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Hello, hello. For some reason my machine doesn't work properly. So, we'll try again. Okay, it's working alright. My name is Louis Bird, I am living in Peawanuck and today is January 11, 1999. This is a new year. Before I begin, I will have to continue doing this, even too sometimes I feel so frustrated that there is no other way that I can keep track or keep record of the old culture that I wanted to keep, that I wanted to record. Making a tape recording of the stories that I remember is a best way I can do. I cannot do any better, and I cannot, I cannot do it any other way. So therefore, I am trying to do this. I am trying to record few things so this will be continuation of tape recording of stories that I remember. I cannot write. It takes so much time to write. I could write in Cree, but I would not have time to do that. I mean I cannot see. I could only read a book maybe for half hour and it start to blur. My vision get bust. And having that problem, I begin to write so bad. My writing is no good. So I could only write maybe 15-20 minutes at a time, and usually I just do the printing instead of writing that is in English. But if I do it in Cree, usually after twenty minutes I begin to write so recklessly, it became so large, you know, a lined paper would be not large enough for me. So my problem is that. And there is not much I can do.

And I am trying to use the computer. I have a computer. What do they call it? Desktop computer. And laptop, I mean a desktop. It's a laptop computer. And it has been given to me by George Fulford, for me to try to practice to use that machine. But my problem, my problem again is that I cannot see! I would spend maybe 15 minutes to try to get this thing going, by the time I get there, I have to push the button that says bold letters, and the largest. And even that one begin to jump around. So that's my truly unfortunate problem. So the only thing I can resort to is just tape recording. And that's all

it's going to do. I don't think I'm going to be write anything with it. So here I begin again, because I am so desperate now. I for some reason I feel like: 'What if I lose my mind? What if I lose my voice?' And then I'll be truly, I will be truly then, helpless. And now, I will stop feeling my so, feeling sorry for myself. That I will just get back to work.

And that is my section of the recording has to do with anything that is mysterious about our culture. There are some recording in my first tapes. There are some mysterious things and they are not listed. They are in amongst the stories that I have put. The first one hundred tape recordings are the beginning of not knowing exactly how to put these things. What I did was, I, exactly what I do today. I am speaking doing invisible person. I am speaking to the individual, who is not saying a thing, but listening to me. But still think a question in his mind. Just like a person who'd never saw what I'm talking about, but the person who'd never hear it before. And I am trying to impress, I am trying to express the stories in words only. And that is why I am doing this. And I don't want to waste time finding the right word or anything in English. I am just using the very easy, easy words that I could think of. That I can use. I mean the word that I can use easy, without my, my strain. Without stuttering and making all kinds of sounds because I couldn't find the right words, so I don't want to do that.

Now today is January 11, 1999 and I have a similar, almost same kind of stories that I have already recorded for two tape recordings and which I call them mysteries. So this, story, is a mystery. Part of it, part of it is just a make up story. Some part it is for Native people, for the Omushkego people. It is a mystery for them. So they thought what makes them, how did this nature to look like this? How could it be? Looks exact. I have mention this one time.

There's a story called Wiisaakechaahk, this person, this character, we describe him as pain in the back or something like that, or a painful soul. So this, this guy plays many part, fill the position where there is no explanation. So in a way he plays the part so we can laugh at it, and we can, the mystery that can be just sort of eased away from your mind. And that's what he does here in the story, and that's what he does many stories. So there is a stories that are mystery, where the Wiisaakechaahk takes place, this guy.

There is a place in the land here, in Omushkego land, where there are some landmarks that are not understood, that mystefies the Omushkego. One of them is in the

area of this famous historical place for the Omushkego people. It's in the Cape Henrietta Maria, that's what it's called today by White man. Ever since the White man came in, they call that. They have a reason to call that. But we, the Omushkego people, our ancestors, never call it that. They call it "Mooshawow," "Kinikimooshawow." What it means is at the peninsula a where the land so bare, nothing grows. It means stunt rock. It means just flatness of land, something like that. A place where there is no trees. But still, people lived there a long time ago. So it is that place that where, where some, many thing happens, especially during the summer. But in the winter time, nothing happen! Nobody lives there in the wintertime.

So there is some, there is a, there is a human sign, there is a signs that would take extraordinary man to leave the sign behind like that. So there is a place called there not far from the Cape Henrietta Maria, I don't know exactly how far away it would be, maybe 10-15 miles from the exact peninsula, where the James Bay and Hudson Bay is divided, on the North side, on the North-West, no, no, on the South-West side of the bay. And there, there is a landmark. And it is said, I haven't seen it myself, but there are many people who have seen it and talk about it. And they say there is a, a shelter. A shelter being made by a large boulders or flats rocks, a flat limestone rocks. That's about all we have around this area, it's a limestone. So there is these pieces of large limestones that have been placed to the Northern section, and open at the South section. And they seems to be as if a human has put them there, to make a shelter. But the thing is, these rocks, they're heavy. No one person can lift them. And how, and how strong is a person who did this? So it must have been something.

The Native people, the Omushkego people has been mystified by it. They have no explanation. Perhaps maybe someone may have had the explanation, but in time past because in a past the Native people live here. Many years before the European came. Some White people, the historians, the geologist, the anthropologist, all these people, have measured a time when the first men became to exist here. They didn't exist from here. They didn't emerge here, they say. He came across the Siberian and the Alaska Straight. They came across from there. It has to be from Europe, that's what they say. They came here. Ten thousand years ago. So, for them, the people that live here understand only ten thousand years old. That's the only period they cover. But to our

Omushkego people, they don't think that. They didn't have any measuring. They didn't measure years. They didn't measure time that way. They only measure time by generation, one generation and then to the other one. But they lost it after five generation, maybe more, maybe less than that.

So anyway, to get back to this landmark, it has been done by some man, some human figure or whatever it is. Human mind does that. No animal should do that. So, how old it is they never tell us, and they never know who did it. So it's just there. So it has been seen by many people, and that's one mystery. The mystery of these things people don't understand where it comes from and why is there.

