Hello, hello. My name is Louis Bird. I am living, today is, January 20, 1999. This is the rerecording of one of the old stories which I have recorded and lost. Part of it was, wasn’t recording. Before we begin I want to introduce a little bit about the story. This story has been told to me by many, many different people. Bits here, and pieces here. At times at the beginning I did not think about I did not ask anything about it when I was young. I just enjoyed the story because it was so powerful, dramatic, and respect and all culture importance contained in that story.

But they’re about different; they are difference each time I hear it. When I heard it from my mother it was something to do with um with respect. She tells us a story about where it says in the Jewish ten commandment, where it says, thou shall respect your parent to live long and something like that. Anyway, our Omushkego culture has the same moral teaching which says respect thy elders and thy parents. And usually the elders are given much respect, as much as you give your parents a respect. And it has been stated from our moral teaching that anyone that show respect to two special kind of people, besides his or her parents, is an elder and then the orphan, the child who is about a year or six even more to fifteen who is an orphan, these are the two different age group that has been always stressed how important it is to be kind and to be honest with them and that one that we all must respect.

It was a law, which has been written on every child’s mind as they grow up. Then before the story I heard from my mother first and then my grandmother first and then there was another old lady, and then there’s, at least two old ladies in the same area where I was born, and then there was a man that I know, I trap with and hunt with, who repeated the story from his mother. But each time when I hear it, about six times, when I was young it was different. There was a little bit more in this, differently, the other person stresses the importance of the story.

My mother did stress it for the respect of the elders. The other lady that I listened to stresses the importance of the women who have courage. And also submissive, obedience to the moral teaching. And the other lady that I listened telling a story is about love, a woman love. How the woman is so courageous and strong because when she is loved... when the woman is loved nothing stands in the way, that is how she tells the story. And the other person that I listened to talks about the adventuresome of the whole story; the man and the woman, the woman comes on most. On the high points it is always the woman that pushes the story. And then there is another man that tells me the story, or repeated the story from his mother, who stresses more like in a dramatic face of a story. Drama involve because there is danger, excitement, fear and all that stuff.
Finally the last time that I listened to my mother about the story was different point. I was now an adult. And she stresses about, about the woman. She stresses the importance of a woman who has received the reward for being XXunclearXX to the elders. And also, she also mentioned of a man who is honest and what he can do when he finds the woman he loves. Again there is that, a dramatic and love story blend together. And this is a story about this woman, I don’t know, what’s her name, we don’t know the names of those people. But this is supposed to be the true story, how many times it happens I don’t know. It could’ve happened maybe four times to four different women because it happens many times in our area that women being captured and taken or forced or kidnapped and sometimes they return with the stories of their own. Sometimes a woman is never XX57XX again, forever is just vanished.

So it was one of those stories that have a very good happy ending, so it begin. So its supposed to have happened again in this between the Hudson Bay and James Bay on west of James Bay and southwest coast of Hudson Bay, what we call today different names these two bays. So in our language we just call it the bay. XX64XX bay. Even sometimes XX64XX lake. So anyway in this case it doesn’t matter what we call it as long as we know generally where the story is involved. It happens in the Omushkego land. The Omushkego territory. XX66XX Omushkego language and XX67XX Omushkego women. Not only her but it involved another tribe.

So it begins this way, there was a little girl who was born out of the two parents who are so loving XX69XX. When she was born, her mother died. She survived. She was taken care of by the grandmother, or either by the sister of the mother, whatever it doesn’t explain. But it, she was survived and she was raised by those relatives. And her grandfather was living too and her grandmother. And the father, it is not mentioned what he did and what happened to him. The only thing that we know is that this little girl, who happened to be so extraordinarily different and so beautiful, even when she was one. People noted how beautiful she was and everybody has a pity on her because she was, now have no mother. She managed to survive by having a substitute mother. Either by her aunt or by grandmother. In those days when the baby is born and the mother died usually the next of kin, it could be a sister or a father’s sister who would be able to nurse the baby. Because at the same time the other person is having a baby. So this is what happened. So the little girl survived and she was passed on to one relative and to the other, you know, for as she grew up as a child, a small child into a small girl. Finally when she begins to be six year old she begin to appear that she was going to be a very beautiful woman, very beautiful child. XX86XX kind and very obedient. All around, perfect little child. And wherever she was kept she always brought happiness and always brought peace, wherever she kept.

People notice thing, people this thing that the child was very strange. And then she was still as in those days, traditions that some of her relatives that are well off that is where she was kept once in a while. If those people are getting too busy or preoccupied on something else she was handed over to the others. She had many homes, many different people she was raised with. But always, her grandfather was always there, wherever she was her grandfather was there. And her grandfather was most kind to her. She began to look up to him as the only steady guide or father, like, figure. Her father did not attended her as much. So it said she grew up. She grew up that way by leaning on mostly her grandfather and attached to him most. And by the time when she
was a young girl her grandfather was aging and the grandfather was getting old. I mean, the grandfather was not well, he was getting sick. Whether it was a bone disease whatever or arthritis, he was not able to walk perfectly.

So he was needing assistance on many things. And there she come in, she offered herself to help each time, whenever her grandfather needed help. On small things, in the bigger things she can help. She used to sit by her and every time when he is resting in the evening he would tell her the moral teaching and also the stories of the past. She enjoyed all those time, it was the best time in her life. And she fully loved her grandfather and respected him so much. And so these other people that she was kept that’s where she get all this honesty that she grew up with, from her grandfather. Because the old man actually teach her many things she can think of. Because he was trying to fill in for her parents that are missing. The fact that he was sick the more so the girl began to sympathize with the grandfather and also more love. And she would do anything to make him happy and also to be comfortable.

