspin. nipihîtin îða matwîwîk. î-mihcîtwâ â-matwîwîk  
And then he was gone. Eventually I heard gunshots. Repeated gunshots could be

nântaw îtokî mitâhtwâ â-matwîwîk. kwâni â-misakât  
heard, maybe about ten shots. Then when he came paddling in,

ispî akwâni “ninipahâw,” itwîw. “n... n... n... ninipahâw.”  
he said, “I killed it. I actually killed it.

“misawâc. môða mâyiða tihkisow.” itwîw. “âhkwaciw,” itwîw. “oskîsiko  
But it is not thawed out,” he said. “It’s frozen stiff,” he said.

piko ohci â-kî-tahtinatak. nîsta mâyiða nikî-kiskîðimâw. pîyakwan  
“I killed it through its eyes. But I felt it, too. It was just like,

î-kî-... pîyakwan î-kî-kawaciyân nispiskwani itî isa  
as if I was cold in my back, you know, there,

â-kî-isi-kanawâpamit. îtokî pîyakwan î-kî-âhkwaciyân nihkwâkan.  
where it looked at me. It was just as if I was cold in my face.

î-kî-... m... akwâni iskwîw,” itîw. îyako “â-maskâwisît mâwac itwîw  
It was... and it was a woman, he said. She’s the stronger one,

akwâni mâka nikî-sâkotîðimâw,” itwîw.  
but I overpowered it,” he said.

### Band Membership – (Track 5—00:46)

akwâni nikî-miðo-pakitinik nimosôm iskwâ pimâtisit. akwa  
And then, my grandfather gave me a good life while he was still living.

nikî-itik kâyihi... *band*, niscawâsi wîða *Band* ohci â-kî-ayât.  
And he told me, let’s see, the band, he was from the Nelson House Band.

akwa nîða ayihîw ôta isi *Puk Band* pakitahwâkani ohci *Band*.  
And myself, uh, I was from this Puk Band, from the Pukatawagan Band.

îkota toh... tî-toh... kî-nîswapiwak î-ayamihitocik anikik  
That’s where I would be from... They sat together and talked, those

kisîðiniwak. îkota nîða ohci nimosômpan ta-kanawâpamit  
old men. That’s when my late grandfather observed me,

animîðiw îkâ ta-pakitinamwak animîðiw *band*. akwâni ayihîw  
that they would not drop [my name] from this band. And then,

ispî ôta â-pî-tako... ayâ... â-pî-takosinâ îyako kitaskînaw  
when we got here... um... “This is our land here,”

kî-itwîw nimosômpan. îkota ohci. akwâni, akwâni kapî ôta  
he said, my late grandfather. There is where it is. And then, then we stayed

nikî-ayânân.  
here continuously.

### Schooling – (Track 6—01:13)

akwâni môða mihcît wâskâhikana kî-ohci-ihetakwan.  
And, let's see, back then there were not many houses here.

â... akwâni iskôl iða kî-ihetakwan. n... nistam  
There was a school, though. Before,

iða môða kî-ohci-ihetakwan iskôl pâtimâ iðiko â-kî-ati-ihetakwa.  
there was no school, not until later on.

kî... kî-sipwîhtîwak nikî-wâpam... nikî-otisapamâwak  
They went away [to school]. I saw... saw them

î-sipwîhtîcik î-ntî-iskôliwîcik. akwâni akwâni îyakwîðiw  
going away to attend school. It was

pîyak-askiy ta-namatîcik. pâtimâ iðiko ta-takosihkwâ îyakwîðiw  
for one year that they would be gone. It was only later that they returned

î-ati-nîpinðiki. akwâni kapî-pipon, îyakwîðiw  
when summer started. And [they would be there] the whole winter,

tântî iskôliwîcik.  
where they attended school.

akwa ôk... ka... î-ok... kanohc pâtos  
And ... right now it [Pukatawagan] looks different.

î-isinâkwa. ahpo môða ... ahpo niwanisnin itî â-itohîtyân  
Even I don't ... I even get lost wherever I go, there are

iðiko î-mihcîtihiht wâskâhikana. mwâc ahpo nikiskîðimâwak  
so many more houses. I don't even know

âtiht âpihtaw nitôtîmak ita â-isi-ayâcik.  
half of my relatives, where they live.

Robert: tântahto, tântahto â-kî-iheticik ôta îkospî iðiniwak?  
How many, how many people used to be here at that time?

Abraham: mwâc nikiskîðihtî. mwâc mitoni nikiskîðihtî.  
I don't remember. I really don't remember.

môða kî-ohci-mihcîtiwak pâham osâm piko kayâs â... kayâsi-nâpîwak.  
There were not many, perhaps only long ago... the old-timers (men).

ôhokok îyakwanik, îyakwanik piko n... n... nikiskîðimâwak.  
These were the ones, the only ones that I knew.

akwa iðiko anohc iðiko mihcît isa  
And now there are so many more, you know,

oskâtisak nîhiðawak os... oskâyi-âtiht anikik.  
of the young people, the Cree. Some of them are newcomers (strangers).

### Grocery Hauling and Regular Employment – (Track 7—01:07)

môða mîna kîkwan îkospî ayihîw *train* kî-ohci-pimpaðiw.  
At that time, too, the train was not running.

akwâni piko î-kî-nâtahotâsocik *Cold Lake*. kî... kî-nâtaahkwâ.  
They just had to go and get groceries at Cold Lake. They went and got

kîkwâðiw î(y)-âwatahâsocik *Company*-wa. î-âwatahotamawâcîk  
things. They were hauling goods. They were hauling for the Hudson's Bay Company.

akwa wîstawâw î-pîtamâsocik kîkwan. *Cold Lake* îkotî  
And they got some things for themselves, too. Cold Lake is where

â-kî-nâtaahkwâ kîkwâðiw î-isi-âpacihtâcîk iðiko pîyak-askiy,  
they got their things from, what they would need for a whole year,

iðiko ta-tîpipaðicîk âtiht. wîða môða kîkwan îkospî  
for some of them to have enough. It's because at that time nothing

kî-ohci-ihakwan. akwa î-kî-wîhtakihîk kîkwan.  
was available [to purchase at Pukatawagan]. And things were cheap.

akwâni pîðisk âta wîða nikî-ati-atoskânân  
And then, finally, I started to work, to work

nikî-ati-acoskîsinân. akwâni pîðisk ayihîw kî-ati... kî-ati...  
a little, occasionally. And then, finally, uh, we started, started,

î-at... nikî-mîðikawinân ta-atoskîyâ ta-t... ta-astawihikîyâ.  
to be given work fighting ('extinguishing') forest fires.

*seventy-five cents a ... a day*. akwâni îkotî ... toni isko  
For seventy-five cents a day. Then, over there... right until

tîpiskâk ta-atoskîyâ pâtimâ â-pahkisinâ îkospî â-pônatoskîyâ.  
nightfall, we worked until we dropped. That's when we finished.

â-pôni-pimowatîyâ nipiy.  
We finished [by] carrying the water.