So, instead of just being stumped, instead of not having an answer at all, they make up a story around it. And make, they make up a story around this symbol. And they say: "Well, well it was Wiisaakechaahk, our hero, our whatever it is, as he was traveling that way and apparently he experienced the white-out storm. And decided to shelter himself there for the night." That's simple answer, very simple. And not far from there, there is another landmark. They say: "It is still there." But one is very simple thing, it just a round rock like a football shape. But it's large, maybe perhaps five feet, maybe more than high. And it sits on the pre-arranged rocks on the bottom where it's, where it's, where it sits. As if someone has put the rocks around and then put the centre piece in. But these things weighs a ton. But who can lift the rock if it's one person? So, to make some explanation, our Elders have said: "It is Wiisaakechaahk, our hero, our giant." And all that stuff. So, that's a second mystery in the same region. They say this, the first, the first sign, which was supposed to be a shelter. If one could just look from the shelter and look towards to the North-West, you could actually see that rock from that place. So it could be somewhere around three to five miles away. So they say: "Why did he put the mark there?" "Well," they say "Well he decided to have a crap." To have a shit more like, in the morning. So after that you know, he just mark the place. So they say: "The Omushkegowuk is there." Because there is no answer for, for now. I mean, because they have never kept the record and when, or they didn't have no certain number of years or anything. So they don't know when, how long, when did that happen. And why did it happen? So that's a second mystery.

And the next one is a, I don't know if it is a next one or the third one. But the third one I am gonna mention is the one that is shown in some lake. I don't know what they call it. Wunnumin Lake, I think they call it. Wunnumin is the name of the rock. You know the outcropping? Not the limestone, but the grey stone. Even sometimes the black stone, the grindage. Sometimes amongst this grindage you can see the different color of stone, which is red. Whether if it's actually red or it's just the rusty color. And so they say in this lake, Wunnumin, Wunnumin Lake, at the outlet of this lake, not far from it, there is a hill. There is a hill there that looks like its a shaped like, like a beaver house. And at the shore of the lake, at the foot, at the foot section of that little hill, it's right on the lake, just before the outlet. And there at this outcropping, that has this grey rock and everything, and over some places there, there's this red rock. As if, you know it appears as if it'd just been cascading into the water. As if there were it's cascading into the water like a red stuff. So people look at this thing from the distance and say you can actually see the mound, or the hill that looks like a beaver house. And at the bottom of it, you can see the blood. Looks like a blood red rock. So they not that, not far from there, there's an outlet of the lake, and in there, there's a very, it looks like a dam. That's how the outlets look like. So they say: "It is Wiisaakechaahk, that's where he had kill a beaver." After he kill the beaver, blood spill on the ground, and that's what we see.

So somehow people have to find an answer to the question. Maybe the youngsters ask question. Or maybe just some people take a look at it and see what it looks like, and they begin to imagine that this stuff. So, there is the third place, but there is no mystery there. And there is no, there is no truth about, about anything. It is just imaginary stuff. But how could it look so exact like that? But why did the people relate this stuff into a stone, into a something? So the question is just part of the mystery. What they say is that it's been so long ago that Wiisaakechaahk had existed and everything when he did has turn into a stone one already. The Native people understand that. The rocks do not become, the rocks become ages, they age. The rock is first, it's very soft and that's a limestone, they know that. And then they have the certain other stage, the rock that is grey matter, and some of it that is red, and different color. They know it's in different parts, there's a different color of stone. So they have a basic understanding about the aging of stone. So when they taught, when trying to explain something that is old, they

always say that you know that “This is so long ago, it has become a stone.” You know that when the stones are old, there is usually a moss covered it, that’s even older. So this is the way they, this is the way they explain things.

And then, it’s at the fourth a mystery, a mysteries that, it isn’t in the place somewhere along halfway of the length of the Fort Severn River. Fort Severn River is one of the largest river, that is drained into Hudson Bay basin, as the geologists would say. And it has a very steep banks and very, it has many tributaries and many lakes. It has many lakes, in the headwaters I mean. So, the river is very large, really, and it’s very old. And then halfway through there somewhere there is a fast water, what we used to say, rapid. Some people say it’s a big rapid, it’s a dangerous one, that a person shouldn’t shoot the rapid, they should be very careful. So they think it’s very highly, it’s a respectable rapid, in the fast water. And it’s located in the, in the limestone place. The walls, the bank, the riverbanks are cliff with the limestone. An exact place, there is a narrower spot, that of the Fort Severn River. And as for this white out, as far as white, white water is moonlight.

And amongst the white water, there is a rock there, that is stick out from this amongst the fast water. Again, it is a hard granite rock and its black/greyish color. And it has the shape of the little bag, like the one carry around a men carried around. They called it the Medicine Bag. It’s a shape like that. And it’s small at top, and the in the middle it’s just like a little bag that men used to carry around, call a Medicine Bag, that sort of shape of thing. So they said, well, that’s again when people ask, you know, why the rock is there, it never move, it’s always there. It’s been there for ages. Another question is: “How does it stay there? How could it stay there? How come it never move?” Well if it’s there now, I don’t know myself.

But in order to have an answer, again, they throw this guy in there again Wiisaakechaahk. By this time, this guy must have grown into the giant or something. So they say he jump, the narrow spot of this river, and while he was jumping his Medicine bag fell off. Dropped right into the middle of the river. So he never bothered to pick it up. So they say, across the river, across to the west side, there is a depression there, right close to the river, where they said: “This is where he landed.” So all this things looks like a similar what they talk about. As it truly, it would like if somebody had step on the soft

mud and there is a depression. It has his footmark! And again, it sounds like you know this thing happened for so long, everything turned to a stone.

