Mr. and Mrs. Trudeau live on the Wikwemikong Reserve, Manitoulin Island, where they have raised 12 children. Mrs. Trudeau attended school but Mr. Trudeau is entirely self-educated. He has worked as a lumberman, fishing guide and commercial fisherman.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Traditional ways of storing and preserving food.
- Problems of fishing on the Great Lakes.
- Quillwork.
- Story about an omen that saved a man's life.
- Story of the origins of the "little people."

Bill: The way we preserved our deer meat was we used to cook the whole deer right at one time. The first thing we have to do is take the meat, remove the bones, just the meat. And then cook the meat right away as soon as we can, maybe the next day. Of course, in warm weather you just couldn't keep it fresh like that, you know. There is a lot of flies always, a
lot of flies during the summer. So you have to be very careful where you put it if you don't work on it. And we used to cook it right away, as soon as we can. And there were times when there is no fat on it. Then you have to put some of that lard in it when you cook it. When the water is getting real low, then you'd put the grease in there so when the water is boiling down real, so there is still grease in there. So it wouldn't burn, you know. It would just start to get brown. And you sort of stir it with a stick about that long. Depends on what size of the pot you're using. And you keep stirring it and if no grease doesn't show up there, then you put a little more grease in it. And you keep doing that until it's all brown, you know. After it's well browned, then you take the pot and put it cool, let it cool off. After it cools off, then you put that meat in a sack, like maybe a sugar bag or a rolled oats bag. Put it in there. And there is not very much when it’s finished. For the whole deer. It shrinks smaller, you know. So after you cool it off, then you put it in the sack and hang it in the shed. Up here on the ceiling so the air can circulate outside of it. And that way, you can keep your meat as long as you like. Or maybe at times, as long as you live, it will be still good.

Tony: Did you cook it all the way through?

Bill: It's cooked all the way through. We had that kind of meat a lot of times. And it's very useful if you keep that kind of meat for you can use that for a lot of places for cooking. Like maybe you'll cook corn soup, you know. You can just go and grab a handful of that meat and throw it in there, along with the... in the soup. Or potatoes or anything. So, it always comes in very handy. And the berries. During the summer months, the ladies would pick all the berries they can get during the summer. They didn't have to worry about the sugar, like to preserve the berries. What they did was, they dried those berries. Like maybe strawberries, raspberries or blueberries or anything, any kind of berries. They dried them and they didn't put any sugar on there. Anytime during the winter, even the following year, if they want maybe strawberries or raspberries, all they got to do is take that certain bag where the raspberries are in or strawberries, take one or two of that dried strawberries in the sack, take them out and put them in a pot and add a little water and put sugar on it. Now, that's the time you put the sugar in. And they're real good, even if you keep them for about two years.

Ernest: Dehydrated foods.

Bill: They're still good.

Tony: What other sort of food did they put aside like that for the winter? I mean besides the berries and the meat?

Bill: Well, there wasn't much around, like other things. Because if they needed fresh meat, they always can kill maybe a cow in the fall. And pigs, there were lots of pigs outside.
Chickens. So that was handy, you know, that fresh meat.

Christine: What about the things from the garden?

Bill: Well, they had their own vegetables like, you know. Potatoes, turnips, beets, onions,....

Ernest: Everybody had a root house.

Bill: Everybody had a root house. But not all of them lost what's in...

(laughter in the back)

Ernest: Usually every log house had a cellar right in the middle of the floor. And that's where they kept most of their.... (Ojibway).

Helen: And your vegetables, potatoes.

Christine: Did you live in a log house when you were married and had your children?

Bill: Yes, yes we did.

Christine: What was that like? What did it look like, that house?

Bill: Well, it looked like a house.

Christine: Did it have an upstairs?

Bill: Yes. Yes, we had an upstairs. Although the house wasn't very big. (Ojibway) About sixteen, maybe eighteen feet square, you know. And it had an upstairs so we slept on the upstairs. That's when we lived down the hill there. But this old house that we lived in here... when we first got here, there was an old house standing right beside that apple tree there, on this side of it. You can still see the foundation on that old house that we lived there for (Ojibway).

Helen: (Ojibway)

Bill: Oh, twenty years (Ojibway). We stayed there for about twenty years. Then this new house was built. And we've been in here since.

Helen: 1967 or 1968.


Ernest: (Ojibway) your daughters and your sons. (Ojibway)

Helen: (Ojibway).

Ernest: Oh.
Helen: One miscarriage, (Ojibway). Three days old (Ojibway).

Ernest: (Ojibway)

Helen: Yeah, we had about (Ojibway).

Bill: (Ojibway).

Helen: (Ojibway)

Bill: (Ojibway)

Helen: (Ojibway)

Ernest: I was wondering if...

Helen: (Ojibway)

Ernest: You raised twelve children.

Helen: Yeah.

Ernest: Twelve altogether. Two adopted.

Helen: Yeah, we lost two of our own.

Bill: But we adopted two others.

Helen: And then we adopted our two grandchildren. (chuckles).

Bill: To make up for the loss, you know.

Helen: So we raised up twelve.

Ernest: Going back to fishing...

Bill: Well, you have to catch a lot of fish to feed that many mouths, you know.

Tony: I'll say.

Christine: That's right.

Ernest: I would like to hear his opinion of commercial fishermen. You were telling me one time how big Killarney went into catching fish. (Ojibway).

