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DIRECTOR, OOWEKEENO HISTORY PROJECT OR THE CHIEF COUNSELOR OF
THE OOWEKEENO BAND.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Gives English equivalents of a variety of Indian words.
- Describes how power may be acquired.

NOTE: The Oowekeeno band name has a variety of other spellings: Owikeno, Owekeeno and Oweekano. For the sake of consistency, Owekeeno has been used to designate the band and the language, while Owikeno refers to the lake found in British Columbia.

David: This is September 9, and we're talking to Peter and Agnes Chamberlain. I would like to ask you what clan you belonged to when you were born?

Peter: (Indian)

David: Is that the name of the clan or...?

Peter: Well, that would be the name, yes.

David: Did you have a crest?

Peter: What is that?

David: A symbol like...

Peter: Well, I told you there's an eagle that... yeah, eagle. I don't know if there's two or three. It's shaped like an eagle, well, that's eagle. The eagle is the, what do you call it, the story of about those... like say for a family. You see some have a different story.

David: What is the story then for your clan, for yourself?

Peter: Well, that's a pretty hard thing to tell because I was not told to, you know, the story. See, at that time, my grandfather he was... I didn't see my grandfather on my mother's side and I did not know my mother too, because she died before I knew anything. Because she was a daughter of a chief and I can't tell you the exact story of the (Indian) tribe. See the sight of that, where they, this side of the gap -- the narrows, on the upper side.

David: On the upper side?

Peter: Yeah.

David: So you can see these people there today?

Peter: Yeah, and they're on this side of the gap, the narrows. On the right going in.

David: So at that time people still recognized that they were in different clans, eh?

Peter: Yeah, some. You know very well yourself that some people were married into a different like (Indian), and (Indian) and all that, you know.

David: Right.

Peter: But others I can't tell you.

David: Oh, I see.

Peter: Because I wasn't... See, at that time, when we went to school at that time... I guess maybe that's the reason why they were put up to us on account of the Indian dancing was outlawed at that time. And they... if they do have Indian dancing they had to have a permit from the Indian Agent to have an Indian dance.

David: Did people actually pay attention to that law, or did they just go ahead anyway?

Peter: No, they had to. You see, they had a policeman up there by the name of Mr. Stone. I don't know his name but I know his name is Stone.

David: He was up in the lake?

Peter: Yeah, no, no, right up at R.I.C. there.

David: Oh yeah.

Peter: Yeah. The reason why they put him up there was because the Hudson Bay Company they had their liquor store and fur trading post just right out on top of, bottom end of the lake just below that island.

David: Oh they did, eh?

Peter: Yeah.

David: Below Katit?

Peter: You see this, the truck road goes here and that store was just below that.

David: Oh, I see.

Peter: That liqour store in there.

David: That was a Hudson's Bay Store, was it?

Peter: Yeah.

David: I didn't know they had a store up there.

Peter: Yeah, yeah, they had a fur buying right there.

David: Was this when you were a child or when you were older?

Peter: No, no, that's way before my time.

David: Oh, way before your time.

Peter: It's in, it must have been in the 1800s.

Agnes: All that was left when I remember was the garage.

Peter: Well, there was a garage there but the store was below that, below the road, the end of the road. You see it must have been before the hatchery too.

David: Yeah.

Peter: And that's the time they... you know how long them big muskets were? The beaver hides had to be that high before they get the muskets.

David: That was the measure of it, was it?

Peter: Yeah.

David: The height of the rifle?

Peter: The height of that big musket, you know, they're long.

David: Yeah, they're long. So you had to stack your skins up that high?

Peter: To get to, to get a musket.

David: To get a musket. Oh, I see.

Peter: Yeah. That's the price.

David: Well, that's a lot of skins.

Peter: Boy oh boy, I'll tell you that. But just the story of the (Indian) I can't even... See, all these people, well, they were all different tribes right from (Indian), (Indian), (Indian), (Indian), (Indian), (Indian), (Indian). Katit, that's the... where that... see, some of them people they moved down during the summer. And they, then they moved right down to R.I.C. Some go to... and there was different tribes at the sawmill.