So that's, these are the noticeable strange things on the land that people cannot explain: "How could it happen?" But there are many things that Native people didn't understand. There are lots of stuff they didn't understand. I think in the tape number one nine nine one is mention about skeleton. It's one of the powerful mystery amongst the Omushkego people. And then again in the tape one nine nine two, also has a mystery about it, in different time. And in this one, we talk about those only the mysteries that are not real. That actually, that you actually see things there, but it's when the person who saw it first in it you really wonder how those things can be there. It has to be human, the one that has look like a shelter and the one that looks like a marking. It's actually human mind who have put those marking stone in there. But on the river, the stone in the in the middle Wunnumin, the one that looks like a Beaver house and the blood spilled over the cascading on the water? Well, that is not real, but it's just the looks. It's a wonder. It is the wonder of what it's shaped, something can be shaped so such a way. So this is, it's really, it tells us that you know deep earth existed a long time. And it's aged. And that's something that we know. And it's true by the scientists too. Archaeologists can tell you how old the rock is. They can say, one rock: "This is very young rock!" [chuckles] And then they can look at the other one they say: "That's a middle age rock. And the other one is old, that's a very old rock." So, the Indian people have some explanation too. But not, not for the mining purposes. So there is one.

Now, let us remain, not the mystery this time, but we have talked about rock. Maybe this is, it's not a mystery a for this one either. It's just a way the nature does it's maneuvering. I guess one other way to talk about it was, an elder to talk about why saying is the Creator's intention. But I don't speak that way. I do not, I don't think I am qualified to speak like that. But I think I could stay in the middle. [laughs] I will not laugh at things but I will make myself giggle a bit. What I am saying is that there are things that the Native people have noticed. But they have not explained, they have not bothered to see. There are some living people who have experienced the mysteries, which sometimes unexplainable, some of them explainable, those things. They are still there.

There are things that nobody notice. And they are there, but the elders know that. I am sorry to have said the wrong way at one time. To say our people are not scientific minded. I am wrong to say that. They were. They were, every elder that lives to be at least over sixty or seventy. The older they get, the more calculated, calculating they begin to be. They begin to understand things. They can understand things what they see. Let's say for example: 'I always thought our Ancestors were not astronomers.' But I am wrong. I have just remembered. Many of our elders have been watching the stars. I am sure they have look up at there, they have look at the universe. And many have mention about the stars that wanders. I know, my own grandfather have mentioned three of the stars that wanders. And I know they are at about at least three of the elders that I know of who have mention about, they say five. There are five stars that wanders in the sky. I mean in time. Like in a year's time. And they are, almost all of them, almost every elder that I know, can easily pick out the North Star. What makes them think that there is a North Star? Why did they say "North star"? But they have say that a long time before the European came. They have always mention that star, the one that's, that stays to the North easy. So they know this. They have noticed something. So they are, they are astronomers, astrologers. They study the stars. Astronomers maybe? Astrology. They study the stars anyway. But they haven't read anything out of it, they just, they know there's a, it's just like a, a time. Just like a clock. A year, a year or even month they could, they could measure, they could learn something out of. So they were sort of scientific minded a little bit, not much though. Unfortunately, they never write nothing. The only that they didn't do is to write. So they study that. Something that is, not too many people to do today.

And they also experience the meteorites, the meteor, the meteorites. They know they are some rocks that have fall from sky. They have seen those. They have seen bits and pieces of those things. And they have also study, they have also study the lightning struck, wherever that lightning has struck. They, this is the only thing that they never actually explain, what is happening when there's a lightning. It's one of the greatest mystery for them. Many other people have an, assume, or believe that the lightning strikes the ground, and it has the material that, that is sticks to the bottom, which has stuck there on the ground. So that it's in the stone shape. But we don't know. I cannot say



anything about that. So they could be wrong there. Because, the way the scientists understand things, they say it's not, the lightning doesn't strike the ground, it connects. So they cannot be any material from up. Like a bullet that goes so far in and stay there. That's the way the Native people used to describe it. Because I ask one time the elder, I said: "But how did they find that out?" I, they say: "They follow the hole right down to the ground, then it follows to the roads and at the end of the road there is this hard, hard, hard stone that you cannot break that. And it's just, harder than the stone." Well, they believe that's what it looks like. But that is, that's what they believe. They can, it doesn't have to be true. And so that's one of the mysteries they could never explain.

And then they also found another thing. They have found a stone that has fall from the sky. They think they do. But they have always find strange things about it, about the stars that came. Some of them they say it's very light. Lighter than ordinary stone. And it doesn't look like ordinary stone. And some of them say it's just, actually it's different. So they say it is, sometimes the stone is, glowing things. Glow? It looks like a glow, a bit of a light emerging from it. Emanated, comes out of it at night. So they say. There is one, at least some person who has found this thing. So it's another mystery for them. They don't quite able to explain what it does.

And then to continue about the stone, and they also talked about some strange behaviour of the stone. [laughs] In the place where we are, where there's a muskeg and everything. They say that if you see a stone, if you walk, if you walk on the, if you walk in the bush, there are places sometimes where there's no lakes, and where there's no creeks and you happen to get stuck there somewhere, and you are really dry, you're thirsty, you want to eat, you want to drink something. So, they say if you ever walk into the stone that is, if it's moveable, moveable stone, or even if you cannot move it they said: "Dig under it." If it's about six or a foot into the ground, they say you will always find the water, and the water is always drinkable, it's very nice. They say all around it there, there will be no water. But under the stone there will always be a water. And that's a way you, that is the way you could find a drink, when you get thirsty, or when you get caught in the hot summer out in where there's no lakes or anything. But to our country, the way it looks, it's all muskeg and full of water, but there are times you get stuck.

So they have this thing about the stone again. The stone they talk about is usually fall from up sky. That's why it stands on a, on top of the ground. And some elders have been mystified by these stones around the coastal region. And, I think I know what that is. I think I know why. But some of my friends, some of the elders that I have listened to, they have always say that you know, this stone that has seems to have fall from the sky and it stays there, it has been a big splash when they are fallen, then they still there. If you walk on the shores of the Hudson Bay and James Bay, especially in the Hudson Bay, in James Bay, yes, you could also find that, too. Because, the West coast of James Bay it's a marshy place. It's a muskeg, it's a mud, it's a clay, it's a very, there is no solid rocks. There is no outcropping. It's all sandy muddy beaches and everything. And the farther away from you go from the shore, there is a, there was a lichen moss and sand ridges. And in between those sand ridges sometimes you will see a rock, sitting there, on top. It looks like on top, just water around it and grass around it, even some small type of wood around it, but it seems to have a water around it. And there's always water, there's always seems it's fresh. So people say: "This is the rock that have fell from the sky." But I studied a little bit of those stones myself. They just stone, they're, some of them are limestone. Some of them will be sandstone, some of them granite, black, grey, it depends. But it sits there. So, I ask an elder one time, you know: "Why is this stone don't seems to grow over? And there are some stones you can just see the top of them, they've been over grown." And he says: "No" he says: "This is a stone that has fall from the sky. As it doesn't grow on them, they will stay there."

