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MISHIBINIJIMA 1
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ALFRED (ALBERT) MISHIBINIJIMA

Attended school for only 3 years. Left because he felt he
was not learning anything. Worked in farming and later in
lumber camps.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- War of 1812 and its aftermath.
- Farming when he was young; local agricultural society.
- Working for lumber companies.
- Fear of having reserves surveyed and of losing some of their
land.
- Origins of some Ojibway words.

Ernest: I'm trying to get his genealogy. I got a good idea now. His father was Louis Mishibinijima. And his grandfather was Moses Mishibinijima. He doesn't know what that name means even. But he has been told that the Indian name was Komos. That's Little Bear.

Alfred: Yeah, Little Bear, yeah.

Ernest: (Interpretation) Little Bear, the real name. Komos, ma Komos. (Ojibway) I can get it from that without writing now.

Christine and Tony: Yeah.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: (Interpretation) In Annie Jamieson's description of the chiefs coming into this building in Manitowaning for their presents, one of the chiefs was called Conswea(sp?), Bear Cub's Skin. But that couldn't be... because this one was Ojibway. But you were Odawa, eh? Odawa, he was Odawa. They called themselves because they came from Odawa territory. So that can't be the same man. But Komos,...(Ojibway).

Alfred: Way back to my grandfather, you know.

Ernest: Way back.

Alfred: The States, you have to go back. (Ojibway)

(Ernest and Alfred in Ojibway conversation)

Ernest: Hunting ground?

Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: Oh. No, I never heard that.

(Ojibway conversation)

Ernest: That's the Potawatomi money he's referring to there.

(Alfred in Ojibway)

Ernest: I would like just to have this on tape. I would like Alfred to repeat what he told me at the beginning about why they came here.

Tony: Yes.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: (Interpretation) So just a quick translation. Alfred says he often asked his father, "Why did we come here?" Because we always heard that there are better wages in the States. Even in my generation we knew that. We'd all try and get over because there were higher wages, always higher wages in the States than there were in Canada. So his grandfather says, "We were harrassed. We were told to move from there because we had sided with the British. That's why we were harrassed. We were told we had to get out. We were told to move."

And then he says the reason that they called this Wikwemikong when they first came here, there were a lot of beavers and the original name of it was Wikweanika, that means the bay of the beaver. And finally it came to Wikwemikong. And that's as far as he's gone so far.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: (Interpretation) Alfred is describing the cruelty that his, Alfred's father's uncle.... Well, that would be his granduncle - talking about this John Eshkogo, the one that's pictured and the one that fought in 1812. He's describing the cruelty of the Americans against everybody, women and children. And this John Eshawkogan describes what he actually saw, what they did. There was a woman nursing - he wasn't sure whether it was a white or Indian, he says - but she was nursing. And they saw the footprints of a boot on the child's throat and the woman had been stabbed and all the other babies, her children, had been stabbed. That's the American cruelty that this man saw.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Yeah, that's described in Pierre Berton's book. That's all in that book too, what he said. (Interpretation) He mentions about Mackinaw Island. I guess his granduncle told him about it, where the Americans came in a sailing ship and tried to attack Mackinaw, tried retake Mackinaw. And the leader of the Americans, he came ashore and he says, "Give me a bottle of the Englishman's blood." Then, they says, one of the Indians shot him and killed him and then they killed all the Americans, drove them off. And then the next day another ship came but these people had white clothes. They didn't fire at them. They just came and picked up the bodies. And that's described in Berton's book, where they came under a flag of truce and picked up the bodies.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: (Interpretation) He tells of some Indians fought with the Americans. But what happened was they met one another one time, the Indians fighting for the Americans and the ones fighting for the British. But they didn't kill one another and then gradually they switched over, he says, over to the British side then.

But I think when I read Pierre Berton's story, this is when... because they did fight. A lot of these Indians fought, like Assiginack even. And then when he found that there was treachery coming from the Americans, then they switched over. Then I think one reason that... like he says, the brutality of these people. They wouldn't stop. They kept coming, coming. And the British promised them that if they stuck together, they would never let the Americans cross the Mississippi. I think that's part of the story.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Would you like Alfred to tell the story more? Of his own life now?

