I am Louis Bird from Peawanuk. Today is February 27, 1997. And this is Peawanuk. This is the second tape for this day. The first one was done this morning. Now it’s afternoon. At the first tape on the side “B” I ended up explaining a little about spiritual part of heritage, spiritual make up of the First Nations of the Omushkego.

I think that I have said that it is… it is fifty percent of the make up of the… of a person, if you acquire this shamanistic knowledge. If you develop the spiritual part of you, of a person I mean. So that is why the First Nation believe they have to have it. Or at least have a knowledge of it. There are people who… there were people who have the knowledge. There are people who believe in it, but they didn’t practice it. Just like me. I know about those things. I know how it’s developed and I know how it’s used and what can be used, but I just don’t use it. I just prefer to use Christianity. There is something in it that I don’t like about the old style. I believe that it was ok in the wilderness where everybody has to survive on his own. Where everybody can live by being fit in everyway. Survival of the fittest, I think its work.

But today, we don’t necessarily have to use all that… all of it, because we don’t live… our First Nation people do not live in the wilderness anymore. We do not actually need it. We would now require much more to practice or to understand much wider knowledge of the world we live in to accept a few things that are outside of our world… of our world, of our sphere of knowledge. So that is why I don’t practice. That’s why I do not care much to practice or even to try.

I know I am given some part of it, not all. But I never tried to develop it. Much of this contained in the original one we still have. We can access to it today. Anybody can, not only Indian people, any person can access to it if you are interested. But you wouldn’t need it. You would not need it today. You wouldn’t need it in the in the modern world. It is only… it was… I think, personally, it is only applicable in time where everyone has to have a… a power, a will to survive.

Since that our people, the Omushkego people have adapted the world where they have lived. They have adapted the condition, the season, seasonal changes. Just like the rest of the animals, like Canada geese and Snow geese. They have adapted themselves to the different season. Different parts of world. Like caribou, like fish. But the Native being didn’t have to follow all those animals and fish. They only new, they only follow them so far. They only follow them where they going to be. How long will they be there. To try to be there on time. So part of the… they did migrate, yes. And they have to understand it’s knowledge. Why does the animals have to be there and when and what will cause it and
how to be there? So all these things were there. And that was the required education for those people, for the young people who were to survive. And that was the knowledge our ancestors had.

Although they had all those knowledge, although they had all the power to do these things, they were very vulnerable other things which they did not prepare for them. What I mean to say is for example, they knew long time ago, years before… years, centuries before maybe. Before the European came. In those days, before the European came, our elders, our people were gifted prophets. Maybe not necessarily the word the prophet. But the seers. They see things ahead in there mind. They could even will to be able to experience what’s to come and what’s going to happen later. But they didn’t want that. They didn’t like those things. Because to them it was so scary, it was not… not everybody likes to know what’s going to happen in years to come. So they didn’t encourage that very much, but there were those who were gifted. As the far future seers. They very seldom mention. But they were, they were very accurate. I think one of our character in our legends play that part. Once there is this part of this story. I think the Chakaapesh play that part, which shows us a little bit about that. I should not tell that story but I want to… I want to say.

For small example, there was a man, one time, who was just a simple man who had the knowledge about everything else. And he was not the powerful man. But he was very strange people who usually tell the story that was never been heard and a… something extraordinary that was never experienced and never expected to happen whatever it is. So he was a visionary. He dreams these things. So one time in his dream he had dreamt about the object. The object that the person will have to measure the time and the day. So he says it’s thick of a heart. And it’s not big, maybe, it fits in the hands. But it is thick. It has its own power to move. And he calls it. What do we call it? Imitation of sun. Pi-see-moh-kan, copy of the sun. That’s what it means. Pi-see-mo-kan. Copy of the sun. Because the sun give us the time. In their life, those days, when you see dawn coming, you know the daylight is going to be so long. And you look at the sun when it goes into the half way to the sky, you know it’s halfway through the day. You measure by that. And as it goes down, it also gives you a certain amount of knowledge and time.

How long would it take, how long, how far distance can you cover with that distance of the sun to the horizon. So the sun tells you the time. Gives you approximate time. So that’s why this man who dream about this object. He calls it the imitation of the sun. So… actually the the the clock or the watch also… it is used where we didn’t have it, the sun would be our time machine.

So anyway, this is one of the very simple… the seer in the future. And this happens just a just a few hundred years before the European appear on earth. We don’t know for sure whether he actually dream this, but there are times when people are sarcastic.

So they say, especially today, some people say: “How long would this person live? When was it?” So people don’t know actually what… I mean how long ago, how many years ago has he lived. How could we remember but it is… There is no indication when. Nobody can tell you when, how many years, a hundred years whatever. But it is today that we begin to know time measurement comes in years. And if we were to say
this man has dreamt this stuff four hundred years ago, before the European has appeared on this side of the world. Supposing he had the story about the travel. Did Christopher have the clock? Did they have a clock somehow? If Christopher Columbus had the clock, which was five hundred years ago, maybe the story could have been carried from those native people up north and talk about this mystery stuff, which gives the person… or gives the European time. Time to date.

So that is the criticism about this, our prophets, predicts. That was the only one. That was not the only one I mean. There were others. There were others, there was another one. This was after the European came. I think I could say very close to one hundred and fifty years ago I think, maybe more. Maybe way back. I’m not so sure. But this was person I was telling about the thing. So he said, he was just predicting this is going to happen.

He says: “You will be able to hear a man from a far distance just by using the mirror in your home and you will see this person who sing away out there. And that’s what going to happen later.

