Louis Bird: Hello, hello, this is Louis Bird. Today is April 15th, 2003 and it is Tuesday morning. Time now is about 6:45. In this recording I will tell the story about what I heard from the elders in the James Bay and Hudson Bay area.

And now I want to begin by saying: the First Nation Omushkegos have never recorded their history in writing. Yes, they have recorded their history in, by just speaking, orally. They pass on the events they know to the next generation by telling them the story about the past. And as we know it today, First Nation did not write their own history, there is no, a pinpoint in time in their past. There is no “B.C.” as to say “before Christ.” There is no “A.D.” as the Europeans use the term. And for that reason it’s very hard to pinpoint the time in the past with the stories we have, because of this situation. Nevertheless, we have the stories.

We are now going to listen to a story between the First Nation Omushkegowuk on the James Bay Lowland. It’s a story about conflict between Inuit people and the Omushkego people. There are at least two or three stories that are not exactly, specifically tell where this place take place. I know for two for certain, in the way that I have heard the stories.

I wish to give credit to the elders I have listen to, somewhere around 1993 I interviewed an elder in Attawapiskat, which I am not gonna give the name. I wish I could. For the sake of safety I will just call him “elder K.” So, our elder began by saying his grandfather have heard this story. I don’t even know whether his grandfather have been involved in this story. That is something that I cannot tell. But apparently his grandfather had vivid memory of this story. He begin, he says Inuit people have always, always bothered the Omushkego people on the Southwest coast of Hudson Bay, on the
Cape Henrietta Maria and on between the Akimiski Island and the West coast of James Bay.

Whatever the reason why this conflict existed between them, his explanation was this, that a place called Nehapiskaw, he mean the point of land between Akimiski Island, which is located within the James Bay and that channel, was a famous place for seal hunting and also waterfowl hunting, meaning geese, ducks, loons and whatever, were always plentiful in that place early June, or even part of May. And it was there that both nations used the land, but never actually joined each other in hunting, but always keep their distance. And all around the island, on the south side of the island the Inuit people used the land for their seal hunting. And to the east side of the island is where they used to camp, or the north side of the island is where they used to camp in summer. It was believed that these Inuit people were plenty at one time. And because they used this small land and such a, one small favorite place for the seal hunting, there was a clash between the two cultures in a certain season, particularly during the summer, when the seal actually favor to stay on in the southwest, west coast of James Bay, along the bay.

The Inuit people had to come and hunt there and then usually, for some reason or another, would attack the Omushkego who lived by, along the bay. Sometimes suddenly, ambushes kind of thing, skirmishes happen. And of course the Omushkego people expect it to happen and sometimes they were unprepared when they were attacked and of course they were killed. And when the killing start, when the Inuit people start killing, they just kill anything that they can kill, elders, children, you name it. And once they go into killing action, they just simply cannot stop themself and they kill people in any way they can. They’re very, very unmerciful. So there are many stories about that. So it happens almost every summer in the past, long time before the European came.

So it has been said at one point, there was a time when it was not safe for the Omushkegowuk people to camp along the coast in the west coast of James Bay. And it was also same experience in the southwest coast of Hudson Bay. And especially, particularly in the area we call today “Cape Henrietta Maria.” It happens there very easily, because by nature the ice always touch the cape. Ice do not leave the land for long time, until the month of July. And therefore because the Inuit people can be at home as long as the ice is thick enough to be on, they were able to move around on the bay.
without much trouble. So they were able to travel on the ice on the bay and close to the shore and hunt seals.

And when the ice begin to recede or melt, they usually settled into the island of James Bay, which we call today “Akimiski,” on the north side of it and on some of the small islands that are located within the James Bay. Especially on the east coast of James Bay and right up to their mainland, the main island which they occupy at that time, the island we call in the Hudson Bay, east coast of Hudson Bay, island that we know today as “Belcher’s Island,” it is their regular home of them. There were many. We don’t know exactly how many they were, but we can estimate about 600 or so, maybe more, in that island alone. And they ventured from that place into the Cape Henrietta Maria area and then into the east coast of James Bay, into the, within the James Bay and also east coast of Hudson Bay. Their main home was located in Belcher Island. And it was these, it was believed it was these people that used to come to the southwest coast of Hudson Bay to attack the Omushkegos who were living on the shores of the southwest coast of Hudson Bay, or at the Cape Henrietta Maria.