Tony: Yes.

(Ojibway)

Alfred: 1898, November 17th.

Ernest: November 17th.

Alfred: Yeah, 1898. Long time ago, eh?

Ernest: That's a long time ago.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: He says they lived in the village.

Alfred: That's my father, my father's village.

Ernest: They lived there for years until they moved out here.

(Ojibway)

Alfred: My father's barn.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: That's one of the old steam threshers, they had a steam thresher.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Oh, steam tractor.

(Ojibway)

Alfred: Steam tractors.

(Ojibway)

Alfred: Steam tractors, yeah. That's why my father, living on the farm, we had to keep the cattle.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Oh, then the boat picked it up.

Alfred: Yeah, picked it up and took it to Manitowaning.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Every Saturday. They say they had a good living during the First War. His father... they sold cream and it was picked up in Manitowaning every Saturday by that old ship the Caribou that's pictured. They have a picture of it.

Alfred: Five cows, (Ojibway), summertime, (Ojibway), a week sold the cream.

Ernest: That's twenty-eight dollars and thirty.

Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: Which was a lot of money in those days.

Alfred: Forty cents a pound, butter, forty cents a pound. Sometimes with two cans in one week, for two cans. I don't know, I forgot how much. A little over a hundred pounds anyway. One can, big can.

(Ojibway)

Alfred: That's 1921, we...(Ojibway).

Alfred: Yeah. 1916 (Ojibway), first winter I was there. Twenty-four dollars a month, twenty-six dollars that I was there. Dollar days, a million days, a million dollars. (laughs)

Ernest: That's what happened to me one time. We were working in Denison Mine, laborer, and we're getting such low wages. So I'm saying, "God, this is terrible." And the reason for that is when this boom came they brought loads of - here I am again - they brought a lot of Portuguese, gangs of Portuguese to keep the wages low. And I thought this would be a big boom for us, we'd make money. So I complained to one...

Alfred: That's my job.

Ernest: One of the foremen. I said, "This is, we should..."

Tony: Lumberjack.

Alfred: Eh?

Tony: Cutting lumber.

Alfred: Yeah, cutting lumber, logs.

Ernest: I said, "These wages are too low." I think it was a dollar ten. "What are you complaining about?" he says. "Dollar a day, million days, million dollars." You know what, I felt like hitting him. (all chuckle)

Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: Oh, that was when there was logs, too. You couldn't find any logs that big today.

Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: Little wee, little wee things.

(Ojibway)

Alfred: 1921, seven months, 1921 and then the Rogers camp. I stayed seven months alone. I'm Indian alone. All mostly white men and for logging, the Frenchmen. But that's the time I picked them up a little bit, words, English.

Ernest: Oh, that's when he first started learning English, 1921. He was alone. He was the only Indian.

(Ojibway)

Alfred: (Ojibway)...on the 7th of September. I get out the 22nd of March.

Ernest: Oh, he picked up a lot of English in that time.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: (chuckles) I want to break in. Tell a story that one of his relations told me. (Ojibway) Gabriel Simon. When he says that he was the only Indian in the camp, everybody was a Frenchman or Polish or whatever.... So this Gabriel told me, this black man came to one of these lumber camps and it was an all-Indian lumber camp. So he spent all winter there and he's telling about his experiences to white people there in some town, after he got out. He said, "You know the place where I work? There is nothing but Indians," he says. "I was the only white man in that camp." (all laugh) But he meant he was the only one that spoke English. (all laugh)

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Oh, he was telling me he went with his brother to Manitowaning. And he was amazed, his own brother was amazed

how well he could speak English. He was telling their mother after they came back - he heard them talking in the store - he didn't know. "He spoke like a white man almost," he says. (chuckles)

(Ojibway)

Ernest: At that time, Wippi, yeah.

Alfred: Wippi, yeah.

Ernest: He found it almost easier. He was talking every day. It finally got like second nature to him. It was easier almost to speak in English.

