

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: WILLIE ROBERTS
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: BEAVER RANCH RESERVE
TALL CREE BAND
ALBERTA
INTERVIEW LOCATION: BEAVER RANCH RESERVE
TALL CREE BAND
ALBERTA
TRIBE/NATION: CREE
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DATE OF INTERVIEW: MARCH 14, 1974
INTERVIEWER: RICHARD LIGHTNING
INTERPRETER: RICHARD LIGHTNING
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- This 64 year old resident of Beaver Ranch Reserve gives his understanding of the treaty promises.

Richard: I'm Richard Lightning. I'll be interviewing this man who lives on Beaver Ranch Reserve.

What is your name?

Willie: My name is Willie Roberts.

Richard: How old are you?

Willie: I'll be 64 years old in the fall.

Richard: Where were you born?

Willie: Over at Fort Vermilion.

Richard: From whom did you hear stories or how did you get your information?

Willie: It was Baptiste Moberley. He is dead. He was a close friend of mine. He told me the stories. He related to me the

promises that were first made. I'm not certain if his grandfather told him or he was there himself. The promises which were made at first were accepted on the condition that they would last as long as the sun walked. The treaty Indian would be cared for until that time. This is what the elder told me. Also as long as the river flowed. I don't know if he was exaggerating, but he also told me that treaty Indians would be cared for until the ravens turned white.

Richard: I'm wondering if the Indians clearly understood the treaty when it was introduced to them?

Willie: I don't know. I couldn't say for sure if they clearly understood what was happening. Another thing I was told, the Indians did not surrender below the surface of the ground, only one foot on the surface. That is what was surrendered.

Richard: Some Indians still trap around here. Do you know if they have encountered any problems?

Willie: I haven't heard anything about trappers encountering any trouble of any kind. There is plenty of open area for trapping. If some of the younger people would like to trap, they could. But I know nothing which would hinder the trapper.

Richard: When the treaty was made, the Indians were told that fish nets and other promises would be provided, did they receive any?

Willie: That was one of the conditions, if a treaty Indian required provisions, he would receive them. That is why they referred to the sun and river, as a lasting promise.

Richard: Was the original amount of treaty payment reduced a few years after the treaty was signed?

Willie: I couldn't comment on that, I was never told anything.

Richard: You have a small reserve here and two more at a different place, how did that come about?

Willie: I'm not certain how that happened, but we do have three reserves. They are not very big. This one here, called Beaver Ranch, is the smallest one. The former chief who is the father of the present chief is the one who accepted this reserve here. I don't know why he requested such a small portion of land. I don't know why there are three reserves. My grandfather was a councillor and his uncle was the chief. They were probably responsible for selecting reserves over at the other place.

Richard: Do the people here have any problems with medicine or any problems in seeing a doctor?

Willie: We have had a few problems, although we are only few in number. In fact, you have seen most of us here. The problem

is that we have no telephone or means of getting in touch with anybody. Even if a car broke down, we would be in difficulty. It doesn't seem far. It's only 30 miles away.

Richard: Part of the agreement was that treaty Indians would receive an education, does that exist here?

Willie: I'm not sure on that, but I think if a youngster wanted to follow up education, he could be assisted in some way.

Richard: During the year of 1942 many treaty Indians had their names removed from band lists. Do you know anything about that?

Willie: I know very little about that. I know some were taken off the band list here, but they were just a few of them. To my knowledge, my father's cousin, Sal Auger, was a treaty Indian and he was taken off the band list.

Richard: What was the reason for this action?

Willie: I don't know.

Richard: Is there any minerals underground on any of the reserves belonging to you people?

Willie: No, I haven't heard of any. There was never any exploration carried out on our reserves.

Richard: When the treaty was signed, the understanding was that a treaty Indian could hunt, fish and trap any place. Is this still in effect?

Willie: Yes, I was informed of that. They could hunt, fish and trap at any time as long as they were treaty. But gradually, everything is changing. New regulations are introduced to them. They now pay for land where they are going to work a trapline.

Richard: You mean the payment of a permit?

Willie: They pay \$10.00 for it. Treaty Indians are paying for the permits.

Richard: Have you heard of anybody having trouble with fishing, hunting or trapping?

Willie: I heard that this past winter that treaty Indians could if it was possible. At the other reserve the people have tried fishing but couldn't get much.

Richard: How is the working relationship between the Indian agent and the Indian people?

Willie: We never see the Indian agent. Even the welfare people are seen very seldom. At least that applies on this reserve. I've been here for some time now, and I've never seen

any of them here.

Richard: Thank you for talking to me.

(End of Interview)

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