And it so happens so many times that, it was said by this elder, the elder who tell me the story, that one day the Omushkego people were, just simply had enough and they say: “We cannot carry on. We cannot tolerate this thing that happens so many times. We will have to have a serious, a retaliation. We will have to attack their home to teach them not to bother us again.” So, as the story unfold, the elder says, the elder K. said his grandfather vividly re-told the story that the army sort of, well, soldiers were formed and trained themself how they should attack and how should they go, why, how and when they should go into the Belcher Island.

They chose to go to their homeland. And they chose the season that, when ice still not yet broken so much, that they were able to travel across the ice directly to the homeland to attack. The organization and preparation was handled very carefully and the equipment was prepared, the boats were made that would last and the sleighs that were required and food provision they required for such expedition. It was prepared a seasons before they actually take place.

And it was that time, this elder tells the story, this dramatic story that these trained and prepared Omushkego people took off across the ice from the Cape Henrietta Maria,
across the ice, broken ice, and used their canoe to get on on the water and onto the next ice, ice island which are floating on the Hudson Bay. And this was supposed to be a surprise attack, so once they get to the point of land, so they observe the Inuit encampment and they know that they were not detected yet.

And because of this strange knowledge about those people, the Inuit has it, the Omushkego have it. It’s what they call “mitew.” The Omushkego has a power to, what do they call this, to neutralize the Inuit mitew power to detect them. It is not a radar. It sounds like a radar, alright, but when a mitew is fully capable can and will detect a danger from the distance. And when he does the scanning his own power, the other person, who has similar power, can’t, can make it so that the mitew cannot detect them, wherever he is, by the mind power. So therefore two groups had the same, equal power for their protection and for their warfare. And it was that situation which gives the Omushkego advantage.

They had their own particular mitew, who was so useful for this purpose, as they observe the camp to study what strength and how many people are they, and how they’re gonna attack it. And they also sent the spies in the camp to see which tent, where the chief is located and where the great mitew is located. So they were very successful to do this, because they have to do it in order to show they mean business, or they mean, they were disagreeing with being attacked in their homeland without ever having a chance to defend themself. This was the idea.

It was said that, by these who described the camp, they said: “One end and through the camp right across, you cannot see the men at the other end, at the end of the camp and also the crossways.” There were so many. The dwellings were so many and the people just milled around. Their action was everyday almost the same. So they studied these actions. The only time that Inuit people would stay quiet is about three o’clock in the morning. Especially that season, because they chose the season to attack these Inuit in the month of June, 15th of June, just when the longest day is, in the middle of June. They chose the season, because they don’t want to be have a problem because of darkness. They know the Inuit people always hunt early morning and then late in the evening. So they have to move around while they were sleeping. And that’s exactly what they did
after they studied the camp and they studied the nature of people. So they planned to
attack during the time when the Inuit people are sleeping.

So they attacked them about three o’clock in the morning. And they attacked the
camp exactly where the men are, the hunters, the fighting men. And then they also
attacked the camp of the chief, the leader. And it was this time that the story took place,
the fearsome fighting that took place and the killing that took place, that this elder told us
the story that was so cruel, that your spine would turn chill, how cruel these people can
be. But they said the Inuit people have done the same thing to them many times before
that. And this was just a lesson to make these Inuit people feel the same fear and the same
helplessness when they attacked unexpected people, elders and children in their camp. It
was more like a revenge and a lesson to them.

So the attackers were successful. They were able to disarm, to startle the soldiers,
or the warriors, or the hunters who were skillful fighters and in that way they were able to
eliminate their own casualties. And also they were planning, the leaders of the
Omushkego fighters, the soldiers who were able to direct the kind of attack and the way
to attack to overcome their enemy. And then it was said by this elder that each fighting
Omushkego was to set themself close to the tent to every hunter, outside to wait until
there is a signal to attack. And they set themself into position to each camp where there is
a hunters, where there is some soldiers are supposed to be.