I had that experience when I joined the army. Like I was the only one, one of the few from Manitoulin that didn't join the army in Toronto. Everybody has a B number around here. I couldn't get in on Toronto so I joined up in Kingston, number three district, so there was no Ojibways there with me. If there was an Indian it would be Six Nations. So all those years, and I had a little bit of trouble coming back. My tongue got twisted around. But it didn't take too long and then I got into the stream. But it does affect you, like he says. Now, I'd like to ask you if you remember the names of the companies and the places, (Ojibway) and I've heard of Collins Inlet and...

Alfred: Oh yeah, Collins Inlet.

Ernest: Where you worked.

Alfred: And Al Rogers' camp, Ovek(?) company. Collins Inlet, ..(Ojibway).

Ernest: Oh, that big pile of lumber, that's Collin, Collins Inlet.

Alfred: Yeah, Collins Inlet, 1926.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: They called it the Potato Bag Company, that's translated into. They're the ones that owned that big red mill in Little Current.

Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: I think there is still some of those old buildings left that they turned into apartment buildings, converted to apartment buildings.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Oh, this one, this old Potato Bag Company, they brought their logs to Little Current.

Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: But the one at Beaverstone, they hauled their logs right to Midland. That must have been risky. If there was a storm you would lose the... (Ojibway).

(Ojibway)

Alfred: Seventy-five logs, that's a contract.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Seventy-five?

Alfred: Seventy-five thousand logs.

Ernest: Seventy-five thousand logs. That's the contract for the winter where he worked.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Do you know that company is still in existence? You see toothpicks, Keenan toothpicks.

Tony: Yeah.

Ernest: Keenan Brothers, it's still running in Owen Sound. It must be the same family.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: He says, in Beaverstone one winter he used his own horses and he was payed \$2.75 a day to haul logs.

(Ojibway)

Alfred: Eight foot wide runners.

Ernest: The bunk, what they call bunks now.

Alfred: Eight foot runners wide.

Ernest: Oh, eight foot runners, oh eight foot wide.

Alfred: Eight feet runners.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: The bunks. The bunks what they call over the platform or bunks they call them. Twelve feet.

Alfred: Yeah. That was in 1925....(Ojibway).

Ernest: That's the year I was born. (all chuckle) And I'm an old timer.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: His son, Joe Peter, he was old enough and knew enough about the farm to run his farm operation and he went up to Latchford. There was a lot of people went up to Latchford about that time. Gus, that's his first job, I think. He drove a truck for A.B. Gordon.

Alfred: Yeah, A.B. Gordon.

Ernest: Yeah, he worked for A.B. Gordon.

Alfred: One winter.

Ernest: One winter.

Alfred: Yeah, A.B. Gordon. His name Anderson for sure.

Ernest: A lot of Wikki (Wikwemikong) fellows, pretty near everybody on this reserve that was a lumberjack, worked for A.B. Gordon.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Oh, not by car then, eh?

Alfred: No, 18 miles from New Liskeard. Near the Montreal River... (Ojibway)...Montreal River. (Ojibway).

Ernest: Oh, yeah. You went by car to New Liskeard.

Alfred: We went by car and then we'd take the boat, the Montreal River.

Ernest: On the Montreal River and then how many days, how many...? One whole day to get to the lumber camp.

Alfred: Yeah, yeah.

Ernest: From New Liskeard. There is a dam there and from there... about a hundred foot high this dam is, that New Liskeard.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: His son was Roy Vansan, he used to taxi a lot. And he'd get contracted by these lumber companies and they'd haul these fellows until even just a few years ago to Chapleau, eh?

Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: That was the last big logging camp that these fellows, Wikki (Wikwemikong) fellows, went to.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Oh, airplane.

Alfred: Nine dollars and thirty-five cents one way. (Ojibway)

(Ojibway)

Ernest: And then from there, from New Liskeard to Wikwemikong.

Alfred: Oh, yeah.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: You know, this is what I've always thought, what he's saying. And this is the thinking of the Indians, just what he said. What he said, (interpretation) this is four years ago, there was a surveyor very anxious to survey. He came almost once a month and they had meetings. And this one particular meeting, this priest, Father Ardis - oh, before I forget, what was his Indian name?

Alfred: Gijik-unung.