## The Strike That Wasn't – (Track 8—01:15)

akwâni ayamihîkimaw nikî-atoskawâw ôta nistam. îyako  
And then, we worked for the priest here, before. It was

ta-kaskihcikîyân pîyakwâpisk pîyak-kîsikâw. akwâni nis...  
(for us) to make money, a dollar a day. And I ...

nisto-aski nikî-atoskawâw. akwâni â-kî-nâtakiht kahkiðaw.  
worked three years for him. And then all of us went and approached him.

niwîhtamawâwak akwa “*istrike-iwitân!*” akwâni â-kî-...  
I told them “Let’s go on strike!” And then we

â-kî-nâtakiht ayamihîkimâw ta-ðahki-tipahamawakiht. âw akwâni  
eventually approached the priest to raise our pay. Okay, then

â-nâtakiht. nât... nipîhtokânân kahkiðaw otatoskîwak. n...  
we went and got him. We got... We went inside, all of us workers.

ninawitisahokwak. âw akwâni niwîhtamawâw ayamihîkimâw.  
They followed me. Okay, then I told the priest about it.

“ni-tî-*strike-iwinân,*” nititâw.  
“We want to strike,” I told him.

akwâni â-pî-ohitiskawapit. âw pây tâyi... “kinanâskomitinâwâw  
And then he turned to face me. Okay, boy! “I really do thank all of you

â-ay*strike-iwiyîk.* îkosi *istrike-iwik!*  
for striking. All right, just go ahead and strike!

akwâni â-it... ây akwâni â-pônatoskîyâ nititohtânân mwâc  
And then we started... Okay, then, after we finished work we did not

nipakicinân ta-atoskîyâ wiða îkâ nântaw ita ta-kî-atoskîyâ.  
quit our job because there was no other work available.

akwâni piko ohcitaw. âw akwâni â-n... ayihîw kê-pî-o... ða...  
We just had to do it. Okay, then, uh, we waited to see

ispî â-oðitipahamawimiht wiða pâh-pîyakwâpisk piko. akwâni  
when we were paid, because it was only one dollar.

nâh-nîswâ... kapî ... “ka-ðahki-tipahamâtinâwâw,” itwîw  
Then it was two... all the time... “I will raise your pay,” he said,

“îkâ î-*strike-iwiyîk,*” itwîw. akwâni pâh-pîyakwâpisk  
“for not striking,” he said. And then he gave us a

ni-ðahki-tipahamâkonân.  
raise of one dollar each.

## John Colomb, 1946-

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Pukatawagan, October 26, 1999

Interviewer: Robert Castel

### The Lynn Lake Tent Village People – (Track 9—15:12)

*It's on, right? Okay, John*

It's on, right? Okay, John is my name.

nitisiðihkâson pakitahwâkani ohci nîsta.

I am from Pukatawagan, too. That's

â-kî-ohci-... ohpikiyân akwa niwî-âcimon.

where I ... grew up, and I want to tell a story.

*fal...* îyahî nîsta tânisi

Let's see, how I

â-kî-pî-isi-ohpikiyân ôta pakitahwâkani.

grew up here in Pukatawagan, too.

nôhtâyipan â-kî-pî-ohpikihit akwa nimâmâ *Rosie* itâw.

My late father and my mother named Rosie raised me.

îkwâni akwa ayihî *from, uh, from the start I'll* ayihîw

And then, uh, from the start, I'll, uh ... I will tell the story of

na-ka-âcimon nîsta ayihîw tânisi â-kî-pî-isi-ohpikiyân ôtî ayihî

how I came to grow up here, uh, back when ('from the past') I was growing up

otânâ. ayihî nîsta â-kî-pî-ohci-ohpikiyân nistam. *sixteen*

here. I was just sixteen

nitahtwâskîwinân îkospî nôhtâyipan â-kî-isit, "akwâni piko

years old when my late father told me, "You just have to go and try to..."

ta-kakwî-tayi... tayi-minahisowan îkosi piko

go and hunt for yourself.

ta-kî-isi-pimâtisiyan." nîsta îkâ ntaminahisowâni

That is the only way (for you) to survive." If I didn't hunt for myself,

îkwâni ta-kitimâkisiyân. îkâ kî-... wîsta kîkwâðiw osôniyâma

I would suffer. If I did not... He did not have money

ta-kî-ohci-ohpikihit. akwâni â-kî-mâci-op... mâci-wanikîyân *when*

to continue to raise me. And then, I started to trap when

*I was sixteen years old I started* ayihîw â-wanikîyân. akwâni

I was sixteen years old, that's when I started, uh, to trap. And



nikî-ati-mâci-pakitahwân *in 1961* ôma â(y)-âcimowân îkospî  
I started net-fishing again in 1961. What I am telling about was

*in nineteen-sixties.* mwa kîkwan kî-ohci-ihtakwan pimâtisiwin  
in the 1960s. There was nothing to live on,

mwa kîkwan *welfare*, ma kîkwan ayihîw *family allowance*.  
no welfare, no, uh, family allowance.

akwâni piko ohcitaw awinak ta-kakwî-pimâcihisot. akwâni îyako  
And everyone just had to try to look after himself.

piko nîstanân nipimâtisiwinân. îkwâni ôta ohci â-kî-pimâci...  
And that was just our way of survival. And from here

â-kî-pimâcihisowân nîsta. îkwâni... kwâni nikî-papâmâtoskân.  
I made my living, too. And I worked here and there... I was there...

nikî-...nikî-ayân...nikî-pakitahwân,  
I... I was... I fished,

nikî-wanihikân. kwayask -nihtâ-wanihikân  
I trapped. I am a really good trapper,

akwa mîna nikî-nihtâ-pakitahwân.  
and an expert fisherman.



akwâni *and after that* akwâni *Lynn Lake*  
And then, after that I moved to Lynn Lake

nikî-ati-âhc...nikî-isi-âhcipicin *in nineteen, in nineteen sixty-*  
I moved... moved there in nineteen, in 1964.

*four* akwâni îkotî nikî-wanihikânân *sixty-two* ohci. akwâni îkotî ohci  
And I trapped there from '62, and then there

â-kî-ohci-pimâcihisowân nîsta â-kî-wanihikiyân akwa â-kî-pî-kîwîyân  
I made my living, too. I trapped and I came back home

pakitahwâkani isi. akwâni kâwi *Lynn Lake*  
to Pukatawagan. And I was back in Lynn Lake

nikî-ati-isi-ayân *after Lynn Lake* îkotî  
again. After Lynn Lake, I stayed there again. I was

nikî-ayân *CN* mîna nikî-atoskân *for a while, for*  
with the Canadian National (Railway). I worked there for

*about twelve years I got laid off.* akwâni îkota  
about twelve years and got laid off. And that's why I

ohci *and then again I went back to Lynn Lake.* between the railway station  
went back to Lynn Lake again.