So I disagree. I disagree myself. They could be very right. But I thought about it myself. I, maybe because it's has sit in such a way, maybe it's so fat at the bottom, and then when every time when there is a rain, there is a rain all around it, and the rain goes under it and this rain always stay there. Like they say, the other people say: "There's always water under it," okay. Supposing it's never get cold, in the winter coming. And this water that is always under it, it maybe it start to freeze. And then when its freezes, it's a left the rock, and the ground cannot touch it, and it pushes the, always push the rock up every so often, every winter. Probably just go up and down, you know like if there was, how would you call this thing, camera that takes the picture who, every year or something. We will surely would see this rock moving. So it's not because it's been fall

from the sky, because of the nature's way. The water freezes and the water thaws and then, it doesn't have a chance to grow over. Because of the way it sits. So, I didn't argue with an elder, I never express my own opinion to them. I just accepted the way they explain. So, talking about rocks, talking about a Native mysteries, there is a mysteries that was mysteries then, and today's that can be explained. We all know that. Every nationality experience that.

Now, there was a story that the person was telling me one time, a person I forget exactly whose, who it was. There are so many people I have listened to. There is one person, an Elder from those people who have come from York Factory. Whether his name was John, I don't know. But its, his last name is Niipin, he still lives, probably eighty years old, maybe. Not really that old. But we were, we were talking about these stones, and he mention about the stones too. First of all we begin, we were sitting on the riverbank and having a tea and as the river goes by. And there's sand and there's beautiful and there's a sand there that is so nice. You know these sandstones? So sparkling and everything, and we were talking about where did those things came from, why is it sparkling an all. And so he begin to tell me the story about the stone. So I guess there are larger stones that time, that shall we call it, he says. He says: "We call it 'Inninassini.'" What it means is that in translation, in simple translation would be, "a human rock." "Why?" he said, "I don't know." We, the Omushkego people, we do have name rocks, the, certain type of rocks. Like we call those lime stones, we call them, we call them Waapassini. And then we have those grey looking rocks, and we call them Waapitewassini. And then we have those black rocks, solid rocks? So we call them Makatewassini.

And then we have those, a mix color of rocks. They are sometimes bubbly looking and they come out in the outcrop, outcropping, and they have many colors. So it they call usually they say they, that's where you find the flint. Sometimes you find the flint in there, amongst those things. And they call it the flint rock, or a flint stone if you want. And then there's also the rocks that actually look red. We call them red rocks. And then we also have some rocks that are mixed with quartz. They call them quartz. There are such rocks in this area that came out from the muskeg and outcropping, you know, out shoreline. And they are speckled with this, with the quartz. Sometimes mix,

sometimes there is a lines of it in there, and, they just come out from under, under the underground. So, we have names for those. They call them Wiinyanwaapisk, Wiinyanwaabisk. And you find those also in the river. You find them many places, sometimes a huge rock, which has been broken off from someplace. Wherever they come from, we don't know. So anyway, it's all the story about the rock. The mysterious thing, that people don't really quite know what that is.

And there are many more stories about rocks. Some Native people have somehow I don't know what makes them say that, that the moon is just a round rock. I guess because the way, the way it looks like. And they never any, they never go any further than that. They just say that a bunch of a piece of rock, because that's the way they describe it. They say: Wanihichiapiskohochin piisim. Aapisk. Piiwaapisk, is a stone, not actually a stone but mixed with anything. Waaweyaapiskakoochi assini. Waaweyaapiskiswassini. Waawiiya michaapiskisiwaassini. Maaktakaapiskisiwaassini. The pisk-, pisk-, is a, it's a, it's a name for something, which is harder than a mud.. But it also, it has it generalization of different kind. Assini, I think it's a most general meaning. But "pisk" is a something harder. So anyway, we've been talking about the rocks, and the mystery of rocks, the mystery that related to the rocks, and the stories that come out from the rocks and all this. It's very fascinating.

So, there is a story about Wiisaakechaahk is also enter in, mix in it. Because every time when there is a mystery, that cannot be explain readily, or easily, so it goes into our legend, where the legend can give not satisfactory answer, but acceptable answer to the question. So at least we have something, instead of saying: "Really, I don't know." So, there is always a little answer to any mystery. So we have been taught, as a young people, whatever we saw, if there is any question that we must ask. That we should ask the elder for anything that we can ask questions for, the elder usually have an answer. If not, at least he will give you a story. So you'll be satisfied. So there are things like that.

So, there are many other mysteries about the rocks. There's one right over here in where I am staying. The community is called Peawanuck. So there again we talk about the -sini, we talk about stone. The kind of stone there is. So that's where the flint is found, in this kind of rock. So right across from the village there is outcropping of rocks, right there. And there is an old man, who have say that: "If you look at that area" he

says, “you could see that you know the rock has been melted down and cascaded down to this river, a long time ago.” So the, what would an elder, knew about a stone melted and cascaded into where? Where did he get the idea? And the guy is not a White man educated, and the guy did not see those things but he did actually see. He actually saw a picture of a volcano, I think he have seen that, maybe that’s what he, that’s maybe what he thought when he saw this rock. So anyway, there were elders long time ago who have talked about mountain being, like being exploded and cascaded a stone, fiery stone. There are some Elders who have pass on the story like that, but we don’t know exactly how the story went. And, we know there is someplace in the earth that stone actually bubble out of the country. They know that there is a hot down there somewhere. A Native people have, our Native people have talked about the story passed down to them, could be from another tribe, that there is such place one time, in this land, that the water bubbles out from the ground. I never believe this thing when I was young. But then, in a, I saw this thing. I saw this on a, in a story, in a book, and recently I saw it in a TV. And this is Yellowstone Park. That’s within this continent, right here in North America. So our elders must have hear the story from other tribes. So we have the story that is a so mystery, and people always mystified how come, where does, how does the earth look like then? And also, they have heard about, also they believe that there is such thing as a mountain would flow with lava or something, the hot rocks. They know that story. They have experience some of those things long time ago, and there is a story about that. We shall deal with that on the other side of this tape.