Ernest: Gijik-unung, that means Daily Star.

Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: Day Star.

Alfred: Day Star.

Ernest: Gijik-unung, Day Star. I've heard of that. So they said they got together, this surveyor and this priest. They just talked by themselves and then this priest turned around and told the Indians, "Don't listen to this man. Don't ever let him survey." They have never let any surveyors near. And then one fellow got up..(Ojibway). So this Zownempky said... that's Yellow Thunder, eh?

Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: Yellow Thunder. He said, "This white man. We used to own all this and they've taken all our land and he wants the rest of it." That's what the Indians are saying now. "And he owes us all kinds of money. Wait till he pays us what he owes us, then he can come and decide what..."

Tony: Survey some more.

Ernest: Yeah, that's what he said. And Alfred said they asked him, "How much will you give us?" "Oh, fifty acres," he said. And he says, "Fifty acres. You got to get your wood off there and everything. Your food you gotta grow. That's not enough. Here now," he says, "we can go anyplace for our wood, anywhere. You don't have to say, 'This is yours and this man's

property.' They can go." And you know, I asked the same question to the tribal advisor for the Dakota Ojibway, Rufus Prince. Do you know him?

Christine and Tony: No. We don't know him.

Ernest: I asked him, "Your reserves, these eight reserves they got, Dakota Ojibway, are they surveyed?" "No. We don't allow that. There was a couple of reserves tried this certificate of possession and it caused nothing but trouble. We don't allow survey." See, we're one of the few. And West Bay must be the only place in Canada, maybe, that's surveyed.

Christine: Yeah, I've never heard of that.

Tony: And I've never heard of that before either.

Ernest: And just what Alfred was saying, this fifty acres, how about your other generations? This is what the Indians out west are saying.

Christine: Yes.

Ernest: How many acres for this family, that you're going to own? How about succeeding generations? How about their hundred and fifty acres or hundred and sixty, whatever they decided in those western treaties? It's like this allotment, the Dawes allotment, hundred and sixty acres. They still use that grant in California, this hundred and sixty acres in this San Joaquin valley, the reason for this being...

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Four hundred acres.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: (Interpretation) He says they used to have a pasture made with these rail fences to pasture their sheep and they used to sell them. And in the 1930s he worked on that road

from Little Current to Espanola and the camp cook there - his name was Cook, you said?

Alfred: Yeah, yeah.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: And he was the cook for the camp and he was from Providence Bay and he said the wolves were starting to come in. There had never been any wolves on the island up to that time. They must have crossed maybe on the ice and they were coming east. One time they just heard these dogs howling and then

they found that there was only five survived out of thirty with the wolves.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: So they stopped raising them. That was true. They say there used to be a lot of sheep on the island but the wolves, some...

(Ojibway)

Alfred: (Ojibway)...my home, run all over the, run the house eh, at night, the wolves. One calf, he kill him. That's all. We had ten calves and we lost one calf.

Ernest: To the wolves.

Alfred: For the wolves, around the house, yeah. Never find him no place. (Ojibway)

Ernest: Now that we're talking about wolves, I was talking the other day about the nice sounds our language had that we just seemed to flatten out. Like we say ningan, my generation, ningan. But they said myengan, myengan. And that's where the word Mohican comes from. They were the wolf people, the wolf people. Mohigan, mohigan, it's kind of a rolling sound.

Tony: What did mohigan mean?

Ernest: Wolf people, the wolf tribe.

Tony: I thought the Mohican and Mohawks were the same people? No?

Ernest: Well, maybe that's, maybe we give it - no, I think they were Algonkian. They must have been.

Tony: Were they? Yeah.

Ernest: Because that's what they called themselves, Mohigan. I learned that by reading that William Branton's Book Of Indians. It's a little booklet and that's where I first found out the Shawnees, Shawnees southern. Well, that's what we call south, Shauona, Shawnee the southern people. But they were always involved. Like Tecumseh, they called Shawnee. But maybe it's just... we had so many tribes that were allied and so close to us you might as well have called them just Ojibway. Odawa, Sauk, Fox and Miami and I don't know how many. Just offshoots of the same linguistic branch.