Bill: (Ojibway), I don't believe in that overfishing because they overfish and (Ojibway). But I don't believe in that. Because nature takes care of that. If there is a decline in fishing, there had to be other reasons. Like what happened up around here and other places. Like up around Lake Huron and up this north channel, there is always lots of fish there way back as far as I can remember. And there were people fishing there real heavy at the time. They were putting in all kinds of
nets. Even seining, what they call seining. Now they don't allow that anymore. And they don't allow those what they call pawn nets. That's those nets with the poles standing in the water like a trap. It's a sort of a trap net. Once the fish get in there, there is no way they can get out. They didn't know where they came in. They had to stay there. That's a trap net. And they don't allow those anymore. And people that don't know nothing about fishing, they keep on blaming on the people that do the fishing for the decline. But I don't think

anybody can fish out any one kind of fish, you know. Because there is too much going on nowadays. Even when I was about forty years old, a little better than forty, we used to go out, up around that island. When you look out of the window, you see an island a way out. That's what they call Squaw Island. And we used to go out there during the winter with a horse and cutter and go out there and fish for lake trout through the ice. Cut a hole through the ice and drop a line in there, you know. Maybe about eighteen, nineteen, twenty fathoms of water. And we used to catch a lot of lake trout.

But since that St. Lawrence Seaway opened up for the big boats to come in up to Lake Superior, that's when the trouble started, real trouble started. Because when these boats come through the canals, there were lamprey hanging on the bottom side of the boat. And that's how the lamprey got in those lakes, in those big lakes. And once they got... oh, well they doubled up pretty fast. They kept doubling up, you know. And the first thing you know, they get crammed in the rivers to spawning. And we started noticing when we fished up here - when I fished at least but I know the other guys did - there was lamprey hanging on the fish. Like maybe whitefish or any other kinds of fish. There was lamprey hanging on there maybe about a foot and a half long. And a lot of times they may be two on one fish, even three on one fish. And when you pulled your net, when you fish up, you can see the fish hanging on your net and they sort of look like a rope dangling around in the water. It floats around, you know. And as soon as you get that fish in the boat, the lamprey let go. And they drop to the bottom of the boat. And if you happen to fish up maybe about ten nets, you'd get at least maybe about a hundred fish altogether. And maybe about three hundred, up to four hundred, lamprey in the boat. All squirming around on the bottom of the boat, you know. When I go out fishing, usually there is always water in the boat when you got out in the boat. Even the boat doesn't leak but you haul the net in the boat, you're hauling water in the boat, too, because it sticks on the net. The more nets you work on, the more water you bring in. And after I fish up, I put the nets back in the water and start heading home. By the time I get down to the beach here, when I get out of the boat, there is maybe about fifteen, between fifteen and twenty lamprey hanging on my boots. They just stick to that rubber, you know. And I just get off the boat, walk around with them lamprey flopping all over the sand. And they wouldn't let go. They just stick right there. And I used to pull them off by hand and throw them away. I don't know just
what they done with the lamprey because they had some kind of a chemical that they used and they pick off those special rivers where they spawn. And that's where they put that sort of a chemical in there, to kill the lamprey.

Tony: When they're hatching, the little ones?

Bill: No.

Tony: Catch the big ones when they go out?

Bill: The big ones, yeah. When they go in there. So they took about ten years at least to notice that they were going down a little bit. That's why we noticed it when we fish up. And finally now, about two years now, like last year and the year before, I might have seen maybe one or two all summer. I can see the marks on the fish but they are not on there. And the very first thing they went after when they got here was the lake trout. Because the lake trout hasn't got any scales. Just all skin right on top and they can suck the water. Once they got sticking on the fish they can suck the water, like the blood, from the fish. That's all they do, suck the blood from the fish. They don't eat the meat, you know. And that was the very first thing. They cleaned the lake trout right out. The lake trout was completely gone. But the people, the Minister of Natural Resources started to stock the fish in for... which was a crossbreed for speckled and, I don't know what...

Tony: Lake trout?

Bill: Lake trout, yeah, lake trout. They crossbreed those fish and they stocked those little fish about five or six inches long. But they did that for more than twenty years. Every year, thousands of little fish stocked in.

Ernest: (Inaudible).

Bill: And everybody that fishes around here can tell you, not one fisherman ever caught a fish that's more than ten years old. And yet they've been doing that for more than twenty years. The people who are doing this, like fishing, they know what's going on with fishing. Not the guy who sits in the house and look at the paper for to find out what fishing is all about. But the guy that's out there, who is doing all the work. He knows a hell of a lot better than the guy who sits in the office.

Ernest: That's sort of an attack on the Indian Department.

Bill: Like, the reason I say this is because those fish that I just mentioned that been stocked for more than twenty years, these fish were dying. And we tried to tell those people that the fish were dying. The reason why we knew that the fish were dying was when we fish up, after a storm, like a high wind, you know. Usually there is a lot of current, depends on the, what kind of a wind. If you have a high wind, then the currents get
The current goes towards the wind, you know. The wind comes down this way, the current goes this way. That's always the case around here, anywhere.

Helen: (Ojibway).

Bill: (chuckles) Everything stirs up from the bottom of the lake. Lots of things stir up with the current; the current does that, you know. And that was the time when we catch all those rotten fish in the nets. The fish that are dying,...