So what… nobody understand this.

A mirror… “Like a mirror,” he says. Because he didn’t have a mirror. But the mirror is chakaasteke. Chakaasteke it is the reflection in the water.

“By reflection of the water,” he says. Like the reflection the water. I think that’s the word he used.

So anyway having that… that story about this man, his word lived on for long time. And it did happen at that time. I happens amongst them. There were two people who have the shaman power who develop their exercise by gazing at the water in a wooden pan. To be able to see a person instantly in a distance. Just like what they call what we know about today… crystal gazing. That similarity is there. But this person was talking about something like that. But he was not talking about that kind of stuff. He was talking about the wee logic that you will look up and at the same time you see it happens there, far distance. He was not saying this is a prediction you see in there.

But he says: “it’s a thing that you see now is happening there”. So it is just recently that people begin to understand what he was talking about is television.

And there was other person who had predicted the radio.

But he had said,” you know, he didn’t say anything much about you use it. It was not a mystery for him”. There was not a mystery, but he was just saying like the one we use, the shaking tent he use.

We use the shake to find out about our friends in distance or anything that we want to ask.

But he says: “This another cultural object, is that you actually hear a person in this box. In this container, whatever it is. That you actually hear a person instantly when you speak out there in the distance.”

So they said: “it was no big deal. We have shaking tents we can use, even much better than that.” So the shaking tent was partially, it was a spiritual connection; spirituality. Partially it was material.

Now, this is my own opinion. Separate my comment from the stories that I just told. To my opinion I think our native people have established or gifted to be able to have
the mind power to manipulate electrons in the air. To be able to hear… to be able to hear things distance, just like the radio waves. I think this is what the native people have managed to do. Perhaps not the object they use. Maybe the sticks, the cover of the shaking tent, it’s not actually the material they were using. Maybe it was a mind connection from other source. Which then their faith makes it so real for them to be able to see and hear things on, in, or from shaking tent. Or maybe he just hypnotism. Maybe a person became the hypnotist, not with out knowledge and make others believe that there is something. We, the First Nation people did not have a distinction between magician, hypnotist and a… ventriloquist. So maybe all these trees where they experience that shaman able to adapt and use. So that’s just my opinion.

One extreme farfetched idea of mine is this, perhaps our forefathers, because of their power of mind and spiritual belief, maybe they were able to connect it other beings outside of this world who are still exercising or living under material world, somehow, and use their power source to use this simple… simple home made object which they believe it’s their doing, that could have been it. Now this is a farfetched opinion.

So to go back to the real world, to go back… to try to explain what the shamanism mean to us… to the First Nation. We can go back to the simple thing, we can say now, which is still unbelievable. The person who develops the shaman power, who wants to have the shaman power, must fast, not everyday, but the regular time-given season. If he wants to develop much more, he would have to develop much more, he would have to fast frequently and deny himself and also sometimes people say, have to deny themselves their pleasures of life. What is the pleasure of life in this world for them? The food. Food is one of them. That is widely known.

And also I think it was second was the sex. But for the first one satisfaction, first I realize it’s the sex for them… for a man. So he had to deny himself that one. Keep himself nice and clean without any tarnishment from other body, and also from other source of food which is not perfect. Actually deny himself and live in the condition of isolation and pray whatever the kind of praying they use. So fasting is the only word I can use. So he was… whenever a person wants to develop a certain skills, certain power, he must back into the fasting, back into the wilderness. And if he cannot succeed at the first time, he must go back again. If he cannot succeed a second time, he must approach the Elders to get their advise. Once he get the advise from the Elder, then he should apply it for himself. And he should follow the instruction which will finally give him the power to achieve what he’s seeking. So it was always… it is always telling us that… these stories.

The Elder, a person that lived long ago and many years on earth have a knowledge more. More experience… understand more mysteries in life. And we have unwritten law in our culture. It says respect your parents and your Elders. If… so if you wish you shall live to be white haired. That’s what they call. It is not from the bible, it is from our ancestors who have this. So it is in the bible, Jewish bible it says, respect thy parents so you want to live long. So anyway, it’s a very similarity. Anyway to go back to this person who develop some certain power, he must continuously fast and find the place particularly where he thinks it’s most achievable. We must understand this, I’m sure we could see the facts from our other people’s history. Whenever a person seeks spiritual
connection. Whenever a person who wants to achieve spiritual powers, usually look for the higher ground.

Every religion, major religion there is… we always associate the spiritual part on the hill, on the mountain, on the high ground. Nobody ever goes to underground. We don’t hear the church that goes underground in order to achieve his prayers. Well, our ancestors are the same. When they want to fast and develop something, they would go into the higher ground. Sometimes there are very thick and inaccessible place. Too extremes. Some people go into where there is no one can go. No animal can go even so they can be totally isolated. Some people go into the high ground where not so many animals want to live, except for some caribous who want to get rid of from the flies. So anyway, so that’s the way they were doing.

And they also believe the higher ground… the high ground the easier to access to the spirit world. Because they believe up there in the atmosphere, that’s where the power lies. Because that’s where they see this power of thunder and the thunderbird. That’s another story. So anyway, this is… that is that is why I said our ancestor’s cultural make-up was fifty percent spiritual and fifty percent physical. Sometimes much more spiritual than physical. The more spiritual power you will have, the less physical strength you would need. But you must have a good health before… when you develop these things, because you going to severely punish your body when you try to achieve these things. Denying yourself will be the thing for you to try. But in those days, during those days when our ancestors practice this thing, it was the only thing they have that have connection with the Great Spirit, which in other words, God.