So years passed and she began to be a teenager. By this time when she was a teenager there were many boys who wanted to have her as a friend or as a girlfriend or whatever you want to call it. In those days there was not much romance in those days. There was no Hollywood style romance. But there was romance. There was a desire, a male or the opposite sex, she does experience the same thing but at the same time she has an obligation she believed was hers; that is to look after her grandfather. She grew up then as young lady, and the men came to ask the grandfather to marry her, the grandfather always give the freedom to choose.

But the girl always said, “I love my grandfather, I want to help as much as I can if I can help.” And she would say I am sorry, I cannot marry you at this time. But she never told when we checked if the man who asked her were young men. Parents around her, around her area, arranged, tried to arrange the marriage for their son to her, to the woman. But the woman has the authority, more like it’s a next, next to the kin, more than the father. So he has the authority over the girl and each time he always said it would be up to her.

And when it was time that he asked this, the girl says: “I will wait”. And then XXunclearXX. And by this time she was very beautiful. She had a very long flowing hair, which is wavy and so shiny. And her body seems to be perfect, perfect and more than any other girls. And her behavior, kindness, and her friendliness and honesty and obedience most of all obvious. And the good work she does, she learned things very quickly and very XX136XX and always applied the best of her ability. She obeyed anyone that has authority figure for her. And she learned everything what she was told. Her grandfather is the most private things that she want to know always asked the grandfather. And her grandfather did XX141XX he can to provide the answers anyway. If it’s something that cannot be discussed between male and female or grandfather, granddaughter the grandfather would point the right person for her to talk to for some questions.

And she was raised very nicely and she was respected and also very intelligent little girl, beside being beautiful. So the men were not [laughs] the young men were just, simply wanted to have her. But she could not decide. She had many, many young who wanted to marry her. Some of them she actually liked to, liked to marry them but the obligation is grandfather first. And then one day, before she begin to be fully grown
woman, grandfather get worst and she has to attended him every time because by now he couldn’t get up. And she has to change her clothes, bed, washer and everything. Give her everything that she want and they staying in one place or where is the camp. And by this time she was now fully grown woman and such beauty increased and as she as she grew. And the more she beautiful the more men wants to have her.

Many men tried but they, she always say: “Wait until my grandfather either died or say yes.”

So one day grandfather got sick, more, and the old man says: “My granddaughter I am going to go now, I am going to leave this world.”

And he says, “you have been very nice to me and you have been always obedient, you have everything what you can to help me when I am helpless. I have done everything to give you what I know, what you need to know when you begin by yourself if you are to get married, you decide to get married. And how to raise your children and everything else I have tried to tell you.”

And then the young lady just hang on to grandfather and hope that he would not, he would not leave. Then the sad day came. Before this happened, before the old man died, there was a story in the camp, you know in the spring time one summer that time, the time when the old man was really getting sick. There was a story going around that there was a visitor from a distant land they say it’s a very nice young man and all the girls were giggling and laughing and everything wanting to get to know the young man. Of course the young girl didn’t have a chance to do that. She just listened to the young girls you know giggling and laughing and she never thought about this thing very much. Then one day when she was hauling water for grandfather to wash she ran into this beautiful strong profile of a young man; never saw her before, never saw him. So she decided, you know, just carry the water up and then walk.

And the young man walked behind him and says: “hey just a minute, I want to speak to you.” And never and never did the boys ever have the courage to ask her that way. She stopped and she looked at the man. And the man is actually a big, big man and a strong looking guy.

So he says yes and he says: “I wanted to speak with you.” He says: “I want to ask you if I can talk to you privately when you’re not busy.”

So she says: “Ok, ok, um, XX179XX I have to attend to my grandfather first. And he said, “I’ll wait, I’ll wait for you by the river.” So she went home and she went to attend to grandfather and forget about the little boy.

As she was walking, as she worked XX182XX she listened to her grandfather say: “I want to leave.”

And the grandfather says: “you are going to get married and you have to carry on living. And one of those days you will have to decide which one of those young men are you going to say yes. They all wanted to, want you and many of them are very good men. And they will take care of you.” So she didn’t actually think about that, she just didn’t believe the grandfather would die.

But anyway, after the grandfather died, she hasn’t said: “this is when I’m gonna die.”

But he says: “I will be gone soon”. Then she walked out with sad feeling. Walked away down to the river, not thinking just thinking about what will I feel then when my grandfather dies, who am I gonna see, who am I gonna talk to, who am I gonna
ask my question I want to know. Then she walks down, head down to the river. And then as she walks down she sat down by the log by the river. As she was sitting their thinking she heard the footstep behind her. Before she can look there is this man’s voice again.

She said: “I’m glad that you wait, and she says oh, oh I’m sorry I didn’t think about what that you asked me I was came down to think.”

So the young says: “you look very sad.”

So she sits down and says: “Yes, yes I am sad. My grandfather is sick and my grandfather is not going to stay long and the only father that I have, that I always love and he’s gonna be gone, and then what’s gonna happen to me.”

So the young man says: “I am just visiting myself too. And I have noticed that one time and you look so nice and I wanted to speak with you. What I want to ask you is that, and I was gonna ask you if you would consider marrying me.” [laugh]

And the girl just couldn’t say a thing “Me? Oh and all the girls are talking about him and this is the man that they talk about.” Actually he is quite handsome and strong looking man. And then the man to speak to him, not in the same language but a little bit different it was very broken, a broken Omushkego language.

So she says: “Where do you come from?”

He says “I came from a way out west, past the XXCreeXX, XXCree is a prairieXX and past there just on this side of the mountains.”

So she begin to be, she begin to listen and she says: “What does it look like?”

He says: “well, all of this, the XXCreeXX is, it just no trees, just rolling hills.”

“And what is the mountain?”

