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JAMES SIMON

Born February 2, 1953, at Manitowaning. Presently lives and works in Wikwemikong. Painter of the Woodland Indian school of painting.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Description of various paintings and sources of inspiration including Indian religion and legends.
JAMES SIMON EXPLAINS SPECIFIC PAINTINGS (CORRESPONDING PHOTOS):

- 1) Sweatlodges across from Dreamer's Rock
- 2) The Egg (Dreamer's Rock)
- 3) The Echo - Kwangaw Lake
- 4) The Spruce Clan (Cape Smith area)
- 5) Path of the Thunderbird
- 6) Lonely Island (Crying Island)
- 7) Red Rock (Bidwell district)
- 8) Today's Bear Walk
- 9) Spanish Residential School
- 10) Swift Current (Little Current Bridge)
- 11) Gathering Kindling
- 12) The Settlement and the Mission
- 13) The Traders in Winter
- 14) Smoke House
- 15) Yesterday's Treasures
- 16) The Hunt
- 17) Badgeley Channel

Tony: This is April the fourth and we're in James Simon's house on the Wikwemikong reserve on Manitoulin Island. And

we're going to be talking about his paintings and the legends that are behind them. So let's start off by asking you when you were born, James?

James: I was born in 1953, February 2nd, on Manitowaning.

Tony: In Manitowaning?

James: In Manitowaning. There used to be a hospital there before the hospital was built in Little Current.

Tony: And you've lived, you've lived here all the time since then?

James: Every time I can, more like. But really I've been staying here since life, the way you look at it. I've never went to anywhere, like say live in Toronto or something like that. But I always stay here, all the time.

Tony: Why do you stay here?

James: Inspirations really. And it's home, when you look at it. Like Morely, when I got to Toronto, the longest I stayed in Toronto was about four hours probably. Stayed and opening a show, an art show. Just stayed there, like. Okay, pick up, first of all get a plane and the first plane that takes off from Toronto. That's how much I want to go home. That's how long I stayed. And the longest I stayed from home was probably about thirty days and that was a European trip. And I wanted to go home there, too. Because closely, like say, just like say art... when you look at your art too, like one time... it hurts to get the dry spell, they call it, from an artist. When he can't produce a line. You can do something but you're not satisfied with what you're making.

Okay, that happened to me one time and that's when I went to school to North Bay for six months. But then I was painting on the sides, just making sketches and lay-outs and things like that. I seemed to lose that certain something inside you. Like being an artist. And every time you're making something, you can't produce it. You can produce but it's not you or it's not done or it's not a finished product. Like that satisfaction you get when you finish a canvas, that's what I felt like, okay? And I came home. Try to devise like, that certain stamina I had inside me for being an artist. But that took me

six months to get back. Got to go and visit people, you got to go walk in the forest. Maybe talk to the forest too and, you know, help me get back to my path. And eventually I got it. It was more like losing the love of something. Just maybe seeing a girl friend, it hurts a lot. And the same thing with a painting. If you lose something, maybe you can look at it... like I think it's more hurting than losing your right arm. Because you can talk about the legends and they can write stories through tape or anything. But you lose inspiration through the mind, it's lost. Or more like getting amnesia or something. And it's something that's really gone. And losing

that certain feeling of being an artist would be painful. That's why I want to stay here. Like, if it's going to get knocked down, I'm going to get some of it and build it someplace near my house.

Tony: You're referring to this house right?

James: Yeah, this house now.

Tony: If this old house gets knocked down, you want to try and reconstruct some of it?

James: Okay, I made a basement so far and it's thirteen, fourteen high right now. That's long. Okay, I can take some of this, especially this living room part, and build in the basement like that. And that will be home also. Like, you always keep that certain part what you originally had from the beginning. More like starting off from a circle.

Just like life, the same thing. Okay, like you were pushed out when you were born from your mother and go all the way around. You're pampered and things like this. You got fed and everything was more like perfect, when you look at it, but it wasn't. Okay, by the time you're around the sixties and seventies you've started going to that same circle again. You're copying that circle and the end is coming soon. Okay, and all through that life, you're scared of dying. Look at it that way too, when you start going pampered again, same thing. They got to feed you and you're scared to die. So, the life has to push you out through another world again. Okay, you're finished in that circle and then you're going through another one, another phase. Through the spiritual side of you. And maybe that's what these paintings are. Like where artists' certain styles are coming from. Like, I'm just building them. Say your dreams, maybe you see a vision. Maybe that's part of

it. Maybe you see through the screens... like, say a screen of the window sort of vibrating, something like that. You see one side and that's it. The flashes, like seeing. I made one painting, okay, like when I seen this certain style in my mind. This style, this certain painting. Okay, it's in my mind already. Like right now, I'm taking this one week break. Okay, about four or five paintings in my mind right now. It's no name, but it's there. Okay, and pick one what you want to pick out. And by the time you've finished that certain painting, that's the time it will pop out like a balloon. Okay, it's finished. Okay, another one comes in there like an assembly line or something. Maybe that's the part, the spiritual side we're going to go through. Like not the matter part but the feelings part, the crying part, the loving part of you. That's, what am I getting at here? What was the question?