The Jewish people have their God. They associated their God in thunder on a mountain, volcanic mountain. They associated their God in many things. That is physical. They even ask for the physical God. And so First Nations, our ancestors were not much different. But they didn’t have one God. They have one Great Spirit, yes, I mean God and Great Spirit the same. They… they didn’t have a religion, I wanted to say. A religion is having one faith. One faith only for the whole people. Which makes it easier to live. But our ancestors were individually developed. Each person develop his own faith and belief. Belief and have faith in it. Which sort of created the separation which sort of created constantly on the moon. And separate from each other which I guess served the purpose of the Great Spirit intention is to use all the land inside of having it in one place only. Perhaps, that is again my opinion.

But there is an Elder who have said that.

He says: “God have created us. The Great Spirit has created us. The Great Spirit created us to use the land. To use it all in season and not to destroy it in one place. That was a very wise saying I think. And it applies to Omushkego Nations also. They actually practice it, the Omushkegos, until the European came. Until… just recently, the last fifty years, begin to emerge from the bush. And it is only; it is only less than twenty years. Seems our native people in Omushkego and also part of northern Ontario that our people, the First Nation people began to emerge from the bush. And begin to exercise living together. Unfortunately, in doing so, it they denied their cultural idea, their cultural belief and totally alienate themselves from their own First Nation culture. How we say, esteem or dignity?
Now they have to go under this living together. And it’s all is… institutions like churches and everything. So they had to follow that also. To deny themselves their own culture. Willingly. Some of them willingly. Just simply dying to be different. And they don’t care much for the old stuff, especially the young people. They are really stuck on the European pride and achievements and awards and heroism. And all this there’s too much in television. So anyway, that’s the results, but again that is my opinion. And now, to get back to the old culture information.

I have said before these are the reason why our culture has existed in the wilderness and these are another reason why they never developed what they call “living together” or civilization. When you live in the wilderness, you don’t need a vocal communication. You don’t need to have a very highly… highly set sort of… syllabic sound or a bunch of words to express your feeling. No, you don’t need high language for that. What you need is a higher level of understanding. Highly level of faith in yourself and spiritual connection. That’s all you need. You don’t need no verbal skills. That’s again my opinion. But that’s what our ancestors did. And this is the way that I tell the story, this is the way I try to express our history. I just don’t go on and on to tell the history of people, this is what happened to them, this is what they did. I have to stop once and a while to explain, to try to explain why it did happen as much as I could understand.

So anyway, trying to put this into a paper would be hard, because you cannot do that when you just have the oral history. It does not organize the people… to be put in the paper in the written form instantly. It will have to be years before we can put it in order. For now all that is required today is to put everything in the written form as it is. It doesn’t matter if it’s not understood at this time. But later on it will be und… arranged in the written format, just like the written bible is.

The Jewish bible did not come with the printing and faxed with the fax machine. No. Or with the printing machine or with anything. No. It came by scroll, stone tablets, wooden tablets and any other kind of formation where you can put the mark to show what it means. It took many years, thousands of years to… to have it at it’s perfection now, what it is. And that is what where we are now about collecting stories of oral histories. So we do not expect ourselves to be masterfully created the history of the Omushkego people at the beginning. It can be just be put in the piece of paper for now. Hopefully someone will be asking for this, for certain. There will be some First Nation.

If the world exist one hundred years today, from today, there will be a Omushkego people who have forgotten their language. Who will then have tears in their eyes to say we have lost, that they would very much enjoy. The will very much appreciated the written material which has been created by their own people. That is important.

Now, getting back to the old history. Let us get back to the state of development of this spiritual part of the culture, which has been forgotten, it has been denied. I am not condemning Christianity. I am not condemning Christian teaching and all that stuff. I live by the Christianity because I find it easy to follow. But it is the Christianity to be strong that our culture’s spiritual connection is become condemned. Too quickly, too quickly
changed our ancestors to change their ways, to adapt to the European ways so they will live easier. That was the missionaries’ idea.

But other part of the world, government has different ideas. That’s what happen then. Before that when our ancestor live in our own way. When they survive on the land as they did a thousand years before. They were not poor. They were total masters in their own life. Their spiritual connection fitted well and works well for them. Even though at times when the creator wanted something to be diminished, he causes us to have famine or bad weather. Not because he wants to punish the people. But he wants to maintain and control the population of any living. That’s what the Elders say. The creator, they say, has the power to see these, to over see all the things work well. And the large animals to the insects, to the bug size. So there is there is teaching where the wisest ways of expressing things. There are seldom found in other languages. But these are the words that are forgotten.

In the language of Omushkego, most of them are forgotten. The words that were used a long time ago. They call it, what should I call it, the oldest language, the old Omushkego language. Which is not use to because we don’t live like a Omushkego anymore. So anyway, to develop the spiritual part in past it was necessary. It was necessary to have a shamanistic power and knowledge, at least the knowledge, so you will be able to deal with it. So you will have an understanding. You will be able to deal with it when there is something extraordinary, a very extraordinary experience arises. So you don’t have to die of fear. Because most of our life is expecting something unexpected, or not knowing how to deal with unexpected thing. So these people long time ago, they had this make up of getting ready, or be prepared to face the worst. And have some, a reserve strength, a reserve knowledge that you may survive.