And he says, “the mountain is a high rocks right out there in the sky, touching the sky, clouds and anything.” She fascinated. And then as she was listening, really, forget about grandfather for the moment.

And then when he was finished he says, “what do you think, what do you say?”

And she says “what?” [laugh]

He says “my, my ask, my asking you to marry me.”

And she says, “Just a minute XX216XX I haven’t thought about it, I just enjoyed your story.” So she was XX217XX talking to this young man, which is not supposed to be done really, she was supposed to go home and try and stay away from young man who wants to be interested. So somehow she got caught up with this young man and she never even think seriously about him asking the marriage because she think of herself as not yet quite ready to get married or anything. Doesn’t know anything this kind of relationship.

So she says, “Wait, wait. I will speak to my grandfather.”

So the young man say, “Ok I will wait, I will wait, I will see you again.” And then she walks away, she’s standing by the river, look at her again, he is a handsome man. Perhaps maybe 25 or something like that. She was already 18 or something. And she walk, she rushed back home, not because of him because of grandfather attendance. As she walks in and she saw grandfather lean to the mattress and everything then she sit down and the elder just hold the hand.

And before she can speak, before she can say anything, he says, “I know, I know. [laugh]

And she say, “What do you know?”
“It is the young man that ask you. I know. Say yes, say yes to the young man. But what she says, she says he is a stranger from a distant land. And her grandfather says, “For that reason you must.” But she says, “I’m scared, I’m afraid, who’s going to be my friend?” So the elder says, “He is going to be your friend, He’s going to be more friend than me. So say yes to him.” And then the girl goes, “Ok. Then I’m gonna leave you behind!” And then the old man says, “No, you are not going to leave me behind as I am because I am going to leave the world before.” About this time she was broken hearted already and excited at the same time. And it so happened, that same summer, the grandfather got worse and he passed away. And she was heart broken, nothing else can help her. Somehow this young man appear, to stand beside her when everything, at the funeral service or burial practice, whatever they were doing, the young woman always stay there standing, not a word, but standing on guard. She does everything before the old man have died, he have gained conscious once more, before he died.

So he had said to her, “my grandchild, for the thing you have to me, for every kindness and every respect that you’ve shown to me, I now give you my blessing. My blessing is that you will marry the young man. And you shall have love, happiness, and your life will be blessed because you have shown great respect to me. In my need you have helped me and the Great Spirit will give you all the help you need and you shall never want and you shall never hungry and you shall find love. XX247XX Before the old man have died, he have gained conscious once more, before he died.

That’s it.” And the old man XX258XX for the woman. Then she hang on and the ritual, there the service came to be called. And that’s when she needed some comfort and the young man was standing there. She know she always said yes to grandfather, now is to try to make that. So anyway, that’s the friend she’s got after the burial. And then when she went home to the next of kin and then this people have the authority over her but she was already a grown up lady. So when the young man came in again after awhile, when he want to know what her answer will be, she said yes.

“Yes, I will marry you.” And the Elder kins, they say, “Alright, if your grandfather has given you ok, for us we are ok too.” So they got married. Whatever the rituals were used, I don’t know. But the story goes on to say they got married and after a few more days, a week, whatever the time measurement was, he finally decide to go home. He had told her that, that he will go home. That he will take her home. And she remembers her grandfather’s word. That this young man will replace the love that she lost when her grandfather died. She learned to love the man, she begin to love him, after they got married. And whatever he says she always obey.

When the young husband said, “Now we shall return to my home.” She did not resist, not even resent to anything. She missed the home yes, she will miss the parents and everything but she went. The day come when they had packed their little belongings and stood on the tundra between Hudson Bay and James Bay facing the west. Both of them took step towards west. She stood there on that high ground where the grandfather XX285XX she stood their once more to glance, to the burial ground of grandfather. And say farewell, and farewell to the man and the surrounding, facing four corners of the
earth. First to the East to the South, to the West, no no, first to the South and into the East and then to the North, finally to the West. And then they left. There wasn’t much possession. All they have is what clothes they wear and a bit of tools they need, and their strength and their new relationship, which then maybe called man and wife kind of relationship. So they left the land, they traveled towards west, days after days regardless of what it looks like.

She never turned back, she never looked back, she always tried to look ahead. And always lean on to her husband. And every time when they stop their love always provide everything. The food there is no problem, the comfort is always there because two of them and whatever obstacle that stood in the way they always managed to make it disappear because they, because they love each other. Because their happy. And yet they traveled through the muskeg land, through the swampy Cree land XX306XX to the open prairie, which was called then XX309XX. XXCree309XX it’s supposed to mean where the land has been scarred and there’s nothing growing, as if it had been burned right down to the ground. But the XX310XX is only the grass, small willows and a few poplar trees. Wherever there is a small creek or river. When they begin to reach this open grassland, she would just walk with her husband and XX315XX hunting, and catching the food as they go. And then she prepare everything, she make the XX…XX and she sew everything, the clothes themself.

And upon to the prairie land they made many traps along the way that they always tried to avoid them. Because in those days it was not the common thing, it was not an easy thing to encounter stranger without any resentment or without any question. Usually there was a question or challenge. This is what the man understand. So he always managed to hide and bypass the, a good number of tribesman around the way. He just said that you know if your a Omushkego man that the man who takes his wife past the Ojibwa land and then finally to the prairie land and then in the prairie land, even though there’s no trees, there was a danger there.

There were coyotes that usually travel and there were other animals that were a bit dangerous and the terrains. Sometimes the river they have to cross, sometimes, at least twice, they have encountered, once I think, they have encountered the buffalo’s. They call them “the Beast”. With hairy head, that’s what she called them. This one time they, they were stampeded. This was in the month of September. They were stampeded by a tundra storm. And they have to run into the bunch of trees and everything and hide there. And she described the scene very vividly in time past, in time ahead. First, XX340XX just followed them. Nothing matters to them, no matter how dangerous the thing is. There is a story that where the romance come in.