David: Oh, I see.

Peter: And there was different ones in the R.I.... Rivers Inlet side, Rivers Inlet cannery side, the R.I.C.

David: Who was at the R.I.C.? What people would be there?

Peter: Well, that I couldn't tell you. At that time when they had houses that were worth \$500 -- that's complete, everything, two story house. We had one big one there at R.I.C., at that little island. And that little passage there is Dardanelles.

David: Dardanelles?

Peter: Yeah, Dardanelles. You got a passage that's going up towards the river, in between R.I.C. and the island there. That's the name of that little passage.

David: Some of the people lived on Katit, did they?

Peter: Yeah, Katit.

David: Was that just a summer place or...

Peter: No that's during the winter.

David: And who would be living there then?

Peter: Well, there was all different tribes. Some... well, they all moved down... There was houses above there, certain

places for certain tribes, you know, for the Indian dancing.

David: Right.

Peter: In (Indian) they had their Indian dance houses, too. And other places (Indian). And then the main part was in Katit. That's the main place where they... See, some stay up there during winter and, you know, they don't move down. It might be just the big chiefs from all the camps.

David: I asked you this once before, but I was wondering if you could try again. Could you name... Did the houses on Katit, did they have different names?

Peter: Well, I couldn't tell you if they had names. I just could tell you who they belonged to.

David: Oh I see, yeah. We were also looking at some of the terms used in the marriage ceremony, you know, getting married. Are you familiar with any of those terms, like the term when you announce the engagement, and then when you...? There's a whole series of things that had to happen.

Peter: Well, I couldn't tell you. Well, the word maybe, I think, something you're engaged, let's say it says that they're getting ready to get married. This word is (Indian). And the word when they get married is (Indian). I think the engagement is (Indian), getting ready, going to get married. And the word for married, when you get married is (Indian). And if you're not there (Indian), they got married. But the ceremonies are different for what clan you belong to. Like the one I seen was my step-mother -- old Captain Johnson, he was the one -- that fellow up there, that side, that's Jack Johnson there in the white shirt. Well, Captain's on that side. He performed this marriage and he's talking to... That's when I heard this (Indian). Remember when we were talking about that? What did we say what it meant? He was talking to the space you see, I don't know whether...

Agnes: The universe.

Peter: Yeah, the universe or whatever it was. But remember when you asked me about (Indian)?

David: Yeah.

Peter: And I, it came to me why he got that name.

David: Okay. I was going to ask you that again.

Peter: Yeah. See, he understood the stars. That's how he got that name and that's his chieftancy name too. See he ended this... he told... he tells a story right from evening until morning. And he'll show you what this was, everything, from land to sea -- that's up there in the stars.

David: So he explained everything?

Peter: Yeah. Even you could see the killer whale there, but I only see that part and it's the Dipper itself.

David: Oh, I see.

Peter: And it's this (Indian) -- we talked about that before. There was, I... that's the only thing we could find was her father when we were at (name). But the darkest night and you see all the stars, you know, when it's no wind up there. You know, you could see when there's wind up there, the stars (inaudible).

David: In the story that we got from David Bernard, he talked about (Indian) children. Do you remember anything of the children that he had in the story?

Peter: Well, only his mother.

Agnes: This (Indian) that they talk about in the story, that's the forefathers of the (Indian).

David: I was just wondering if you could explain, like, when people got married, there was an amount of money paid from the groom to the bride's family.

Peter: Yes.

David: Could you tell me how that works, this buying out? What does it mean for a bride to be bought out?

Peter: Well, the word (Indian). See, when they pass the money to the bride's family, to the father and mother, and then... No, no, the bride's father and mother first and then after that there's another ceremony and the man's parents again for transact, then it's settled.

David: (Inaudible) Is there a term for that, is there a word for that?

Peter: Now you've got me there.

Agnes: The ones that we can remember, they're more the modern times, later times. I forget what it's called but they had the formal names. And that's what you've got down there is the formal names.

Peter: It's something the same as this Bella Bella too.

David: Did you... could you ask him... Here's the page here. Could you ask him if those are correct, these words here?