Christine: Are there any wolves around here now?

Ernest: Yes, there are. (Ojibway)

Alfred: Yeah, yeah.

Ernest: Yeah, there's still wolves. There's some people used

to make pretty good money trapping. You get \$50. What... \$25 from the township and \$25 from the federal government now? \$50.

(Ojibway)

Alfred: \$50 from the government, bounty.

Ernest: But if you took it, say...

Alfred: And \$7 a skin.

Ernest: Yeah, but if you did it in Billings - I guess that's the organized township - if you took it to Billings, you'd get more. You get payment from two tiers of government, two.

Alfred: Yeah. (Ojibway)

Ernest: Yeah, I know this Motishaga (sp?) that came from that Batchewana. That's all he ever did. He was a trapper. He'd go all around the island. Maybe whatever he caught, maybe it didn't matter, he just took it to the township and they paid him.

Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: I was just listening to a program last night. A phone-in show talking about wolves in British Columbia, that wolf-killing episode. So many varied opinions about the wolf kill.

Tony: Go on about the farming, Ernest.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: (Interpretation) He says he always lived good and lots to eat. Never bought eggs, sold cream.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Clydesdales, oh, the real big ones, Clydesdales. 1800 pounds each.

Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: They still have these pulls here in the summertime. They didn't have it this year. (Ojibway) They usually have these big Clydes pulls.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Oh, they were half brothers, those horses.

You know what I should ask Alfred... because from my curiosity too, the formation of this agricultural society.

Tony: Yeah.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: There was a man called Sexsmith - he must have been in Agriculture - came and kind of encouraged them to push for this society. You could probably find that name somewhere.

Christine: When was this?

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Oh, must have been way long....

(Ojibway)

Ernest: It lasted around twenty years when it was strong.

Tony: When did it start?

Ernest: Well, he doesn't really know. I know I was just a kid when they used to come around here. They were great big... and

Johnny King was the first president. That's Mary Lou's granduncle, that would be.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Johnny King, that would be Mary Lou's granduncle. And he had a farm up there in Buzwah. They had an agricultural - where the powwow grounds are now - they had an agricultural hall. But then, themselves they built that. That was a pretty big building, and they themselves built that. And they called it Jesup (sp?). (Ojibway) That's what was the native society, Jesup, like turnip. The turnips. All the people that belonged to it, the turnips, Jesup. Turnip house they called that big hall.

Talking about, I got to get this joke across. This Sexsmith. I guess this girl took a call from somebody, called in into her office from somebody, and apparently there was a man by the name of Sexhour working there. I guess he thought there was a man by the name of Sexhour and he says, "Is there a Sexhour there?" "No, hell, we don't even get a coffee break." (all laugh)

(Ojibway)

Ernest: I'm going to ask, when I was a kid and when I used to see those boxes with birds,...(Ojibway). Alfred doesn't remember, I asked him what kind of birds. Maybe owls or something, I don't know. (Ojibway) I was pretty small. It seemed like a big bird. There used to be wagons lined up. (Ojibway). Fall Fair, there used to be a big parade to start it off.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Oh, there used to be a big band that used to come by. That used to be big years ago, a brass band. They had some real good bands too, and they used to combine on those days, he says, Rama, Cape Croker and Wikki (Wikwemikong). Yeah, there was a....

Christine: Why is there not as much farming here as there used to be?

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Alfred still hasn't answered me why the farming but he started talking about the threshing and he said the first ones that had... there was a couple. One he mentioned was my

granduncle. He had a horsed driven threshing. There were two of them but when they got breakdowns they had trouble getting parts for it. And finally one, Joe Zowninky (that means that Yellow Thunder), went to Waterloo to get a threshing machine. And that was steam driven. Finally he got a motor and then he threshed. Oh yeah, oh, here's the one. This is the steam one now.

