

Title: 0116-Our Voices-Guns and Bows II
Bird Number: 102701
Recorder: Louis Bird
Date Recorded: April 20, 2001
Transcriber: Roland Bohr
Date Transcribed: Oct. 27, 2001
Language: English
Culture: Cree (Omushkego)
Transcript: Proof

Louis Bird: It's not on yet.

Maureen Matthews: It's working.

LB: Hello, hello!

MM: It's actually, the batteries, the microphone is right here.

LB: Okay, it's good. There it goes. It's on now. Let's just pause, pause.

MM: Okay, go ahead.

Roland Bohr: ...ask first and then you can say, can answer those questions. What I was looking for are the terms in Cree for bows and arrows, quivers and their individual parts. So, for instance, if you could say and write down the name for bow for instance, or the word for bow, to begin with.

L: The bow

R: Yes.

L: Achaapi. The bow is achaapi. Bow, I put this, achaapi. I don't know how to make that achaapi, achaapi.

R: Do you write in syllabics?

L: Yes.

R: There you go. And last time you mentioned that there were different types of bows. So are there different names for those?

L: Yes. You mean the wood? You mean the wood to make?

R: Yes, maybe the wood species, but also you said you need stronger bows for different purposes than.

L: Yes, we need the stronger bow for, for shooting the big game animal. Strong bow, we use strong bows for big game animals. And this, the wood we usually we usually use is the otatasekiw, that's the one that green wood out of a tree, otatasekiw. It means any

kind, any kind of tree. It's either by spruce, spruce tree with this, with this that certain kind of a tree that grew, up in our area. Spruce or tamarack. Tamarack. Tamarack with red side. Red? With red side. It means red wood side, eh?

R: Yes.

L: That means otatasekiw.

R: Those were the little red spots?

L: Yes, yes, spruce.

R: They provide elasticity?

L: Yes. Makes it a strength on it, eh? Adds more power to pull. This spruce we called sesekatak. Sesekatak. I'm gonna put it here. Sesekatak, that's the name of the tree and this is the waakinakan. Waakinakan, that means that kind. And then these are the strong bows but they can be used also at the same, you use the same trees without red wood. And that's just for practice shooting.

R: Okay.

L: Okay? Without red wood.

R: So that would make a weaker bow.

L: Yes. The red wood.

R: So you cut the red wood away, or?

L: Oh yes, no, you just chose the one, chose the tree without it.

R: How do I, what's the difference, how do I see the difference?

L: You take the, you take the bark, outer bark, you scrape it off with your knife or the axe. Then you see, especially where it's leaning, that's where you gonna find that red, red side of wood. And that's where the springy is, yes, yea. So you just skin off the bark and you see then. And if you skin off on the other side, it's white, that means it's on this side.

R: So you use the white wood because it's weaker?

L: Yea, it's weaker. But if you pick the wood that stands upright, it usually doesn't have anything. The tree that stands in a protected from wind it doesn't have that because it just stays there by itself, so not much wind, eh? It's a tree that stands on the prevailing wind side, that's the one that always fight the wind, and it will have the red wood at the bottom, okay? And that's what you're trying to get.

R: So the red wood would be on the side of the tree that is against the wind.

L: Yes, against the wind.

R: Right against the wind or opposite?

L: Opposite, against the wind. This is the wind, but it will grow on this side, opposite side.

R: Yes, on the leeward side of the tree.

L: Yes, yes, to find, so to find this kind of wood is, to find this you chose the, what do you call it? The wind, the one that is exposed to the wind? The one, the tree, the tree that is exposed to the wind. So that's where you find the red wood. And that's for the strong, well the strong, resistant to pull. It has more pounds when you pull it.

R: More draw weight.

L: Yes. More pull, big animals, yes, okay? And then the, the tree, the tree that stands on a protective of wind, okay? The wind that, the tree that stands.

R: Protected from the wind?