**Tent Village Area  
between the railway station  
and Eric Lake (above)  
(May 2000)**

akwâni îkotî nikî-n... nikî-ati-mâci-ayânân ayihî  
And there... we started to live there, uh,

papakwânikamiko-iðiniwak asici *Lynn Lake* ohci iðiniwak. akwâni îkotî  
with the tent people and also people from Lynn Lake. And we came to stay there

nikî-pî-ayânân nîstanân. môðiða ohcitaw î-kî-wî-sipwîhtîyâ mâka  
ourselves. Anyway, we did not come out on purpose, but we

akwâni îkotî nîstanân î-kî-micimwâci-ayâyâ îkotî wanihikîwaskiy  
got stuck there on our trapline.

î-kî-ayâyâ. akwa mîna ta-pakitahwâyâ. îkotî piko isi nîstanân  
And we fished, also, to survive. That's the only place

â-kî-isi-pimâtisiyâ... â-kî-isi-pimâcihâwisowâ. îkwâni îkotî  
we could make our living, how we could support our children. And we

nikî-ayânân *in a tent. Tent village people* nikî-itikawinân *in*  
lived there in a tent. We were called the Tent Village People

*nineteen... 1969 to 1970* akwâni *all these years* îkotî nikî-ayânân  
in 1969 and 1970, and during those years we lived

*in a tent. tent village people* nikî-itikawinân *people.*  
in a tent. We were called tent village people.

*for* kayâs ohci îkotî â-kî-... â-kî-ayâyâ papakwânikamiko îkwâni  
For a long time we stayed there in a tent and afterwards, in the 1970s

*after in nineteen-seventies* îkotî nikî-ayânân *and all through*  
and after the 1970s we stayed there and *we lived*

*we were the ayahâw tent, tent village people* nikî-itikawinân  
in a tent village. The Lynn Lake Tent Village People, as we were called

*Lynn Lake.* pakitahwâkani mâyiða ohci kahkiðaw ohci nîðanân îkotî  
in Lynn Lake. But we were all from Pukatatawagan,

â-kî-ayâyâ *all ayahâwak Colombs* ôhokok akwa ayahâwak *Dumases* akwa  
all of us who stayed there. The Colombs, these ones, and, uh, Dumases and

*Linklaters* îyakwanik osâm piko îkotî â-kî-ayâyâ nîðanân  
Linklaters. These were the ones that were were by and large there, we who were

îkotî â-kî-ayâyâ. ayihî *as, uh, like, uh, tent village.*  
staying there, as a, like a, as a tent village.

akwâni *after in 1980, 82* î-ispadîk. akwâni  
And after 1980 to 1982 it happened.

â-kî-pôni-minihkwîyân. â-kî-mâci-wîcihakwâ nîc-iðiniwak ta-kakwî-...  
I quit drinking. I started to help my fellow people. I tried to...

wîcihakwâ tânisîsi ta-kî-isi-miðopaðiyâ  
help them so we could work things out ourselves,

nîstanân. Lynn Lake *like*. akwâni ayahâw  
we [who were in] Lynn Lake. And, uh, the chief and,

okimâhkân akwa oðasowîðiniwak nikî-itikwak.  
also, the councillors told me to try to be there, to



A Tent Village Campsite

ta-kakwî-ayâyân, kakwî- nântaw- tótamân ôhokok  
try to do something for these people

iðiniwak wîstawâw â-kitimâkîsîcîk. îkosi pîko kîkwân  
who were suffering (in need). That is the only way I could get things done.

ta-kî-isi-kaskihtâyân. akwâni sîmâk nikî-mâci-mawinîhîn.  
And right away I started to tackle it. I sat with him [them]... I...

nikî-wîtapimâw...nikî-... nikî-kakwî-ayân iðiniwak ta-pîhtokahîkîcîk  
I tried to have the people put into apartments or houses, you know,

ayihî isa Lynn Lake *in apartment or housing or things like that. for*  
uh, in Lynn Lake.

*f...* ayahâwak *friendship centre* mâna nikî-meet-iyinân  
We used to meet in the Friendship Centre

*with the mayor and the council.*  
with the mayor and council.

îkospî nikî-mâkohtânân î-kî-pî-iðiniwiyâ îkotî.  
At that time we suffered there, just by being Indian.

nîtî î-kî-pî-kitimâkîsîyâ nîstanân. akwâni nikî-itikonânak ahpo  
Over there we came to be poor, and the white people even told us,

wîmistikôsiwak, “mwâc ta-kî-ayânâwâw ayihî wâskâhikani wîsâ  
“You could not live in, uh, houses

kî-kitatimo-pimâtîsinâwâw,” nikî-itikawinân. îkwâni mwâc mâ...  
because you live like dogs.” That is what we were told. I should not ...

nikî-mâkohtân mâna nîsta. mwâ mâyiðâ nântaw awasimî nikî-ohci-...  
I did not usually have any problem myself. I [thought] maybe I should not continue...

kî-ihôtîn nîsta wîðâ. akwâni nîsta î-kî-...î-kî-sâkôcimîk...  
I was unable to do much, either. And myself, I was [almost] convinced... They very

kîh-kîkâc î-kî-sâkôcimîcîk ôhokok wîmistikôsiwak â-kî-itikowahkwâ  
nearly convinced me, these white people told us this in about

ahpo *in 1975, 76* nântaw â-kî-itikawiyâ mâna îkospî î-kî-mowahîcîk  
1975 or 1976. We were told at that time, too, that we ate

atimwak akwa mîna pôsîsak î-kî-mowakihcik ôta *Lynn Lake*  
dogs, and cats, too, we ate. We ate them right here in Lynn Lake. All over,

misiwî kî-pî-ihwakwan *in the news* iðiko isa misiwî  
you know, all over, it was heard. It was in the news.

î-kî-pî-ayitikawiyâ nîstanân akwa tahkohc iðiko  
We were being told so, and to top it off,

î-kî-pî-kitimâkisiyâ môða mâka nântaw nikî-ohci-itîðihîfnân  
we were already poor. However, we did not think anything of it.

n... nikî-pakitîðihîtamwânak mwâc nântaw nikî-ohci-itwânân  
We forgave them for it; we did not say anything.

îkosi isi nikî-itwânân piko mâna misawâc îka tâpwî pakwanta  
We only said to forget about it, and, anyway, it's really not true,

piko î-itwîcik pakwanta. î-kakwî-kitimâkimikowahkwâ. mâka  
what they were saying was a lie. They tried to put us down (slander us), but

nikî-pî-kitimâkisinân. nikî-pî-kwatakihtânân nicawâsimisinânak  
we came out poor. We were experiencing hard times, our children

akwa nîðanân.  
and ourselves.