Agnes: Well, (Indian) it's marriage ceremony, (Indian). I remember hearing it but I'm not sure exactly how it's pronounced, (Indian). When you're asking for a marriage.

Peter: Well, I'll tell you one thing I couldn't tell you, this word (Indian).

Agnes: What's that?

Peter: It's something to do with that.

Agnes: Oh yeah, husband and wife part because of quarrel, (Indian).

Peter: Another word there...

Agnes: I remember hearing (Indian). Have you heard it?

Peter: Yes, there's a different way of pronouncing it.

David: There's part of the... when giving gifts during the wedding ceremony, there was a term used for that, (Indian).

Agnes: Yeah (Indian). Holding each other and gift giving in a wedding ceremony.

Peter: (Indian). This was for that marriage, isn't it?

Agnes: Yeah.

Peter: (Indian), you know, like clothes, the bedding, towels and all that stuff he got. (Indian). There's a word for it. You see the reason why I'm... it's pretty hard for me, you see, because this here, you know, he bought it... See I may pick it up for maybe tonight sometime and then I forget it again.

Agnes: And then when the goods get returned to the bride's kin, (Indian).

Peter: (Indian). No.

Agnes: Oh, that one, (Indian).

Peter: No, (Indian) means, that's when he's asking her for her hand, you know, "Will you marry me?", (Indian). That's the

word for when he's asking her for her marriage, to marry him, (Indian). (Indian) that's asking her to marry him. You got that?

David: Yeah.

Agnes: (Indian) to drop into one's stomach, the wedding feast, the name of the wedding feast, (Indian).

Peter: (Indian). It takes a little time...

Agnes: To remember.

Peter: Say that again in English, so I can remember.

David: What word would you have used for a married woman then, to refer to someone who's married, a woman who's married?

Agnes: (Indian). I couldn't figure that one out, either, married woman. I can just get as far as (Indian).

Peter: The only word I know is (Indian).

Agnes: Yeah, these are the formal names of...

David: What's that word you just said again?

Peter: (Indian). Well, that means two.

David: Two together?

Peter: Yeah, two together. The other word, well, either one... there should be one for the lady and there should be one for the man.

David: Oh, I see.

Peter: But then that's out of my... Like I told you, you see those words were... like now I'm going to tell you something. You see the original (Indian) language is something to hear. I... well, most of the time, that must have been some time ago when the language start changing, you see. You see, there was so many different camps where they, you know, they talk different too. See and then it might have been, like when you combine those words, you see (Indian) would be different too. See, a lot of people, like me for instance, see in part from (inaudible). We got a place up there and the name of it is (Indian).

David: Really?

Peter: Yeah.

David: Where abouts is it?

Peter: I don't know...

David: (inaudible)?

Peter: It's not too far from Head. It's a river and there's wonderful trees there that belonged to my father.

David: What would the name of it be?

Peter: (Indian). Same as the one at the, that's where we lived too.

David: Oh, I see.

Peter: What they named (Indian).

David: This river, is that going into South Bentinck?

Peter: Yeah, that's in South Bentinck.

David: Oh, I see, yeah.

Peter: I'm pretty sure it's on the left hand side going up.
I'm not too sure.

David: That was the named for your father then, is it?

Peter: No, no, no, that was his, that was his holdings up
there, that was his land.

David: I see, yeah, all right. How did he get that though?
Did he marry into that?

Peter: Yeah. My grandmother, my real grandmother is from
Bella Coola.

David: Oh, I see.

Peter: That's how he, that's how come I became part Bella
Coola, you see.

David: You were telling me, yeah.

Peter: Yeah.

David: Was there... Bella Coola spoke a different language?

Peter: Yes, altogether different.

David: How did you manage to communicate with them then?

Peter: What do you mean?

David: Well, were there any problems in just talking with
them and trading with them and so on?

Peter: Well, I could, I used to talk it pretty good.

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Peter: We would say a distant nephew, (Indian).

David: (Indian), I see.