L: Yes. Yes, protected from the wind. That's where you find the, the wood without red wood inside. I don't know what we call that. We call that otatasikii. Otatasikii means "resistant of something," it keeps pulling up like this.

R: Yes, springy.

L: Yes. So when it's dry, it's very good. Less power, less pull, okay? And then you can practice with it, used to practice only. So that means you don't have to worry about what kind of wood you use, because you can use any tree that you know will not break. That's all you're looking for. You're looking for a tree that would not, not break when you pull. So you know where to find it. In our area it's a spruce and tamarack. Being here [Winnipeg area] you could use almost any kind of those trees, but they have to be dry. That has to be dry.

R: Those are elm.

L: That's elm, yes.

R: Elm is good.

L: Yes, you could use that, yes. But you have to dry it first. So elm is that, can be used.

R: The oldest existing bow today is made of elm.

L: Straight grain, okay? Straight grain. Has to be straight, not twisted but straight. Okay, anyway. Anything else?

R: I keep bugging you about this. You mentioned earlier that your father said that he used this sturgeon spine thing for a bow backing.

L: Yes.

R: Did those bows have a different name than the ones that were just made of wood? Was there a different name for them? Or were they all called "bow"?

L: The only way they say, the only way they say in our language is that, what do they call it? They just describe it like, what do they say? Awikaniapi, awikaniapi is what it's called awawikaniapisochiiw. It means "the string behind the back", sort of, awawikaniapi. The, the bow, what do they call it? The opposite string of the back? Or how do you say that?

R: Well, that's pretty much what it is.

L: Let's put it: The string.

R: String on the back?

L: String on the back.

R: Yes.

L: The string on the back of the bow, to protect from cracking? Or fracture?

R: Yes, fracture.

L: Fracture, okay, okay. Okay, that's the reason for that, the string. That's what we call, we call it kawawokapi. Okay, that means, it means "the string of the back", okay? That's just to keep it from cracking, you know? That's what why it's there. And also gives it a little bit more power also. Protection of cracking, so we got that, okay? Alright.

R: Is there a term for the handle of the bow? The place where you put your hand.

L: Yes, akapatinik, "place where you hold", or "hand"

R: "Handle"?

L: "Handle," yes. "Hand place," you could say, where you put your hand place, handle. Let's just say handle, okay? Because that's exactly what you're doing. You make a handle in the middle. Handle, that's the name, at the center of the bow, okay? Center of the bow. The bow, and also it helps, it also helped for additional power for a spring effect. When you have a, when you have, you ever see, did you ever see the people, young people in our, in our culture, we have this, we have a game. It's, sometimes it's a bow, or sometimes

it is, I mean, a small bow like, you know? As if you cut half of this bow and your handle it here and you only have this.

R: The upper part?

L: Yes, and then you put the little, a stone in there, you can practice with that, as a kid. And that's the kind of thing that you try to make this bow. That's the reason you, you have this handle. And then you, that's how they do it, sometime, long time ago. They used this stick, then they used a stone. Just to play with the kids and now you just make two springboards, which makes it spring, you attach a string and then, and bend this way. Pimmachasquan, they call that stick. We used to make that.

R: Like a.

L: Pimmachasquan, yes. Pimmachasquan, we have that in our, our culture, what do you call, "spring woods," "spring wood," I mean, "wood spring," you could call it, "wood spring." So this is what, yes, it's a game, like a, just children game, boys game.

R: A boys' game?

L: Yes, boys' game.

R: Not a girls' game.

L: Not a girls' game. So, eh, that's what the, that's what you are having here in the bow, eh? The bow is here and like this, and this is the handle, right there and this is the part that springs, the spring is here. And that's what you're using, you just have both of these. That makes the bow. That's the bow, but this is a wood spring. This is just a standing up this way, okay? This is the thing and the handle is right here, yea?

R: That's how I made that bow.

L: So that's the game. You could throw a stone, a small stone, okay?

R: Put the stone in a "spoon"?

L: Yea, yea. Stone, stone thrower, I think that's what they called it.

R: Looks like a spoon here.