Tony: We were talking about your inspiration and where that comes from.

James: Yeah, things like that.

Tony: So you say you go through these periods where you dry up?

James: Yeah.

Tony: Alright. Does that mean that when you come to a dry period, that when you start again, that you go into another style, that you change again? Does that happen then or do you just dry, you might dry up in the middle of doing certain kinds of things?

James: No, it's more like... like some of them styles that I've got now, like let's say the middle part of the Canadas... I don't know what kind of style would I call that. And okay, you start seeing these other styles, too. But I keep seeing these other ones. The appetite paintings, they're still up there. Like, say, repertoire of your mind. Like if these rock paintings are there and it goes on and on and on. You never dry up really. You never dry up.

Tony: Obviously from the look of some of these paintings, you get your inspiration, too, from the land around you.

James: Oh, yeah.

Tony: Where you've been going. Where did the ideas of doing particular paintings come from?

James: The show, the show I had in Vancouver, that's where I seen that. We went to Squamish Indian reserve, talking to these people... their history, the legends, things like that. First of all I ask them, "Do you believe in the Bigfoot?" And over there, trees are twenty feet in diameter and whatever, eh. "And look for yourself," he told me. I looked up and there was ice caps in them mountains and I look all the way around and there is old people sitting around.

Tony: You mean you see these people in the mountains, in the scenery?

James: In the mountains, things like that. And that's where I got this inspiration. All the way down, all these old people sitting on these Rocky mountains. More like, when you look at it. These ice caps are the gray hairs and the rest of the mountain are their bodies. They are sitting around looking at each other, looking down, looking across the ocean and things like that. Okay, when I came back right from Thunder Bay right down to Sudbury, everytime I looked at a rock crevice, I seen faces. Maybe I don't know if it's a phase but when you look at it, these things, everytime I look at something... You know, these things were made for a purpose. Anything, you know, like name it. Even if you don't like something. Like a tree. Okay, even the bark of the tree, you start seeing faces. Crevices, like a rock crevice. Okay, it's a wrinkle to me. More like cheek bones wrinkle, you know, eye wrinkles. That's

what I see in these things. Every time now.

But it's changing again, as I told you, to these log cabins. Okay, and it's more like you're driving a car and you're steering, steering all over the place and you're seeing all the styles you've been through. They're all in your mind though. I don't know if it's going to explode or anything like that, but everything's there. But it's nice to explore all over the place, all these styles.

Tony: Wait a minute, you were just talking about being able to see faces and figures in the landscape, alright?

James: Yeah, landscape.

Tony: And so that now, you're going through a change where you say you're starting to paint log cabins and things like that. Can you explain...?

James: From what relates?

Tony: Yeah. What it is that you go through personally to make that change, and what significance the cabins have for you.

James: Yeah.

Tony: Or the structures have for you?

James: Okay, what the people went through, okay. Let's say I painted the one across the road. Underneath all that prefab, there is a log cabin inside there. Okay, this guy told me a story one time what he seen and what happened to him. And I want to relate to the English side too, like, to the white man's world. If he can see a painting through my eyes, he can see it through the log cabin and the story behind it. Like, say meeting him halfway. Let's say the bridge on both cliffs. Okay, he's building a bridge on his side and fine, but in one time we'll meet halfway and we'll understand each other, what we're trying to say on both sides. Don't have that withdrawal, like, from a painting. "I don't like that part. But that part I like," you know, things like that. Okay, this is not what he's looking at right now. Through the log cabin and the story behind it, he relates to it. It's a log cabin. Okay, what's that painting called? This three story building I made there is a little school house in December. And okay, it's a blizzard and things like that then and what happened to that history, okay. A lot of things happened through that little bit of history. The paintings that I got now, like the contemporary - I don't know what you can call it - native art, there is legends behind them. Okay, and he's going to think about a certain legend, what relates to this log cabin. Okay, don't look at this style now. But then evolve eventually, totally, like it will be there. Okay, now start going back again to this, another different kind of legend. What I said there, then you'll understand through another media of art. You know, that's what I think was the relation to it. More like meeting halfway to understanding.

Tony: So in a sense it's like your landscape, your Indian landscape, is being invaded by white people who put their own structures up and brought their own things into it. And now, when you paint those things, you're looking for an interpretation of those things as they apply to the land, your land.

James: Exactly. Exactly. What I'm doing now, what I'm doing now on the paintings. And trying to make them relate. They are relating but through the eyes of other people, they don't. Like to me, the artist itself made that canvas and the other canvas, they relate totally like sister and sister. Okay, through another person's eyes, how come these styles are different? Things like that log cabin and this certain kind of abstract painting with something. Then okay, maybe the next style will be putting two and two together. You know, the log cabins on top of the... maybe the vice versa of what I'm doing now. You know, like say log cabin is there, and this one is looking over it. The mountain, goes on and on and on. Things like that.