îkwâni îyako ohci iðiko â-kî-pî-nôcihtâyân nîsta iðiko kayâs  
And that's why I worked on it for such a long time

ohci îkota â-kî-ayâyân *Lynn Lake*. îkwâni *in 1982* îyako anima  
when I was living in Lynn Lake. And in 1982,

â-itwîyân akwâni îkospî ohci â-kî-mâci-ihîâyân ta-mâtatoskâtakwâ[w]  
what I said was the same thing, from when I started to occupy myself

nîsta ayahâwak iðiniwak akwa awâsisak î-kitimâkisiçik akwa mîna  
with it, started working for you, the people and children in need. And

iðiniwak ta-kî-nîsôhka mawakwâ. pikwîsi isi.  
I also helped the people in every way. All kinds of

akwâni nîstam kîkwan î-ihîtamân *office*  
things. The first thing I did was that we had an

nikî-ayânân *Lynn Lake in 1974. 1984*  
office in Lynn Lake in 1974. In 1984 we

*we had an office ayihî in Lynn Lake. âh...*  
had an office, uh, in Lynn Lake. And then, uh,

akwâni ayihîw îkota *office* â-kî-isi-ayâyâ îkota  
when we used the



*Lynn Lake* akwa iðiniwak nikî-pîhtokahânânak  
Lynn Lake office to put people

*in the apartments* akwa mîna ayihîw *in the*  
into apartments and in houses, and so forth.

*housing and things like that.* akwâni nikî-nâskomikonânak ayahâwak,  
And they thanked us, uh, these ones from the town of Lynn Lake, the mayor and the

ayahâwak wîðawâw ôhokok *Lynn Lake town, the mayor and the council.*  
council. And then

akwâni nikî-miðikonânak wâskâhikana akwa mîna *apartments*  
they gave us houses and also apartments for

ta-pîhtokîyâ. akwâni nikî-miðwîðihtînân îkospî â-pîhtokîyâ.  
us to move into. And then we were happy at that time

kahkiðaw awinak kî-miðwîðihtam. îkwâni îkota ohci akwa  
to move in. Everybody was happy. And then from there on,

â-kî-pî-wîtataskîmakihcik ayahâwak *Lynn Lake the mayor and*  
we came to work with them, uh, the Lynn Lake mayor and

*the council.* â-kî-itakihcik ayihîðiw misawâc ta-*support-iwiyâ*  
the council. We told them, we would give them our support from

*from, uh, from the welfare for our school kids* ta-iskôlîwicik  
from the welfare so for our school children to attend school,

akwa mîna *stores* anihî ta-atâwîyâ îkota kahkiðaw  
and the stores, too, for us to buy things, a lot of things,

isa kîkwân ta(y)-ihtôtamâ îkosi â-kî-...îkosi â-kî-isi...  
you know, for us to do things. That is what

â-kî-asotamawakihcik ôhokok wîðawâw ôhokok *the town*  
we promised them [we would do], these ones from the town.

akwa ayihîw ta-wîcîkâpawîstawakihcik kwayask. îyakwîðiw ohci piko  
And, uh, we would really stand by them. That was the only way.

â-kî-pakitinikowahkwâ.  
They allowed us [to do it].

akwâni îkota ohci â-kî-mâci-atoskâtamân  
And it was from then on that I started working at it,

îkwâni iskonikan ta-kâhcitinamâ mahti nîfî *Hughes Lake.*  
to negotiate a reserve over at Hughes Lake.

âsan nôhtâwîpan îkospî 1972 kî-*claim-iwîw land* îkotî  
My late father had already claimed land over there in 1972.

îkospî. akwâni nîða â-kî-mâtatoskâtamân iyako îkospî *that year*  
Then I started working on this [project] in the

*1980s.* akwâni nikî-pî-atoskâtîn kinwîsk pîðisk. nikî-at... nistam  
1980s. Then I worked at it for a long time. I tried to..., the first time

*in 1980, 88* îkospî â-kî-*claim-iwiyâ* anima *a re...*  
in 1980. At that time we claimed a reserve land,

*a reserve land just the land, reserve.* îkwâni môðîða reserve mâka  
just the land as a reserve. Then it was not a reserve, but we claimed only

piko î-*claim-iwiyâ* land. îkwâni akwa *in 1991* îkospî anima  
land. Then in 1991, that is when it was

â-kî-*approve-iwinâniwik* as *a, as a Black Sturgeon First Nation*  
approved as the Black Sturgeon First Nation reserve,

*reserve, just the reserve.* mwa kîkwân sôniyâw nikî-ohci-ayânân  
just the reserve. We had no money, just the

akwâni piko *reserve.* akwâni mâna îkospî mâna iskwâ atoskîyân akwâni  
reserve. Then that time before, I used to take

mâna ohci piko *from my ...uh...* î-kî-wanihikîsiyân akwa mâna  
from my... uh... I trapped a little and fished, too.

î-kî-pakitahwâwiyân îkosi piko isi â-kî-itohtîyân *in the meetings.*  
That was the only way I could travel to the meetings. I was really desperate

mwâc kwayask nikî-pî-mâkohtân â-pî-mâcihtân. îkâ, îkâ sôniyâw  
when I first started out. The money was not there; we needed so much

î-kî-ohci-ihât ta-wîcihikawiyâ iðiko. âta nikî-pî-wîcihikonânak  
to be helped. We eventually got help from the band council at

oðasowîðiniwak pakitahwâkani. okimâhkân akwa oðasowîðiniwak kayâs  
Pukatawagan. The chief and council, for a long time

ohci nikî-pî-wîcikâpawîstâkonânak. mâyiða wîstawâw  
they stood beside us. However, they

îkâ î-kî-ohci-osôniyâmicik.  
didn't have any money either.

iyako ohci nîsta â-kî-mawinîhamân  
That's why I really challenged myself

kwayask ta-kakwî-itohtîyân iyako ita oðasowîcik.  
to try to make it to wherever they had a meeting.

â-kî-... *Thompson* ahpo ôta *Winnipeg* ah... ahpo îkota *Lynn Lake*  
Even here in Thompson or Winnipeg, uh... even there in Lynn Lake.



anta. akwâni pîðisk â-kî-sâposci-ayâyâ *reserve* anima â-kî-sâposci...  
Then, finally, the negotiations went through

*reserve* nikî-ayânân môða mâka kîkwân nikî-ohci-osôniyâminân. ayihîw  
through... for the reserve. We had a reserve but we didn't have any money. Let's see,

kî-icikâtîw *Mathias Colomb*, kî-icikâtîw anima *that reserve Black*  
Mathias Colomb it was called--that reserve, the Black Sturgeon First Nation.