L: Yes, exactly. Yes, yes. I call this a stone thrower. It's almost like a, so we used to have this game. But that's exactly what you are doing, except that you are making the bow out of it.

R: Can you write the Cree word for handle there?

L: This one here?

R: Yes, and the one for

L: Yes, yes, tapenikan, tapenikan, okay? And this is also tadenikan.

R: Same word?

L: Yes, this one here.

R: Yes.

L: This section.

R: This part.

L: Yea, and then this one is this part.

R: Yea. Right.

L: Okay? Tadenikan. Okay?

R: And the bows that were made in your area, would they bend in the handle, or would the handle be stiff?

L: That would be sort of stiff, yes.

R: Not much bend?

L: Not much bend, not supposed to bend anyway. Supposed to stay put.

R: Alright.

L: Anything else?

R: The ends of the bow where you tie the string, do they have a name?

L: Yes, yes. {?} Okay. There is a word for it, but I just can't remember it. There is a name for it, otaapichikan, otaapichikan, okay? Otaapichikan, it means "where you attach the string." Otaapichikan.

R: Makes sense.

L: Okay? Where string attach on the bow, okay. That's what they call Otaapichikan, this one here.

R: Yes.

L: Alright?

R: And the elastic parts of the bow, would they have a name, too, the parts that are actually bending?

L: Yes, kaishiwakipanik, kaishiwakinapik. Or we can call it, what do they call it? Akipanin, okay? Akipanit, it's a place where it's springy, right? Spring? The bow.

R: In English they're often called "arms" or "limbs." The Cree word would be referring to the elasticity?

L: It's just elasticity, yes.

R: Okay.

L: Yes, we do have the wing also.

R: The wing?

L: We do say ohtatakan, achaapi ohtatakan. We call that also ohtatakan, you know the one, the bow that is move here? And it's strong in here, they say. We call this ohtatakan in this section also.

R: Okay.

L: It's just like a wing. We call wing on a bird, eh?

R: Oh, yes.

L: Because that's exactly what they look like.

R: Right.

L: The wing.

R: Ye, like here...

L: Ohtatakan, achaapi ohtatakan, yes. achaapi ohtatakan, that's right, yes. So the bow wing. Achaapi ohtatakan, this one here, that's what the name's right here on both sides, okay?

R: And the bowstring, what's the word for bowstring?

L: Achaapiyaapiiw, Achaapiyaapiiw.

R: Achaapiyaapiiw?

L: Achaapiyaapiiw.

R: Achaapiyaapiiw?

L: Achaapiyaapiiw, yes, bowstring.

R: And that would refer to any type of bowstring, of any material?

L: No, you just name the general term.

R: Okay.

L: The name is a general term.

R: Yes.

L: It can be any kind, but you have to describe what you use.

R: Like you said in the other tape.

L: Yes. If you wanted to use the, if you want to say the hide, rawhide, you could use that. You know already in your mind this is the Achaapiyaapiiw. You could say koshkweyaapiiw, koshkweyaapiiw, rawhide, okay? Koshkweyaapiiw. Achaapiyaapiiw is any string, but koshkweyaapiiw is the one that you use, the one that is, the hide that has been dried hard. It's just like a, almost like a flexible wood.

R: Yes.

L: Became like the wood. It doesn't stretch anymore. And, that's usually what we use. You know, the hide that you have stretched it already and dried it and what do they call that stuff. Oshkimaniyaapiiw, some, it's an actual name but you're not using it for it. I'm gonna put it here, oshkimaniyaapiiw.

R: And when the rawhide string gets wet, would it stretch again?

L: Yea, yes, yes.

R: Okay. Same problem everywhere.

L: Babis. They call that babis.

R: Oh, like "Babiche."

L: Yes, yes, yes.

R: Ah, that's where it comes from.

L: That's the same thing with this one, the same thing, the same word. And then achaapiyaapiiw is a bowstring. This is a real, naming the string here, okay? But the extra, what do you call these, what do you call something when you, when you name something, you've described it before, one descriptive word and there is a noun. You call that a adverb?