Alfred: Yeah. (Ojibway)

Ernest: Yeah, Joe Zowninky, and he threshed for white communities, too. They used to come and get him. Bedawah and all over. Yeah. I remember seeing this. You know who had got one still and it's in operating condition? It's Jack Seebrook in Mindemoya. He bought one of those and every once in a while he'll start it up. I remember when we were a kid, when there was a family got in, McVay used to do the threshing in West Bay and we'd go. There was quite a bit of farming there one time, too. And they'd have a wagon behind. Yeah, it was self-propelled with steam and it had a wagon full of water. And we'd run right around the reserve just following. This was really something, you know. Just like a train years ago coming in to... and we'd run right around and follow it. It would stop and sometimes do just a small job. And that's when, like... I don't think there was any wages paid because it was farmer helping farmer. Big meals. They were like get-togethers, you know. Community get-togethers. Now nobody wants to do anything unless you pay them, that's why....

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Alfred says the one reason for the decline in farming was since everybody used a horse then, these companies - since the advent of the tractor - these companies that were making the equipment for horses, like walking plows and harrows, they quit making them. And everything had to be...

Tony: Mechanized...

Ernest: Mechanized for tractor, attachments for tractors. So, since they couldn't afford tractors, all their old plows or equipment were worn out. He says that contributed to the

decline. So that makes a lot of sense. I never thought of it that way.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Yeah, I remember those hay binders. They may have had a horse but when that binder broke there was no parts. The equipment manufacturers had discontinued. So that's, there's your answer, part of it.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Yeah, I remember there was a push for that. We had band-owned equipment but somehow that even didn't seem to work. It just petered out. We tried that in West Bay. We had band-owned equipment but they were just... hardly anybody. It wasn't worth it.

Christine: Did people continue to have gardens and things?

(Ojibway)

Ernest: He says as far as he was able he gardened right up to a few years ago and he sold a lot of the stuff that he couldn't use to Little Current. He'd go around selling his extra. But there isn't...

(Ojibway)

Ernest: He says he got all that from not quite one acre but he looked after it.

Alfred: Yeah. (Ojibway)

Ernest: Yeah, he planted two bushels and that was enough to last him all year.

(Ojibway)

Alfred: My brother, two brothers beside me. (Ojibway) Seven guys, seven 90 pound bags. (Ojibway) Average, over hundred fifty acres (Ojibway).

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Seven bags and you got...?

Alfred: Three hundred bags.

Ernest: Three hundred bags. He said they had an over-supply, they couldn't get rid of them. They tried to make a deal in Manitowaning. Even at 25 a bag, they couldn't sell it. There was just too much.

Tony: What?

Ernest: Potatoes.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: He would like to take us, before we leave, to his son's place, his old farm. And he has already told Joe.

Tony: Okay.

Ernest: So, you'll meet his son. He only had one son, Joe Peter, Joe Peter Mishibinijima. Oh, what was I going to ask before I forget? I always try to ask elders where the word Shaganosh come from.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Yeah. See, can't pin that down.

Tony: What about Wemitigosh?

Ernest: We have a pretty good idea with Wemitigosh. We know that now.

Tony: What is that?

Alfred: Frenchman.

Tony: Yes, I know but....

Ernest: I've heard two versions of this now. The one from Michigan, it's a little booklet I saw in the Historical Society and I think they have it in the Foundation. Wherever the French explorers, whenever they come ashore, the Jesuits were with them, the missionaries. And they came... (Ojibway). We say, like a stick if it's waving in the wind, wayboxay. That's the verb for the motion. Wayboxay. Tik, we say wood. Takwoosh, that's kind of a derogatory way of saying wood. That's like saying damn stick.

Tony: Yeah.

Ernest: Takwoosh. So finally I guess when they come ashore, Wayboxway that piece of wood, they just knew that was a piece of wood. Wayboxay takwoosh. So they finally shortened it to Wemitigosh an I believe that would be the translation.

Tony: And what was the other one you heard?

Ernest: This one they say when Cartier arrived, I guess there was word spread that there was a ship there and even Ojibways

went up to see. And they saw trunks, you know, chests made of wood and tik, they were tik, they were. So, but this other one that I'm thinking about that crossed... it sounds better, Wahebtakoosh. Finally they just put it together.

Tony: What does Shaganosh sound like?

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Yellowhead, Joe. Do you know Joe Yellowhead? I asked Joe this summer, "Well, we have an old Indian word called shagan. (Ojibway). Anything you use for defense, like a gun, they call it shagan."