When the woman tells us a story, it just, nothing matters to her as long as her husband hold her and have her husband’s arm around her. Nothing else, that’s all the protection she needs and she love him. She found that is much different and strong than her grandfather. She found physical love much pleasant and much more comforting. Where her grandfather’s love was powerful and protective and wise, so this man also is very powerful and protective. So she thank grandfather for talking to her many times. So they were, totally were happy. He was going home and he had the wife that he loves. So they travel with all those dangerous countries passing many things. Some tribal people were not very friendly and he managed to pass them without much danger. Sometimes he passed the men XX356XX who wanted to take his wife. And he has to avoid that.
Those things were exciting but they are much more detailed in some part. But in this time I will not be able to describe all those excitement stories. And as the story goes, they reach their land, again she describe only after she returns, she returns this lady, but I am not going to tell you right now, I’m gonna tell as they go. They come to the land, the prairie land and some bad lands, somehow, whatever it is. And here is a story that makes it very interesting. Before they pass the land somewhere, before they come to the mountains they found some rivers. And one time they the river. And he told a story about the giant bones that were found there. And she just listened, she didn’t see those things. All he says was this is the river where the giant bones are found, washed away on the shores, sometimes washed over.

So she didn’t ask anything, she just said, “Ok, ok.” And then they go on. And finally when they were traveling, of course the man knows about another country, and one day she got up in the evening, towards evening. She knowed it was cloudy, there’s a cloudy there, there’s a sunny days and all that stuff.

And then this day she kept on seeing this cloud formation, ahead of her, that seems to be there that doesn’t seem to move, just stays there. She never said anything she just talked with this husband and walk and everything. And then in the evening she looked towards west. There is that cloud that doesn’t seem to move. She still didn’t say anything. One nice morning she got up and walked into the higher ground and there’s that cloud. White on top, dark on the bottom, but where is the ground, it doesn’t seem to disconnect there. But she has come used to seeing the land disappear and then there is cloud because they’re traveling in the grassland. So she didn’t ask, she thought well it’s just the appearance. Then finally, she begin to notice the cloud. But some part of the white stuff move. That is when she stopped her husband and says, “How come those cloud over there, they don’t move?” And him, he just laughed. He just laugh and of course she felt she was laughed at.

And she says, “Tell me!”

And he says, “Oh I’m sorry, I’m sorry dear, I forgot to tell you that. These are the mountains that I told you about. They are distance, they are far distance yet. You will see them another, many days yet.” He says, “You will see them after, closer. Maybe you won’t even see them, because we are not going to reach them.” So they traveled for many more days. Finally they come to these hills that are much higher than the flat land and then which there a bit of trees grow and everything. And she find out the trees are much larger than they appear, they’re big. These are similar to the largest trees that she ever saw in the muskeg land is what they call timber. And the pine trees, the pine trees sometimes they look like that. So she ask her husband those things what she was wondering and he explained of course.

So they finally made it to the mountain. They didn’t get to the mountain, they on to, what we call today, the foothills. That’s where her tribes were. And they were what, they, they had a different language, they didn’t speak the Omushkego language. They spoke something I guess, I didn’t know what tribes they were. Some people did, many, many people that I’ve listened to they didn’t even mention what tribe they were. But they were, recently I begin to more. And these were the Stony Indian people, Stony tribes, right in the foothill of the mountain. That’s where this guy went, it was his home. And then the winter came and they live in his home. The years pass.
They have children. They have sons and then they have a daughters also. But nobody says how many years they live there. But they said they raise about six children or maybe more. Some sons and daughters. But in those days people can have as many as ten children. But I cannot say how many.

One thing that they did, this lady and her husband, when they had a baby she asked her husband, “Can I teach him to speak my language? Do you mind if I do that?”

And he say, “No go ahead.” By this time he understood the Cree language, he spoke very well with her. So they speak to their children in Cree language. No, they’d say Omushkego, not Cree, there were no Christians yet. So they were, Cree, the term Cree is not applied there in this story. It’s a Omushkego language they use, they choose to use. So they, they raised children in that language and they get grown up and they get raised, and even the last kid, the last they wanted to have maybe, and they raised that one to. And the last one begin to be a teenager and by this time she was not, she couldn’t have anymore children. She had passed her children bearing and they’re still good health. She was in the good health and he was.

In all these years, not once did they ever have an argument that is usually yell at each other, but they did disagree many times. That love she had was always extraordinary, very kind. The promise from her grandfather, she experienced love and kindness, and provision as exactly the way her grandfather had promised her. She never get hungry, children always well fed. And always had something to wear and always have enough warm and blanket to sleep on. So she understood this thing, this lady, and she always remembered the word of her grandfather when he gave her the blessing and bless her marriage also. She always have that knowledge and she always the story to her children and always teach them to always respect someone. So the story goes. And then as the last child begin to be a teenager she begin to think, well there is, now she has a grandchildren, the first child they had they already married now, they already have a children. Now she have grandchildren.

And then, one day, when she was looking at her children and her family expansion, she says, “I have done, I have done my live, my living, my life has been very fruitful and blessed.” She expressed that to her husband, says, “There is nothing more that I could ever ask you to do, that you have provide me all this and you have given me children, we have raised them and they have not been suffering. I have always get the blessing.”

So he says, “Yes, yes, I am very grateful myself too. Because I nevered know that we would live this long to see everything.” And they always in good health and still good health at that time. And then they live. One night she had a dream, she had a dream that he was living here where she’s now. She thought of looking towards East where they travel. Go back to the trail in her mind. That was very exciting that was most happiest moment in her life. And she wanted to see it again. She wants to see this trail that she came so joyfully when she was a young girl, young lady. And now she thought she wants to go. In the dream she dreamed that she’s going. But she kept dreaming this on and on. And then finally she told her husband. One day she had this depressed feeling when she was that age, when elders are getting down a bit. She had this depressed feeling and she was sitting down there. And her husband was just sitting there beside. And he knows she was sad or whatever it is.