And also the leader of the Omushkego went directly to the center where the chief
is located, the big mitew. One Omushkego mitew against the Inuit mitew. They were to
clash each other right in the center. And when they set up themself, they gave a signal to
attack. And it was that time that slaughter took place. They had literally slaughtered the
Inuit people.

And then story took swing into the center, where the chief was located. And the
Omushkego leader, or general, if you wish, led the attack into the Inuit chief. And it was
said at that time, the arrows that are sharp and can penetrate any kind of object, a wood
and everything, except a stone, could not penetrate to the camp of this powerful shaman,
the leader of the Inuit. And he was inside. They can hear him move around and he has
with his men inside, also, and his family. But the Omushkego could not shoot through the
camp and every time when they want to come close, there is a way this Inuit peoples was
able to shoot with crossbow that was small, with a powerful bone as a bow and has a very short arrows that he uses and shoot through the holes in the camp and is a covering of his tent. So it took many people to finally penetrate the place. They literally have to cut holes in it. And people who cut holes sometimes they were killed from within. But this chief was only himself, there were only his family and he was able to fight off the enemy by himself very skillfully. Then finally they were able to cut section off the covering, which they find out after that it was three layers of the most thickest walrus hide that he was using as his camp. He must have expected the attack to come. They said: “So that is the reason he could not be, the arrows could not penetrate.” Finally they were able to subdue him and finally able to kill the leader.

Once the Omushkego captured and killed the leader, the rest of them were just sort of gave up. Because in the way they have situated themself in attack system, they were able to beat the enemy, which were much more numbered. Inuits, the Omushkego soldiers were outnumbered by their enemy. The skill for the preparation helped them a lot. But the most powerful things that they have brought is the mitew fighters, because mitew can accomplish anything that is impossible by regular human. It has been said when they actually cornered the chief, the one who was a shaman also, it has been said that, you know, many times people think they shoot him right into his body, but nothing happened, he kept on fighting. Even though he didn’t wear anything, he was not able, as if there was no, nothing can hurt him. And it was only later, when the other mitew came in, in close contact, that they were able to actually, literally kill the leader inside his camp.

Once they kill the leader, the others were just sort of gave up, give the indication that the leader is dead. And the rest sort of just gave up and ran away. And those fighting men and the women and the children who ran away, they were not killed, they were spared, except those women or some who want to resist, they were killed. But the ones who did not make an effort to fight, they were spared.

And then finally all those Inuit soldiers who were resistant were guarded and they were told that this attack was not intentionally mean to punish or to do for pleasure of killing, or to intimidate them. They were told that this attack was a lesson to let the Inuit feel the same fear that they have inflicted on the innocent Omushkegowuk who live on
the mainland of the James Bay, west coast of James Bay and southwest coast of James Bay. They were explained and they were told that they were really told not to do it again, because if they do it, they would be killed, all of them. So those who were spared were spared and they were left as they were. They were helped a little bit, but the soldiers that ran away, they were chased out into the bay.

And it has been said at the same time at that time, there were mostly of those who escaped were the shaman, who were able to perform some magic for their safety. It has always been repeated by the stories of the Inuit people, whenever they attack or retaliate or resist the attack from the Inuit people, when the Inuit people retreated, they always retreated to the water. And when they are in the water, they turned themselves into a seal, which is, you cannot touch, because they go under water. And this is what the Omushkego people have told the story. And the same happened at that time when this expedition, when they cornered the Inuit soldier, sometimes into the edge of the water and he just jump into the water and seem to disappear as a human, but next come up again like a seal and therefore cannot be killed. And this was the trick they used to use and it was impossible to fight with the weapon or with anything that is made by hand, because they were fighting for their survival by the power which, that can be usually eliminated.