Tony: I've seen some of these which we'll take some photographs of. And some of the cabins and things that you've painted, they are more or less realistic.

James: They are realistic. Well, they are realistic but, in a sense, I want to look at it through different....

Tony: But they look as if they are in a... almost a ghost-like landscape. Is that...?

James: Um, okay.

Tony: Or a spirit landscape might be a better term.

James: Okay. I meet the sky. You know, when you look at it, that's all sky. I mean you look at it, there is snow on it. Okay, that's sky, too. I just built a sky. Okay, where I'm going to build this house, now. Look at certain clouds. Okay, I'm going to put it right there on certain spots. And part of that sky turning into the ground now. Part of it's world now. But it all started off from the sky, when I make my sky. I didn't put no ground, like some of them. I didn't put no ground at all but the feeling I had of this... you start putting trees sticking out of the clouds and things like that. The background is more important to the artist also. First of all, like, the white canvas, perfectly white. Got to talk to that, got to look at it. Then you got to... when you are really, you know, that dry spell what you were talking about for a little while there... got to look at it, then you see something. Same thing through the clouds, what I'm doing. You see a lot of things. I seen cabins, I've seen mountains. But you pick out what you're going to make on them, on that certain canvas. Maybe something in your mind will say, "Pick me, pick me," or something like this. Then you put your building or

your rock or your... by the painting on there. Whatever you are choosing like that. That's where, like, you can really say if it's a ghost or something like that. Well, the same thing with skies. It's only a sky there but I created something on that sky. And more like it's a style, when you look, if you want to look at it.

Tony: Then you said that you think that this is going to go through another phase and then that those cabins will be in places where they may be looking out at the rocks and so on. Are you suggesting then that those cabins which would be done more or less realistically, would be placed in a landscape that would be depicted in the way in which you see the characters and the faces and people in the rocks? Are you talking about putting them into that kind of a landscape?

James: Really, it really doesn't matter. That's how you looked at it, the way you seen it.

Tony: Well, I'm asking you if that's what you're saying.

James: It would originate into that. Like, say the log cabin and the mist or something or the clouds or whatever. It would originate into that. Or it would originate inside the log cabin or outside, or this kind of painting there. The abstract or the native art on top of it or in it.

Tony: I see.

James: It goes on both sides.

Tony: I see.

James: But right now I can't tell you because it hasn't originated in that yet. Maybe it would originate into a totally different thing. There is a lot of ways because I'm in a phase now... I'm inbetween the... like, say I'm walking along the fence. And it's on this side or this side. And it all depends on which way you want to fall. Or you want to get back on top of it or whatever. Things like that is how I look at it right now.

Tony: You were saying too that the characters and things that you've seen in the landscape, these are all tied into legends. Or many of them are, right?

James: Yeah.

Tony: So it's not enough for you to just to go around, see these places. You have to know some of the stories that are behind them. Is that right?

James: Let's say certain places. Let's say the Kwangaw Lake, the Echoes, Dreamers Rock. Okay, the Dreamers Rock. When I make the mountain, you won't see that figure in there, you

know, through your eyes. But that's what it is though, through my eyes. Like, maybe you won't see that figure off the bat. Maybe eventually you'll see two, three, ten, fifteen, twenty, hundred years or it goes on. And the point is, the legend behind it or a story behind it is more important than the painting. That's how I look at it. You know, it's that important to me. Like the legends and the art ought to meet each other around four on the legend's side because that's the most important thing behind it, I think. You can't just make a rock and put it, and make a legend on top of it. You got to visit these places and where this happened, where it happened, why it happened. All these media of it is important, of the legend itself. Then you make your painting around the legend. Without the title, you got no story when you look at it.

Tony: Where do you get this? I mean, presumably there are places like Dreamers Rock that are traditionally well-known. Where do the stories come from about those places and some of the other places which may not be as well-known?

James: Well, first of all, Dreamers Rock sounds so beautiful. That's why. And, okay, Kwangaw Lake, how does that sound like? (chuckles) That's how it is. Let's say, Cape Smith, a lot of these (Ojibway), all these places and dreamers.... Dreaming sounds like my dream of something. I wish I had that or something like that. Because Dreamers Rock.... You can go and like, say when I go out to Toronto or something like that, "Oh, that's Dreamers Rock. How does that operate?" You know, well. "You go over there to dream of something then you get it?" You know? That's how they look at it. But Dreamers Rock, it's a place of visions and things like that. How should I put this? You go there to fast, you pray. It's like a church on the Catholic side. Same thing. You don't go there to dream and get whatever you wish for and get the next thing. (chuckles) That's how they look at it though.

Tony: So it's a spiritual place?

James: It's a spiritual place. Really spiritual. That's probably the most spiritual place of all the island really. That's what it is. That's how I found out.

Tony: What about other places on the island that have spiritual significance and that have become part of your paintings?