R: I think that's, not adverb, adjective, I think.

L: Adjective, okay. So that's what these are. Adjective.

R: They describe.

L: Yes, what it's, what kind. Describe what kind.

R: Rawhide bowstring.

L: Yes, yes.

R: Something like

L: Dried rawhide. Rawhide.

R: And that must stay dry?

L: Yes, same thing with this one, alright?

R: Okay. Well then, maybe we should talk about arrows. What's the word for arrow?

L: Akask. Akask is one, akask, arrow, akask. And the other parts?

R: For different kinds of arrows would there be different words?

L: Yes, yes. We have got the whole, we have to put it here, here. We should, we put the name here, then we put the descriptive word again. Okay. Kinds is a, we have to put here "type." "Type," I put it here.

R: Like at the museum we saw these ones with the big club-heads and the sharp arrowheads.

L: Yes, yes. Okay. Kamakinichiskwane akask, that's what they call blunt head, or.

R: Yes, blunt.

L: Okay, how would you, blunt, blunt head, okay. Okay? Right there. And Kamakinichiskwane, it means this one here, I should have put it over here.

R: No, that's okay.

L: And then there is a kachipositekwan. Kachiposit, it's just the one that's just sharp, just the sharp one? Sharp. Sharp wood, you don't need, there is no. Sharp one, sharp head. Sharp end. Okay?

R: That would refer to a.

L: Well, just the wood that is hard wood, that is.

R: Oh, okay.

L: Just there.

R: Just a.

L: Yes, just a.

R: Pointed arrow head.

L: Yes.

R: Like you said, were used for fishing.

L: Yes. And then there is a, a takaschikan oskan, oskan, oskani akask, that means the, that's the one that you, hunt with the, for the fish, okay? Fish arrow, fish hunting arrow, fish hunting arrow. Bone head, okay? Bone.

R: Oh, that would be the one with the, like a fork shape?

L: Fork shape, yes, fork shape. Fork shape. Fork, okay? Fork bone head, okay? Oskani. And then there is a oskani, the same thing, oskanodji. Oshkan akask. That's a, that's again bone head, head, big game, okay? This is for big game.

R: So that would be a sharp bone arrowhead.

L: Yes, yes, yes, sharp.

R: With a blade.

L: Yes, that's the one. And then there is a, they don't have a steel head.

R: Steel?

L: Yes.

R: Stone, maybe?

L: Yes, stone. Stone head, yes. Assiniwakask, assiniwakask, that's stone, bone arrow, arrow with stone. Why am I keeping put that H? Here, okay. Stone. And than there is a arrow with steel. Steel? Okay? Piwaapisko akask, this doesn't mean that the bow, the arrow is all steel. No, that's, that's just this one, just the head.

R: Right.

L: Okay? Piwaabiskostekwan akask, have to put it like this. Piwaabiskostekwan akask. This is an actual name. It says exactly "arrow with a steel head."

R: Yes.

L: Yes. So this is what it means here. So we just say Piwaapisko akask. But the actual name for piwaabisko: "arrow made out of steel". You never see them? You ever see them? Just a steel?

R: Oh, like a long spear?

L: Yes, yes.

R: Okay.

L: [Laughs] So that's the one here, Piwaabisko akask.

R: Okay.

L: We made them also for fish hunting.

R: Oh.

L: [Laughs] Yes, just recently, just for fish hunting.

R: They must be pretty heavy.

L: Ah, no, no, the light stuff. You know the, the copper wire, brass wire.

R: Okay.

L: Just recently, not long ago.

R: Strong wire?

L: Strong wire, or whatever it is you could find. So that's good for fish. Spearing fish, you know, from the, from the water, from the bank. They go straight. They're much better than wood.

R: Probably heavier. How do you call the wooden part of the arrow? The shaft?

L: Yes, yes, yes. Arrow shaft. Shaft, like this?