Peter: But my grandfather and my father they spoke it, what
would you say, fluently or something like that. They spoke it
well. And her grandfather spoke it too, (Indian), he spoke
that. Because that (Indian) you see. Most of the (Indian),

you see, they used to come down from... See, some of the people used to walk during the wintertime and walk down the river. Used to go and watch the... See, they can't travel during the wintertime by canoe to come up to... So some people walk up to the Interior -- I think it goes to there, they come down the White River to (inaudible) and then they come down. Imagine walking that distance. Yeah, that's a long ways.

I'd like to tell you about my grandfather. He went up to... well, they used to hunt black bears, you know. You remember I was telling you about them, for those Englishmen's big furs they wear. And they walked the Milky River -- that's the White River, they call it, and that goes to the Interior.

David: Oh, so it goes the other way?

Peter: Yeah. Goes right into the Interior. That's where they coming through, and then it goes to this glacier. They walk the flats. I don't know where that is -- I guess that's over, must be the Interior because they passed the mountain. And it comes to, it's just a little stream and this water's coming out from the ice, so they drank from there like this. And they turned back and they start to get drunk on it. They didn't believe them until this Henry -- he used to read a lot of books and then he spoke up all of a sudden -- we were just sitting down. He spoke up, "If you leave water in a jug or something for twenty-five years and drink it, you'd get drunk." See, he read it, he read it from some kind of a book. He was quite a man for reading. That's the way he got his education -- he didn't have no education at all. He went, I don't know if he went as far as five or two, something like that at Alert Bay. See, Ned Wesley, he only, he learned from books too.

David: What's his name again?

Peter: Ned Wesley, yeah, that was my niece's father. Only Dave had education.

David: I was wondering if... We talked a little bit about this last time, but I was wondering if you could review or tell us your history as a dancer, your career as a dancer. How old you were when you started and the different dances that you did. Could we go over that again?

Peter: Well...

David: I'm interested in the different names for the different levels.

Peter: There's only one that I can't... The first is the (Indian). That's what you are when you first start. You're not actually a cannibal dancer yet.

David: That's at the very beginning, is it?

Peter: Yeah.

David: So that term is (Indian)?

Peter: (Indian).

David: That's when you're just a beginner?

Peter: Yes. You don't dance to regular cannibal dance at all, it's different altogether.

David: When you're in your first years of dancing then what sort of routine would you go through? What sort of ceremonies would you go through?

Peter: We just, it just, it's nothing. Well, it's a potlatch, you know. Just, see, first you... See, like it might be in the family and then it's (inaudible). But the story from my, my story is from my grand-uncle -- that's who I followed, you see.

David: What was his name?

Peter: (Name). He got this power when he was chopping down a tree for getting this food from the bark, from the hemlock(?). And they were poor people. And his father noticed what was wrong, and he jumped his son before that power got into him and he took it out of him. And spoke to it before it, you know, tell it to go away, you know, to wait until they have enough for starting the potlatch. But my beginning should have been (Indian). That's... and I don't know the next one, I'm not sure what the next one is. But when on the fourth one -- that will be when I'm thirteen or either sixteen or something like that -- I might have started when I was four years old. And that's (Indian).

David: And that's your fourth year?

Peter: Yeah, that's when I'm going to really, really do the cannibal dance. See, there's four years to each performance -- that it takes sixteen years. See, I had, I know the reason why, I just barely remember the first performance I made. So it's a small... And that's why I was late going to school -- I was eleven when I went to school. But you see I can't... very well... that's the only one that can tell (inaudible) first one. Because they had to make me do it in... I don't know.

David: Did you continue when you came back from school then?

Peter: No, no.

David: So that was the last one, was it?

Peter: That was the last one.

David: And that would be four years, would it?

Peter: Yeah. See we have stories of, for the different dances too. At that time then there was, those houses were burned down.

David: Yeah.

Peter: I asked my uncle (inaudible). "I wish we could. I wouldn't mind doing it again," he says. We still had those masks then. And that's all I can tell you. But I inherited this from my grand-uncle. That's where the story, this story begins with the cannibal dance -- from him. See, like I told you when the, you know, you're pure, you see you're not with any... you're not mixing up with girls and you fast. (Indian)

David: Does that refer to purifying yourself? Is that the act of doing it?