So he says, “What is it? Bring it out, bring it out.”
So she says, “You know my husband there is only one wish that I’d like to do, for now. I have everything else.

So the man says, “You name it!” [laugh] But he was just kidding. “As you name you shall have it.”

And then she didn’t say anything, just, “I will wait for you, the right moment I will tell you.” So one day it came to pass that they were so happy once more. And then there was that total happiness and thankfulness that there was nothing else to ask.

Then the man says, “What was it that you wanted to ask, that you wanted to wish for?”

And she says, “Oooh yes, yes, yes.” She says, I have been dreaming that we travel on that trail again where we came. And I wanted to travel that trail again. I wanted to see all the way back there again. If we could make it.”

And the man says, “Are you’re nuts of some kind?!” He says, “Are you crazy? In our age?” I don’t know how old they are but it’s after they raised their children.

And she says, “Yes, yes, what’s wrong with it?” So anyway, at first, he laughed at it. How she describe her feeling and everything.

So he begin to say, “You’re serious, you are really serious.

And she says, “Nah, I’m just dreaming.”

But, he says, “But you dream. You know you will, you will never forget if you, you know you keep talking about it. But it’s just so…”

She said, “It’s just so fascinating to think about. Me walking cane on that trail, you and I, to go through all these things that we came through one time. And perhaps even to reach the Omushkego land.”

And he says, “There, there now. I would say up to the prairie yes, but through that country I don’t know if I could make it,” he says. So, you know they have a little fun. They have a very nice friendly and loving conversation. And so that time they stopped. For a little while they put the subject aside and they went life. I guess a few days pass, or a few months pass, or a year pass, I don’t know. It doesn’t say because there was no time, what happened between them. But their life was up.

Hello, hello this is Louis. This is the same story, it’s a continuation of the story. And so a time has passed between the first time when she opened subject to husband. I don’t even know her name and I don’t even know his name. Only we can say, that’s it. There was this young lady who went to get married and went to the, to such far as this land. So it so happened, the subject open again. And then this time it was a bit more serious. It was not just a joke. This time it was a bit more questioned. It this really necessary or would the children be needing us around, or is there anything that we should be around for. So they asked these questions.

They say, “Well it seems everything is in control. The elder children are responsible. And they are, sort of look and care and sort of guide the young one. And they’re all grown up. And our grandchildren are now beginning to be growing up too.”

So they said, “It’s possible we can make a trip.” They said, “We can make a trip if we want. It doesn’t matter how long it takes. We don’t have to rush there and we can come back. If the Great Spirit will.”

So the man says, “My wife, when you say yes to marry me I didn’t believe it. When I told you that I’m going to take you home, when you say yes I did not, didn’t expect it. There was not so much to say no. You didn’t ask me a question, you did not
resist. And for that reason my dear,” he says, “If there is anything on earth that I can do to make you happy further of this life I shall do it.” So they plan. So they plan, nobody says how long it takes them to plan. In those days there wasn’t much anything or possession like property to worry about. All they have to worry was their health. That they know they have health. So the day come. XX25XX, informing all their children that they will be making a trip.

After telling their grandchildren stories about the East and the Omushkego land, and their relatives that are there, and the mom’s side of the story, they all said, “Yeah, yes, why not? She can go and see and maybe when she come back she will tell us more.” So everything was ok. At that point on that site. Today XX30XX There was no rejection, there was no disagreement, but everything was grand and as they, there would be no misunderstanding, there would be disagreement, there would be no tragic sadness because the two elders have done their duty. And so their friends know that and the other friends have said, well if she’s in good health, yes, she might make it to see there and even to come back again. But still there lies the danger.

When they were young, there was no obstacle, they know that. But when they are now aged and the youth is not there, the power is not there but the wisdom is there. So the willing is there. So this is the two things they have is the wisdom and the willing and the will to do. That’s all they need. So the day come. After everything has been prepared, they set out, once more to the East. Once again they stood on the high ground, look back at the mountains behind them and turn to the East to make another trail. Off they go. So we shall stop you for a bit more explanation. Like as we say “intermittent intermission”.

Those people who have tell me a story they say many different ways of the same story. Some are so beautiful, some are not so interesting. Some are, they jump into the exciting part of the story, even a negative part. But I’d like to take the middle ground. I like to only mention the ones that are, that gives a praise, that gives a woman side of the story. Not much for the man because this story was made especially for the women. It was made to encourage a young women to be good. It has been created to teach a young woman how to be obedient, how to be submissive and how to be courageous. Why a woman has to be learn everything before she is married. All this has been explained.

Even from the beginning about the little girl who listen to every teacher. Who does everything that is necessary to be a mother, to be a wife, to be anything. This is why the story is made. It is made to have some pleasure in the story, and some reward, which is more fitting for the woman’s satisfaction and also which is exciting at the same time. And this is why the story was made. To try to encourage the young ladies to listen, to take advice, from the old lady, from the old man.

If you want to know anything about a man’s side, the way things they do, as long as its not sexual, well you could ask your father, you could ask your uncle, more so to your grandfather. Grandfather knows how to open subject and they do not shy, because they’re wise. They understand the subject, they understand the young lady’s question, and they would give the instruction or the answer she needs. And they will give the answer as much as she must have and how much is safe to give her. And as long as there’s that open, open unfinish answer, so the girl will come back again. Maybe, maybe her life would extended a bit more and found another mystery or another question in her life she experienced. Then she will always have this grandfather she can go to.
So she will ask him, “Ok grandfather, here is what I know and here is what I don’t know yet.