So that is the story about the clash between Inuit and the Omushkego people. This is a story from the Omushkego side, but what is the story on Inuit side, we don’t know. There must be a story from their point of view. But I have heard myself that Inuit resented the Omushkegos who live on the southwest coast on the Hudson Bay and also west coast of James Bay. They remembered the past and so is the Omushkegos.

There are many stories about this when the Inuit people, which was believed people today, because they appear to appear suddenly from the bay area, as if they just materialized from the shore and that is way people used to think they are Inuit people. And they have a tricks, certain tricks they use when they attack the camp, which is innocent, which is not ready for anything. They would walk directly to the camp one by one behind each other and from the distance, all you see is just one person moving the same as unit. And it was usually only within the thousand feet or so, or maybe more, half a mile maybe, I’d say, that people would recognize this is not one person, this is people
walking behind each other, sneaking towards the camp in the open country. In that area west or southwest coast of Hudson Bay, or west coast of James Bay, on the shores there is usually about two miles of land that is bare, except just a bit of a grass and also a very short willows. You can see the distance. There are ridges, one ridge and the other ridge and the other ridge and the Omushkego people usually camp in those ridges on creeks, small creeks. And in that case you could see people coming one ridge and then after the other. And then one ridge is usually about a thousand feet apart. The last ridge would reveal that there is not only one man who is coming.

And that’s what makes the story repeated itself whenever the Inuit people attack the Omushkegos. But they think it was Inuit. They never actually describe those people, but they think they were Inuit. So they give the name as to call them “Atoyewak, Atoyewak.” I have said this many times, there is three ways of, to say the word. One is Atoyewak and these were believed to be Inuit people who seem to attack the Omushkego camp from the bay area.

There were other kinds of tribes that did come around and visit the James Bay and Hudson Bay area for their own reason. They attack the Omushkegos, the innocent people, and these were known to be Aatawewak. “Aatawewak” is the word they use. “Aatawewak,” it means “they look,” “people who look for something.” And then they, Aatawewak is the one that actually kill people. But the other ones are called “Natawewak.” Natawewak is the people who look for some tribes or some human for their reason of, sometimes not as friend, as a friendship, but sometimes partially to do in friendship and also to satisfy their spiritual beliefs and practice, because in those days there was no Christianity. And every tribes across the land have the similar belief.

People who practice mitewiwin, some not all, some believe that tribes together as almost religion, they would believe that if a person, if you take a life of a person, you’ll extend the life of yourself, or your friend, or your loved one. And it has seemed to indicate that the beliefs were similar across the country, which is the reason, maybe, there were the warrior tribes, there were literally some tribes who travels so long, far distance to accomplish this. There were tribes someplace, who literally traveled every, or every second summer far distance up north to capture the other tribes and take them back to their country and use them as a sacrificial offer.
These are stories, but we don’t know if the Inuit people have the same thing, or we, the Omushkego don’t know which tribes are these who do that. But they know. That’s exactly what has happened. Because there are stories that are so many, when the Omushkego people being attacked or ambushed in their camp, they were killed unmercifully. And there were some taken as captives, mostly young people, sometimes an elderly women who is used as a slave or temporary slave to work for the soldiers or warriors who did such an attack. The stories are so many, very small, very short, which explain about these things. And now, these are the things that are very, very hard to remember now, because many elders who have remembered these stories have now passed away, they have already died.

Let us stick to the stories about the Inuit people. There is a story that tells us by our people, how the Omushkego people attacked the Inuit again, somewhere in the northwest, or north from Churchill area. But this story was just simply, we do not understand. Why did the Omushkego people attack the Inuit people mercilessly? But the answer is this: These Omushkego people again organized their own warrior type of people, young people, the young hunters who are eager to do anything and they did the same thing. They went to seek the Inuit people someplace to the west coast and found a group of Inuit people and they attacked them in a similar manner as it has been told on the first story.