James: Let's say, Mindemoya, that island there. You know, that's a legend that happened and that's not a spiritual place. But this legend happened and there is significance in these things, why that happened. And (Ojibway) the place of the rocks, white rocks. They said one time these people got lost in a canoe, like on night time or something like that. There is too much islands if you want to go towards, to the east side of the island. There is too much islands, so they can get lost. Okay, one time a whole wall of that cliff lights up so, more like it will serve as a lighthouse to guide us to home. And

there's Kwangaw Lake, I told you about that. It's about a native voice answering back, that's not a spiritual place but they're legends what happened though.

Tony: What are the legends about what happened?

James: Kwangaw Lake is about a quarter of a mile away, this rock, just straight up. And it's surrounded by water. And when you yell towards it, it answers back. Okay, through fall or winter when they yell out towards that rock again, it doesn't answer back. Okay, legend says the spirit on that rock, it is sleeping now, it won't answer back anymore. Look at it too, scientifically, okay. It won't answer back because there's snow on it, because the voice of the man or woman hitting on that rock, cushions the... like the snow or something or the trees or... But you know, that's how these, you know, how should I look at it? They are not spiritual. But they're legends.

Tony: But they are legends.

James: Like the places, I say Dreamers Rock, the places of sweat lodges. I can form a sweat lodge anyplace but to perform a sweat lodge and to be inside a sweat lodge, you find yourself saying things inside you, really inside you which are coming out. Especially in Dreamers Rock. You can go over there and

just rocks, they turn to a certain color after they are used in sweat lodge. Yellow, red, darkened brown or orange and things like that. But there is a lot of rocks out there that have been used long ago. You know, you can tell. You can hit it towards another rock and it splits open because it was burned one time. And oh, there is a lot of things really you can relate to Dreamers Rock. Like the Bell Rocks. All these places there, they all relate to each other. And that's where it all started. Like man evolving to, like let's say Anishnabe, the native people, Indian people. Say the flight of the Thunderbird. Let's say God created man. He can look at you that way, too. But on the legend, spiritual side, it's native, like fight the Thunderbird. Like the Great Spirit came there and planted man as seeds and planted something else. Like the egg, like, "When I return, if the egg will hatch."

Tony: You mean when the Thunderbird returns, the egg will hatch.

James: Yeah, or the Great Spirit.

Tony: Yes.

James: Maybe why they call it Thunderbird, this something came down like a bird. Like one time it was like a bird. That's all that we can explain. It's like the birds. That's what that thing was like or what it came down. That's how they can explain it. And it roared like thunder, can look through that way, too. Okay, now, okay, a craft. You can look at a craft or a person or a Great Spirit or something, and it all evolved

through that word Thunderbird. Maybe there is a lot of explanation that can go through it when you look at it. But to me the important thing is the seeding of man or the seeding of Anishnabe or, you know, it goes on and on. And where people, maybe they're hoping now where the people, their same spirit is going to return. Okay, it landed there, that's what returned there, like home. You left here and he's gone; he'll return. Maybe he knows this one spot, okay he'll return there to a certain spot. You could say it was God, you could say it was Jesus or something.

One time, the Indians, there is a story they seen Jesus. You know, like they would used to cut the native person's hair but when they seen this person, he had long hair. You know, long black hair, light skin and things like that. It was, when you look at it, over there it was a Jew. Michelangelo painted him as a white man when you look at it, and all the Jewish have real kind of dark flesh, brown skin or something like that.

Tony: Are you saying then that Dreamers Rock, that area there, is the birthplace of the nation, of the Ojibway nation then? That that egg was placed there?

James: You can look at it through that way because, okay, we started off from a spiritual side of it. Spiritual side of the nation itself. And probably it's the place. Maybe they met them, looking through that. And, well something happened (chuckles), put it that way. Ask Ernest over here. You're getting me stuck.

Tony: Something spiritual happened there.

James: Yeah, something spiritual happened and more like it was said, he'll return.

Ernest: I'm learning from my brother myself.

James: Maybe something will happen. You got to look at it through the, like it's on the verge of maybe the Great Spirit returning. It's on the verge, maybe He's on his way. Things are happening what shouldn't happen.

Ernest: I would like to ask Jim here, when he said that this, that the reason that rock wouldn't answer anymore was that the spirit is asleep.

James: Yeah.

Ernest: Every time they gather at the Bell Rock... well I was only at one. There was a ceremony there by Tootosis.

James: Yeah, Ernest.

Ernest: Ernest. And I think Art Nawagahbo got up and talked about the legend. He struck this on the end he was approaching and apparently it made a great noise, it could spread. Is it

because it doesn't make much of a noise now, would it be that the spirit is asleep in those rocks now? Because it doesn't make as loud a noise? Now it doesn't carry as far?

James: Well, when you hit it, you can hear it, say ten feet now. But it was known that rock rang right across until Thunder Bay.

Ernest: This is the Bell Rock.

James: The Bell Rocks like that, because they're more like a guardian.

Ernest: See, now it's kind of weak.

James: Or it's gone or it's sleeping or he's waiting. Look at it that way, you know.