Hello, hello, this is Louis Bird, from Peawanuck, Ontario. Today’s the January 11, 1999. We will continue to talk about the stone, rocks, and whatever that is, has to do with the rocks or stone, sand, you name it. At the other end of this tape recording, at side A, I said we shall talk about the story about the stone. Okay. The stone has many stories about it. There was a story at one time that came to us, that came from somewhere. And we have the story about which connect to other stories. There was a story one time I heard some elders say, because, but the thing is, the stories are overlapping. Our stories are overlapping. Sometimes, one person would tell, would begin a story with, a story that’s similar to the other legend. You mean legends are like that. The beginnings are much the same but it’s branches off into totally different thing.

We have two stories that are almost similar. The beginning. We have one called Wemishoosh. And a Wemishoosh is a main character. At the beginning of the story of the Wemishoosh there is a peculiar beginning. I mean, its, it's a totally different thing. And then, the Wemishoosh pick up the main episode, whatever you want to call it. Something to say like this Wemishoosh is usually the, who is it who was a great shaman, a powerful shaman, not very good one. Who used to practice his belief, his religion more like, who believes that if he kill a man, killing him in person would extend his life, and live forever. I guess all the Nations in the world have tried always think about living forever. And trying to find, trying to find solution or, potion, whatever is that you call it that they try to do to extend it their life. And the story is like that. That's the reason we have this Wemishoosh story. And it presented many other problems too, many other, a negative side of living.

So this, reason why we talk about this the beginning of this Wemishoosh it doesn't have anything to do with him! It has to do with a different thing, that is not, doesn't seem to connect it there at all. But it was similar. But there was an introduction of something at the beginning, at the very beginning. There was an introduction there that nobody understand why, if you are a young person but only when you live very long, you will understand that. And then the story goes on into ordinary, easy to understand Wemishoosh get in there. So the very beginning there is a two, twice. This beginning is used twice, for the Wemishoosh story and it also start with almost the same with the other, with the other legend. Oh yes, Sinkiipis, in the story of Sinkiipis. At the beginning of Sinkiipis it begins the same way! But the only thing difference was that there were, there were two girls in the Sinkiipis story. And the Wemishoosh story is two boys. But the beginning there why is it the two? And that is hard to explain. But anyway, that's how these stories intermingled or something. So the stories can be very old, and can be very fascinating. And I am talking about this because we were talking about the stone. The mystery of stone, connected with stone. And the oldest living thing in the, on earth is, is a stone, nothing else older than that.

So the old people, they have understand that. So anything that has to do with stone is, must be very old. So one story that came to us, passed onto us from other tribe is this. Or maybe he has been twisted. There was a story about this raid that took place in, in

our famous historical area, at the Cape Henrietta Maria, in that thunder area. Apparently, there was a raid from other tribes in down south, who managed to come here in summer. They raided the village of a few families of the Omushkego. And they take the captives. They took the young people and some women. What they usually do is they used to take the very young women, and they take the very young men, maybe the teenagers, the one that just about fully grown, very, and then they will pick a lady. Not an old lady but the middle age, the one that has much experience of all the work. So these too, these captives, the lady is usually to serve the raiders or the warriors who came in. To sew the moccasins for them, to wash whatever, to mend whatever they need the women for, and also besides that, besides sex. And then, the two young men who are what the young person did they, they are highly prize captive. They are supposed to be sacrificial beings, where they come from. That's what the story tells us.

And it was one of those human person, a man who was stole, who was taken from this raid, and was taken down South. And he travels for many moons, he says. Even we don't know how long. He knows the place, he knows he was going south all the time. Everytime when they travel, they go south. Finally, they reach the place, and then they was unfold, unblindfolded, because he was blindfolded all the time. But he knows he was always heading south. So he come to this place, where the humans, where these men capturers release his blindfold, and it was this huge village of First Nations. And they have their elders sitting in front, and all the onlookers outside, and he was a captive, captive who was released, plus others. Not from his tribe, but from the other tribes. And this is was supposed to be inspection from the elders and in not a judgment, it was inspection. And this, this guy was taken in, the young person, sixteen years old. So, he was saved, he was taken by the, an old lady to be trained to be kept until such time for sacrificial purposes. So, he was carry, he was kept there by the old lady, and he was trained, trained by this old lady to acquire shaman powers. Because the old lady fell in love with the little boy in like a son then doesn't want to see killed and then she train him to have many in a dream quest and all that, that a vision and everything, in order for him to escape.

So he did and he did escape. I'm a going to h- make a shortcut there. Then I'll go more like a preview. He was captive this time and then he was taken, and then he was

adopted by the old lady, he was trained to be a shaman and he use, and then he was joined by the warriors, because he win the freedom, then he went to the other place, and he was captured, if I am saying it right. Okay. He was captured again out there the other tribes even south, and then he was taken even more south and then he was, ended up there even worst as is, as a sacrificial offering. And this is where he talks about the stone buildings. The high stones where they sacrifice humans he says. Stone buildings? Pillars, whatever it is, no, he didn't say pillar, he says the mound. The stone mound to the high in the terraces you call those things? That more like a step up and you are there? And he says this is where they take the sacrificial things. But he manage to escape. Find him back to the Mushkego land, and he told a story about the stone buildings. So that's a story that relates to the stone.

Now, at the beginning we talked about Wiisaakechaahk who has made the shelter with stone, that are heavy. And when this sort of story came in, as a young man who was captured by tribes, and then re-captured down south and taken to the such place that is powerfully built by stone. And these are fascinating stories. And they fit together today. Now is understandable what they were talking about. So therefore our legends are our history, in the, in so to speak. In my opinion, as a storyteller, that's what I think. But the people who tell me the story they did not worry about explanation, they just tell us the stories to entertainers and to educators to make us aware about many things. But, now that I am getting older, I begin to think about these things. So that's the way things go. Now, stones. That's the way the story goes about the stones. One time.