Tony: Then they are down on the bottom.

Bill: They are laying on the bottom. And that sort of pollutes the water, too. We kept telling those people, the people that look after that fish hatchery in South Baymouth, and they wouldn't believe it. We told them that for maybe about five or six years, every year. Oh, they wouldn't take our word for it. And finally they hired those people that go down the bottom of the lake to look around. The divers. Sure enough, they found what they were looking for. So I heard this somewhere that they are going to quit that altogether, stocking those fish. They were doing that for nothing. They were spending millions and millions and millions of dollars on that for nothing.

Tony: It wasn't making any difference.

Bill: No, the fish don't survive. They live till they are about four years old. After they put them, after they stock them. Then after four years the fish start to die. By the time they're about six years old, those fish that were stocked in six years ago, they are all gone; they are all dead. Somebody might catch a few, the fish, the people that fish, before they die.

Ernest: (Ojibway)

Bill: (Ojibway)

Ernest: Did he explain to you why they died? Why they died?

Bill: You mean the fish?

Ernest: Yeah, why did they die?

Bill: Well, nobody knows exactly why the fish are dying. But I might point out that there had to be a reason. And the only reason that I can come up with is when they take the spawn from the fish, like the fish when they are spawning, like in the fall like. Lake trout would spawn in October, around about the middle of October. And whitefish doesn't spawn until late in November, about the middle of November and so on. Like cisco, herring, and these fish when they're spawning, usually they take about a month. These fish don't spawn all at the same time, all at the same day. Some fish would spawn maybe about three or four days later than others. Then again another three
or four days later for some other fish, you know.

But the people who are taking the spawn, they set a net out there in Lake Manitou, one of those trap nets. But they don't have to put the stakes on. This one I'm talking about is much smaller than the ones they used to use up here in Georgian Bay. These are smaller but they are the very same pattern. A trap net is the right word for it because when the fish come in there, they get lost in there. They just don't know where they came in. And when they take the spawn off the fish, there is very few fish that come in there that their spawn is kind of loose, you know. They have to squeeze the fish like this. They have to squeeze them like this. And a lot of those eggs are not ready yet. A lot of these fish. And yet they squeeze the fish to get the eggs out. I believe that's where the problem is, the main problem. Because they're hurting the eggs. Although the eggs hatch but the little fish are not healthy.

Ernest: They say the most precarious time of a person's life is when he's born, it's how he's handled.

Bill: It's the same way with a woman, if a woman goes in the hospital to have a baby. It has to be at the right time for the baby to be born. If you try to squeeze the baby out or maybe like what... you've heard of that sometimes. He was born before the date. Then they have to keep that baby in an oxygen tent for some time.

Ernest: You, that time I told you about...

Helen: Incubator.

Bill: Incubator.

Ernest: That program "The Nature of Things", that was a two part. Now what you're saying... that Wire Hauser Company in Washington, they got a big hatchery because they want to make up for the destruction of stream so they got a big fishery. So they raise these little fish (inaudible). They are trucking them and they just dump them in the ocean but they are all dying. Suzuki says they have a gradual change in temperature in water before they reach this sudden, like a shock. So that's not nature's way. It's got to get there by it's own natural time, in it's own good time. So they just... it all makes sense.

Bill: I was in a meeting about a year ago, they had a meeting up around Espanola. And these happened to be the tourist camp outfitters from the island here. And they were, and the people that was there are the ministry of resources, gaming fisheries like, you know. And before that, maybe about a year earlier, they have some kind of an agreement with the Indian people about fishing. The ministry and the Indian people. But these people that... I suppose they were not invited, those tourist camp outfitters. They were not invited in that meeting
when that...

Ernest: Agreement was made.

Bill: Agreement was made, you know. So they were mad about it. And we were invited to go at the meeting, anybody that wants to go. Although we weren't forced to go over there. And they had a meeting in one of those... I believe they had that in an arena. Like a skating rink, you know. And there was a lot of people in there. One of the men was there from the Department of Indian Affairs and he explained why the meeting is there. To announce those agreements between the Indian people and the Ministry of Natural Resources. And after he announced the agreement, he sat down and he told the people that if anybody has anything to say he can go right ahead and say it. And sure enough, there was a lot of people that had something to say. Pretty near every one of them had something that he would like to say. But there were certain people, here, here, and another one over there, jumped up. They all wanted to get in the act, you know. And I had something to say too but I sat back there and just listened and tried to get everything what they say. Although, I don't understand every word what they said, what they were saying. But at least I get a certain amount of information from it. By the time ten or eleven people got up, that conversation was getting heated up, you know. Everybody was pretty red hot around the neck. If that meeting lasted another ten, fifteen minutes, every one of us Indians would have been thrown out of that building. That's what I was thinking when I was sitting there. Everybody was getting real mad.

Ernest: About Indians.

Bill: About us. I don't know why. We aren't doing anything wrong, I don't think. Maybe we are, I don't know.

Tony: What were they mad about?

Bill: Well,...

Tony: The agreement?

Bill: The agreement.

Ernest: This is between... who is in there, who was in there?

Tony: Tourist camp operators?

Ernest: No, they weren't invited.

Bill: Well, at the time when they had that meeting, that's why they were in there.

Ernest: Oh, they were in there.

Bill: They were the people that were jumping up and down
there.