Tony: The Bell Rocks are at Dreamers Rock?

James: Yeah.

Ernest: Have you been there, Tony?

Tony: Not yet, no, because of the weather yet, about spring. But.... So maybe we should talk about some of the paintings.

James: Yeah.

Tony: Specifically. While you're talking about them I'm going to get this ready. How about this one, James, the one that's - tell us about that one?

James: Okay, that one is about the mainland. All the places over there are, let's say they're houses. Like, say I thought about them sweatlodges near Dreamers Rock area, the mainland on the other side. Okay, the one there is the Manitoulin. There is an island on this side and across the bay there is a mainland sweatlodge and things like that. Places, the place you can go to get purified, more like saying.

Tony: Whereabouts is that exactly?

James: Around Dreamers Rock area, the mainland. Dreamers Rock. And this here, that's Manitoulin here, sleeping. (chuckles) Put that stick in front of you. (chuckles).

Ernest: Okay, carry it all over.

James: Yeah, by carriers. Went up towards Sault Ste. Marie and asked, and it was going to go back, I think it was around the Toronto/Hamilton area there. That's where it was made, that wampum. And I guess the carrier died here I guess or something and that was one of his possessions. And you used to have to bury with a person's possessions. And the wampum belt is inside him really, when you look at it.

Ernest: Somewhere up here.

James: And they...

Christine: Who were the carriers?

James: Hard to say. More like to each tribe.

Ernest: All we can say is that it was handed down almost through one family. (Ojibway).

Tony: I think you mean, who...

James: Like, each carriers.

Christine: Yeah.

James: More like their tribe probably. Like over here there was (Ojibway) supposed to carry that.

Christine: But how did they come to be the carriers? How were they chosen to be the carriers?

James: Like the leaders. Probably the leaders of each tribe, probably. More like he can... but any Tom, Dick and Harry to carry something. (chuckles) Maybe they did.

Ernest: You know that description of the... in 1814 in Drummond Island, the chief talking had it in his hand.

James: Yeah.

Ernest: And berated the British for signing the treaty in Belgium, at Ghent. The Treaty of Ghent. And he said, "You shook hands with the enemy," and he had that, but that (inaudible) over there. The chief says, "O carta," There must have been a mistake because we have no r's in our language.

James: No. (Ojibway).

Ernest: Yeah, just Mohawks have it. There is no l's and no r's in there, in our language.

James: Stanley Swifthawk from South Dakota, like he's an elderly person, we walked around like this and, "I can feel that there is somebody here," he said. That's Dreamers Rock. And he's been doing this from... like this is the third generation these guys are medicine men. "There is something here," he says, "I can feel it." Okay, you know, "What is it?" "I don't know," he says. And we turned around, this one flat bed of Cambrian shield. And that's where we seen all these little mountains of rock all over the place. "There were a lot of us here one time, shaking tents, every kind of ceremonies," he says. "And all these rocks are used." You know, like maybe

one time. Take the old, the green stuff off them, the peat moss or moss out of it, and they're colors. You break some with his hand. A lot of rocks and they're all red and yellowish inside and, "They were used one time. I don't know how long ago but this must be really a spiritual place one time," he says. And maybe this is what I'm feeling here. There were people here before. And that's why I did that certain painting, Dreamer's Rock, on the shores of that Dreamer's Rock. And the sweatlodges.

Tony: And the sweatlodges there. What is this?

James: The egg. Great Spirit and the egg, when he came over and planted that egg.

Tony: Whereabouts?

James: That's, that path, the Thunderbird. When he came down and he was here and he planted something and the people. And he's going to come one time and that egg will hatch. And inside that egg there is spirits. Or there is other sources of something. Or maybe that certain one there, it's the forces of good and evil. Maybe it hatched or something.

Like, say, Bear Walkers. Okay, and we thought, like, say around here, Bear Walks. Bear Walks are, maybe they're long gone. We thought they were long gone with the only part that's here was probably just the native art, we thought. Okay, there is young people. There is some young people now, they say there is around seventeen Bear Walks here now. Like you know, they are more powerful than yesterday's Bear Walks. Because there is more things you can choose from. There is a lot of bad things

on this earth now you can use to do something bad to other people or to yourself or to anybody. Like, say a zombie or something like that. You could use something like that and oh, there is a lot of things that a Bear Walk could do.

Ernest: Or you could always think and you could associate it with Tony's suggestion that maybe this was the place of the origin of our people because the egg represents the origin of something.

James: Right, right. Exactly. Maybe that's what he brought over or something like that.

Tony: Is that Dreamer's Rock, too?

James: Yes.

Tony: That background?