Now let us get back to the, to the stories about, another story that was brought back by some tribes, from other tribes was that there was a man who came in amongst the Omushkegowuk, supposedly from down south. He described things down south. He described the land that was barren and they called it the "Mashkotew," means where there's nothing grow but grass. "And across the way to the south," he says, "there is a mountains. And a mountains sometimes that explode and spew down the black cloud and obscure the sun." And sometimes the ash will fall onto the land. Black as, black as a, as we do it a with a Chiistakoonak, I mean the spruce tree green branches, when you, when you burn them it goes up and then fall black. "That kind of stuff," he says. "But this is rock," he says, "not wood. This is a, this is a ashes that come from a stone, from



underground.” So that was a story that was brought in to this area. And people, people was terrified, I mean mystified by it. And I actually, somebody did not believe that story for a long time.

And then, not long ago, I would say recently, that was just before the white man came to this land, right here in this Omushkego land and then between again, between the James Bay and Hudson Bay lands, where the Omushkego people used to congregate in summer. I mean, a small village here and there. Because they were, they liked to stay in the open, in the open ground in summer. One of the main reason was that they be able to look out in the open space. And in summer time also to get away from the flies. So it was told. So the story goes.

So it was there, that they were camping on it all the time in the open space. That’s not long ago. But there was no story about the white man yet. And they say that, you know, one day, when people were camping on the open it was beautiful day. Sunny, warm and everybody was enjoying. And then, in the south, to the south there they see this haze that was hang there for days. And it gradually come towards the north and for a week there was no wind. And it was just coming and coming and coming closer, and finally it reach up to the, a where they are and it goes up to the north, all over the sky. There was no cloud in the sky, seem the weather, seem to be stood still. And then this black cloud came in, cloud which seems to be a big cloud. And it covers the land. The sun in the middle of the day begin to hang there as just a ball of red coal. Soon even it turns to a yellow and then soon it begin to go covered. And for time, for many days, there was no sunlight. It was getting dark. The land was just black. People have to make a fire in their tipi, in order to see. Nobody can hunt. And for many days, soon people get hungry, they cannot go anywhere. They were expecting the end, something to happen.

Then finally one day, after many days of fasting and praying and setting up a shaking tent to ask question to the Great Spirit, someone get an answer saying “this is temporary.” And it says “the Mother Earth have been spewing the bad stuff. And it will clear in a few days. That’s what the Shaking Tent have told him. And then, as sure as it was, few days later, the wind begin to pick up from the north. And a two days, you begin to see, just like a dawn, from the north. The white slowly, slowly came in the light, into the light and the sun begin to shine, and then the sky begin to clear, beautiful as ever, so

crystal white. That all that black ash that as far can see, be seen on the water and also on the ground. But the cloud, but the sky was so beautiful. And then, the black, the haze has been lift up and could not be seen anywhere. And a few days later, the regular storm came in, pouring rain and washed the ground. And the next three days after it rain, it was so beautiful, back in the original place. And then the people of the Mushkego land begin to enjoy living again. And this is a story. So there is that story that people have said before that, before in a time after, that there is such a mound in the rock, the rocky mountain that can explode and spewed out a dirty ash, black ash, whatever it is. So the story have reached to the Omushkego land, where people hardly saw any outcropping higher than 100 feet. So it's unbelievable story. So it has been said. It has been recorded to the minds of people, it has been passed on to us to this day. It's a terrible, it's a terrible story, but it's a very fascinating story. And it is real. Today it is just as real as it was then. So our stories can be very accurate, and our legends that is. These are. This story I'm talking about is more like considered one of the shortest legend. But it is not the legend. It is an actual story. So that's, that's far as I'm gonna go for about stone, stone story. [laughs] Or rock story.

Now I'm gonna get back to the humor. We have this character by the name of Wiisaakechaahk, who have been said to have been pass though our land, long time ago. They say it's a very long time ago. And when he pass through this Mushkego land, he was very, very friendly. He call everybody "my brother." And he loves everybody. He actually never did any wrong to anyone. I don't think there is any story about him killing anyone at all. But about him, there is a stupidity in him. Sometimes to the, him, himself was almost killed, because of his stupidity. But he was friendly to everyone, men, animals, even the season, or the environment, whatever you call it. And then he lives amongst the people for sometime.

And then finally he decided to leave the land, the country that he was with, the Mushkegos. He has told them, he says: "I am gonna leave. I am gonna leave you behind. I have been very nice to you and when next time I am gonna return, at the end time. And at that time," he says: "I will not get, be very friendly." They say. I don't know if he has said that, but people say that. That he will walk again. He will come back. And this time, he's not going to be friendly as he was. He's gonna judge people. He's going to be very

harsh. But he left towards west. He went, they say, from here, from this Omushkego land. They said “he went west, at the end of the land, where the mountains are high, where the mountains touch the sky. And amongst the sky is where is where the mountain touch the sky, at the end of this land. That’s where he sits, facing west, taking care of this land, so nothing will happen.” “And he’s been sitting there for long time” they say. He’s very old now. He has turned into a stone. And some moss growing on his head and forehead. And a huge pine tree grow up on his forehead. And he sits there facing west. And at the end time, when the earth will begin to end, he will get up again and to walk again, on the ground, on the land. So the story goes. So nobody actually believe this stuff. But it’s a great, it’s a great story. And there is another story about for the people who don’t believe that. The person who is “aaah, that just a make-up story.” So they, at the long time ago.