When we ask the elders: “Why did they do it?” they say then: “All those accumulated years which those people, the east people have massacred or killed of the Omushkego people innocently, those who were innocently just living by the Hudson Bay shore, the anger is sometimes too strong, when they tell the story and then they go out, in the spring time, in the summer time to attack them just for that purpose, which didn’t bring much peace between them and it was only for that. There hasn’t been any other reason that I can think of. Only on the west coast of James Bay did I ever hear some elders mention about why did the Inuit people attack the Omushkegos on the James Bay. Some elder says because at that particular area between the main land and the island on the channel, where it was plentiful of seals and other water mammals and waterfowl, it was for that reason that the Inuit people attacked the Omushkegos on the west coast of James Bay, to sort of try to possess the hunting area. They didn’t want to share it. And so
there was then retaliatory action that took place years, ten years without ever accomplishing anything.

And at this, that’s the story that I hear, the second expedition that took place on the west coast of James Bay, southwest coast of James Bay, and where people, where the Inuit, where the Omushkego people form some sort of an army as they go up to the northwest and pick the best men with each other and the leader simply went to look for the Inuit tribes, whether is they were Inuit, that is what I don’t understand myself, because there is another stories that come to similar situation, but though I like to stick to this story to say the Omushkego people just sort of excite each other and then went on to attack the Inuit people for the purpose of just killing. And in this story there was that, there was actually equal fight. The Inuit people fought well and defend their home and their families and but unfortunately they lost the war and they were starved all over.

And the stupid thing that I would say myself what happened, once the Omushkego people have defeated these tribes, they have a feast, so they cook this Inuit person, cook it as a foot, cook it actually in a pot, just like what they do with the animal. And they all eat it, all the soldiers. And when they return, I think a few years later, they begin to tell the story because they feel so bad for doing such things. So one person said to them, he says: “So what did it taste like, the human to cook and eat?” So the one person, you know, humorously answered and he says: “Well, it taste like a red throated loon,” he says. And that was the end of this sarcastic remark.

But the story that we hear, it wasn’t told to us to enjoy the action, or to enjoy the behaviour of our ancestors. It used to tell us how to teach us such action was not, not lawful at all, to slaughter human person for no reason. But it, they tried to make an excuse to say, it was a lesson to the tribes not to do it again. It was always the same. But did it work? They say yes, it did work for a few years. As soon as the Inuit people begin to forget, they seem to come to do the same thing years later.

So that, the expedition that took, went to the west coast of Hudson Bay is very dramatic in our language. It has the heroes in it, the man especially who was a leader and the description of the attack also is terrible. But personally as a storyteller, I do not wish to repeat such behaviour to be proud of. I am ashamed. Actually I am ashamed to talk
about my own ancestors to behave such cruelly. And I feel sorry for those people who were slaughtered in this nature.

So I will finish that story in this manner and then pick up another story, which is more recently. I don’t know which is the oldest one. I think the second story is much older than the others, the one that the Omushkego people go to the northwest and pick each other up and pick the men up and they begin to be a quite number of men. I don’t know exactly how many men, and that they attack the Inuit people somewhere out into the northwest area, not in Manitoba. And what reason is there? Why did they have to go there? But all I can pick up, all I can remember said it was to teach the Inuit a lesson what they have done to the Omushkegos. That they all they ever had said. Whether it works or not, I don’t know.

And the second the story that I hear, I think the second one was, second expedition is the one that took place in Belcher Island. Because there is a mention about the gun, there were white people already. There were those people who have a gun that you load from the muzzle, or the front end. And that is why the Omushkego people were able to beat the Inuit people. And they, when they shoot the chief’s home, they could not penetrate it even with the slug and that is how tough these three layers of walrus hide is. Apparently the chief understood there will be such an attack and prepared for it, which gives him fighting chance. But unfortunately the still succumb to this attack. But anyway, I think that the Belcher Island was the second, the second oldest.