James: Yes. Like, he brought a lot of things over with him, like say history or something like that, you know. Like, say, let's say the existence of people, like native people. Okay, there is a lot of things associated with that. He brought things over. He probably just didn't bring good over. He

brought some little bit of bad, too. Like, say bad medicines too and good medicines, love, name it. He brought everything over. Let's say he brought the evil or what's inside of the egg. Maybe when it hatches what is that the egg, is that the ones who is going to choose the people, let's say hell, then heaven, put it that way. Make it a little bit understandable. And around the bird itself, there is other creatures. There is spirits, the back of the eye. Like all of that is the bird's sticking out of the... you know, it's only the head part of the... more or less the Thunderbird. Okay, there is the eye, there is the beak. Behind the eye, there is the spirit again. On the other side, from... like the water coming out... there is more like the water creature. Goes, you know, depicts a lot of things just in that one painting.

Ernest: I like James' explanation for the exploration of his painting. It's his dream before he left to go to Rome...

Tony: Yes. Which one, tell us about the dream you had.

James: That we had a show over in Rome at first, then to Bali. But the Rome was the more things because it had something like, more like a destiny I wanted to find out. Because before I

took off, I had a dream of seeing a big, huge church. It was so enormous, it was big. And the morning we left, we were sleeping at the Skyline that night when I had this dream at the Toronto International. And all the way I thought, I wonder if the St. Peter's is that big. But no, it wasn't. This one was twice the size, four times the size and wider like that. It was just huge. And when I seen St. Peter's, it wasn't that. I started asking people around, "Is there any more churches around here, some big like, maybe another half the size of the Colosseum?" "No, no, just the St. Peter's." The one in Russia is really about the size of that. Now, I just want to find out. Went to Bali, there is a lot of churches and all Italy itself. So I came home.

Then I was more, like, dissatisfied. You know, I didn't find that. Didn't find that at all. Then I went back to Dreamers Rock and there was another, more intellectual version in these lectures Dreamers Rock. And that's where I seen that, sitting on the end of the dock there, that lodge. That's where I seen that church. In my dream. It was huge, and I looked up. I was fishing for pike at the end. That's where I seen that church. I know I looked up on that rock. That's where I seen that huge, huge, more like it's - it's a sacred place, I guess.

Like, nearly all of my dreams come true. Sixty, seventy, eighty percent of them. A lot of them. And some of them are scaring. But you know, obviously happened I think, like just accept them. Sometimes I can manipulate them, too. When you're half awake and things like that. You can control the dream. You know, like the one I had there about a week ago, like bears fighting. Them animals are going to hurt themselves and okay, I'm awake, I'm still dreaming. I just went over there because I'm not going to get hurt anyway, I

thought. I was going over there and they're not fighting. Then a week past this, a few days ago, the dogs were just yelling away about four o'clock in the morning. I went out and there was a couple of bears around there. You know, they were fighting, fighting dogs or something. They were waiting; they were hungry. Going to go after garbage or something. Maybe that dream was it. But they weren't fighting because the dogs were fighting. But I didn't stop them or nothing like that. Because another one came true. Goes on and on and on.

That's the same way, like these paintings are seen as dreams. I've seen them. Like right now, if I'm not inspirated, just go out, maybe play a few games or something with my brother there. And all of a sudden this flash of a painting comes out. Like a certain spot. Pick a topic and just flash, that painting just comes on. Just for a while and just fades away. That's a nice

painting, I think. And that painting is still on your mind. Stays all there all the time. And it happens every day more like. Flashes of paint comes on there and it stores back in your memory bank or something but it stays there. Until it's finished or until it's done or when you want to do it or when you want to talk about it.

Ernest: Jim, going back to this church thing. Ernest Tootosis, when I first met him and talked about our idea, our concept of a church, the Indian concept of a church and the white man's concept of a church is this. A white man built a church and he went in there, there were objects and pictures to remind him of the spirit, of his spirit and his God. But he says in ours, the whole world was our church. The entire world was there. The whole world was a cathedral. The animals, the sky and everything. They were visual reminders of our spirit. This is what He created, this is what He said. And when you got up to Bell Rocks, that's all marble-like stone. Like a cathedral up there. You go up there. You haven't been up there, Tony. You go up there, that rock is there like a marble up there.

James: White rock.

Ernest: I don't know what the name of it is, what the geologists called it - there is a name for it, it's not like this.

James: I know what you mean.

Ernest: It's different. It's not limestone or quartz.

James: Quartz, something like that, yeah.

Ernest: Very marble-like stone.

James: (Ojibway).

Christine: (Inaudible) (chuckles).

Tony: Join the party. Okay, what about this painting, James? What is this one?

James: That's the one, I think that's The Echo. Kwangaw, Kwangaw Lake.

Tony: This is Kwangaw Lake?

James: Yeah.

Tony: Can you describe what that painting is saying?

James: That's the echo, one of the stories I talked about there, that's spiritual, that's a legend. The Kwangaw Lake. It's really to do with the echoes. When he yelled against a rock, it has an echo by itself and it speaks back. Okay, like spirits go to bed too, when you look at it. And okay, he's holding a baby also. You can hardly see it. And when you yell against the rocks, the rocks will yell back, and in the winter-time, it won't. Okay, they're hibernating. The spirits are asleep. And through the scientific way when they look at it, they don't yell back because they'll say it could be another reason. They would say the voices of the man doesn't bounce back because the snow is squishing the man's voice. And that's what really that whole painting is all about. About the spirits, hibernation, I guess should say. But it's called The Echo.