And the grandfather says, “Yes, yes, I know you’re gonna ask me that or the grandmother will say that if it’s a female side of a mystery or question. She will provide the answer the best she can.” Again, only as much as she can handle. No matter, no matter if it’s mature already. She will still have to have enough space to understand, in her mind, not to, sort of, scare her. So that’s why this thing, the story was made for that, to try to show what happened to the lady, the young lady if she listened to the advice of the mother and the advice of the grandmother and advice to the grandfather and all those relatives that she grew up with. And what happened then, if you actually listen, and also learn to respect and learn to submit, to serve the mankind even the men, your children, the future population, all that is your responsibility. And that is why the story was made. To make it exciting, to make it wonder, to make a dramatic, to make it everything, and then all the excitement that you could think of.

But when the woman tells a story, she tells it much better with a woman of enjoyment. And the men tells a story, he tells a story about how courageous that woman is. The way the man likes to see the woman, that’s the way they tell the story. So this is what the story is all about. And now we begin again.

So the day come. They day arrived that they will depart, they will depart again, towards East. They stood on the high ground and wave goodbye to their friends, turn towards East. Each step they took brings them towards East, towards the Omushkego land. So they have to travel these distance, they have things yet remain there. Dangers and questionable things that may endanger life, or that you may have to pass with not so ease. Maybe a difficult day, or something may happen along the way, or you may get sick, you may get stuck half way. All these stuff are their, but still, you’re determined to go; she determined to go. All this been weighted, put in weight and scaled and everything in their mind.

So they went. And so almost the same situation was existing. There was still tribes that used to fight each other, and there was still tribes that have followed those buffalos and there was still danger of buffalos stampeding, in the area or wherever you travel. There were groups of buffalos, they were group of those large animals. They were the wild animals. And then was still coyotes around. There was the wolves that followed the wolves. And they also dangerous. And when they reached the, when they passed the prairie land there is always a danger of grass fire, that may suffocate you. There are many of those dangers that you have to experience and they always have to, be ready for those. There is a training that you can do to survive. So they know all these things but they have passed them once, only when they were younger, but this time they are older. And they travel, they travel.

One time as they were travel they find this grassfire. I think it was about in July or something, or no in August I think. Time when they were traveling right into the edge of that prairie, to the east. There was grass on fire, for some reason. A lightening striked the ground and, they say, there cames that fire, create the fire. But what happened is that it was, what did they say, they said, the shower, like the shower like thunder & shower, that’s what happened. When the lightening strike it didn’t set fire right away. But after it passed when the sun rise...when the sun shine again its a grass fire. And those clust of clouds condition they usually carry a gust of wind and after it goes it changes the wind
changes. And that’s what caught them, that wind that changes, it changed towards their traveling area. And that’s what come close to suffocate them or choke **XX122XX** the smoke. But they managed to find a way to do, to avoid that. They went into the creek, a small creek, and they covered themselves with, some kind of a moss, which act as a feather of the smoke and they stay there until the grass and fire went over. As it went, and they didn’t get up right away, he got up because the instruction they received from the elders and all that, they say, if there is that shower coming, so they said, wait for the shower to come, don’t move, just don’t walk because the grass that is burned will always bring out a dust and it might affect you.

So they wait, they wait there, after even the grass has passed, and the remaining grass where it didn’t burn, they sit there and wait, and dry themself off and then finally the shower came. And then they were able to move. So one instruction to have **XX133XX** have saved them of discomfort. So again on one part, I think once again they were sort of not right in amongst of the stampede. I guess the thunder, thundercloud I guess, scared the, the beast. And they were not a larger heard they were just a small heard and then they almost run over them. But they went through that one too. And then they went through a tribe of some people, I think, I don’t know what they call them. They, she says they spoke Ojibwa language. I don’t know where is this place, where is that I don’t know, something like they say close to the edge of the prairie, to the East. To my opinion I think it maybe a people who call Blackfoot, because Blackfoot people speak Ojibwa language, part of it.

So they were not a very nice tribe, they were some kind of a war tribe; they liked to challenge. So it is dangerous to pass their country, to through their section of the land. They did have to sneak around, avoid these people. I guess twice they come close to them. One time they were traveling in **XX152XX**, whether they were warriors or not I don’t know, but they just hide, they hide, they bury themselves in the ground, again. And they pass, these people pass. Plainly the only thing that makes them almost get caught was their dog. [laughs] The dogs of those people turn around and sniff, sniff at the ground. But they buried themselves, so the dog didn’t think. So they were very close calls, but they were mature. They were now old people they know what to do. But another thing that I would like to mention, the men was, what I call it **XXCreeXX**, he has this gift. He was able to use that, you know to save himself. I think that’s what happened to the dog, I think the dog was distracted by something, by the power of the Shaman.

And then, they were safe, and then they were gone. They were gone their merry way again, the two of them, not jumpy as they were forty year ago, but at least now they were traveling in their time, there was no hurry. And there was no hurry to return either. They were just gonna travel **XX164XX**, and each day, no matter what happened, whoever survived that wherever **XXhe/sheXX** will just have to make **XX166XX** somewhere. So the danger to the prairie was just as bad as it is when they reach the Omushkego land. The muskeg land was started after they reach the bush land. So they say, they said they reached that there were much more different kind of easy to find food. And then there also danger in there too.

