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- Problem of alcohol among native people.
- Raising children: comparison with earlier days.
- Establishment of the Shesheep, Sakimay and Muscowpetung reserves.

SAULTEAUX WORKSHOP

MRS. CROWE 0000-0110

Oct. 30/73

Long ago the way our ancestors were, we are gradually losing our culture. We are trying to hold and revive our Indian culture. At this time we are gradually losing our native language. Our white society is gradually taking away our ways of life. It looks like we don't want what God has given us. Our children are taken away by white society. We are to teach our children our own ceremonial ritual. How are our children going to pray not knowing his native tongue.

This is what we are trying to hang on to, our ritual activities, how we were brought up. I had to work and given lectures on how I should manage a way of life. I am here and have seen what my elders have told me.

And again about alcohol, I am not trying to hurt anyone by my talks. I have been, once, of those unfortunates myself. Alcohol has been deteriorating our whole life leaving us on poor track of life.

Every day someone is gone as a result of excess drinking - children, young people taking it. There is no one to lecture these young people. If an elder is to tell them or give lecture, he is told he talks too much or shut up.

It's very good what we are working on today. I have recognized it and seen the results on what we are working on today. I've got some good results out of it. Every day or morning of my life I have been talking same way as a prayer. I have seen and recognize the results of my faith. The way I was brought up and told by my parents. I encourage you people to try and hang on to our faith. Do not accept any other Christian denomination. Hang on to our own faith. It was given to us for reliance and protection, and I hope it's clear and understood. This will be all.

JOE WILLIAMS 0303-0339

I am starting with my story. My relatives from this reserve where I come from - at that time our ancestors looked upon one another as animals. They had wars on this area where we are located today, wars with Blackfoot Indians. Our party retreated as far back which is called Winnipeg today and from there the Blackfoot retreated back to where we are located today, no farther back. This was where our ancestors stayed for a period of time. It was at this time one of our natives made

preparations and left. "I will be looking for a place where we are going to live," he said. He was prepared with dry meat and moccasins. It was at this time he came upon this big lake which is called Crooked Lake today. He sat down viewing the place. It was a very nice place, a big lake. It was a place where he would make a living. It was at the time when the big game were plentiful in this area. We called [them] elk. They were standing everywhere. It was very nice so he made camp, a wood lodge, at one of those points beside the lake. It still can be seen yet, there is still signs, rock are still set in a circle. I wonder if you have ever seen this place. This was a place where the first camp was made by Sakimay whose name it was, and today the reserve carries the name of Sakimay.

Where he had made his first home across the lake, his wood lodge, he went back to get his tribe to this location. This was taken up by our forefather, Sakimay. He was a leader of this reserve.

Somehow as time went by (we don't know whether he had children) he moved across the lake which is called Sakimay today. The former location is called Shee-sho reservation. We don't know how he was related to him, maybe it was his son. And from then on our forefathers have succeeded one another as chiefs. We still have it today. Agoose was a chief; their dad's name was Qew-wich. There were three of these men, Agoose, Pun-nip-keeshik and Mit-tik-mish. Those were the three brothers; their father's name was Qew-wich. He was a very fast runner. It was said he was able to run down a buffalo on foot. This here Agoose, he also was a fast runner. It was said he

ran down seven elks. He tired them out at an all day chase and killed them, all seven. There were many of our ancestors who were able to tell us the stories. These were the wonders of our historical events of years ago. I can't very well recall the stories that were told and I think that will be all for the time being. To this day the man that had located the place is called (his name was) Sakimay. The reserve is called Sakimay.

WILLIAM KEQUATEWAY 0349-0419

I am a little undecided how I should start, of our difficulties in our way of living far back. I am not used to talking in public.

For my way of life my old man talked to me and brought me up. I was not able to sleep as much as I wanted; I was told to get up. If you are for long future you are not going to be single, try and see what lies ahead of you. Someday you are to live with a partner, a feminine lady, it's true. Dad has given me

lectures on different subjects. I used to think I was getting a scolding and pestered. He used to say, "You are heading for many difficulties, it's like going through bush. You may not go through with all the difficulties you are heading for."