*Sturgeon First Nation*. akwâni îkota ohci kîyâpic akwa  
Then, from there I still struggled with

â-kî-pî-mawinîhamân ta-kakwî-kâhcitinamân iskonikan iðiniwak ohci  
trying to (actually) establish the reserve for the people

mîna awâsisak ta-isi-... ta-pî-isi-... ta-isi-m... ta-isi-...  
and the children ... to... to... to...

ta-isi-miðo-ayâcik. iðiniwak mîna ta-isi-miðo-ayâcik awâsisak  
to live comfortably. For the people and the children to be in good health

îkâ awasimî ta-pî-kitimâkiscicik pîyakwan nîðanân iðiko  
and not to suffer any longer, as we had

â-kî-pî-kitimâkisiyâ îkâ îyakwaðiko ta-isi-kitimâkiscicik  
suffered so much ourselves, and for them not to suffer.

wîðawâw. îyako ohci iðiko nîða â-kî-pî-mawinîhamân kayâs ohci.  
That is why I had challenged this for a long time,

kîkwân ta-kakwî-ohpinamân îyahâwak ohci awâsisak akwa mîna  
to try to establish something for the children and

ayahâwak *elders* kahkiðaw isa nîðanân î-kisîðinîwiyâ  
the elders, too. You know, all of us who are old enough

ta-kî-kakwî-wîcihitowâ îyako anima ohci nîsta â-kî-pî-nîsôhkamân.  
to help each other. That is why I came to help, anyway.

aðisk nimosômpan wîsta ôta â-kî-pî-mâcihtât iskonikan ômîðiw  
It's because my late grandfather, too, started a reserve, this, uh,

ôta âm... *Mathias Colomb*, *my great-great-grandfather* îyakwîðiw  
Mathias Colomb [reserve], my great-great-grandfather is the one

â-kî-pî-mâcihtât iskonikan wîsta. akwâni nîsta îyako  
who started this reserve, too. Then, myself, this is what I came and took on as a

â-kî-pî-mawinîhamân. îkwâni nôhkomisak mihcîtwâ nikî-pî-kakîskimikwak  
challenge. My uncles, they many times gave me some advice, not to give up on whatever

îkâ ta-pakicîyân kîkwân kâ-wî-tôtamân. îyakwanik mâna nikî-kiskisin  
I wanted to do. Those are the ones I remember, many times, my uncles

mistahi nôhkomisak akwa mîna nôhtâwîpan nikî-pî-kiskisin mistahi  
and my late father, too. I remember lots of things

kahkiðaw ôhokok kayâs iðiniwak nikî-pî-kiskisin mistahi  
these people long ago

ta-nîsôhkamawicik.  
did to help me in many ways.

îkwâni îkospî pîðisk kâ-kî-sâposcipaðik nîsta isa kîkwân  
Then, finally it went through, what

â-kî-pakosîðimowân iðiko kayâs ohci. akwa iðiko pikwîsi  
I had desired that took such a long time. And we were

â-kî-pî-isi-ayitikawiyâ â-kî-isi-iðinîwiyâ. mwâ nikî-ohci-pîyakowâ  
being talked about in a bad way, how we were as a Native people. Not once

nikî-ohci-kwîsk... kwîski-ayân tâ-... ta-ayâyân ta-kisîmit isa awinak  
did I turn... turn around and... to let someone upset me by something he said to me.

nântaw â-isit. nikî-pakitîðihtamawâw misawâc, misawâc îkâ tâpwî  
I forgave him because, anyway, it was not true. Even if/though they thought it

ahpo kiyâm tâpwî mwâc nântaw nikî-ohci-itwân nikî-sôhkîðimon  
was true, I did not say anything. I was stalwart. I ...

nikî-...nikî-ntotamawâwak nôhkomisak akwa nôhtâwîpan  
asked my uncles and my late father and all the

akwa kahkiðaw kisî-ayak ta-ayamîstamawîcik.  
elders to speak up for me.

mâk... akwâni akwa â-kî-... îkwâni âta wiða â-kî-sâposcipaðik  
But... Then finally it... then, my wish came through (became a reality)

nipakosîðimowin *in nineteen ninety-five*. îkospî *in March* pâham *or*  
in 1995. That time in March, I think, or April,

*April, April the or March the seventeenth 1995*. îkwâni  
April the... or March the 17th, 1995. Then,

îkospî *we were recognized as a sixty-two first nation*.  
at that time we were recognized as the sixty-second First Nation.

â-kî-wîhðikawiyâ *as a band*. îkwâni îkospî kwayask nikî-nanâskomon  
We were recognized as (called) a band. I praise the day when

îkospî okimâwin â-mîðikowâ îyakwîðiw ayihîðiw kâ-kî-...  
the government gave us that, uh, what it had

â-kî-asotamâkowâ akwâni ta-ati-sâposcipaðik  
promised us. And it will go through

nîkâni ôtîsi.  
up in front (go forward).

akwâni nîsta ayahâw nimosômpan ôta â-kî-pî-ayât  
Then myself, uh, my late grandfather who came and stayed

*Mathias Colomb* â-kî-itiht. nimosômpan iskonikan  
here, his name was Mathias Colomb. My late grandfather, he established a reserve.

â-kî-pî-ayât. akwâni îkota ohci *we break away* ayahâw *ff...our*  
That is where we broke away, uh, our

*own great-great-grandfather* akwâni *Marcel Colomb First Nation*  
own great-great-grandfather. And then, Marcel Colomb First Nation,

îkwa nitikawinân anohc ohci. akwâni akwa nîstanân âti-nîkâni akwa  
that is what we are called now. Then, ourselves, in the future

ôtî na-ati-tipîðimisonân akwa wîstawâw nicawâsimisinânak  
we will be on our own, and our children and our grandchildren too

akwa nôsisiminânak nîkâni ôtî. tîpiðâ nîstanân kîkwan  
in the future. As long as we showed something, too,

isa î-nôkohtâyâ. ta-kakwî-... ta-kakwî-ayâyâ ...-nokohtâyâ  
you know. We will try to... try to be... to show something,

î-moyi-nakatahahicik ôhokok nicawâsimisinânak akwa mîna  
before we leave these children of ours, and our grandchildren, too.

nôsisiminânak. îkosi nîða â-kî-pî-isi-pakosîðimowân nîkâni ohci.  
That was my wish for the future.

îkwâni kahkiðaw nikî-pî-ati-okimâhkiwinân nisîm mîna  
All of us came to be chiefs. One of my brothers,

pîyak salastan itâw îyako kî-ati-okimâhkâniwiw. akwa mîna akwâni  
named Celestine, became chief. And also

kî-ati-okimâhkâniwiw wîsta ayahâw nisîm *my youngest*  
my youngest brother, too, he became chief.

*brother.* îyako ohci iðiko â-kî-pî-atoskâtamân nîkâni ohci  
That is why I worked very hard for the future.

tîpiðâ awinak kîkwâðiw ta-ohcisit kîkwân nîða î-kî-pî-tôtamân.  
As long as somebody benefits from what I have accomplished.

mwâc nântaw nititîðihtîn nîða tîpiðâ kîkwan î-ispâðik.  
I don't regret it myself, as long as it worked.

tîpiðâ wîðawâw akwa î-osôniyâm... sôniyâwa  
As long as it's for them and, the money..., they

tayi... tayi-isi-pimpaðihâcik ayahâwak kotakak ôhokok  
will go and spend it, the

oski-pimâtisak. îyakwanik îtokî nawac ta-nîhtâ... kwayask  
younger generation. Maybe these ones will know better... how to

ta-isi-pimpaðihtâwak î-isi-ayâcik î-iskôlîwicik. akwa mîna wîðawâw  
run things properly, because of their education. And these ones, too,

kwayask ta-ati-ispâðihtâwak sôniyâwa aðisk misawâc akwâni akwa  
they would start to know how to run the cash flow properly because they would

ta-ati-kâhcitinâcik. nîða isko nistam â-pî-mâcihtâyân mwâc pîyak  
finally get hold of the money. Myself, when I started, I did not have

sôniyâs nikî-ohci-pî-ayâwâw. nikwatakihtâwini ohci  
a single quarter (25 cents). It was due to my suffering that I wanted to have a

â-kî-pî-ohci-nôtinamân ôma iskonikan.mwâ wîhkâc awinak  
reserve. Nobody ever gave me money to say to me, "Here, go and

nikî-ohci-mîðik sôniyâwa ta-isit, "mâhcâ!ta-wî-mâwawapi," ta-isit.  
have a meeting." Trapping... trap...

niwanihikî... niwanihikîw... â-kî-ntawî-wanikîyân iðiko  
When I went out to trap, I killed a moderate amount of game.