Peter: Yes. That's for... like, if you're going hunting, that's what you use. (Indian) when you fast. Well, (Indian) is for, you know, so you could have better luck when you're hunting. So you won't have trouble with your hunting and things like that.

David: And how often do you have to do that?

Peter: Well, four times.

David: Four days?

Peter: Yes, four days. It's all like if you're... it depends on how if you want to start early you may do it for like sixteen days. It all depends on how you feel.

David: I see.

Peter: The more you do it then when you're so pure, you know, that's when any kind of power that wants to grab a hold of you, like a cannibal dance. There are different dances which I couldn't name. You know that (Indian).

David: What's that?

Peter: That's when you have that power. And when you get that (Indian).

David: Is that the same word for a Medicine Man, like a shaman?

Peter: Yeah. (Indian).

David: That's the man who has the power?

Peter: Yeah, when you have the power, (Indian).

David: Well, when you were growing up were there any people who were (Indian)?

Peter: No. You have to have performances, Indian dances, so many times. And a lot of people they don't show it, what we call (Indian). You don't, you don't open yourself that you have the power, (Indian). See, that's like hiding your power.

David: Right. So there was, was there anybody then who would recognize that as a shaman when you were...?

Peter: Oh yes, yes.

David: What was his name?

Peter: His power is called... it will be more or less one side of this, it refers to (Indian), you know. It's something to do... you see (Indian), that's summer. (Indian) is spring. Now this story (inaudible). You know those, what do you call it -- cranes?

David: Big bird?

Peter: Yeah.

David: Whooping crane?

Peter: No, no, you know those cranes that come around here. I think you call them crane or stork or...

Agnes: I think they've got three names.

David: The bird?

Agnes: Yeah.

David: Shore bird?

Agnes: You see them all the time.

Peter: You know, them long legs.

David: Oh yeah, yeah. Those are cranes, yeah.

Peter: Now what's his name? He was the one that, the story is that (Indian) -- that's Bella Coola. And the story, instead of, you know, he's got this big blue spear, and he used to have this regular spear. And this (Indian). (Indian), that's the thing he wears every time the cloud goes over the sun -- he just looks up and the cloud clears away so he can see the fish in the river.

David: Oh, I see. That refers to the, what is it, cedar bark, was it?

Peter: Yeah, (Indian), I guess that's what it was. Well, that's the way they get the power too, you see, (Indian). He just takes a look at it, look at the cloud that's over the sun, you see, and the clouds go away. And he looks at the fish, and there are guys holding the canoe for him to spear the fish,

you see. So this... you know, this was told to me so long ago that -- Jack told me the story (inaudible). See, we don't talk our language, all English. I forget the name of that (inaudible). Let's say you're referring to this fish -- it's a name of the... He had this power to turn into a fish, goes overboard.

David: Oh, I see.

Peter: And he's watching this here, he's going up the (Indian). See this, he wanted this spear, he wanted to... Well, the story, he went in the water, you know how the fish are... I forget what they call it. Yeah, I know the name of that (inaudible). He just hold the canoe and he seen this fish. Instead of getting caught with a spear, what do you call, he just grab a hold of it like this and cut it, and turn back and went over it. He could, that big chief, you know, he was the big chief of the tribe, and he could see it was cut, and then he looked real down and then this fellow he went over to there... (Indian).

David: Was that his name?

Peter: That, what you call it...

David: Spear?

Peter: Yeah. And (Indian), that's my own. He had the power of the, well, (inaudible).

David: So this is a man that actually existed when you were growing up? There was a man, a (Indian)?

Peter: No, after you get the power. And you, it's, there are people that get it though, as I say, but there are people that performs from their... inheriting that power from, you know, for Indian dancing, see. You have people just perform from their ancestors. And at certain time they may get the power, I don't know. But there are people that get it just like my grand-uncle. Did you remember that guy named Jacobson?

Agnes: I barely remember.

Peter: Yeah, he was with the (Indian). Yeah I think so, he was alive when I went to school, but I don't remember when he died. That was (name) younger brother. Yeah, and he was a Hamatsa too, he was a cannibal dancer. See, I could claim his name, I only know two. But that (name) he really had the power.