These were the things. That is why they developed this spiritual part of themselves. And now to get back to this thing, without being dramatize it so much. I will now tell the small story which is happen not to long ago. I would say about ninety years ago. Maybe more than… a hundred years ago, I would say. A hundred years ago there were still quite a few Elders that retained there, their spiritual practice, their spiritual powers and things. There were those who excepted their Christianity and practiced it in front of the people. And when they get back to the wilderness, they just return to their own ways. For their spiritual things.

And there was this old man who were out there living away from his own trap line. He know that he’s not going to have much… much supply of tobacco. And he uses tobacco for his prayer. So he had hoped that someday he would be able to meet someone who will, who will have enough to spare. But it didn’t happen, so he ended up having none out there in his family and his also relatives. And he was getting aged. He was already old. Not the kind of age that people can cover long distance. They think. So anyway, he mentioned to his wife,

He says: “My tobacco is almost gone, my dear.”

Says: “I think I going to take a trip. I’m going to take a trip. I am going to take a walk over there and see if I can find someone who can spare an extra drug.

And if it’s not, he says: “ I will have to make it to the community”. So the community there existed somewhere. Sure enough, a few days later, he was prepared to go, not much. All he did was pick of a bag, everything he’s carrying bag. I want… each man has, each
hunter has. He brought it in and put a few stuff in it and take it out and hang it up again.
So they’re on one early morning, he got up and

He said: (to his wife), “Good bye, I will see you maybe tomorrow.”

To the wife says: “Where are you going?” So he named the place, but it’s a long ways
away. So he will… he doesn’t need anything. He’s an expert. He does need no big
corporation. He can feed himself. All he need is a gun, matches and one puff. That’s all
he need. This is the winter. He doesn’t really need to carry a blanket. Because there is a
way that he can make his home without it being cold at night. So all this. The old lady
knows that. She knows her husband very well, that he’s skillful to be able to do anything.
So as he didn’t say much, he didn’t have to worry about him, so he left. He left one day
and he took off towards direction to the place where he was talking about. He had
mentioned about the family that lived almost halfway though.

He says: “I was stopped by them to see if they an extra tobacco”.

If not,” he says: “Maybe I have to go on.” The old lady know the distance,

She says: “Oh my God, that’s… it would take two days for a man to travel with a
good health.” But she was not worried. Sure he left, the old man left the morning, gone.
Nobody cares, nobody worries. The children know that he’s going to be gone sometime.
So the night came and he didn’t return.

So the next day toward sunset, there he comes. He came outside and people could hear
him so the kids went out to meet him. And there he was. Take off his snow shows and his
bag. Put away his gun. Let his wife take his shoes, take his moccasins off. And ask…

The old lady ask: “Why do you walk around so far this time?” So he’s got the bag and
he says: “Dig in the bag, there’s a bit of something in there.” I think he brought a tea for
her. Tea and I think something else to. So he has his tobacco.

So the old lady say: “So you did get your tobacco, eye.”

So he says: “Oh yea.”

And the old lady ask: “Did you, did you stop our friend’s place where you expected
them?” And he says: “Yes, I stop back there, but the man didn’t have enough to buy them
all. So I just stop there for a while and then went on.” This is the one-day trip at least, for
the healthy man.

But he says: “I went down after this,”

He says: “So I stay the night over at the… on this side of the village. I didn’t stay in
the village, I just make my lean-to, not far when I went to get tobacco when the store was
open.” So he went. So he went to the community which is about fifty miles away at least.
It would have taken five days for a ordinary man to travel, but it all taken him only one
night. So the the kids begin to curious about the… you know those young teenage boys.

They begin to ask question, “How does he get there so fast, how did he do it?”

So they went down to check. The old lady didn’t mention anything. She knows. And
the boys went out there where he went, where he came back. So they saw his trail. He
came back a lot of different ways. Then he just coming in. So they follow the one he
left. They follow it into the lake. There was a large – not a very large – maybe a three
quarter mile lake around. So that’s where he wants this woman’s straight out to the east.
And then halfway through there, his track begin to disappear. Very lightly mark and then
it, soon it disappear. So the boys figured, well, it must have been, it must have been
windy and just, you know, covered all his trail. So they went to look at a straight-ahead and around, to find his trail. Nothing. No tracks there, across the lake. Investigate. So they came back. Nothing there. So they come back again where the other where he comes, you know, they’re a little bit different. Where he come in, so they fall back pass this one coming in. They see it well. The same way. The tracks began to disappear only to see the the tail end snow will begin to show. Finally the fall snow so much, as if he just landed. But there was no wind last night, during the day. So they went up all mystified, these boys. So in the quiet of the day when the old man was not aware, they think. They went to ask the old lady,

and they say: “How did our grandfather travel without trail? How far is that place where he went? How long will it take us to go there?”

So she tells them.
And they say: “How come our grandfather go there?”
So the old lady says: “Do not ask the question about your grandfather. There are things even I could not explain.” That was the answer.

But only in the years later did these young people wanted to ask the question. Only later they find out the old man had the shaman power. And one of his dream quest he had mastered how to travel, without his power, but his will to take him where he wants to go.
So that is the benefit of this spiritual connection or whatever power that he did develop.

When they need much more physical strength, sometimes this will come into power. Personal energy just to get his tobacco and a bit of tea for his wife. She didn’t complain. So we now understand what use is this partially. Sometimes it’s benefit, sometimes it’s no good. Too much.