Ernest: Oh, I see. Oh, now I get it. Yeah, go ahead.

Bill: But when that, when they made that agreement you know, it was just between the Indian people and the...

Ernest: MNR.

Bill: MNR. Ministry of Natural Resources. So, I don't know. Fish are fish and people are people.

Ernest: You say that - I asked you of commercial fishermen - you say you never overfish.

Bill: It can never be overfished.

Ernest: But the tourist camp operators accuse us of overfishing.

Bill: Yeah. I've heard that many times. Like that meeting I just mentioned. They got up, every single one of them was blaming on the Indian people.

Ernest: Yeah.

Bill: And yet they are the people who are making all those tools for catching fish. And those camp operators. I knew every single one of them up around this Manitoulin when I was guiding. They are the people I worked for at the time. They keep the people over there in their outfits. And they send them over here and I begin to know them pretty well. And I know, I just couldn't say I knew everything what was going on there, I wouldn't say that, but I know something what's going on.

Ernest: There was a guy, a....

Bill: These are the very people that are overdoing the fishing in Lake Manitou. Even after the season is over. Like the tourist season usually ends around about September, after the duck season closes. And these are the people that are doing the fishing there. They got nets. They're not allowed to have nets in there. They got nets. This guy has maybe one or two nets. These other guys haven't got any and they lend this net, what they have, to this other guy. And they keep rotating that.

Ernest: (Ojibway)

Bill: Yeah, they still do that.

Ernest: But the MNR doesn't go after those guys.

Bill: And the MNR told us that we can fish in Lake Manitou two years ago, two or three years ago, in the fall when the fish are spawning, like whitefish. That's in November. And we have
to go by road with a car or a truck. There is no way you can go around by boat to get to Lake Manitou, because that Blue Jay creek is not wide enough for a boat to go in. So you drive over there with your car or what have you. A station wagon or passenger car, you name it, you have to drive over there. And when you get in the boat to set a net out there, a guy would come out from the bush and put a knife through your tires.

Maybe, if you're lucky, you'll get one flat tire. But if the guy is real mad, he'll punch every one of those tires, like the four wheels, you know. They just slash them.

Ernest: That still happens.

Bill: Yeah. It's still going on.

Helen: (Ojibway)

Ernest: (Ojibway) He says there are people here left, that's why they phone and see if they can come in. There is nothing wrong with it.

Helen: (Ojibway)

Bill: I don't know. There is always something. Maybe we don't know that we're doing wrong.

Ernest: There is a council that made a big push. Oh, motions made by every township, every town council across the north shore, Hadden or Haddo. And then a man from Sagamok wrote a letter. It was in the Sudbury Star and the Expositor and it talked about what they do. And he says he made a survey of Sagamok and there is hardly anybody eating fish in Sagamok. You know, it averages to two, three pounds a year. And yet, he says, there is commercial fishermen just off Sagamok point hoisting up fish by the ton. You know, they are the ones that are taking them. And I think some fisheries are, they are letting some people come in and netting huge amounts of fish for catfood, dogfood. This is what we don't know. These are people given private licenses. And they're taking lots and lots of fish. But we don't... the Indian's catch is so insignificant but they still blame us for everything.

Christine: How did you learn how to do that?

Helen: Well, I guess I learned it from this lady I was talking about, where I was adopted, my adopted mother.

Christine: Oh, yeah.

Helen: Yeah, she used to work on those things. And for some years I used to make canoes and tipis. I never used to make quill boxes. I just started a few years ago. I was able to make them, I managed how to. I guess I have it in my head, you know, what I want to do it.
Christine: How do you go about doing it? Do you have to prepare the quills and the bark?

Helen: Oh, yes.

Christine: So you do it right from scratch? Where do you get your quills to start with?

Helen: From the porcupine.

Bill: (chuckles)

Christine: (chuckles) Do you catch a porcupine?

Helen: I don't, no. Well...

Ernest: (Ojibway)

Helen: Well, he used to hunt for them some years ago. And then he quit, I don't know. Maybe he didn't like to do it, I don't know, but we had to buy them from somebody then.

Ernest: You get a lot on the north shore. (Ojibway)

Helen: Not any more, not any more. I don't know where they get them. (Ojibway) They get them around here, I guess, sometimes or like (Ojibway). There was a guy from Cape Cook (Ojibway). And at one time we were in Sagamok and then they were two guys (Ojibway) porcupine. So that's the way it is. You buy them from...

Bill: There used to be a lot of them around the north shore. But those MNR when they spray the trees with some kind of a chemical.

Helen: So you have to clean them. You have to clean them. You know, they are furry. You use an old sock to clean them.

Christine: The quills are furry?

Helen: Yes.

Ernest: There is something on them. And they know that.

Bill: There is light hair, I don't know what....

Helen: And then you just put them on the sock. And then there is just the quills. And then you put them someplace.

Bill: (Ojibway) Let me show you what they actually look like before they are cleaned.

Ernest: We worked on the north shore and they would be crawling all over.

Bill: Well, they used to, but not now. Like I remember not too far back, I was out there in a boat. I was out there for
three or four days and I brought in one porcupine altogether.

Helen: See what they look like?

Christine: Oh, yeah.

Bill: That's how bad it is.

(Inaudible conversation, break in tape)

Helen: Something here where I put the quills because they are kind of...

Christine: So then you just put them away?