This is what the old man used to tell me who brought me up. "And this lady, your children, you will be going hand in hand. When you have raised and brought up your children, they will think nothing of you. Your children will be smarter than you are." And that's what has happened. My children are very smart. How smart they are! Tomorrow one of my boys is facing a charge for impaired driving. If I was able to drive a car I would probably be in the same position. One of my daughters is driving for me. Alcohol has affected us in many different ways. Every day we hear someone has done something to himself. That's what happens to him as a result of alcohol, and we still are not able to leave it alone but we see how it's affecting us. We seem to be drawn to it. It's not all our fault; it's the white man's fault. He puts it there for our insane behaviour.

JOHN CAPPO 0421-0553 HISTORY OF THE RESERVE

I am going to tell the history of our reserve which is called Muskowpetung. Long ago before the treaty day the Saulteaux were all camped together. My great-grandfather, my grandfather's father it must have been, he was along with this party. He was one of the headmen in any social event. When the time arrived for treaty day a feast was set up, my grandfather was there. He was the one who signed the treaty, his name was Che-cuk.

When he had finished he moved to hunting areas to hunt. When it was time for him to move back home he didn't get home. He took sick and fell while he was hobbling his horses. My grandfather went home with the loss of his father and it was a long time again before they had a chief. The superintendent came, told the people they were to elect a chief. They were undecided who was to be elected as a chief, looking at one another. There was

an old man who had a lot of horses but was very bashful, would not talk, but the women insisted he be the chief. "Perhaps he will give us each a colt," they said, and this is how Muskowpetung became a chief. He was a chief for a long period of time. Muskowpetung passed away and we never had a chief for a long period of time. Just very recently we were told we were to elect a chief. Now who was to be a chief? I think we are all chiefs at present. What are we going to do now? No one seems to know what to do. This time we will put this in the paper for nomination and elect those candidates for the election. Having gone through with the procedure of electing a chief, John Gambler became a chief by majority.

He was a chief for a long period of time he was still a chief after the World War II. When the new Indian Act was proposed to have chiefs for a term, then I was elected a chief for a term and then John Gambler was re-elected chief again. And at the present time David Benjou is a chief. So we've never had many chiefs since the time of our treaty; there were approximately six or five since that time.

People talk about alcohol, we have the very same problem. If there is any social activity there's some drunks there. We are told there is nothing we can do and our reserve today is owned by white men running it and farming it. This alcohol has caused a serious problem, I know for sure through my own experience. I had money going to town but when I got home I didn't have any.

As you talk about our Indian faith I have a lot of respect for it. My dad has had a lot to do with it. This was the reason to respect it. My dad used to say, "Some day, my son, you will see the day to carry on. Never reject it." That's all I have to say.

MR. H. CROWE 0553-0641

I am going to talk about the days of my dad's time - how hard times it really was at that time and how they were brought up. He told a story that one time they were on a verge of starvation, how hard the times were. It was very hard us how we were brought up. Moose was very scarce. We sat down for a long time listening to him. We asked him to tell us stories of their time, and today we don't have children who may ask their old folks to tell stories of old times. It's pitiful to hear how hard it really was for us in those days.

My grandfather was a chief, his name was Wata-pe-tuk-eukay. He also told us how hard it really was at their time. My father predicted the difficulties we have to go through. I thought, this can't be true. Today we see the things come true.

How hard it was for us in those days. One morning they called on four elders in one lodge to predict where a moose could be located. The following morning one man was awakened to go and hunt the moose to where it was predicted to be. We were starving, we had absolutely nothing to eat.