R: Shaft, yes.

L: Okay. There's a T after this?

R: F-T.

L: F-T, okay. Put you there. There you go. Okay. Arrow shaft. Akaskwapik, akaskwathik, okay? That's the shaft itself. Akaskwathik, it's hard to say in the Roman orthography.

R: That's okay.

L: At least it's written down.

R: And the part at the end of the arrow where you insert the string, the slot for the string, does that have a name?

L: Yes, there is. More like a descriptive name, yes.

R: Yes.

L: You mean the, at the end of the shaft and there is a little slot?

R: Yes.

L: Like this?

R: Yes.

L: Where you put down.

R: Right, where the bowstring goes.

L: Oh, yes, yes. What do you call that? Okay, achaapiyaapiiw kaishishekotek, achaapi, achaapi, achaapi, it's supposed to be at that, achaapiyaapiiw kaishishekotek, just describes it. Everything that you say it's just descriptive, eh?

R: Okay.

L: Arrow end, arrow, what do you call this? Arrow.

R: Depends, "nock", probably.

L: Yes, how you call it? Arrow.

R: Nock.

L: Nock, okay. Yes, that's what it is.

R: The whole thing.

L: The whole thing, yes.

R: Yes.

L: Okay.

R: Alright. And then the, the feathers that go on there, the fletching. How is that called?

L: Okay, what do you call those things in English?

R: Fletching.

L: Fletching. Arrow fletching.

R: Arrow fletching.

L: Fletching, okay. So we call them, astowaanak, akask astowaanak. Astoyak, it's just a name. Astowaanak, astowaanak it is, yes. Astowaanak, okay? Astowaanak. Next?

R: And usually three split feathers were used?

L: Yes.

R: That's what you said, right?

L: Yes.

R: I was wondering if you've ever seen arrows with, I don't have a picture of them, but with one long split feather wrapped around in a spiral? Have you ever seen something like that?

L: No, I never see a one.

R: Okay, good.

L: I never saw that one.

R: Yes, that's alright. Okay. That's about it, I would say, for the terminology. Oh, yes, the process of stringing and unstringing the bow, are there words for that, when you have to, when you take the string off?

L: Just a moment.

R: Yes, sure.

L: Just to say this what I just read to you. Okay, ketachaapewin, [Laughs] to take, to unstring, to unstring the bow, or de-string.

MM: I'm sorry, I was just wondering what you want to do about lunch. Do you want a little bun, or, are you hungry?

L: Bun?

MM: Or do you want soup? I could get you some soup.

L: That's alright with me. Soup and a little bit of bread will be alright. To un-do the string, or to de-string. [Laughs]

R: De-string the bow, I guess?

L: [Laughs] Okay, okay. I hate the "deplaning" and "de-this". [Laughs] Okay, okay. De-string the bow. [Laughs] De-string the bow, great, de-string bow, okay. [Laughs] Ketachaapi, ketachaapi, okay. Ketachaapi, is that what I say? Yes, ketachaapewin, because it's a noun.

R: A noun?

L: Ketachaapewin, it's a noun, yes. You say that.

R: Okay.

L: Because you're taking off.

R: The whole process becomes a noun?

L: Yes, yes, the whole thing becomes a noun.

R: Unstringing.

L: De-stringing, so unstringing, and then when the bow, when there is no string, you say something else. Achaapi without a string. That's what you wanted to know, or was it that you want a string but it's not, it's not snapped, put into action yet?

R: Yes, what I'm getting at is when you don't use the bow.

L: Okay.

R: Do you take off the string to preserve the elasticity? Or do you keep the string on?

L: Okay, okay, okay. Ketachaapewin, that's good, okay. This is alright. This is alright. You're naming the thing, okay? Exactly what you're saying, okay? That's what it says, Ketachaapewin, but you have to explain why we do that, yes. It's not because, to preserve the string, it's to preserve the bow, it's, it's flexibility.

R: Yes, the elasticity.

L: You know, the twang?