Helen: Yeah, I just put them away. And then you wash them. If you want to have them tinted or dyed, you wash them in soap water first and then you dye them whatever color you want, like red, green, yellow, any color.

Christine: How do you dye them?

Helen: We use (Ojibway) Ritt dyes. You see them in boxes, eh. Or Sunset, Sunset dyes. Put a little salt...

Bill: Or vinegar.

Helen: Or vinegar, that's how you dye them. Just keep watch of what color you want depending on how much dye you put, whatever color you want. If the red is too pale, well, just add a little more dye or a little bit more salt, whatever you....

Bill: (Ojibway)

Helen: Where they are pointed, they have dark colors. Sometimes, that's the way we work on that quill box, you know. You could turn them in, like this way, two in one, or this way. See, how it looks like.

Christine: Oh yeah, it makes a different pattern.

Helen: Natural, their own color.

Christine: So then how do you get them through the bark?

Bill: Well, you have to punch a hole there.

Helen: That's what you use. These are my tools.

Bill: This is the thing that you have to pick out where you are going to put a hole in with this. Then you put a quill in there and then use this for pulling the quill out.

Christine: Why do you have to soak them?

Bill: To make them soft.
Helen: To make them soft.

Christine: Would they break otherwise?

Bill: Some of them do, but not all.

Helen: No, they don't go well in the bark if they are dry.

Ernest: They say they are too expensive but when you consider the amount of work, they are still a deal.

Tony: How long would it take you to make a quill box? You know, one that's covered completely.

Bill: Depending on the size.

Helen: Depending on the size and....

Bill: If it's small, well, it won't take too long.

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Helen: (Ojibway) Some of them are - the ones that you saw - they are short. They are all short.

Bill: And then some of them are too skinny.

Helen: There is so many kinds of quills.

Bill: There is so many kinds.

Helen: Yeah.

Bill: They come in different....

Helen: And there is some of them, they are almost all white. And only at the tips, there is that dark, yeah.

Bill: Black spot at the tips, you know.

Helen: That black spot.

Christine: Are those the best kind? That are all white?

Bill: Not necessarily.

Helen: No, not necessarily.

Bill: And a lot of those quills too, they got a little wee mark somewhere. Just if you look very close at it sometimes you'd notice it. And when you put that quill in the birch
bark, like when you're working on something, and you pull it with this pincher here - when you pull it a little bit tight to put it through the birch bark - that's when it breaks off.

Christine: At that spot?

Bill: The ones with little marks on it. So the people who are selling them, they don't know what to look for. They just want to get rid of the porcupine skin with the quills on. And that's considered... that's one porcupine and he wants so much for it.

Tony: That little mark on the quill, is that where the porcupine might have been sick?

Bill: I really don't know.

Helen: There is a certain time of year that you get the very best quills - if you get it at that certain time.

Bill: During the hot summer.

Helen: During the hot summer it's not good. That's the way it is.

Bill: These quills are watery, they look like there is little water in them where they are stuck in the skin, you know. About this much. They are watery; they are no good. That's the later part of July, August, and part of September. For about two months during the summer, nobody wouldn't kill a porcupine, for this purpose anyway.

Christine: When is the best time then?

Bill: Well, usually round about this time of the year. Only this time of the year there is a lot of hair; that hair you just saw there. There is a lot of it on the porcupine. That's his winter coat. And after a while, after it warms up a little bit, maybe in May, most of the hair is gone. The quills are still on there, on the skin. But the hair is almost all gone.

Tony: So it's a good time to get them?

Bill: That's about the best time, yeah.

Tony: What about the bark? Where do you get the bark from?

Bill: The bark you can only get it round about in June. And usually it doesn't last very long, maybe about two weeks. So you have to be there at the right time to pick your birch bark.

Christine: You go and pick it yourselves?

Bill: Yes. Most of it. And again, it is very difficult. I
guess it's pretty much the same way with everything. We just mentioned a few facts about the quills, and I guess it's pretty much the same way with the birch bark too. Because when you take the birch bark in, during the summer, you try to pick out what you consider to be useful, you know. At the time when you're picking it out, you know, when you take it off the trees. And you wrap it up in bundles so you can carry them better, and take them out of the bush to the truck.

Helen: (Ojibway)

Bill: And by the time you want to use that during the winter, they look a lot different. A lot of that birch bark which you picked that summer won't do any good.

Ernest: (Ojibway).

Christine: Do you have to store it in a special way? Over the winter?

Bill: No, we just put it in the shed here. We just store it on the floor there and leave it there. As long as it isn't outside in open air.

Christine: How do you come to choose a design?

Helen: I just don't. I just have it in my head, I guess.

Christine: Yeah?

Helen: Just by looking at the bark and then, I keep thinking what I can draw. Sometimes I use a knitting needle.

Ernest: And make scratches, like this.

Helen: Yeah.

Bill: See, this has to be colored green this part here.

Helen: Well, most of the time, I make little patterns like these here. Just when I'm sitting down, I start drawing them and cutting them out.

Ernest: (Ojibway) frame.

Helen: Frame, picture frame.

Bill: You might even have your own picture in there.

Ernest: (Ojibway) My mother, (chuckles) she was the one that told me I ruined that beautiful frame.

Tony: You learned this from your foster mother or your adopted mother?

Helen: That's how I started. But I didn't learn everything
that I'm making now. I just got the idea how to work on them. Like the quill boxes and the canoes, that's where I learned.