Ernest: (Ojibway) Where is this?

James: Just south of the bay.

Ernest: South Bay?

James: Yeah. Forty, fifty miles from here. Forty miles probably.

Christine: How do you spell Kwangaw?

Ernest: K-w-a-n-g-a-w. (Ojibway).

James: That's the person that used to live over there.

Ernest: Oh, that's what his name was.

James: Yeah, Kwangaw. The spruce clan. Once they had a clan. All these medicines have their own doctor or something. Like, say the spruce and the cedar, it's good for certain colds and things like that. Okay, that woman or that man is helping up each other or something, from a disease or from a cold or name it. And all the remedies are all around them. All the remedies are, like today's, we find out it's from the earth, name it. That's what that is. All the respect itself isn't within us. That's nice. Sometimes I go on boat rides just to see the cliffs around Manitoulin, just to find out what they're

about, what they look like.

Tony: Whereabouts is that painting?

James: This one here is around, let me see, Cape Smith area, the more I look at it. Cape Smith, and you got to go towards the bay to look...

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Ernest: Just thinking, Jim has a... like everything relates to the sky and the bringing of man by the Thunderbird. But the Anishnabe creation originates from the turtle, eh, the island. Just strictly earth, released to the earth more, eh, (Ojibway). Everything is from up above. Instead of from the ground.

James: From the ground up.

Ernest: From the ground up, yours was from - and they always used to say, some people I talk to.... I remember talking to Alec Pelletier. He says the Indians always work from the top, down. You know. I forget now what he was trying to explain to me now. It'll come back to me later on.

James: Because you know, I think to me, like right now, the most important thing right now is the skies. That's why man is kicking, you know, like man himself.

Ernest: Industries are destroying the sky.

James: That's how they are going to destroy themselves. In water, that's the most things that man needs right now is that. Air and water, that's what he breathes. Half of his body, more than half of his body, is water. Like food need. Okay, your food when you plant it needs water and air and they are just going to self-destruct when you look at it.

Ernest: Some have said that these structures in Mexico - I think that's what Patty was telling about - there is no logical explanation how those rocks got there and how they could have been moved. It had to be by various supernatural things. You know, there is no way that you could have done it physically. On this earth. It had to be somebody, some force, supernatural force was used to bring those huge things on top of one another - unless it was these big birds. (chuckles)

(break in tape)

Tony: Okay, how about this painting, James?

James: Okay, that one is titled The Lonely Island (The Crying Island). The Crying Island is a place that's located about a mile and a half out towards the Georgian Bay on the southern side of the island, of the reservation. More like saying the other side of the mainland. Okay, when the big fire was taking

place here, around the 1600s, the people burnt all this island totally because there was bad medicine on it and they thought the Great Spirit was doing bad things on them or punishing them or something because they did something wrong. All this sickness coming towards and among the people.

After they did that, they put a guardian on the Lonely Island (it's called now) to guard the, more like intruders or somebody on the island. And the baby was left there. The beliefs they had, say about four or five centuries ago, like that guy that was talking about, and the people took off but the baby will still stay there. And like, it will die eventually but the spirit will be there. Like, you can say ghosts or something. And up to today now, you can hear sounds. Nobody never returned, and maybe they should have made a ceremony on that island long ago and now people go netting and fishing and things like that, can hear sounds right before dusk. Especially on summertimes. They can hear sounds over there or could be winds or something. And that island, that Crying Island, that baby ain't a baby spiritwise. He's grown up and there is a lot of ships getting destroyed. Maybe he's doing them; maybe he's punishing the people now. Like, we asked around, "How come that baby is like that? Like you know, is crying all the time or something?" And they say, "Nobody didn't go back to make a ceremony on that island to give him

thanks or something to taking care of the island itself." That you nourish it back again to the maple trees and things like that. And every time that baby cries, that's the only place on that side there is rattlesnakes. The rattlesnakes are biting that baby's spirit or something and he cries and cries. And that's why, more like, there's those noises over there. It's not a baby anymore, it's more like it's a growing spirit. And that's what I'm depicting, that story in that painting.

Christine: Where did the people go after the fire?

James: To the mainland more. Like, say all this when you go out towards the, what do you call it? Let's say Chicago, Chicago area. At that time it wasn't named Chicago, it was called Chiconguis(?) I think. (Ojibway) And all around the Michigan area. Like, then it wasn't Michigan yet. But today it's around that area, all over the place. I guess this sickness was happening all across North America. But especially this was a place for peace talks and the Manitoulin itself then. And after that is when all this fighting started originating. But it used to be a place of peace and ceremonies, spiritual ceremonies, shaking tents, and things like that. And they returned I guess a century after or something, after everything grew back. I imagine it's the century. That's when everything starts to grow back again. When it's totally destroyed. That's what that painting is about. You got to cut it again. Put another one up.