R: Yes.

L: You know, just to remain that way, okay? Nikachaapi, nikachaapewin, that's what they call that. They call that "releasing," "releasing the string", "releasing the strength," that's how you say it? "Releasing tension," okay? "Releasing bow tension," alright.

Nikachaapewin, nikachaapewin, it also remains a noun, okay? It means that you release the, the energy.

R: Yes.

L: When you do that. You relax the stuff.

R: Right.

L: Yes, I just want to write this a little bit.

R: It describes what kind of.

L: Nikachaapeniw, nikachaapeniw, there is many ways of saying if a person do it, eh? He, he release the string, so there is many words on that. But we're not going into, we're not going into the, okay, what's the next?

R: You said earlier that hunters would leave their bow outside and when they come back, they take the string off and leave the bow outside.

L: Yes, yes.

R: Okay.

L: That's tradition.

R: Yes, and when you take off.

L: That's cultural tradition.

R: And you put the string on before you go, set out.

L: You don't put the string on before you set out. You carry it that way. You carry it without the string.

R: Okay.

L: You just carry it on the back there and with your quiver bag and there is an attachment there on the quiver bag in a way, where you could put your bow. So you just walk there like a, right there behind.

R: The bow is unstrung?

L: The bow is unstrung. That is before you begin to hunt. When you're just traveling towards the area. Yes. So when you get to the place where you see the tracks or anything,

then you take it out and put the string on. Then you begin to walk around with that ready, alright?

R: Can you demonstrate how you string the bow? I could have brought my bow, but.

L: Okay, okay, yes.

R: Can you show it?

L: Tapachaapewin, okay? I could just say it.

R: Oh, yes.

L: Yes? Should I string the bow? Should I say "string the bow"?

R: Yea, that's probably the.

L: Stringing the bow.

R: Pretty much equivalent.

L: Yes. We would just try to say "stringing the bow." String on the bow. Tapachaapewin, tapachaapew, tapachaapewin, again we have the, this is a noun, okay? Tapachaapew, this is a person who's doing this, okay?

R: And when you put the string on,

L: Yes?

R: would you do it like I would, step through and pull the bow behind your hip?

L: Yes. I usually just done it this way.

R: Okay.

L: Like a, you hold the bow and in there.

R: Yes. You.

L: Then you just push this one.

R: You block it with your knee?

L: Yes, with your right leg and left knee. Left knee into there, like this.

R: Pull back with the left arm and

L: Yes, yes, then you, yes.

R: and tie the string with the right hand, sure.

L: Yes, okay.

R: Okay. I've seen that in other books on Native archery on the Plains, it's very common.

L: It's the easiest way. [Laughs]

R: Yes, you don't have to step through.

L: Yes.

R: Quite tricky when you have big shoes and a low brace height.

L: Well, I'll just have to scribble a little bit here. Right foot, use left knee, okay. That's what it is. I'm just saying the way you, the way you put the string on, okay?

R: I've seen a photograph of an African man that was taken in 1920, or around 1920, he did it just the same way.

L: Yes, yes.

R: Same thing.

L: I used to do that when I was young.

R: And these bows you are talking about are about the size of the person?

L: Yes, yes.

R: They're relatively long?

L: Yes, it depends on what kind of a bow you are making. If you are just making a bow just to practice in the open space, if you are six foot, it can be six foot big.

R: Yes, but also shorter?

L: Yes, it should be shorter. And usually they want a, they make a shorter one that they go into the bush with, because it won't take so much room.

R: Right.

L: And also the one they make it shorter, it's usually very thick. It's thick. And one thing that I know about my father was telling me when they want to have a strong bow, hunting strong bow, they usually have this already carved, the stick, the tree. And it's very, it's very strong to pull it. And that's what they used to, to hunt the big game. You know the one that is already half there, so they can pull it right as far as they can. It's already bent a little bit.

R: It's bent in the direction of the string?

L: Yes, yes, with the string, yes, direction of the string.

R: Not in the other direction?