Bill: You never learn enough from somebody.

Tony: The which, canoes?

Helen: Yes.

Bill: Unless you do what you want to do.

Helen: I used to make canoes.

Bill: You find out whichever way you can work on it better.

Helen: All kinds, sizes. Not anymore on account of my hands, you know. My hands have arthritis on them so I can't very well do the handling on them. So, then you have to use your hands real hard.

Bill: That we don't do any more. We used to make cedar, what they call cedar-lined canoes. And they are tough to make and it's hard work and we don't make them any more because on account of his hands. It's too much for his hands. But we got all the... what we can use to make them.

Ernest: (Ojibway)

Bill: (Ojibway)

Ernest: Yeah, I saw them. Gus had a few but the tourists grabbed them all.

Christine: Were these little canoes?

Ernest: No, fairly big.

Bill: Some of them.

Ernest: Yeah, and they were made just like the real canoes. With cedar inlay.

Bill: Cedar-lined canoes, they are called. They have cedar inside, you know.

Christine: Yeah.

Bill: You have to get that cedar, real good cedar, so you can strip it just like paper, paper thin. And you can bend that anyway you like. When you have it, when you happened to have a good cedar but there are...

Helen: We even used to make elm bark canoes. See that elm tree standing over there?

Both: Yeah.
Helen: The bark from there.

Ernest: Yeah, I used to see a lot of them.

Christine: Could you make real canoes?

Helen: Yeah.

Bill: No, no not...

Helen: Not the real canoes.

Christine: No, you didn't make any of those.

Bill: Just for, I guess they were just for flowerpots.

Helen: Maybe for plants or something, flowerpot planters.
   (chuckles)

Tony: How old were you when you first started doing the quill work?

Helen: I would say maybe I was about eighteen years.

Tony: This was after you'd finished school?

Helen: Yeah.

Tony: What did you do when you finished at Spanish school?

Helen: Oh, I just stayed home and that's when I practised this kind of work. (chuckles)

Christine: But you were working on the farm then, eh?

Helen: Well, just a little helping out like cooking. And sometimes I would work in the garden like weeding time, you know. So...

Ernest: So there is a lot of old experience behind that. No wonder it looks so good, so neat.

Christine: Yeah. And then you got married when you were nineteen?

Helen: Nineteen, yes. I was nineteen and a half years, I think.

Christine: You got married here at Wikki (Wkwemikong)?

Helen: Yeah.

Ernest: (Inaudible) close to the church.

(all laugh)
Ernest: I got a question to ask. Which priest married you?

Bill: (Ojibway)

Helen: (Ojibway)

Ernest: Father Belanger.

Bill: The thing that keeps coming back to my mind is about the thunderstorms that we have now and then. That the white people are saying that the reason for that is the heat and the cold air get tangled up together and causes that noise like a thunder. They figure that's nobody like maybe somebody or a mitto(sp?), what you might say mitto. But it's just the heat and the cold. But the Indian people... I heard a story from an old man and he heard it from his grandfather too. At least that's what he said anyway. And they got stories about that thunder. Somebody is doing that. Like somebody that's living. They, the old Indian people that used to live, used to go up there and see those people. And visit them and find how they live, where they are. I don't know whether it's true but that's what the story was all about, you know. But there is something that puzzles me. Like, when we have thunder, like a rainstorm, and usually that thunder would hit something sometimes or maybe a house. It's either a house or a tree someplace. And when they hit a tree, I often see it in the bush, and again it happened right in front of our house there one time. When we lived down the hill here, there was a big elm tree standing there about the size of this one, this big one. And when that, when they hit that, there was just little pieces of chips. I might call them chips. Everything was smashed when they hit that. And the thing that puzzles me the most is how can that, when there is nobody up there doing that, how can that be that accurate to hit something? When they want to hit that and they hit it right where they want it?

Tony: Yeah.

Bill: I've seen a lot of trees being hit. And some of them are nearly... they miss right, to hit them right in the middle when the tree is standing up like this. They sometimes miss a little bit. And that thing would open up the tree on the side and the thing goes around like this, like an auger. It goes around the tree right down to the bottom.

Ernest: Spirals.

Bill: (chuckles) But according to the old story, the Indian people used to dig up that thing what they used to hit the tree under the ground. And they said that that doesn't go down very deep. Maybe about two, two and a half feet underground. And they dig that out you know, and keep it. And there is another thing, after a rainstorm, like a thunder storm, about two days later there is maybe a dark cloud floating around in the sky, just so big. And it moves around. Another time you look at it, it's way over there. Another time you try to find it, it's
a way over there. And according to the Indian people, what they said about that cloud hanging up there is, when the people that was around, that causes that storm, they are coming back for those things they used when they hit something. They come and pick them up.

Tony: The lightning bolts?