Ok, that’s it. We will continue to speak at the other side of the tape recording. Ah… we still have a few seconds of this tape. So I will take about this old man a little bit more, the one who travels the distance with some power. It was my friend, late Michele Patrick told me the story. And Michele Patrick is a comical person. And he use to make fun of things. When he had finished the story, I was mystified, beside have fun. So he ended up saying

he says: “I was saying he must have been powerful man.”
Says: “To be able to travel with nothing.”
So he says: “Maybe,”
he says: “Maybe he was a powerful man. But he could have used the helicopter,”
he says: “The little transfer in the helicopter”.
But I said: “Where could he have summoned it? The helicopter are not there yet.”
So he says: “Maybe he just will to have appear, this helicopter.”
And he says: “What about the pilot.”
I said: “He would have to will another being to...”

[END OF SIDE A, 1 of 2]
On Side A I ended up imitating my friend Michele Patrick when we begin to make of the old man who travels by his power. Well, we had fun. But it remain a mystery how this man ever do these things, if we ever done it at all. But the story is suppose to be real.

There are many of those kind of stories. That individual had done things that are not possible normally by a normal person, but it is said that the people who can do that had developed it in the name of shamanism. Shamanism is the only word I say I could use. If I say spiritualism, you could judge to say the Devil’s power. Or any other. Be easily be said. It will be said it’s a Devil’s power. But I cannot myself say it is evil thing, because there are many things that the story just not fit to be the evil stuff, in those days. Since that there was the only one, the only kind. For them, without ever having the any other source of spiritual teaching or information, they were innocent. It’s my opinion. Just like a child who begin to walk and begin to do things. Throw things maybe that valuable and break it without knowing that it will happen. Or the baby could hurt himself walking, running too fast. He did it himself, but he didn’t do any damage. He didn’t break any law, except he had hurt himself. So that’s a similar situation to my opinion.

This small, small story example, which I have spoken about the old man who travels distance, is only a very small example. There are other stories that are mystery, that are dramatic. Sometimes that right down to the evil stuff. You could judge yourself if you ever hear all of those. Anyone can judge after he hears all kinds of those stories. One can judge himself which one is evil and which one is not. But I don’t think there is any. This is only my opinion. I don’t think it is right to judge things by one action. I think action measured the judgment evilly or morally. That case. What I mean to say is that if you see, if you hear the horrible story about the person who have used this power to do what he wants, which is not moral, it is will be up to you to judge. But you cannot condemn the whole thing, because it is only one person who do this.

There are other stories that are that are right. That are important. Where this such person, a shaman, or a powerful man who were doing the good things for other people. For other individuals. To save their life. Even to feed them in this time. When they use this power, we cannot, I cannot judge it as an evil stuff. To my opinion, I think the good
lord, the creator, or a Great Spirit, whatever the name you apply have granted these things to happen in time. In a certain time in history. In a certain place of the world. What do they say in the Christianity? With God, nothing is impossible. With that in mind, I personally cannot judge them. But I joined the Christianity instead, just the same. Because I find Christianity more comfortable than anything else. My spirit. But that is not important to what I think. The important thing is to tell the story. The history. The oral history to the written down. That is the important thing.

Now lets get back... lets get back to one of the teachings. Why do we have to learn many other things. When people... when those people were living in the wilderness. Living in the wilderness for them is home. No place on that particular area. They cannot be lost. Perhaps they maybe could be denied their homemade home in one night or two night, because they been kept away. But they would not get lost. Because wherever they live in that particular area where they grew up, it is a home. They can make a home wherever they are. Perhaps inconvenience for a time. But the main area where they usually stay. It’s their home. They didn’t have to build any stone buildings, because if they use stones, that would have been take them a time. Season was too short to do this. And how would they heat the stones if they make a stone houses? They didn’t have time because they adapt themselves into the world they live in.

They could not change the thing. They did not wish or know how to harness the power that was there or the resources that are there. Because they are too busy. Always trying to survive in the wilderness. The seasonal changes. Cannot allow them just to sit back and think of how to harm us... some other things. I’m, again this is my opinion, perhaps their Great Spirit has hold them the way they are so they will not destroy the world. They will not pollute area. If they just stay in one place. Even themselves if they have followed and understand the example of negativity of staying together, and living together with so many people. They have witnessed this continuously in their life by watching the animal. Animals. Especially by watching the beaver. The Elders who live for a long time. They have a lot of life experiences. They have seen season’s come and go. They have seen different season come and go. They have witnessed the effect of different seasons in their life. And they know what season will change things. What will happen to the land, to the animals, to the plants and everything. Birds and fish, all that. They know all those by observation from the young days until the very oldest days. From the day they open their eyes they begin to study, they begin to see, they begin to experience. And the day they could not see, when they get old. They still see. So that’s the kind of a culture. That’s the kind of education they have to learn to live by it. To experience it. To practice it and to survive in it. So they have... from perhaps maybe... God, creator, or the Great Spirit may have... may have the plan for them to live like that for the time being.

Maybe God did not have the plan, that some the other people will come. And that they will have to change. That’s my opinion. But whatever it was. It has come to pass. That those First Nation people will have to be diminished. They will have to stop living the way they were. Because of the... the changes in the world, the development that take place today. So we cannot condemn them. And that is the reason we are certain... it certainly will not exist for a long time. The memory will exist for a time, for those young
people who have listen. But if it’s not written down, the memory will be gone with the Elders. I have heard this word many times. Most of them they’d known. But none of these Elders lived our culture. We live differently now. Even the most isolated communities. There are very few of us live like our ancestors. The changes in life make us weak. Our condition be deteriorate. Our condition be deteriorate. Our physical condition and mental deteriorating, weakening. That is my opinion.