So the story goes [chuckles and laughs]. So the story start another one. Another story comes like this. Everybody hear this, every youngster would hear that as the young, they grow up with it and everything. Even before long, long time before the European came, before the white man. And there were many who didn’t believe it. They just simply think it’s just a fun story. So one day, there were those two young men, young men, they were not very young but they were hunters, they were traveling together, companion, two of them. So they went out somewhere. One day in the evening they were talking about this Wiisaakechaahk, they knew that he went west and he sits there somewhere. So they were saying that “you know, I wonder when he’s gonna come.” “I wonder what he’s gonna be like when he comes back.” So one evening when they were sheltering down to spend a night, like they used to be, this was summertime, so they have just finished their supper and they were just gonna go lay down and they didn’t have no tipi because it was summer. So they just have a very, very small camp and it just a very small lean-to. And they were just looking at the fire and sitting there and the sun was getting set, and then all of a sudden they, they are aware there is someone singing! In their mind first, they thought: “Oh, geez I’m thinking!” So they look at each other and finally one guy says to the other: “You hear that?” and the other guy says: “Yeah! I thought you were humming.” And the guy says: “Me? I thought you were singing!” And he says: “No I’m not.” And they get up and they say: “Where does it come from?” So the song, somebody

that sings, came from the west. And this was after sunset. And the song that person sing is one of those songs they say mitew song, mitewahamaasotiiw. So they say: "Wonder who that guy is?" So apparently they think that it is just someone not far from where they camp. So they said: "Well, tomorrow, tomorrow we'll go see." So they went to sleep. But the guy sang right up to, right past the sunset. They just finally faded away. Then they went to sleep.

So the next morning they never even thought about it. They just went back hunting and all that. They didn't care much about anything. And late evening again, after sunset again, towards the sunset, they hear it again! They ask: "Did you hear it?" "Yeah, I did. Yes, I hear!" So they say: "What do we do with this thing?" "Well, it's too late now, there's not much we can do." So they just make, make camp again, and so they just didn't say, they just listen to the song. So they begin to say: "I wonder how far that guy is?" So they say: "Well, we should try to seek it in our dream." So they went to bed, tried to dream. You know, how far would this guy be? Because they travel around that day and they didn't find anything, but they didn't actually look for it.

So the next morning, I think they both have a dream, but one guy says: "Yes I dreamt. I dreamt about this person who sing." So he says: "It's just more like just over here, not far away, we could, maybe see him if we travel that way tomorrow. I mean today" he says, this guy. But the other guy says: "No" he says, "No, that's not, that's not the way I dream." He says: "The one we hear singing is far away, far away. We would have to travel a long distance to get him. But you're not gonna hear him." He says: "You can hear him only in the evening." So they say "Ok, ok which you have," so they finally agrees, "Ok, well, we'll go towards west." Oh it just, there was just two of them anyway! There was nothing to worry about. So they traveled to the west, and all that. And then in the evening again they have traveled quite a distance, again in the evening, just sunset, they hear the song again. Same way, but different song. So finally the next day, for many days they travel, towards west. Same thing. Each evening they say they hear this song. So they finally came into the end of the bushland, come upon to this what they call "Mashkotew," means the prairie, whatever it is. They come upon that land. Begin to recognize that they are leaving, they are leaving the Omushkego land. So they travel

across this mashkotew land, the desert land, whatever it is. Travel for many days again and every evening they still hear this person.

And then one evening, one day they were traveling, all of a sudden notice that the cloud seems to be sticking up there. You don't seem to change the cloud at all. And it was towards evening that they begin to ask question to them, they say: "Why the color not moving? So dark under." So they begin to recognize that it's not a cloud, it's a mountain, it's a snow-covered mountain. Begin to walk, and still, in the evening, they still hear this person who singing, still west, always to the west, towards the sunset. And then, finally they decide: "Well, maybe we have been fooled. Maybe we shouldn't go any farther." But the other guy says: "Why don't we, why do we have to turn that way? We are, we are already here. We might as well go just to the mountain, maybe we'll see if there is a mountain. See it from under the mountain, whatever it is." So they went on and went on. They begin to climb the mountain. They begin to walk amongst the mountain and spend a night, still the voice is still from beyond, towards the sunset. So they travel and travel to the rugged land, to the mountain, to the valleys. Spend the night again. Still the song came from the same direction. They were, they now were so tired, they were so far away, they were no use turning. They finally decided, they already decided now: "This is what we hear about Wiisaakechaahk. "That's him!" Begin to think that that's him, yeah. Well, finally they come to the mountain, they climb again, and they saw the last mountain of West. And then the evening come now they can hear this voice, the voice very clear. And they say: "Oh yeah, that's him. That's, that's Wiisaakechaahk alright." So they believe now. Says: "Why do we have to go and see him? We know it's him." So he says: "Why – why – why [chuckles] turn now?" they said. Says: "We've come this far, may as well go see him."

So they went the next day, they just traveled the last hill, the last mountain over there. They are very hard to climb from behind. So they have to go all around, around it. They finally saw it behind him. And from the bottom of the mountain here, they could see. They could see this guy sitting up there. Sitting there on the mountain. Not on top of the mountain, on the slopes of the mountain. The way they describe it is that as if he's sitting on the, resting his back on the mountain, on the side of the mountain. But not actually sitting up there where the snow is, just on the halfway. So anyway, the way they

say is that you're not for them to look at this, a huge person is enough for them to worry whether they should go up ahead or not. But they didn't expect this thing.

But the story would be here so fascinating now they really believe. So they know that this person is a wise person. And he has a power to do almost anything. To them it's just more like God. [laughs] Whatever it is. So they decided, they say: "What shall we do?" "Shall we turn or just, what are we supposed to do now? We're here!" So they said: "What can we do? We've seen him." Says: "Don't we say anything at all to him?" And he said: "Well, maybe we should. What can we ask anyway? What shall we do?" So they said "Well, he's, he's wise, he must know something. What about if we ask him our future? Our, something like that, you know, because every wise person knows about things ahead of time, about in the future, whatever it is."

So they finally say: "Well, okay. Let's go up and ask him, you know, how long, how long will we live? Shall we say that?" "Well, we could request," they say. "Okay," they finally agree. They say: "Let's go up and see." "Let's go walk up to it." So they walk up, climb for the hills and the mound and right up to the bare rocks and everything, and there sat, there sat the giant. And that's what they described. On it's knee, on it's shoulder, there's a white moss and on it's forehead stood a huge short, stout, pine tree. And then he just looks up sits toward west and gaze up to the west. Not moving.