L: No, not in the other direction, no.

R: Okay.

L: Yes. I have never, I have never seen one that is look like this when you pull it that way.

R: Like a reflex.

L: No, no, I didn't see that one. But I see always this one here, they always tried to make it look like that.

R: They are already bent in the string direction?

L: Already bent, yes.

R: That takes off tension and makes for a longer draw.

L: Yes. And it go right down there and, and it also gives lots of power to spring. That's it. That's what my father used to saying that. Only thing I know as young is that my father showed me how to do it. He never have to hunt with it, they just show us. We guys were just little boys.

R: Right.

L: And he also walked with us where to look for the ducks and the ones that are molting, because they don't fly, eh?

R: Right.

L: I mean, you can just see them, they were, you know, just run on the string. That's just part of the survival skill for us.

R: I find that when I'm using a longer draw like with this longer bow in the picture, it's easier or me to aim.

L: It is, yes.

R: As opposed to this shorter bow. When I just, when I'm drawing to the chest. So you would say the same thing?

L: Yes, it is, yes. I found that exactly the same. That's why I like the longbow, I like it, because you can actually hit accurately.

R: Yes.

L: But the short bow is no, because you have to hold it so, such a way and you don't actually aim. You're just shooting by guessing more like, you know? This will be about there, but when you hold it like this, really aim exactly where.

R: Where it's easier to shoot.

L: Yes, yes.

R: Easier to learn.

L: Yes.

R: I didn't want to believe that, but a friend in Germany, who shoots longbows, kept bugging me about it because I was running around with that little short bow instead of this long one.

L: [Laughs]

R: He is right, when I made a longbow, that's what happened. Anyway, I think that's, that's what I wanted to know about archery.

L: Okay.

R: So thanks for

L: If I ever

R: telling me all this.

L: If I ever think about anything else, I will record it again and then send you the recording.

R: But there is another topic that I would like to talk about, if you have the time.

L: Okay.

R: And that would be conservation. Was there ever a concept among your people to, I guess, preserve the animal population by hunting only certain animals, or in any way managing the game population?

L: Yes, yes, there was, yes. There was a, there was a, as a rule, maybe we didn't have any game laws, not like the way, you know today. We didn't have those. Of course not written ones. But we did learn when we were young, when we are young, we are told: When you hunt, they say, the geese, they say: "Shoot only the male, don't shoot the female. Shoot the male and don't shoot all the young ones, if you, sometimes if you want to shoot the young ones." It says: "Leave some, maybe two." That's the teaching, that's to keep the population stay the same. And we, we were told to do that with the geese, with the ducks and any, any game birds that we eat.

And same thing with the, with beavers. Beavers we do that, eh? When you go beaver house and we know there'll be two adults, two parents and there maybe, maybe four last year and then there'll be four maybe a year before. You know, there will be about one, two, three, four, five, six, eight, ten beavers all together in there. So the parents say: "Okay, leave the female, if you can. Just kill one, whether it's a female or not. But only take one. And then take two of the other half size and then, if you need to

take two of the little ones. So that way you have there for the next spring they will be mating some other place.”

And it's same thing with the, with the family of otters. Sometimes the otters, you've see the trail, there are five of them. You know, there is two, there is one mother and used to have four young ones. So they teach us, if we can, that's why we have to, we have to know the trail to be able to read, which one is an elder, when you see the, the trail. Okay, this is the biggest one, and you see that these are the young ones, so you try to catch one only when you see them. Or if you have to trap them, you try to catch the, when you see if it's a mother then let the two, two of them stay alive, if you can.

R: So you leave the mother and you leave two cubs?

L: Yes. Then there was a, there's a teaching when you're young, even though we didn't have no rules or written, we still know how to do.

R: And these things were taught in order to make the animal population stable?

L: Yes, yes. It's for the, the, maybe you could call that in English "conservation," a conservation practice. We did that all the time before the European came. And only then as the European came, these things were not observed anymore. They changed.

R: Because of the fur trade?