â-kî-nipahcâsiyân kîkwan îkota ohci â-kî-ohcinak â-kî-itohtîyân tântî  
That is where I took it, [so I could] travel to where

mâwawapiyân.kapî-nîpin akwa îkota mîna ohci â-kî-ntî-mâwawapiyân.  
I attended a meeting. And fishing, too, all summer, that is how I went and

isko, isko ayihîw ta-tîpîpaðiyân awa sôniyâs. îkwâni misakâmi  
attended a meeting. Just enough to last me, this money. And all the way I had

nikî-pî-mawinîhîn.  
challenged it.

mâka akwa mâka wîðawâw anohc miðopaðiwak.  
But they are fortunate now.

mwâc takâc îkosi ta-isi-mâkohtâcik â-wî-ntawî-mâwawapicik.  
They don't have to endure hardship to go to a meeting.

okimâwiwin piko akwa sôniyâwa mîðîw. akwa mîna nawac,  
The government has just given them the money. And it is starting

nawac ati-miðopaðin anohc anohc ohci iðiko nistam. mâka  
to work out right now, compared to the first time. But

kwayask ninanâskomôn ninanâskomâwak nôhkomisak tahto  
I am really thankful to my uncles, the ones

â-kî-pî-nîkâni... â-kî-pî-nanâ... -kakîskimicik. tânisi  
 who were first... who came and... who guided me. [Who advised me] how to

ta-isi-mîh...ta-isi-mâcihtâyân kîkwân îkâ wîhkâc  
 start... how to start something and never

ta-ohci-pakicîyân. akwâni îyako îyako nîsta nitâcimowin  
 to quit. And that was my story, too.

akwa mîna îyihîw kwayask nimiðopaðinân. akwa ôti kâ-ayâyâ nîstanân  
 And we are very fortunate, too, where we live in Lynn Lake,

*Lynn Lake* ôma â-kî-ayâyâ â-kî-pî-ohci-kitimâkisiyâ akwâni akwa pîðisk  
 where we stayed and suffered from it, until finally we have everything.

kahkiðaw akwa kîkwân nitayânân. nîstanân iskonikan nitayânân akwâni  
 We have a reserve and...

na-ati-ayânân wâskâhikana. akwâni îkota ohci kwan...akwa ôhokok  
 we will have houses. And from then on, and these ones from Pukatawagan,

pakitahwâkani ohci ninanâskomânânak mîna iðiko  
 we thank them, too, for how

â-kî-pî-wîcihikowahkwâ. kayâs ohci â-kî-pî-wîcikâpawîstâkowahkwâ.  
 they came and helped us so much. For a long time they stood beside us.

akwâni îyako nîsta nitâcimowin, mâka kîspin kîsta kîtahtawið  
 Okay, that was my story, but if you by any chance will start

kîkwân kî-mâcihtân kipakosîðimitin kîsta îkâ ta-pakicîyin kîkwân  
 something, I hope you continue and not quit what

â-wî-ihotaman.  
 you want to do.

îkosi. *Thank you.* cân nitikawin nîsta.  
 Thank you. Myself, I am called John.

### At Work – (Track 10—02:37)

*Okay! Okay,* akwa mîna pîyak kîyâpic kîkwân n...  
 Okay! Okay, I want to tell you one more story.

kiwî-wîhtamâtinâwâw. ayihîw mîna kayâs ohci â-pî-atoskîyân  
 Let's see, I worked all the time for a long time,

â-kî-itamân. î-pî-atoskîyân awâsisak ohci nitiðinîmak ohci.  
 as I said. I came and worked for the children, for my people.

îtokî ohci nîsta nôkohtâyân ta-atoskîyân, *as a... as a politician*  
 Maybe that is why I worked to show it, as a ... as a politician,

akwa mîna, akwa mîna *as a miner in the mine* mîna nikî-pî-atoskân  
and also, also as a miner. I came to work in the mine, too,

akwa mîna okimâwini isi. okimâhkânak akwa mîna oðasowî-iðiniwak.  
and also in the government area. The chiefs and the councillors, too.

okimâwini misakâmi mis... misakâmi nikî-pî-wîcikâpawistâwak  
All the way through the area of government, all... all the way, I stood beside

okimâwin akwa mîna îyako okimâhkânak. nikî-pî-wîtatokîmâwak  
the government, and the chiefs, too. I came and worked with them

kayâs ohci.  
for a long time.

akwa mîna ayihîw îyako â-pônihtâyân akwâni nikî-ati-ayân  
And then I stopped working there. Then, I started to be

*in the mine* nikî-ati-atoskân *gold mine in Lynn Lake for about*  
in the mine, started to work in the gold mine in Lynn Lake for

*three years* âsan. nitat... n... n... nitatoskân  
about three years already. I worked

î-kakwî-kiskinawhamawakwâw nîsta awâsisak oski-pimâtisicik ôhokok  
to try to teach the children, the youth, these ones,

wîstawâw isa. ta(y)-isi-kaskihtâcik môða piko ayihîw môða piko  
too, you know. For them to know how, it's not only, uh, it's not only that;

awinak îyahîðîw, îyahîðîw ta-kî-... ta-nihtâw-atoskîta isa awinak  
one should know how to work, you know,

ka-it... pîyakwan isa nîstanân â-kî-pî-isi-ohpikiyâ. *for a...*  
just like us, the way we grew up. For a...

nîstam ohci â-kî-pî-ohci-ohpikiyâ â-pî-kiskinawhamâkawiyâ  
Right from the start, the way we were taught

ta-isi-atoskîyâ. îyako ohci nîstanân kîyâpic anohe  
to work. That is why I am still

â-atoskîyân î-kakwî-wâpahtahkwâ nîsta nicawâsimisak akwa iðiniwak  
working to try to teach my children how to work and the people,

wîstawâw isa ta-kaskihtâcik. pikwâ-awinak ta-kaskihtâw kita-atoskîta  
too, you know, to make it. Anyone can do it, will be able to work

pîyakwan nîða. *as a, I'm a trapper, commercial fisherman,*  
just like me. As a, I'm a trapper, commercial fisherman;

CN nikî-atoskân akwa mîna nikî-pî-wîcikâpawistawâwak  
I worked for CN [Canadian National Railway], and I stood by the

okimâhkânak oðasowîðiniwak. akwa mîna ayahâwak okimâwiwin  
chiefs and the councillors. And, uh, the government,

mîna. nikî-pî-wîcîkâpawistawâw nikî-pî-wîtatoskîmâwak îyakwanik  
too. I stood by them, I worked with them,

kahkiðaw. akwa mîna *the mayor and the council in Lynn Lake and...*  
all of them. And also the mayor and the council in Lynn Lake, and...

akwa mîna ayihîw *Lynn Lake* mîna nikî-pî-atoskân *as a ...*  
And, uh, I also worked in Lynn Lake as a...