Bill: The lightning, yeah. And another guy told a story about going back in the bush, working in the bush. The sun was out in the morning when he left and during the day the dark clouds came in and it started to rain. And after the rain got started, then the thunder started to come. So he thought maybe he'd better get back home. So he started out and about halfway, the rain came down real hard. So he picked out one of the big trees with a lot of branches on. He went down there and lean against the tree there, standing right underneath there so to stay away from the rain. It was pouring rain and he could hear the thunder up in the sky. And after standing there for maybe about half an hour, the thunder was still up there, the same place. So he was beginning to wonder why. In the pouring rain, you know. So he started to look around up in the sky. I don't know why he was doing that. He couldn't see anything up there except the clouds. And there was a light thunder up there. He looked up, way up towards the sky, and as he was looking up there, he noticed there was a little fish up there. Right close to the tree. The tree was standing here and the little fish was pointing his nose towards the tree, where the guy was standing underneath here. And he could see the little fins moving. The fish was moving his little fins and his little tail. So after he noticed that, he knew there was something wrong. He grabbed his axe and he started to run, out in the rain. And about thirty, thirty, forty feet away from that tree, then the thunder hit that tree that he was leaning on. There are stories like that, you know. That's just one of them.

Ernest: (Ojibway)

Bill: (Ojibway)

Ernest: In midair?

Bill: In midair.

Ernest: Like a warning.

Bill: Oh, there are all kinds of stories.

Christine: Do you ever hear any stories about the little people?

Ernest: (Ojibway)

Bill: How they come about, I know how they - what I heard. I don't know whether it's true, what I heard about the little
people. But (Ojibway), how they come about was, the woman was pregnant at the time and nobody knew yet, twins. So these people were camping out in the bush. That's what they usually do a way back then, where there is a lot of game to live on for the winter and a lot of wood close by to keep the fire going. And each family, they move different areas like. One family stays there, another family over there, another family over there. They were pretty well scattered, and these young people, they happened to... the man looked for this place during the summer while it's dry, and in the fall they moved to that certain area where he picked for the winter, and built up a little shack in there.

So, after staying there for some time, not the whole winter, maybe about a month in the fall - that was before the winter anyway - that's when it happens that the man had a bad dream one night, that somebody was living there, close. And he dreamt that this particular somebody came up to him that night and this particular person might call him as they didn't like him to camp there for the winter. They had to move out. Or, to satisfy his hunger, they could feed him for some time, maybe about ten days. So the next morning the man told his wife about what he had dreamt and they talked about it. And they were in bad shape and he knew that his wife was pregnant. Now they got a place to live for the winter, it's kind of hard for them to move. So they thought they would feed him, this monster I might call him. So the next couple of nights, nothing happened. And the third night, he had another dream. And he was dreaming about the same monster, the one he dreamt about three nights before. And he got all the details what to do come feeding time. To cook a pot full of meat and put the pot right in the corner, right close to the door and leave it there. Of course, he goes in the morning and he's hunting all day so the wife has to stay there. And the wife isn't supposed to look at the guy who is eating that meat there. She is supposed to cover her head with some kind of a skin or deer hide. Never look at him.

So when he got up the next morning, he told his wife about it. He has to cook some meat, a lot of meat. Maybe one deer, all the meat for one deer. So, he did that. He cooked it and they put up a pole there so they can move it. So the lady can move it closer to the door after it's cooked, you know, the easier way instead of lifting the whole pot. So, when the time came around, sure enough there was somebody eating there. You could hear it when he was eating that meat. But he was warned not to look, never to look at him. And this went on for about nine days. Every day. So the tenth day would be the last. It's got only one more day. And on the last day, the lady, she wanted to see what's going on while that monster was eating. So she raised this cover up a little, just a wee bit to see who's there. And right away that, I suppose that he was watching her. And right away he jumped up and he just grabbed her legs. The lady was lying down on the, where they were sleeping, and he just took her legs and split them right open.
That's where the babies were, the little babies supposed to be born later on during the winter. And he threw that little baby up, one of them up right close to the roof, where the roof goes down on the inside part of the house. And he threw the other one through the hole. They had a hole up on the roof where the smoke goes out, you know. And away he went. So after, when the man go home, then he saw what happened. Then he knew right away that his wife was trying to see what's eating over there. What mitto was doing. He buried her the next day and he didn't go anyplace for some time. He just stayed there in the camp. Just go out for a while and cut some wood and bring in some wood to keep himself warm.

And in the summer, as soon as the snow started to melt, when he was lying down having a rest. He was away all day. Then he, when he came back that evening, he noticed there was somebody there. But he just couldn't figure out who it was. But there was some signs of things that weren't there when he left that morning. Then after he ate and he lay down and trying to sleep and was still thinking about his wife, about what happened, then he heard a little sound somewhere in the house. Well, he thought maybe it was a squirrel or a mouse, or something like that, you know. He didn't bother with that. He just looked there for a while and never saw nothing. Then again, just as he was getting to sleep, then he heard another sound. So he got up and he started to look around.

So after looking around for some time, he finally came up with the answer. Then he found a little guy about a foot high. He was naked, no clothes on or nothing. So picked him up and brought him down to where he was sleeping, and the next day he started to make some clothing out of skins. The furs he had in the house. So he had him all dressed up. He didn't go out that day for hunting. And he made a little bow and arrow for him to play with while the little guy was alone there during the day, to play with it, you know. So he stayed there for about two or three days and took care of him. And so he had to go out; they were running short of meat again. So he went out and tell him not to go anywhere. Just play in the house there where they live.