So in those days when people develop themselves by themselves in the wilderness requires the power and strong mind and a strong will to live. They develop themselves that way. They have to understand everything that is there known as. I said before they have to be able to understand many things. I once told a man, I once told my young… young person,

I said: “Try to read the water for you to travel. Read the water as it goes down. Or if you want to go up with it. So you will be able to travel where the deep water is. Or if you want to go down with water, look at the water where is going and it will carry you.”

Because I said: “Read the water.” He sort of looking at me because the only thing he understand himself is to read the paper. That it marked there as a language. But that’s not the only thing that First Nation people read. They read the sky. They read the movement of things, the wind. They see the wind, it moves, as it moves. They see it because of the dust on the ground and also on the water. In the wintertime they see the wind on the drift snow, where it goes.

They may not be able to hear exactly where is goes if they live in the flat land. If they live in the flat where there is no willows, no trees. But when they live in the bush where there is the trees and where there is the willows, at least four feet tall. They can hear the wind. They know where it comes from, where it’s going. They hear those noises. So they have to understand all those things. Many times in the past they say a man has save his life because he could read the wind and the weather, the formation of the clouds in summertime. Or else he could have lose his life in the water if he had not prepared. And that is the reason why they have to teach by observation of everything. Not only those things, there are other things they have to understand by looking at it.

Now, another education system they must learn. It is quite different way to teach the young person than it is to teach the… I mean a young man than it is to teach the young woman. They have this education system which both sex can learn. But not necessarily applicable to female. So she has a specific training. She’s trained to make a home. To raise children. To take care of the children. To feed them. To maintain the home. To keep the home and to feed the children first but they feed from her breast. She has to understand her body. She has to be told. She would automatically have the power to do it, the woman. It’s strange, no matter what nationality it is; there is a mystery in women. The mystery only the Great Spirit have created, the creator created this mystery. And it’s in the women. There is a time in women. There is a clock in women. There is a measuring mechanism and the creator has set this perfectly and the native people have to follow that. A man have to learn about these things. Even though they didn’t have no pleasure of sex, no woman.

They have to understand those basic things between men and women. I have said before our First Nation Omushkego Nation were not daily nomadic. Not like Hollywood style. No. Some tribes call them, the worst tribes for their wives. The Ojibwa people like
to tease the Omushkego people by saying they treat their wives, then they treat their horse. But that’s the wrong way of saying. The Omushkego do not have horse. And they have a dog, one or two. But it is true, yes. It seems like that is from a far distance. It truly is there is not pity, no pitiness in the education system. Because if you there is too much sympathy, there is almost over protection, you actually harming the children. Actually harming the person. You must teach your children the hardship in life for him to survive and her. So these things were known amongst those people, our ancestors. There were some who are old and mystified by sex, even I said taboo. Some of our Elders have believe that the woman is unclean every month. The woman is unclean after she had babies. And then they totally make an effort not to touch anything that women touch during this period. They’re really afraid. They even dream some of them. And it actually happen to them, because they believe in it.

I think have tell the small story one time just emphasize what I’m saying. First of all we will go back to the dream quest. To have… in order to have dream vision. Dream quest is when you begin as a child, when you try to dream something, when you try to learn how. Until you get it, the dream vision is the one that automatically come to you, just like a vision. You have that. That’s why you can receive it because you have been trained. So anyway, and in this in this nature, this man had the dream, had a vision one time. That he have understood in his dream, if the women other than his wife, if the women every give him drink or food while she’s in a certain state of the moon, of the month, or after having a baby for a certain time, that if the lady touch the water inside the cup, or the food with the bare hand, then this man will die. He believe that. And all his life, he was a powerful shaman. He was able to overcome many impossible things. He was able to save himself in many ways. But only this that he fear, that he could not overcome. He believe it so much.

It happen one day. When he was traveling one of those communities as in time after the European arrive. And he was traveling between communities to go to work, he happened to come upon the lady who was at home. And she just had the baby a while ago. And the lady offered him a tea or drink and shaking the water with her finger and the man say that he say the visitor and he’s so much gentleman. Because he’s a shaman, hey? Shaman… just the real powerful shamans are very gentle people. Gentle people. Gentlemen, sort of. They behave gentlemen. They respect people. So do to the respect and in order to… not to refuse what she’s offering, he took the cup, even though he believes that it’s going to kill him somehow. So he took the cup and drink it and was on his way to the next community. We don’t know how long it take him to get there, but he got there. He got sick and he died. So he believed, he believed just because he took the cup from this woman, and that’s why he died. Nothing else would have killed him, but he says: “That’s the only thing.” And that was his belief. But to the other people who have witness, they say you know, he had, he had a disease called small pox or chicken pox, I’m not sure. So one of those poxes anyway. So he had all measles, I’m not sure what it is. So anyway, apparently they had that in that community, European community, settlement where he was working. So he died from it. To our opinion, to people who listen to the story, they said no, it was only his faith, it was only his belief. That did not kill him.
So this is what… that’s the negative side of this dream vision. It can make you, if you
don’t have enough true education about how come the shaman didn’t have enough power
to understand these things? So there is… there is a question there. This shamanistic thing.
It’s no total. It is not actually pure. Perhaps that is what, to my opinion, this is my
opinion. Perhaps that is what the missionaries, the early missionaries saw in people.
Maybe that’s why they condemned that belief and practice. Maybe because the priest and
the missionaries, they were the most educated people in eighteen, seventeen century.
They were the only people that would be able to read and have knowledge of many
things. Perhaps they saw his behaviour in the people. And they… they have brought in
their certain ways to believe themselves, because in those days there was the Christianity
was fighting amongst itself. Beginning to split.