David: Did he use it to make people better when they were sick?

Peter: No, he didn't, he didn't. He wanted to, when he wanted to study it, his uncles and aunties, they had to hide him. Captain Johnson -- that fellow there -- it couldn't have

been too long because he wasn't too old when I -- he was still alive when I came back from school. He died in the '40s, I think. We just got together with her and he was still alive. You remember, he was still alive...

Agnes: Yes.

Peter: He was at Kiltala. Well, that couldn't have been too long ago, that was in his young days then.

David: Well, how do you mean that they had to hide him from...?

Peter: Yes, they (Indian). See they, at that time, way before that time they have to go on their own. They have to go away for four months.

David: In the woods?

Peter: Yeah, and live on their own. But that fellow I'm talking about, that man there and Moses and their grandfather and Albert Harry, I think it is -- they had to take him up to Kiltala for the four months.

David: Oh yeah.

Peter: You see, time would change and so they took him up to Kiltala and that's when this fellow he told this (Indian) to give him a piece of pebble. There was an eagle up on the tree just across the river, (Indian). Like he blessed it, (Indian), you know. You don't see (inaudible), pretty soon, you know, like the eagle was shot, down it went. He had its power and then they, you know, they got to cook it and when it's done, the muscles, when it's starting to get cooked, you know how it is, they tighten up. And then he start feeling -- his goes like that too, you see, follow suit to what's happened to what he, well, where his power was. (Indian), you know, they had to dump it. Yeah, well, they dump it, dump their cooking. And yet they had to dump it. So he was all right then, you see, they didn't need it. See this fellow I'm talking about, that's the guy that's (Indian). They didn't know he had the power.

And (name) found out that he had it. He knew, he found out right away, that's more or less challenging him when he gave him that pebble. And he had the power for this, you know, the river, you know, (Indian). The river, the current, that's coming down so fast and he had the power. And he told him to sit down on the canoe and he was in the back end and he started chanting away, hitting the sides of the canoe, start chanting. And Moses said he could feel the canoe just like if there's a motor in it. It start that vibrating, and pretty soon the canoe starts going up and so he said it was pretty steep, (Indian). He says, "Make sure you use the poles when you get over the rapids." Chanting away and the canoe is vibrating and it sounded like if there's a motor in it and it was going up by

itself, he's chanting away. Soon as he get over like that, his power, he used his power. (Inaudible), he went up the beach and pretty soon he was all right. He was spent.

David: Yeah.

Peter: That's (Indian).

David: That's his name?

Peter: No, no, no, no, that's... He had the power of some kind. See he more or less challenged (name) when he gave him that pebble.

David: I see, right.

Peter: And (name) knew right away that he had some kind of power.

David: And the word (Indian), does that refer to the man himself or the power that he had?

Peter: That means that he was hiding his power.

David: Oh, hiding his power, I see.

Peter: Yeah, (Indian). And those people that were there, that was taking him up the river, they didn't know that (inaudible). They found out when (name) rechallenged him.

David: Oh, I see.

Peter: Yeah.

(END OF SIDE B)

(END OF TAPE)

INDEX

INDEX TERM	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
CEREMONIALISM				
-dancing	IH-BC.03	CHAMBERLAIN3	166	16-20
CEREMONIES				
-potlatch	IH-BC.03	CHAMBERLAIN3	166	17,18
DANCES AND DANCING				
-Hamatsa (Bella Coola)	IH-BC.03	CHAMBERLAIN3	166	19,23
FUR TRADE				
	IH-BC.03	CHAMBERLAIN3	166	5,6
MARRIAGE				
-ceremonies	IH-BC.03	CHAMBERLAIN3	166	9-12
POWER				
-acquisition of	IH-BC.03	CHAMBERLAIN3	166	17-26
	PROPER NAME	INDEX		

PROPER NAME	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #

KATIT, B.C.	IH-BC.03	CHAMBERLAIN3	166	4,6,7
KILTALA, B.C.	IH-BC.03	CHAMBERLAIN3	166	24
RIVERS INLET, B.C.	IH-BC.03	CHAMBERLAIN3	166	6