*as a miner* îyako mîna. kahkiðaw nikî-pî-tôtîn nîsta.  
as a miner, that one [job], too. I came and did all kinds of things, too.

nikî-pî-kocîn î-kî-kakwî-wâpahtahkwâ nicawâsimisak mîna  
I came and tried in order to show my children and

nôsisimak. akwa mîna kotakak îðiniwak tâyisi wîstawâw isa îkâ,  
my grandchildren, too. And other people, too, so that nobody would be

îka ta-kosta awinak ta-atoskît ta-kakwîcîhkîmot ta-atoskahiht. îkosi  
scared to work, to ask to work, to be put to work [be hired]. That, too,

mîna â-isi-pakosîðimitakwâw kîspin kîstawâw îkosi ta-kî-itôtamîk  
I wish you [if you] might be able to do it so, too,

îkâ ta-pônihtâyîk kîkwân â-wî-tôtamîk.  
and not quit what you want to do.

îkosi.  
Thank you.



Lynn Lake, Manitoba  
May 2000



Keystone Gold Mine

## Charlie Hart, 1931-

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Lynn Lake, June 8, 2000

Interviewer: David Westfall

### Wisahkechahk – (Track 11—10:17)

...î-wâpamitân. ... â kimosôminaw pikwîta  
I saw you. Ah! Our forefather used to roam

kî-pimâkamikisiw. kwayask miðwâsinðiw  
all over the place. It is a very good place

mîna ita kâ-ayât tântî îtokî  
where he stayed, too. I wonder where he

â-kî-ohtohtîp piko ofî îtokî kihci-kîsiko  
came from—maybe from the heavens—that is

îtokî îyako m... m... nistîs. ka-kî-âcimostâtin toni îyako  
my brother. I told you about him. That is the story I told you about.

ka-kî-âcimostâtin kâ kiki ihtâw îyako ohci nistîs â-itak wîsahkîcâ.  
Yeah, it is obvious why I call Wisahkechahk my older brother.

akwa ôta nikî-wanihikân, *Lynn Lake* nikî-wanihikân ôta kayâs  
And then, I used to trap here at Lynn Lake. I trapped here long ago.

wîmistikôsiwak kî-otinamwak ômiðiw. kî-pasisamwak ahpo nîkinâna.  
The white people took this [away].

nîso nipimâtisinân piko *Dominique* akwa, akwa nîða.  
They even burned our cabins. Only two of us are still living--Dominique and, and

akwa tîpakohp î-kî-ihtasiya. wîmistikôsiwak.  
myself. And before, there were seven of us. The white people [did it].

akwâni wîsahkîcâ â-kî-ihtakosi ôta. â-kî-ihtakosi wîsahkîcâ.  
And then, Wisahkechahk arrived here. Wisahkechahk got here. I don't really

tântî îyako ohci nistîs. îkotî â-ohtohtîyân ôtî nisîmak. kîkwan  
know where my brother was from. That's where I came from, my brothers. What are you

kâ-mîciyin, kîkwan kâ-mîciyin. ohcitaw mîcison âskaw ôma ôta  
eating, what are you eating! Once in a while I get something to eat during my stay,

kâ-ayâyân kâ-ayâya *Lynn Lake*. kwayask nimâmaskâtâwak wîmistikôsiwak  
here in Lynn Lake. I find it amazing, too, how the white men made such extraordinary





î-osihtâcik kîkwâðiw mîna. akwa nikî-waðawîskâkonânak kahkiðaw.  
things. And then they displaced all of us [pushed us out].

akwâni niwanihikân îkotî. î-itwîcik, “nîða ôma â-tipîðihtamân.”  
Then I trapped over there. And then they said, “I own this place.”

mâka mwâc nîða îkosi nititîðihîm otî mîna nikî-ayân pakitahwâkani.  
But I don't agree with that. I used to stay over here at Pukatawakan, too.

pîðisk ôta nîða â-kî-takosinân îkotî nikî-ayân nôhcimi î-kiyokîyân.  
Eventually, I arrived here myself. I stayed there in the bush, visiting.

*tent village* kî-itamwak, îkosi kî-isiðihkâtamwak. pakiwanikamiko  
Tent village, they called it, that is how they called it. The Tent

iðiniwak. ohci anohc îyako â-nôtinamâ mîkwâc. mahti iðiko  
People. To the present, that is what we have been fighting for. Let's see when

kî-wîkatîpinikawiyâ. akwa ôtî ihtakwan askiy namîwi-sâkahikan  
we are going to be thrown out. And there is land over there called Sturgeon Lake.

îcikâtîw. nikakwîcimikwak tânisî ayisi... ayisiðihkâtîk. nîða akwa kotak  
They asked me what the name of it is. I and another

kisi-aya namîwi-sâkahikani. macî nititâwak îyako â-îcikâtîk. ayihiw  
elder [called it] Sturgeon Lake. Well, I told them that is what it is called. Uh,

na... namîwi-sâkahikan *Hughes Lake* itamwak animîðiw wîmistikôsîw  
Stur... Sturgeon Lake. Hughes Lake, they call it, the white man

isiðihkâtam. mâka namîwi-sâkahikan nititî. îyako anima kwayask timîw  
names it. But I call it Sturgeon Lake. That one is very deep,

anima sâkahikan. sâwano isi-pâhkwâw. îkotî nikî-pimohtîhon.  
that lake. On the south side it is shallow (dry). I travelled there.

mîðwâsin î-âcîmostâtakwâw î-nîhiðawîyân pîyakwan  
It is good to tell you this story in Cree just like

kimosôminaw â-itak wîsahkîcâ. ayi... nikî-kanawâpahtîm askiy tântî  
our grandfather whom I mentioned, Wisahkechahk. I have looked at the land,

mâka îtokî â-kî-ohtohtîm matwân cî kihci-kîsîko akâmaskiy îtokî  
but I wonder where he came from—maybe from the heavens or from across the ocean.

matwân cî kî-mistikôsîwiw akâcî. mwâc î-kî-pî-wîpiniskwîwî. îkotî  
Or maybe he was a white man. No! Maybe he left his wife. Oh,

ay... ôta â-kî-takosi. piko awiðiwa mistikwa kî-ayayamihik. akwa kîyam...  
then he came here. All kinds of things talked to him. The trees talked to him. And it

kî-mâkohtâw kwayask. ay môswa kâ-nipahât. kâ-itât “pôy!” î-kî...  
was okay... He had a hard time. Oh! He killed a moose. He said, “Boy!” after eating his

î-kîspot. îyakwîðiw î-kîspot awa kistîsinaw wîsahkîcâ. ay mâmâk... ay fill. He was eventually full, our brother Wisahkechahk. Oh, it was... Oh,