And another religious section were imposing on Christianity. And to try to counter-
act, the Catholic Church had establish the Spanish Inquisition. So this was that century
also when the missionaries came with the European conquerors, shall we say sailors. A
sailors who accidentally landed in this country. So they brought this Spanish inquisition
with them which gives them the power to condemn other part of the spiritual belief and
practice. That must have been it. Maybe this is what they believe in so much. That the
Spanish inquisition has been dismantled. It has been disorganized, I mean, it has been
dissolved by the church. I believe it is. It has a very bad effect on the First Nation people
in North America and South America, that is my opinion. But still without it… without
the missionaries, without different denominations of Christianity, Christian missionaries.

There was still a nagging question about whether the shamanistic thing was, was
actually real good stuff. We know it was quite a bit evil. But it is not the religion. That’s
the only problem. Each individual who develop it has his own master to it, his own faith
in it. So therefore he cannot be condemned. He dies with it unless you want to change. So
that is the question still hang in my mind. Because the story tell us many stories. Our
history.

And then… just like today, they tell us the negative part of the stories. But there are
many good stories about this story about this connection. I do not believe that our First
Nation in Omushkego have had any idols or forming or shaping any material to worship
as god. No. I have never heard it. The only thing that they ever shape is the shaking tent.
But that is temporary. They don’t carry that around. They just construct it when they need
it. And then dissolve, that’s it. It’s logical, because… because they are migrators and they
always want to travel light. How could they created an object out of stone, out of wood,
or any other material for that matter. Would they have to create it each time when they
settled to one place, or would they have to carry it around with them? I am sure they
would not carry it around. So they did not adapt that kind of stuff.

They were no idols amongst the Omushkego people. Perhaps it did happen down
south where people don’t have to migrate in different season. But the Omushkego. No.
We can be sure that they did never have any idols. Out of stone or out of wood or
anything. Perhaps then they have carried the pipe. The ordinary pipe which they smoke
by man. Some women smoke pipe. Maybe that’s the only kind of idol they got. But that
was pure physical pleasure for the smoke.

So anyway, they are people who have used tobacco to practice their shamanistic
power. There is a story about that. So we still have a lot to talk about. I still have a lot of
information regarding the makeup of the First Nation of Omushkego which I have already said. Fifty percent of it is shamanistic or spiritually related stuff which I cannot say it’s morally acceptable today. No, it is not, it has not been. Let me take a rest. Now let me… let me try to explain about another part of education system.

I have said there are different ways to educate young ladies and the young men. Automatically the young ladies understand their position, because they look at their mother everyday as she works for them and for their father and for the home. They know what is expected from them each day. Everyday as they wake up they see their mother get up. They see the first thing she does is prepare our water, heat water and something to eat in the morning, if there is anything to eat. They see their mother as she works for the family. And they see also the difference between the boys. How are the boys expected to behave. So the girl automatically understand that she will have to keep a home. She’s also made aware she’s a different than a boys. And then there is certain rules on how she must act and how she must play and what she should be careful.

Right at the very early age about five or six, a little girl is told to be careful to cover herself in the certain part of her body. And as she get to be about eight or ten more so is trained to be conscious about how she behave in front of the home. And that she is always be conscious about her difference. She’s trained how to sit. What not to do when she plays and what to do when she plays and when and everything. And she also have an explanation why is that. And then everyday… everyday she does exactly the routine of her mother’s duties as she watches her. And she’s just right there beside her and she does as much as she can. Sometimes she get bored and sometime she wants to play. And then she goes out and play for a while. As soon as the game she plays is getting dull, she come back to her mother and back beside her. And do something that she does.

And the mother is very active person in the wilderness. She hunts the rabbits. She make her own hunting around the home. She’s responsibility is to catch fish around a home, to catch the rabbit and partridges and any other bird that are eatable. It’s to provide herself as much as she can around home.

The father is expected to provide something else for a home. That is to try to catch the bigger animal for the clothing, for the cover, for the home and also other things that are required. A man… a young man is trained to hunt the larger games. For example the beavers, otters, and then the big game, caribou, moose, whatever there is available. And that he must know how to hunt those things. And how to prepare himself to hunt. And that is another part of a young ladies training is to help out. A man needs snowshoes in the wintertime. So the young man is trained to look for the trees to use for his snowshoes early in the fall. Sometimes in September, sometimes in October. To be able to have snowshoes ready made soon as the first fall of snow. And that young ladies that trained to lace those snowshoe sticks, frames, to put strings on them. To put the hide in the foot section. And to know exactly how to do it. That’s part of their contribution. And they must know how to prepare the hide. For that purpose alone.

Beside preparing the hide for the clothing, the snowshoes and the jackets and every other thing. The training for the little girls, the young ladies is many. As for clothing taken, learned to make her clothing from any kind of material they can find. Not from only the big animal, but a small one like for the winter. They can catch the rabbit and they can make jacket out of it. They can make pants out of it. They can make hats from
the rabbit’s skin. But having rabbit skin for garment requires like something similar to weaving, but not necessarily crisscrossing the lines. Rather making loop knot of the hide. First the hide is taken off the body and then cut into strips maybe half-inch wide. Then after that when it’s still raw, then it is twisted like twisting it into twine. And when you finish twisting it the hairs became like the line of fur. It’s like a large fluffy wool about an inch and a half diameter. So inside there, there’s a hide. So you dry this thing for a little while, maybe a week. Then it’s ready to use. So that is what you put into the rack, I mean the bone, and then you start to make knots. It’s like almost net… it’s almost like the net. The way we make a net, gill net. That’s almost the way he made it. And with that line you could make a jacket out of it, he made a pants, a hat, winter stuff. Very warm.