We had a buffalo mat. "Hunger has taken over me, I was crying," he said. "Suddenly I smelt that something was burning. Our buffalo mat hair was being burned off. My mother boiled and cooked it. This is what we ate, you see how hard it was. I felt relieved after eating the hide. At the following time our hunter has returned. I heard someone commented

Wench-che-ta has killed the moose. I don't really know how many camps were there. We had very little meat after distribution. And again one time someone killed a partridge, that was also shared. That's how hard it really was in those days." He also predicted that there will be a time when "someone will be taking care of you. You will see shining houses everywhere. Those are going to be superiors." He said, "What you are heading for is going to be hard." That is all I can recall what he has said. He also talked about alcohol; he predicted a problem with this. I can see everything what he said and I thought it can't be true. And today I find it hard to go through all the problems in existence.

WILLIAM KEQUATEWAY 0641-0728

The subject of back history I don't know very much about it, but my father who brought me up, from there on I will tell our problems and hard times we had. There were a lot of us in the family; there were six of us. My brother are all old too. I believe I have many years behind me. I am going to tell how poor we were. My dad never used to quit snaring rabbits to provide us with something to eat. We ate everything that had nourishment even gopher, coyotes, anything that was available to eat. This is how poor we were in those days. I am still poor today. Ever since my dad and mom were buried I am living among the white society. This poorness and self pity still exist in me today. Where am I heading for? Where are all my relatives? I appreciate very much today with all the native people here to talk to, Crees and Saulteaux, I am glad to be here, never before did I ever speak publicly where I come from.

I am going to change my subject. I am very happy to see that there is a pipe set here which I attend to and fumes of sweetgrass including the offerings set there. What I am happy about is to see the old man pray and the way he has mentioned in his prayers; this I appreciate very much.

I also possess sweetgrass and also a pipe and often at times I fill my pipe and direct to the one who is over us. Not the white man, I never direct my pipe to a white man, but to the Ultimate Reality, asking him a real way of life, towards the future, including my relatives. This is what I like about it. My dad practised ritualism. He made Rain dances at Sakimay Reserve and where I come from. It's going to be six years since I left the reserve. I don't know what goes on back there but I often hear the news from there. It's not that I dislike the place why I left. I lived close to a road; every day and night there were drunks coming in and out. I had pity on my children. They were small at the time; as soon as they saw

someone or something they would come running in. Just like a coyote who is scared to be seen, this is how my children were; fear of reserve since alcohol was open for us which has caused us many problems. I did not like the situation. My children were not able to play and enjoy themselves outside. I did not like the way things were going so we made plans and left for the sake of my children. I appreciate very much who I see and how you manage. This will be all.

JOE WILLIAMS 0728-0819

CROOKED LAKE

I ask forgiveness from our Creator, everything to be true, I am not going to tell lies. What was handed down by our Creator, and that is our Indian faith. It was very hard for us for a time trying to fulfil our ritual activities, difficulties arising from our former bureaucrats. They had done away with our ritual activities. Rain dances, the only way they were able to fulfil their rites was to do them secretly, trying to fill out what was handed down to them, making Rain dances. My nephew sitting there knows this too, how hard it was. Today there has been a change; we don't have to hide or do them in secrecy to fulfil our Indian rituals.

There was a time when we had to get permission from the Indian agent. What rights has he got with our Indian rituals? He wasn't the one who taught and handed down these rituals. These rituals were handed us by our Creator not the Indian agent.

Today is different but we don't have any more of our old folks. But we still have one and we are able to make Rain dance on Sakimay reserve. Our ancestors were given these rites and to keep our Rain dances. A Rain dance was given to a native Indian. It's powerful and spiritual. It is said our old folks have made sacrifices and offerings asking or praying for good health for their children; and they had what they were asking for. It's no use to promise and not to do it. Even if you think in a spiritual manner God knows. This is how great and powerful our Creator is.

I am going to talk about two of my grandfathers whether they were doing this competitively, I don't know, to show the power in themselves. It was at the Rain dance; the last of the dance my grandfather stood up and asked to be pierced on the surface of his shoulder and strung to the lodge post. Several songs were sung and one more song was sung; following the song, the ropes fell off. These were the powers our grandfathers had, a given power.