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Yeah.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: So he says, "Well, anything used for defense is shagan. So the white men, wherever they saw them at first, they always had a firearm or weapon. Well, that could be used for defense, too. So this is just my rough explanation but I don't know if I'm right or not," he says. Then finally we just put shagan nosh, shagan because he had that shagan. But still that doesn't seem right to me. This is as best as I can do. But maybe someday I'll run into, maybe it's too late now. But maybe somebody will come up with something better.

Tony: I think Basil Johnston had an explanation for it but I don't know whether it's correct. I'll ask him.

Ernest: You got to watch Basil because he's one of these strictly commercial Indians. And he's not well liked. I know him very well. He's not - Basil's strictly - I wouldn't trust whatever he told you. Helen Tanner asked us about him. And right away she said, "Do you know Basil Johnston?" "Yes." "I think he's some kind of a comedian," she says. And Basil doesn't even speak good Indian.

Tony: That's what I heard. Somebody said to him, he teaches Ojibway but there is nowhere you can go where you hear people speaking like that.

Ernest: No. And because of that, nobody wants to confide in him anymore.

Tony: I see.

Ernest: Mayway, we call a continental European because mayway means a person that sounds strange. (Ojibway) We call the Frenchman onima, nokshma, German onima.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: It would be too much to write but I'm going to ask Alfred to give me the names of the ones that he's heard of that fought in 1812, the Indian names.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Oh, just those three. Yeah.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Louis Odjig, John Chebadees, Ambrose Chebadees.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Demanakanoo, that's the one that fought. That's the great-grandfather of Gordie Odjig.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Oh, he just knows those three that for sure were in the 1812 that he...

Christine: Does he know any stories from that time?

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Oh, that's all he can recollect, what he, the incident he saw the American cruelty.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Yeah, he said the Americans were pretty cruel. I mean, he didn't distinguish the women and children from the fighting men. He would kill them just as soon as he would kill the warrior.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Another thing he heard, he says, when the Americans came they were always cruel. They just shot Indians on sight and finally they started kind of organizing and they did the same thing. They usually strung them up then, to retaliate.

But the Americans started it first, he said. Well, that's like the book that I have. I used to hear this Norton, his sister tell me what their dad told them about this genocide. They say in California that would be a favorite pastime for northern Californians, like say let's go rabbit hunting. That's what they would do. Go around shooting Indians in California.

Tony: Do you know any stories or anything about the treaties, the signing of the treaties?

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Would it be this in particular, the island treaties?

Christine: These treaties here.

Tony: The treaties, the island treaties.

(Ojibway)

Ernest: Manitoulin treaty, 1862.

(Ojibway)

Alfred: Lots of money that \$400 that time. (Ojibway) I say I only got \$4, these four. How do you see that makes \$400, that's only \$4. It's \$400, (inaudible) that's one cent, count that money. That makes four dollars, that's four hundred. Yeah.

Tony: Four hundred pennies.

Alfred: Yeah.

Ernest: He says what he's heard I guess must be this treaty,
...

(End of Side B)

(End of Interview)

INDEX

INDEX TERM	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
AGRICULTURE				
-agricultural societies	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	16,17
AGRICULTURE				
-cattle-raising	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	6
AGRICULTURE				
-equipment	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	5,6,17,18
AGRICULTURE				
-gardening	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	19
AGRICULTURE				
-livestock	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	14,16
HUMOR				
	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	7,8
LAND				
-claims	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	12,13
OJIBWAY INDIANS				
-language	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	20,21
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT				
-and employment	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	6,7,8,10
TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE				
-mechanization	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	18,19
TRAPPING				
	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	15
WAR OF 1812				
-accounts of	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	4,22,23
WAR OF 1812				
-aftermath of	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	3
WORK				
-for wages	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	6,7,9,10,11

PROPER NAME INDEX

PROPER NAME	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
LATCHFORD, ONT.	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	10
MACKINAW ISLAND, ONT.	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	4
NEW LISKEARD, ONT.	IH-OM.04	MISHIBINIJIM	81	11