And now, the third one, the last, the last clash between the Inuit and the Omushkegos took place on the James Bay Akimiski Island, which they call “Akimiski.” The same problem existed before that. Inuit people pushing the, bugging the Omushkegos who try to live on the west coast of James Bay, and then the Omushkegos feared the, being bothered by these tribes, bothered by the situation. Finally they decided again the same idea is to show them the resentment that they, what they did, the Inuit people did to the Omushkegos. And it happens the same way. The Omushkego leader said: “We have to stop this. We have to stop these people killing us every summer. Intimidate us and slaughter the innocent children and the elders. We never have a chance to fight back.” So he says: “Let us fight, fight them just to teach them a lesson, or to show them that we do not like to be pushed around.”
So, again it was, now there was guns. Even Inuit have a few guns in that Akimiski Island. And this time they were, knew they were being, there was a tension between the Omushkegos and the Inuit. Inuit people used to come right close to the shores of the Akimiski, close to the west end. By this time they know they had been pushing their luck so much, they were now living at the east end of the island, very close to the east and so the, to avoid being so close between the Omushkegos. But the Omushkegos know that, the Omushkego people.

And then one day a man stir up the idea. And he says he has lost his friends by the Inuit action, by being, slaughtering a family. It has been said that he has been, he have lost a friend, his family, because of these Inuit people. And he had not taken a retaliation. He was not able to do it because he is alone. What can he do by himself when there is Inuit people? So organized the army. He organized a group of people to help him fight the Inuit people, who are located at the end, at the east end of the island. So he organized some sort of a, I don’t know what to call this, call it a type of warfare, to attack and retreat, attack and retreat, that sort of thing.

So he trained the young people, young soldiers and then also recruited an elders who gave him a good advice how to fight the Inuit people. He also hired the mitew who was able to, a few mitews who have a special skill for such thing. He recruited one elder, mitew, who was able to perform a shaking tent to see the camp of the distant tribes. And he also recruited the mitew who was able to control the weather. So he had, he also had able to recruit, recruited the mitew who has used a drumming. So there’s three powerful mitew that he was with and plus a hundred men, well picked men. And they have a few guns by this time. They have a muskets, I don’t know what you call those guns that existed in somewhere around 1700, or 1800, I think it was very early 1700, somewhere around there.

So they organized this group of people from the James Bay, west coast of James Bay, beginning from Kashechewan. Kashechewan people begin to form this, organize and then some people, visiting tribes from Attawapiskat and some other areas who have a very a bad experience with the Inuit people, so they joined the group. And it was believed to have been numbered about a 110, thereabouts, plus the three elders who were to be assistants to this group.
So when they form the group, they had pick 10 birch bark canoes, 10 which can place ten men each, plus their equipment and their fighting equipment. So they went from Kashechewan towards Moosonee. Between Moosonee there is a place they call Kanehak, it is more like saying “a bluff,” or “the highpoint of the land.” That’s where they stop.

And it was there the mitew instructed the group to perform such ceremonies for ten days. Ten days the leader of the drum, they created a new drum there, which was large and for ten days they sing and drum, every night for ten days. And this was praying to give them a success for what they want to do. And after ten days they satisfied, the mitew said: “Okay, this is what we wanted,” and asking for protection and asking for the success for what we, what you, said the leader, what you want to do.

And so after ten days, so they folded their drum and put it away, they get all their things ready to go. So the elder who was this visionary said the camp is such a way and it’s located there and these are how many people there are. He have seen it through the eye of the shaking tent. And the other one that is there was the one that has helped, or associate with the drumming, he has prayed for the favourable weather, so that they will be able to sail across the bay, which is not visible from the mainland. I don’t know exactly how far the distance is, I think it is about 35 miles, maybe 50, straight across. And that’s what this one mitew does is to ask the weather to be favourable.

And then it so happened after ten days, the wind was favourable, the wind came from south, which is exactly what they needed. And so they left after ten days. Their destination is right to the tip of the Akimiski island to the east where the Inuit camp was located. Nobody said exactly how many Inuit people were there, but they say there must have been a few because they take 100 warriors to do the job. And they plan well about their attack.

And then, when they left, all ten, ten birch bark canoes, specially made for this, took off from the shore of the James Bay with the favourable wind, south wind. So they hoist the sail and they sail together. And at this time, even though they had the powerful shaman, they were not able to, what do they call that, neutralize the other shaman in the island that belongs to the Inuit to stop them from seeing them. So they could not do that. The Omushkego couldn’t do that. But the Inuit can. They have their ways of scanning their surrounding for safety by their shaman power. So they were known, the Omushkego
people were known that they were coming across, they were known they prepared for ten
days.