One of my grandfather's name was Pun-nip-pe-kee-shik. He climbed up the lodge post with two wing feathers on each side of his hand. He started to sing and the dancers were dancing. Suddenly he started gliding from the top of the lodge post. We don't see this type of elder today. The reason why I tell these stories I wish and hope that there would be someone to tell our young people, teach them, tell them the happenings of yesterday. Perhaps if they were told and given a view the

spiritual side of our culture we would work our way back. I am a little afraid it's going to disappear gradually. The number of people who are assembled here and pipe set here and scented with sweetgrass directed to God, let us now ask Him to give us the power not to lose the spiritual side of our culture.

There will be someone to tell our young people. If we are able to collect what we are looking for by helping one another we will succeed in what we (?) forward to. This will be all for now.

JOHN CAPPO 0819-1886

I am going to tell a little of the time back. I used to stay home with my mom. I was the only boy in the family. There were eight of us children; I was the only boy, all girls. I was well loved by mother. She used to tell me many different things. She was a Cree. She used to tell me, "Someday, my son, you are going to be a man too. You are going to see kindness." I can see that today. I have grandchildren, this is where I see kindness. What I have been told by my grandfather, I think about what he has said. It's true what they have said and what is happening today; it seems we are gradually losing our Indian faith. I know at present there are some school teachers who are teaching Cree. They are teaching at schools too, mostly Crees who are starting this program. I am glad to see this program has started and wish to see it practised everywhere. As long as we don't lose our language, perhaps we will revive our Indian rituals. That's what I think; I think it's a very good proposal.

Concerning our relationship the way we are related to one another, we are overwhelmed by white society. We are gradually losing that too. We don't even know how we are related to our neighbors. I have known years ago relationship was mentionable. They used to say, "How are you, nee-ta, how are you, nee-che." Nee-tim, my sister, my young sister or brother. The way we were related was mentionable and we have lost that. I think this is the purpose of our meeting trying to hold our culture and revive what we have lost and that's what I have to say.

MRS. CROWE 0926-1007

We are expected to speak on different subjects, on what they are trying to achieve. I have been here many times. The understanding I have what our leader has to say, grievously, what is gradually coming to extinction. Coming in here today, I feel a little sadness hearing the wind. It causes me to feel sad, hearing it. I have my thoughts on that pipe that's set there. It was given everything, our requests to be true and to be taken whenever our Indian is consciously worried of his problem.

When we are trying to help along the natives we are not only trying to help ourselves by coming here. I never forget

thinking of our time. The only way we could achieve our goal is, work together to get what we are looking for.

To keep in mind and conscious contact with God asking him to give us back what our white society has taken away from us. What the Indian was his way of life and depended on has been taken away from him.

At my age today we had a lot of work; our parents made us work. I had the idea we were being driven and treated harshly. My dad was well-to-do; he had horses and farmed quite a number of acres and had a lot of cattle. They used to awaken us early to water the cattle on cold winter days. Many a time I cried from being cold when we returned from chores. We were at least given breakfast. When our breakfast was set for us my father used to give us lectures. "Someday you are going to live in a different place and you are going to support yourselves, no one is going to support you. Also someday you will have grandchildren. You will be in a position to think for yourselves. Don't get the idea that time will never come for you to have worried. Difficulties lie ahead where you are heading for," he told us.

And the spiritual line of life we were told never to forget. It's true I never forget wherever I may go. I am always in mind. If you have a home, keep it clean, your doorway to be clean; you will achieve a bright future if this is properly done. We were given every different kind of work.

My father used to cut wood for us to go and load to take into town. Otherwise we never went to town. Today children are overthrowing their parents' authority. We never saw this in our time; when we got paid for the wood we'd come straight home. We never even spent a dime; that's how strong discipline was in our time. When they had enough money collected they'd go to town and nothing for us; we had to stay home. We had many different kinds of work - haying we helped. We were trained

how to work. Today we benefit from how we were trained to support ourselves in time to come. Years ago parents used to give lectures; we don't have it today. Today young people would slap you on the mouth when you try to tell them something. I would perhaps be slapped too if I didn't have the nerve to correct their wrongs. This is all I have to say.

(End of Interviews)

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