So this little guy was playing there and shooting his arrows in the house there. And all of a sudden he had a better idea, that he'd shoot right through that hole there up on the roof. So he shoot the arrow and he ran outside and look for it. And couldn't find it. And he shoot another one, ran to the door, outside towards where he was shooting. He never could find it. And this kept on for some time. Each night when his dad come home, he would make him another maybe three or four of those things to shoot, you know, bows. And each day he loses everything. So, somebody was taking those from outside. Somebody was watching all the time. So he was trying to figure out what to do to catch him. One time he went up close to the door, close to the door, and he shoot through that hole and as soon as he let the arrow go, he just jumped out and around the house. And sure enough, he saw another little guy like him
running towards a stump. So he followed him. Got a hole in there, you know. It's a nice little room in there, under the stump. That's where he saw a pile of little bows and arrows that he was losing all that time. That's the guy that was picking them up. So he tried to bring him in the house, but he wouldn't. He'd rather stay in the stump. And that night, when the father came home, the little guy told him about it, about that other guy in the stump. And that was the one that was stealing all those bows and arrows. So, they went over there and coaxed him in. They finally had him in the house. So he went back to the same routine, what he did to that other guy. He started making clothes for him the next day.

Now he has two of them, two little guys. And he noticed something about them when they were playing. Usually they would stay on one side of the fire. Of course, they had a fire right in the middle of the house and there is a hole up there. And sometimes they'd play there around the fire. And one of them would jump up a little bit higher over there and one of them on this side. And they'd shoot these arrows across to each other. One would shoot an arrow to the other guy and that little other guy over there on the far side would catch that little arrow. And he used the same arrow to shoot the other side. When the creeks were running, that's what they say, when the snow was really completely gone but the creeks were still running, he noticed that there was something about those little guys. They seemed to have something on their arm here, like maybe a knife. It looked like a knife. He never mentioned what he sees. He was kind of surprised about it, you know. So one night after it got warmed up, real hot... it was round about May or June when the warm weather sets in... one night they were playing and he heard something about, talking about their mother. How that monster tore her up and how they are going to go after that monster who killed their mother. So, the man was real surprised how they knew what happened. He never told them about it. He never said anything about it, but they sort of figured it out by themselves.

So, after a while the little guys told their dad that they are going after that monster the next day. He was kind of surprised and he told them that there is nothing they can do about it because it's a monster and they are only little guys about that high. But they were determined to go after him. And so they did, the next day. And not too far from there, where they had their camp, there was a narrow spot there on the river, a big river. It's deep in there. Lots of water goes through there. And one of them said to the other... and this guy that was in the stump all winter, he was the toughest of the other, than the other. And that was the guy that went down to the bottom of the river to chase that monster out and the other stayed back. When the monster came up, right in the middle of that channel, then that little guy on the other side, the one that was under the water, came up on the other side of the bank. And they started shooting the same way they did across the fire, you know. That little arrow that the other guy shoots, uses the same arrow, to shoot the monster right through the body. And the other guy would catch that little
arrow and shoot back again until they killed the monster. That's what I heard about the little fellows. Yeah, the little people.

Tony: And where are they supposed to live?

Bill: Well, they don't have a home. That's what the story says. When the time came to leave to go back home to the other place where they lived during the summer, they didn't go with their father. They told him that they can't go, that they got a job to do on earth for the people. There were a lot of those monsters that were killing people, especially in the water, underwater, where they are kind of hard to get at, you know. And these little fellows were supposed to go after those kind of monsters. The monsters that kill people, all over the world. So they haven't got a home. They keep moving. Year in and year out.

Tony: So they are still supposed to be around?

Bill: They will be around as long as there is people living. They will be with the people.

Christine: Do people ever see the little fellows?

Bill: Yes, they see them. My own mother saw them once up around, towards Rabbit Island road there. There is a creek that runs there and people lived there for some time. There is still a house there but that's not the same house that was there before. And my mother saw them once across the bay, right here. Little guys, two little guys.

And there is another story that up here, there was some other guy who saw them... but this other story that Tubby, they called him Tubby Assinewe, (Ojibway). Mark Assinewe (Ojibway). Right close to their home. He noticed there were two little guys playing near the creek. He was only a little fellow at the time, you know, maybe about six or seven years old. So he went up to them and he played with them. That was around about noon. And his parents started looking for him before dark and they never could find him. And all night he didn't come home. And the next day, all day the next day, he never showed up. And they were giving up on looking for him. They kept on looking all day the next day but they never saw nothing. There were other people helping out. And when they gave up, it was almost dark in the evening, then he came in the door. They asked him where he was and he said he was just playing right close to the river for a while with two little guys. He didn't know how long he stayed there. He started to play with them the day before at noon and all night and all day the next day. So they must be around.

Ernest: Yeah.

Bill: I never see one myself.

Ernest: (Inaudible) (Ojibway)
Bill: (Ojibway) Yeah, I was in that film.

Ernest: Oh, you were in that film.

Bill: Yeah, and we made another one in South Baymouth but the one they called Mendabin (sp?). You might have heard of it in West Bay Cultural, (Ojibway) Cultural.

Ernest: Oh, no, I didn't hear that.

Bill: They got a picture there.

Ernest: Yeah.

Bill: At least they have one. I don't know where, (Ojibway). They come up with different stories. Like anything happens over there, some people will tell you different. And the next day you'll see another guy who'll tell you another story about it. It's the same story. But they, they bring it up differently.

It's pretty much the same way with anything, I guess. In a way that, like the Trudeaus, how the Trudeaus got here. We are Trudeau, that...

(End of Side B)

(End of Interview)