So finally they decided to speak to him, they say: "How do you yell at him or whatever?" It moves! Soon as they decided to speak to him, they, he just move and looks down. And he says: "Hello there!" And his voice is so thundering and they were afraid, they want to run down. So he says: "Oh no! Wait." And he says: "What shall I do? What, what you want me?" So the two men, the two young men couldn't understand. They couldn't, they couldn't think of anything. It was just so startled and stunned. Afraid, scared, whatever it is. Fascinated. So finally one guy stammered, he say: "Well, I, I just wanted to know, I wanted to ask you if I could live forever. I want to live forever." So, the Wiisaakechaahk said "Want to live forever, eh?" And he says: "You sure that's all you want? That is what you want?" And the man was just so scared he doesn't know what to say. He was afraid. So he says: "Yes, yes." The Wiisaakechaahk again say this once again, he says: "Are you sure this is what you want?" And the man says "Yes," he was getting scared already. And then he says: "C'mon." Then he kneel, he bend down

this old, this old Wiisaakechaahk and he says: “Come on, jump on my hand.” So he, the man jump on his hand, walk on his hand and Wiisaakechaahk lift him up to his face and he says: “Are you sure this is what you want?” That’s three times. And the man this time was so scared. And he says: “Yes.” And then he says: “Okay.” And then he covers him with this, with another hand, and then rolled him in there as a dice. And he lowers hand as you do when you best wish, you know, to get number seven? [laughs] And then throws it on the ground. And there rolls, into the mountain the sandstone. And he says: “There you are. Now you’re gonna live forever, in this land.”

And the other young man saw this fantastic thing, and he just didn’t know what to say, he was just shook standing there watching that. His friend turned into a stone. And he thought: “I should not ask that request. I wanted to ask him too,” but he change his mind. “But, I cannot just go away. I have to ask him something.” So the Wiisaakechaahk turn around, he says: “What about you? What you want me to do? What do you want? Any request?” And the young man say “Yes” “And what is it?” say the Wiisaakechaahk. And the young man says: “ I, I don’t want to live like him” he says. “Not like that. But I want to live longer. I want to live long. But not, you know, just ordinary time.” So Wiisaakechaahk says: “Are you sure?” And the man says “Yes.” And then, finally the Wiisaakechaahk came and kneel, I mean to bend down again and he’s: “Okay, jump in my hand.” And he’s like: “You sure you want this, what you want? You sure you know what you want?” So the man says “Yes, yes, yes, I know.” And he picks it up in up into his level of sitting position and finally, once again he says: “Are you sure this is what you want?” And the young man by this time was so scared, he just say: “Yes,” stuttering. Finally, Wiisaakechaahk put his hand over the other and cover it and shake it as a dice inside and blow his hand into it and then open it and roll it into the ground, and there stood the magnificent, fully grown, tamarack tree. And then he says it “There you are! Now you gonna live long time, but not forever. Exactly what you ask. As you requested.” So, that’s the end of the story.

We have talked about stone, rocks, something that mystifies men. And we also talks about, talk about what people do. People, almost every nationality, have always quest for, for immortality, for the long life. People don’t want to die. And all this story is just showing to us there is no such thing in this earth that you can live forever, unless you

turn into something. But, that's where this guy play a big shock. The Wiisaakechaahk play more like as a Creator, or a God. And still shows us that there is no such thing. So that's a story about the stone thing. And him. He sits there like a stone. The beginning. Before he started to move. And who nobody says what happened to him after that. But the people say, the Omushkego people always say that this trickster, whatever you want to call it, Wiisaakechaahk, he's going to walk again on the land, at the end of time. And this time he's not going to be friendly as it used to be. So that's the end of a story of a two stories about the stone, and about Wiisaakechaahk. So we have done. We have talked about something that mysteriously, unbelievable story but still show us something that our ancestors have known something that only the elder can understand or make sense about this kind of things.

When we young, we don't know those things. When we young men, we are too busy. A young person, we are too busy to try to experience life. And sometimes we don't even want to lose young, our youth. When you get a bit age we want to remain as a young. And we always seek. If we only we could hang onto something we like most. But it's not possible. And then this story teach us that, you know, there is no life can last forever in this land. You really have to go back to the land. So it, the stories are very fascinating, almost any other nationality. But only that it doesn't have no Creator who created things in six days that's missing. And also we don't have a story that we would have kill our God and crucify it. We don't have that story. Similarities are there. Yes. We, our elders believe that there will be end time, and that there will be kindness that was there once, and is not going to be kind next time, the end, near the end, whatever that is. So the stories are very similar to each nationality, whatever it is. So that's the end of my story about the stone.

Now, let's get back to the present. Let's get back to the present about stone. No, not really stone. Now, this is real! This is a real thing. This is not the, this is not the legend. But it is also been recognized by our people, and it, it comments a few comments of, from the elders and those who have aware about those things. Like similar that I was, similarities that I have mention about the elder who still live, who talks about our Peawanuck, the formation of our rock, in Peawanuck, the stone, that is called Peawanuck. The rock. Now, in this area, the Omushkego land, we have a few outcrops, outcropping



of rocks. Not necessary right high, but just amongst outer the muskeg. And you can see it, even today as you fly over this land. You can see the stone that is out, coming out, propping out of the muskeg. Even there's a very flat muskeg around, there is a outcrop that seems to showed out, right here in this Peawanuck community. You walk to the west from here, to the north-west, about one mile. You will see this rock that sticks out from the muskeg. Four feet high and four feet, there's a cut there, four feet. Sheer cut. Like as if it just came out, like, like if you just slip the wrong boxes, two of them, rubbing close to each other. That's what it looks like. And high sides towards the south-west. And this, these are the things that a fascinate me. Okay, that's it for now.

Well, that's the end of the story about stone. [laughs] Well, usually when I want tell a story I want to keep the same kind of story. If it's something that is mystery, trying to come to the sequence. So I hope this one has been interesting. And so, I may be able to find another story that might fit into, into the other. Okay, thank you for listening.