There were animals that they not used to; something like a black bears, sometimes they’re bothersome, sometimes there is a flies that are very bothersome, and many of the things that are there during the summer. But somehow they were ok.
I would assume their traveling area would have been somewhere around Lake Winnipeg, and northwest of Thunder Bay, in between those two Great Lakes, and that is reason to have to pass many different tribes. If we were to study the tribal line today, we know the Blackfoot live on the edge of the, on the prairies South side or on the East side. But they were there. And then after the Blackfoot and then there were Ojibwas, to the East. And these tribes were always, there was a friction there, they’re not always welcome each other, that is what happened to the tribal people a long time ago. They’re always on guard, they’re always, they could attack each other, unless they make a sign, unless they have a good communication.

So that is the dangerous, most dangerous thing for the traveler, for a distant place. So these two people have that. But he speaks, he understands Ojibwa language and he speaks the Omushkego language or the Cree language, as we know it. So he was alright, but she spoke only the Omushkego language. And one of the things that I said before, he is a Shaman; he is just as good as the other person. And of course he knows a little bit about that stuff too. So they were well prepared, well gifted. But there were those everyday problems that in the wilderness you find. Especially when they could get to the woodlands and they have to pass through the rugged country, bush and some hills, bogland, and many kinds of rivers. So it wasn’t a pleasure walking but it was their pleasure. So it is said, they passed through the land, they finally reach their destination which is on the Southwest coast of Hudson Bay, we don’t know for sure where, where did they hit the bay. Some say they hit the bay between XX210XX and Winisk river system. There is a ridge there, out from way inland and right in the middle of James Bay and Hudson Bay. There’s a ridge and that’s where they travel, not necessarily on the ridge. But they find their way.

So, on that summer day, they arrived back in that place where she left home a long time ago and to see her parents or something that people remember. She was now an older person and the young girl she grew up with when she left was happy to see her. They too, the girls were left behind, they had been married, they have had children, they have had grandchildren. And some Elders she know were gone. And her life went on just the same. The thing is they never thought they’re gonna meet each other in the same place, those friends that she has and the other people. And of course they were so proud of her and also her husband, who has so much love to his wife, he didn’t care to walk across the land just to please her, just to be with her. And that was the most important. The women admire him.

The women said, “If I would have a lover that, a man who love me so much, they say was a good example, that man.” But we don’t know for sure who that man is. We think he’s a Stony Indian. Some people say that. Because the question was, one of the explanation that I hear, and I have heard when I listened to the story, was that. There was an explanation why, why there is a Cree speaking people right across the West of the land, right passed the prairie. Why is it all these Cree speaking people across there. Actually it was thought that these kind of language people, people who speak this language in James Bay, west close to James Bay, southwest close to James Bay, they thought they were the originals. You know right up to the XX238XX area and a bit inland. It was thought that these were the original people, they were the original
language people. So somehow they extended to the west so far. And that has been the question amongst the people.

They say, how come these Omushkego language speaking people extend all the way out across the prairie to the land of the grass and right up to the hills, into the mountains? That was a question and then this story explains that at the end because it said, a lady that have married this stranger from the west, have had children and raised them all and had an opportunity to teach them her language. And therefore the Omushkego speaking people spread across west, or shall we say the Cree speaking people reach across the West, to the prairie right to the foothills of the mountains. Because of this courageous woman, who have submit herself to her husband. And that was the, one of the stress point of this story.

That is a minor one but it’s a very beautiful one. And besides that it stressed mostly and more impressive, emotional, when you put a woman as a leading character because of her courage, because of her submissiveness, and the strong will to live and the love she carries across the land, and the courage she has and what give her the courage and what, why does she have such a strong blessing. But it has explained, in our moral teaching, our Omuskego moral teaching, morality, is that if you listen to your elders, if respect to your elders, you will be blessed, in all your life.

When an elder gave a blessing to the person, it usually come true. So they say, because of this young lady, who has been so faithful to her grandfather right to the end, she had received the very best blessing that the young girl can have. Even though she was broken hearted and never had a mother and never know what a man’s love would be, how to behave and how is she going to find another man to love, as a wife she didn’t know that, or as a lover, she didn’t know those things. But because of grandfather blessing she had receive all those. She’s the one that tells the story when they reach, back home.

Many days after she arrive she told the story about her trip, when she left, when she left the area a long time ago. She said she had a doubt, very doubtful of whether she could make it. Later on know how to love a man she’s supposed to marry, or live with forever. And as they go, as they go, as they pass the land, as many trials pass, dangers, this brought them together. It brought her together to him because she has to grab on him, hang on to him, sleep around his arm at night when she’s scared. Much more love and holding and touching than her grandfather. The promise that she was given that she will receive, she did receive. And nothing matters across the land, no matter what stood in the way because she had this strong love, the development of strong love to her husband.

Along the way her love blossom, strong, to overshadow all the fears, the obstacles seems nothing because she was so happy. And this is what she told to the woman friend when she return. And when she got there she never find any loneliness, she never think about going back, as she begin to have a children. All the time she thinks about her children and when she was given a chance to teach her children her language that also gives a great blessing. And her husband, speaks the language, her language. So she was the one who tell all the story. So she explained about all the encounters, when she returned to her friends. She explained all the things they go through when they left. Many times, she says, they have to sneak passed the Ojibwa, or OjiCree people first and then Ojibwa and then those are the same kind of speaking people they met.
Sometimes they, she says they actually approach some people or show friendliness toward them. But what she did was she was told by her husband never to show fear. One slight fear, that the tribes or anyone can be suspicious. And she did all that she knows how to do it soon.

And when they run into the stampeding buffalos, which she described vividly, she says, “The buffalos rumble and shook the ground and covered the grassland as a blanket moving as far as the eye can see. And on the edge of the buffalos came within our area.” And she says, “I just cuddled between my husbands arms and stay.” And this is what makes her close to her husband because of this dangers. And when the danger passed she said she was much closer to her husband but she thought she couldn’t develop to love him. And besides that, which men and women experience in love, she began to know that to. And she expressed that very fondly. She was asked, because she was asked by her friend, a woman friend, how did she manage, how did she survive. How could she give in to be so dramatic and adventurous type of thing.