The Inuit mitew knew all this, but they were prepared also. And so, while they were
in the center of that bay the Inuit mitew, who was powerful, created a very sudden
storm that hit from the west, which could literally wash away and drown these
Omushkego warriors. But the Omushkego mitew had foreseen this, it’s going to happen,
so he had prepared for it. So he directed the group of the warriors to place their canoes
together, around, so they would be just like a round island. And the mitew said: “The
wind is going to bypass us.” So it so happened, when the storm engulfed them and the
waves were coming, so minutes it was calm where they are and the wind didn’t touch
them until the storm subsided. And then they went on again directly to the island. And
then they, they did travel during the day this once, because they didn’t want to travel at
night. So it was by this time the land was in appearance, was a, can be seen. But they
know that they would not be able to see the camp, only when they get closer do they see
the camp and by this time the Inuit people were ready.

So when they beached the canoes onto the shore, they went directly to clash with
the Inuit people and a fierce fight took place with the soldiers and the Inuit. And then to
the Omushkego blessing, I would say, they were able to win. They were able to win the,
their enemies.

And it was here again in the story that tells us, when the Inuit people were
retreating towards the bay, to the east of this land, they was still some ice on the end, or
the tip, east end of the island, because this was in the month of June, ice was still floating
in from the north, and they said, the Omushkego soldiers said, when the chased the
fighters, the warriors into the ice and they jump off the ice, the same story, they jump off
the ice in a desperate to get away and the turn into a seal and then they cannot touch
them.

And for that reason they were spared, the men. And the women and the children,
we don’t know if they were killed, in this story we don’t. But I think, I think just to be in
the favour with the Omushkego, I personally think they were not killed, they were not
massacred, they were not uselessly killed. But they were told that never to attack the
innocent families on this west coast of James Bay of the Omushkego people. Temporary
agreement was made and it was from that time on the Inuit people left the island, they move up north, gradually ended up into the Belcher Island. So that is the end of the story. There is more detail information about this, but personally I do not have it. I do not wish to say more than what I have heard. So it has been said, it was the last time that the Omushkego of the James Bay have ever had clash with the Inuit people on that particular island, Akimiski Island. So that’s the end of the story.

There are many other stories that the Omushkego people have said about being attacked by some tribes, not necessarily the Inuit people, but some other tribes that come from the distant lands to come attack them, in summer, it’s always in summer. It happens always in summer. Some tribes, warriors, come in and simply attack the unexpected Omushkegos on the James Bay and also on the Hudson, southwest coast of Hudson Bay. There are many stories that are involved here. There are stories that are fascinating. There stories that are unbelievable, but they were supposed to have happened in the past, long before the European came. And it happens even after they came. It happens a little bit, not as cruel as it was, not as dramatic as it were before the European came in. Finally it didn’t happen. Finally after the European arrive, these things didn’t happen between, the way it was. There hasn’t been any clashes between the Inuit people and other tribes to arrive from any distance, from any direction, ever since the Hudson’s Bay Company begin to do the fur trade. But that doesn’t happen. It did happen between the Europeans, they began to kill each other for different reasons and that’s not our First Nation history. That is involved with the European history.

So therefore this is as far as I can say about the clashes between the Omushkego and the Inuit people on the west coast of James Bay and on the southwest coast of Hudson Bay where the people live which we know as the “Omushkegowuk,” the “Crees” we know them today, the “Cree” we call them, but in translation of the Cree word, “Omushkego” means the “Swampy Cree.” Why do we say “Cree”? We should eliminate the “Cree” totally. We should say the “Omushkego,” the “Swampy People,” that’s what the “Omushkego” mean. I insist that it should be changed, because “Cree” is not a tribal name, it is not a tribal name. So let me finish here and thank you for listening. My name is Louis Bird.