L: Because of the fur trade, yes. So people just kill off everything and then they depleted the animals very quickly.

R: Okay.

L: We did. My grandparents did. They know they were doing something wrong, but the fur trade [Laughs]. Trading for the goods with the other person was stronger [Laughs]. So we have those, yes. We have the rules. But we learned them when we were small, when we were young. Parents tell you, the elders tell you. You know, you don't wanna kill them all of. And if we shoot the, if we hunted the ducks they say leave the mother alone. So we have to do that, same thing with the caribous.

R: That's what I wanted to ask you.

L: Yes, yes, caribou's are the same. Leave the females and if you see them in, especially in the month of March, when you see that they carry the young ones, you don't kill them. But kill a buck, if you have to, or two years old one. So they always teach us that, and people know exactly which, which one is this, even the moose. They know if it's a

female, they know it's last year young one, they know it's a bull's out there, they know that. But if this is a, if this is the month of, month of March, I mean March or thereafter, you have to leave them a mother, because she's gonna have a calf, so if you kill that one, you kill two. So you kill only the bull.

R: You mentioned earlier that very long ago caribou were hunted in big drives, that they were driven into enclosures.

L: Yes.

R: And would they all be killed, or would you select some?

L: In those time when a, in those times there were plenty of caribous. They were, they were coming in and they know that they're not gonna kill them all off. So that's the time they do that. But when there is, these are migrating caribous, okay? They migrate from some place and they travel here, they will travel only in a certain month.

R: Right.

L: So that's when you kill as much as you can, but don't kill them all off, so because they're plenty anyway.

R: Yes.

L: So these were the ones who did that. Sometimes you see maybe 25, maybe fifteen, you can do that. Sometimes if you have fifteen then there's no problem with that, but when they're declining period, the caribous come and go, every 25 years or so.

R: Okay.

L: So there are plenty and then after that, not because you killed them off, because they move to other place.

END OF SIDE A

L: Yes, we did. It was done. But it was done in such a way because sometimes people knew this is only the month that I can do that, March and April, May it's a bit too late to do that.

R: Yes.

L: Only March and April that they can do that very easily. And you know that in the May they're not gonna be able to hunt big game animals because of slush. So they have to have extra. Something that they can cache at their camp, during that time. That's the only

reason they do that. They have a reason when to kill many animals. Other than that you just don't shoot them for anything. There's no sport hunting. There's no such thing.

R: This is, I think, comparable to the Great Plains, when people hunted buffalo and drove them over cliffs. This wasn't selective, they would kill like a, a part of the population.

L: Yes, yes.

R: Including all kinds, males, females, young ones, old ones. But when horses became available, they would just pick out the young cows. And that began to affect the population, the bison actually became smaller, and they had shorter pregnancy periods and the calves would be growing faster and there were fewer of them. So, I was wondering if similar things happened to the caribou.

L: Yes it did, yes.

R: Yes, maybe because of the introduction of firearms?

L: Yes, when the gun came, that's when really our people just killed as many as they can. They forget about the old practice. But long time ago they only killed so many at a certain time. I can say in the spring time. Or sometimes they kill the caribous just about this time, November when it start to freezes, because they're gonna migrate away, they're gonna go a long ways away. And then you never know where they're gonna be. And this is the only time you gonna have and that's when you kill as much as you can, as long as it's not too many. Then you would kill, you would kill only the female and the last year ones. That time you don't have to shoot the buck, because, you know, he's totally depleted himself on mating. [Laughs] He's not much good to eat. So and that's the practice. That was a conservation practice.

R: I guess that's it for now.

L: Okay.

R: Is it still recording?

L: It's still, it's almost, we're getting there, yes, just a few more minutes, see?

R: Yes.

L: Almost come to the end.

R: Almost.

L: Would that be okay?

R: Yes, thank you very much. We should include the date. Today is October the 27th, 2001.

L: Oh, yes, October 27, 2001, okay.

R: Okay.

L: Okay.