And she answers, “With pleasure once I get a hold of it XXX339XX.” So this is what she told everybody and her friends would just simply enjoy her story. And besides that they, they love her, they just love to have her back. Even the men who wanted to marry her they were so glad to see her back. Even though now they are married and everything. I guess she was very popular, popular person. And besides that being a good person. So the story goes, and that’s what she told, she was the one that told the story about about their journeys, experience and what they saw. And she explained about dangers and what the experience in that prairie land, that the grass grow, XXX349XX.

And for many days, for many moons, yeah many moons, many days they say she travels on that prairie. And there were many things she talks about. She talks about a little animals that look like a squirrel, brown squirrels I guess and she saw them. And also the foxes. And also the coyotes. She explained about the danger about running in to the pack of coyotes.

“They can be dangerous.” she said. Then she explained many other things like a insect and things like that. And mostly she fear she, she experience very fearsome thing was that, the grassfire, grass fire, is that it’s very dangerous if you don’t know how to do it. But there is a system that the Native people use whenever they get caught on a grassfire. And what kind of day should they expect to have a grassfire. And the danger that comes with it if there if, if those wild beast which we call buffalos if they are around. They can be very dangerous they can be traveling across the land very fast, without nothing can stand in the way. They just run over everything they see. Trees, where there are even trees they can.

So this was the story she told when she return. But this time she was old. And I would say she must have been about forty-five maybe. In those days, that was being old. But then unfortunately she got sick for some reason. She got sick there and some kind of a disease, which kills her, right there as she was visiting. So the sad part of the story is that she died. But she expected it. They both have agreed. They had said when they left home on the mountains, the foothills that if one of them die that they will return anyway, back to the west because their children are there, grandchildren are there. So that’s what happened because what they promise when she died, after she was buried, he return. And the story goes, the man buried his wife on the famous hill where they used to grow. Where the nice flowers, wild flowers smell, and the beauty of colors on the ridges, the
sand ridges of the Hudson Bay. So he stood there for a long time after they buried her, stood there for a long time by himself. Some people watch from a little ways trying to give her console, or trying to comfort her, him!

But he says “It’s all right,” He wanted to have a moment with his wife. There were some kids, I think, they were standing there, who see that he shook, body shook as he cries. And finally say farewell and turned, stood towards west. On both cheeks there is tears running down, and he wept and then took a step towards west. He return home, turn back.

So that’s the end of the story about the man, but there is a bit more vivid story amongst the, when the women talk about this they always praise that man. A man who have shown strong respect and love to his wife, who even didn’t mind to travel so across the country to satisfy her, his wife. So to the women he’s the perfect man and to men he was also respected because he was a very powerful man. So he return home, and for that reason they say,... it’s for that reason this one strong courageous Omushkego woman, who have traveled with her husband across the west to the prairie right up to the foothills of the mountain, snow-covered mountain they say, had brought her language and spread the Omushkego language to the west.

So that is a story. So there is many teaching on that story. It teaches us about the morality, why we should respect the elders and if they give us the blessing that we will be blessed by it. And the story also told us about the woman always being blessed that she would find the blessing and a benefit, and the joy and the love for the good things she does, even if it’s impossible. Not only from her own people not even from her own friends but even to the strangers.

So it has been said that where she went to raise her family even there people remembered her as a kind person and always friendly. So the story ends with this beautiful woman. And it is a teaching to the young ladies to listen to their parents. And is also a teaching to the young boys to teach them to respect their women folks in the future when they get married, how they should respect their wife, how they should be protective of their wife, that they must have courage in order to save and protect their wife and to give into their wife with a reasonable distance, I mean, a reasonable way. If the wife asked too much well it is naturally, sometimes, it’s impossible. So that’s the teaching.

The story can be told very shortly just to express about only the women love story side. How the woman is loved and how she love a man and what the love can do to a woman when she got the proper person, and that is very beautiful amongst women, when you listen to that, for them. I have listened to them to the women telling that story with each other they get choked up, they get too emotional, as if it’s happened to them or wish it could’ve happened to them. And I have listened to it amongst the men when the men tells a story but usually they it tells a story about the women say how courageous the woman is and that kind of woman they would like to have as a wife and also if they could be as great as that man.

That’s how the men tells the story and also fascinated about the story of the what it looks like and what is there and how could you do, to save yourself and avoid some conflict or even avoid the attack, ambush and everything. So the men enjoy the story too. And us young people, oh we were so thrilled to hear about how the man is heroic and how he overcome all those obstacles and how he protect his wife with
the stampeding buffalos and how he chased the coyotes away and how he crossed the rivers, how did he do, ah of course you make the raft and many other things that he did along the way.

There is so much vivid story to make it so enjoyable. But I heard the story many times... 5 different ways of saying almost that I tried to tell all together. So that is as far as I’m gonna go about the story. For now XX512XX.

So that was a story about the Omushkego woman and the little girl who was born to be most beautiful, and the girl that was loved and the girl that was often and XX517XX the reward of being a good girl and being obedient and she acquired the blessing of an Elder her own grandfather. So the teaching of the story is many, but the most is we heard the blessing of... girl who receive the blessing from her grandfather and lived to see all of it. And one of the thing we know of to try to find out how come the Cree speaking people spread across of Canada, almost right across to the other bay. It’s not a prank this is real. You know so, nobody knows why these things happen but some people ask, how come the Cree speaking people spread so far across, so there gotta be some story.

So we find a little bit in story tell but that’s not the important thing. The important thing is, maybe five different important things along the way. And either one of them you can enjoy them. And that’s the story and thanks for listening. I am Louis Bird, from Peawanuck, Ontario. Thank You for listening, bye bye.