“na-ðîwatî-âskocinin mâko...mâkon mistikwak,” itwîw. akwâni mistikwak “I will rest propped up between the trees,” he said. “Press... press me, trees,” he

ôhokok kâ-mâkwâskoskâkot. akwa anihi â-kî-astahcikot anta otayâna. said. Then these trees pressed together against him. And then those things of his he

â-kî-astahcikot. anta îkota â-akoci awa. akwa piðîsisak ôhoko nanâto stashed there. He put them in a cache. And there he was hanging, this guy. Then all

kahkiðaw î-kitâðit anihi otayâna akwâni â-itwît pakitinik kinds of these birds devoured all of his provisions. And then he said, “Let me go,

nisîmisak itwîw mistikwa. “ka-mâmîðwâkintinâwâw nci,” itwîw my brothers,” he said to the trees. “I will straighten you all, I will,” he said.

akwâni î-kitâðit kîkwâðiw kahkiðaw kîkwâðiw îya... îyako kistîsinaw And then, they had eaten all, all, all that... that is, our brother

wîsahkîcâ. akwa â-matâwisit î-pakitinikot. wâwâkipitîw mîna ôho Wisahkechahk. Then, he came out of the bush after they released him. He bends these

mistikwa.ay... oskana piko... oskana piko â-astîðikwâ. akwâni â-itwît, trees. There were only bones... only bones left. Then he said, “Wait!” he said.

“cîskwa!” itwîw. “â... [n]ka-âhkân, ka-âhkân!” oskana ôho â-sikwataha “Ah, I will make tallow, moose fat!” He pounded the bones. He pulverized the bones.

oskana sikwataham ay... sikwataham oskana ay tântî îtokî mîna Ah... he pounded the bones. Ah, I don't even know where he got the birchbark plate from,

waskwayi-oðâk... waskwayi-oðâkan â-kî-otina akwa pimiya mîna. and the fat too.

ay â-pîcisapimât îyakwîðiw â-tahkwana Ah, he noticed him coming. That's the one. He's carrying the one he made

î-kî-âhkî. cîkahikan... ocîkahika kiki. ay â-itwît ay â-wâpamât the tallow with. The axe... his axe, too. Ah, he said he saw somebody (or something)

î-pîtatakâðit awiðîwa. mâtoðîwa mistahi. “nisîmis âstam,” itwîw. swimming towards him. It was crying a lot. “My brother, come here,” he said.

“tahkiðôta ôma nipimîm... nipimîm,” itwîw. “kâða mâ...” (î-mâtoðit it... “Cool off my [moose] lard, my tallow,” he said. “Don't cr...” (It was crying, so it is

î-mâtoðit. “ka-wîhðitin,” itwîw. â nistîs kâwiða mâka... kâwiða... said. It was crying. “I will name you,” he said. “Okay, my brother, but don't... don't...

kâwiða koskôwiðin. î-mâtoðit â-itât. akwâni â-itât, “kâwiða,” itwîw don't scare me. It was crying, referring to him. And he said to him, “Don't,” he said.

ây mâyiða î-mâtoðit î-tahkiðôtatât opimîm î-kî-âhkît îyakwîðiw  
But it was crying. It cooled his tallow. He made this out of

oskana. îyakwani î-pimoh... â-itâ kîtahtawið î-tahkiðôtatâðit  
bones. Then it was carrying... He said to him—then all of a sudden, while it was cooling

îyakwîðiw “pîta, nisîmis, akwâni,” itîw. pôy â-akoðâkompâðihot.  
that—“And bring it here, brother,” he said to him. Boy, it dived under the water. And

akwâni kahkiðaw ...mwâc kîkwâðiw ohtisiw awa. “ay... ay ka-wîhðitin  
all of it ... He ended up with nothing, this one. “Okay, I will give you a name anyway:

ohcîtaw it mâka wacask.”akwâni wacask îyako îkosi â-isiðihkâsot  
muskrat.” And that was the muskrat. That was its name—muskrat. And it said to him

wacask. akwa î-kî-itikot îkâ îkosi tâ-itwît.  
not to say what he would say [not to say that!].

akwa ôma ôta â-âpiyân mîkwâc âcimowân miðwâsin  
And while I am sitting here telling a

ta-âcimowân ôta *Lynn Lake* kâ-ayâyân akwa kayâsîs ohci ôta  
story, it is nice to tell the story right here in Lynn Lake. It’s quite a long time.

kâ-ayân. nikiskîðihîtn tînisi ayihtotamân. apisîs nikanawâpâhtîn  
that I have been here. I know what I am doing. I only look at it on a small scale

îða. nikotwâsikomitanaw kîkâc tîpakohpimitanaw ... kîkâc-mitâhtosâp  
(perspective?), though. I am sixty-nine years old,

nitahtwâskîwinân kîkâc tîpakohpimitanaw. ... ninâtn tîpakohpimitanaw.  
almost seventy. I am approaching seventy.

matwân cî na-wâpâhtîn kîhtwâm askîwahki akâcî mwâc. ay pakitahwâkani  
I wonder if I will see it when another year comes around, or maybe not. Ah, obviously

îða n-aðahokawin..nîki îkotî astîw akwa ôta mwâc n-ðh-wikin ôta  
I will be buried in Pukatawagan. I have my house there and I don’t have a home here

kâ-ayân *Lynn Lake* pikwîta nitâhcikawisimon mwâc mistahi niwaskawân  
where I am living in Lynn Lake. I sleep from place to place. I don’t move very much,

mâ... nimâmitonîðihîtn kîyâpic kîtahtawið na-pimakocinin pîyakwan awa  
but ... I still think I will (can) move fast like this

nâpîw ôta kâ-wîtapimak. nitâcimostawâw tînisi ayispaðik ôta ôma  
guy I am sitting with here. I am telling him a story of how things are happening here,

nitâcimowin ahpo kayâs â-itak mocikan, kî-mocikan. mîkwan...  
I am narrating. Even long ago, as I tell him, there was fun, it was fun.

kâ-wanihak nistîs ana wîsahkîcâ. tântî îtokî  
I have lost my brother (digressed) meanwhile, that Wisahkechahk.

piko â-kî-ohcît. ay ... â(y)-itâcimih̄t wið̄a  
I don't know where he came from. Ah... as it was told of him (according to a legend),

îkotî â-kî-oh̄tohtîyân akâmaskiy tântî mâka îtokî  
he likely came from overseas. But from where overseas? He left

akâmaskiy. î-kî-wîpiniskwîwît akwâni ... kî-miskawîw mâni mâka iskwîwa  
his woman. He obviously found a woman here (I presume). He evidently found a woman

îtokî ôta kistîsinaw â-itak.  
here, I think. I am speaking of my brother [Wisahkechahk].

îyakwaðiko piko âcimostâtakwâw. kinanâskomitinâwâw.  
That is all the story I want to tell. I thank you all.

nîð̄a *Charlie Hart*.  
I am Charlie Hart.

**Right: Birches at Lynn Lake  
June 8, 2000**