And you can also make it for a blanket, a family blanket. A long time ago a family blanket use to be fit for a parent and his wife and maybe a small children in between or wherever you want to put them. It only requires one blanket in one home when there’s only a small children. So a wife has to know how to make this. To make blanket big enough for her husband and herself. Perhaps one little tike. And as the kids grow, the children grow… that’s another story she tells that to them. So this young lady she has to learn this way. And also she has to learn to make moccasins from different kinds of animals. The beaver, even the otter and a caribou, moose whichever the person is, a sealskin can be made into a moccasins with out any fur. Any hide can be tanned and smoked same way as a large caribou hide. So all this the young girl has to learn this as she grows up.

By the time she’s thirteen, she knows most of this stuff, maybe not yet physical power to do but she knows by experience. And this time also, she begin to develop the womanhood. And this time begin the desire to have another experience. And now this where she… she’s ready now. She can be… she can live the man. When she’s thirteen, fifteen. But a lot of time parents prefer to keep their daughters for longer than that. Maybe under twenty. So that the old people, the old culture understood that the younger the lady gets married, the better for her to raise her children while she’s still strong.

So she will bare the children when she’s still young. Then when she has enough children that she’s have physical power to enjoy life. And the child… and the young lady has to learn all this. How to provide everything physically. Just physical stuff, I mean the materials that are required and how to cook, how to care.

And she has to know about medicine. Plants. Herbal medicine they call it. And she will have to be a nurse, a doctor at home. And she will have to know all those. And wherever she can find. And also to be able to make, to cook any kinds of food… to prepare the food. To preserve the food. All that is required. And and then she’s ready. Then she have to practice in her own family after that. But the young girl does not necessarily have to develop the shamanism. She is gifted sometimes. There is a girl sometimes that is gifted to predict the future. I think in the minor term they call it the woman intuition. Highly developed amongst the native people. I have seen those kinds of people. These are not shaman. They are Christian, but they are very highly developed. To experience what they call woman intuition. They are very accurate. So the women are gifted. Young women usually get these things. Now there are… I think that’s about all the… the young person has to know. As a female. She does not practice all the rituals for being shaman. She doesn’t have to. She’s not required but if she wants to, she could
acquire it very easily. Somehow for some reason the women has the suffering kind of life much more than a man. And that these… she’s gifted to have an extra protection. Just like our body.

The woman is especially gifted to rebuild disease much more than a man. Our Elders know that. There are many things that our women must know and train. And they are told how to care for the small child when they grow up as a married person. How to care for the small baby and why they should and why they should fed, breast-fed. There was no choice anyway long time ago. The only thing that they can feed their babies by their breast and they were told to keep on breast-feeding the child as long as they can because it helps them withheld their monthly period that way. And they’re much more a freedom to participate in actions while they still carry the baby in their back.

This was benefit for them and this is what they were trained to be and it also gives them other things which gives them a small pleasure in life as wife and as women all these were, were told in, in more ways than one amongst the women themselves but there was no romantic instruction, there was no such thing.

And now about the young man has a different training. He has a training in how to hunt mostly. So to learn this kind of hunting he has to go out with his father every morning, early morning and why does he have to get up early in the morning? He needs to start his life. So he goes out hunting early in the morning, he goes out. He is encouraged to get up early, before dawn and to be on his way before the sunrise. Because they say all the animals for the minute or so the animals will stop dead in their tracks during the sun begin to appear in the horizon, if it’s a nice day. I guess they do the same thing if it is even cloudy, the animals have that. So that is when you could hunt the animals very easily at that time. That’s why the man is told to leave early in the morning and be quite a distance, put himself a distance away from his home where the animals doesn’t hear them or in case there is such animal close by so that he will be able to hunt to kill and save him much of the trouble of carrying the food back home. Seems that he found the food not too far away from home and that is the teaching. So these were training that required for the young man and he has to master them, he has to have faith in them, he has to believe in them and he have to practice them so that is part of a boys training. Besides if he is gifted person that he should also attend spiritual part of training. That he should make the most of it, make the effort to acquire as much as he can if he is gifted to, to know for sure what he can be and he is also explained by the elders, by the grandmother and by his grandfather and stories by his parents by, by legends.

Parents can do that in what make the person in this story so extraordinary so that he too can listen to that and ask instructions from the elders. Most of it is usually, is beneficial when you concentrated on hunting, how to keep stamina in you as you a good hunter, to be a good hunter. And then that’s not all there is to learn, he has to learn the behavior of each animal that he has to hunt. He have to study them as a young boy with the parents, with the father. He had to spend hours to study the animal that he is supposed to hunt and most specifically instructed not to waste anything that he kills, that he should always respect anything that he kills and never to waste, that most of the time to try to use it all wisely and also to thank the creator, the great spirit for providing him the things he need in life for his, for him, for his family and the loved ones. This is the most important, conservation is very important for them.
And I think that this is the end of the tape recording and maybe few moments so the next, next recording we’ll do a little bit more deeper and more, well we’ll go back to the same subject but a little bit more different ways. That is the problem with this cultural training because it does not organize in the way you should learn.