(break in tape)

James: This one is called Red Rock. It's a red cliff

located around the Bidwell district. It's not the rock that's red, you can tell. But more like obb(?) grew there abundantly. Kiwi (Ojibway). Like there is a lot of strippers from (Ojibway) really. There is medicines (inaudible). That kiwi, I know in Regina it's popular, I guess. Do you know about a kiwi tree?

Christine: Red?

James: Yeah, red willow, yeah.

Christine: Red willow, yeah.

James: When you peel it, you dry it. There is no more in Regina though, I think.

Ernest: (Ojibway)

James: Yeah, the bush.

Ernest: Yeah, the elder (inaudible).

Christine: Alderberry.

James: Yeah.

Ernest: Red bush.

James: And that obb there, that medicine when you boil it. The way it used to be done in that certain area - because there used to be a lot of it in that specific part, like the heart of Manitoulin - you look at it around the Kagawong district there. And it was used for a lot of things, punishments. Punishments. Like legends say that one time it was used to punish the bad people and that's why it turned red or things like that. It has the scars of red anyway, of a very violent punishment. And that represents the blood of something, the kiwi, kiwi (Ojibway), that bush. But there is a winter scene, there is a winter scene on that. That's the inspiration I got from the skies. I would use like, you know, like summer scene but the winter, I was really inspired by the skies.

Tony: What is this one?

James: The Bear Walk. Today's Bear Walk.

Tony: Can you explain it?

James: Okay, first this broken down cabin at the back. Okay, spiritually you can see through the mammals. Or the mammals or the persons on it, you can see right through it. Okay, there is going to be more powerful things or happening today than what used to. Let's say, yesterday's Bear Walks.

Ernest: Why don't you have the Bear Walkers standing beside it?

Tony: Well, these...

James: They're going to be tools. That person there is going to use them as tools. Okay, I used animals and the firefly or dragonfly as an example. But it can be other people as well. And he's learning the art of it. Like plucking feathers off. Okay, the feathers could be hair of something, hair of somebody and you know, do the art of it. And there is a lot more things you can use than just animals itself. Like, it could be a

transformation from something, this Bear Walk or something, like to a dog or something. Now it could be transformation to another person because there is more people now and there is a lot of bad things happened, like bad people, too. He can pick whatever he wants to pick. That's what that is about. And the log cabin represents today, that's today. Look at that again, that's all sky there.

Tony: Yes.

James: That's all sky but you know, where the cloud is, that's where that one ends let's say between the horizon of the sky and the ground. But that's all sky there. There is no ground barrier.

Okay, that's the one you were talking about, the Residential School.

Ernest: Oh, the one up here?

James: Spanish.

Ernest: Spanish, oh.

Christine: That's Spanish.

James: That's a place of discipline. You can look at it too, like, let's say....

Ernest: A spirit lining.

James: Yeah, it's discipline for, let's say today's people. And nobody can have discipline that much because if you want to make something really straight, it either snaps sometime along the way, even halfway near the end or something. Just like people inside themselves. You can't have them the way you want to have them because people are only individuals, and that's what that house is trying to do to people. Like the wood, sometimes. If I lived at then, maybe I would have knew more about that, but what I hear about it today, I don't want to hear it now. Nothing about it, because it was too strict, way too strict. And let's say people, they weren't allowed to speak their own native tongue in there, in that school there. Like you were punished if you say your native tongue. Get punished for that. It wasn't right, that's about all. Could say it wasn't right.

Ernest: It represented the destruction of our culture.

James: (chuckles) That could have been where it all began, probably.

Ernest: That sort of thing.

Tony: Where what began?

James: You're losing... Okay, let's say you're an Indian, went to that school. Your lifetime until you finished school, that much you lost. And you had a whole different aspect of your culture and you're trying to come back and trying to teach enough. You didn't forget your kids. Okay, then the kids, what you're teaching, you didn't teach them all enough what you're supposed to teach them then, what you knew. That thing wasn't there. And okay, the kids didn't know all that you knew before that, then that's why they haven't got no interest now. Like that.

Ernest: (Inaudible)

James: The loss, it's the loss of that. Let's say a tank of gas. That, okay, you only have a quarter tank or something. The fullness of you, you should have known. Or you didn't know, but that part you had to learn English and Geography, Science and Math, whatever.

Ernest: It's sort of collective amnesia.

James: Like that.

Christine: Yeah, severed the connection from the past.

James: Yeah, like that, yeah.

Christine: (Inaudible).

James: That's what happened there. Hmm, really something. This is located on the...

Ernest: (Inaudible).

James: Yeah, this is located on the Little Current bridge. Okay, there used to be an annual thing, long ago, I guess. I heard about that. All the time that thing goes towards the lake, that water fast. It supposed to go fast. And maybe the tide goes or something, sometimes it goes the opposite, it goes around the currents. And the spirit wants you to make, make

it through. Like he won't take you. Like to go to the mainland. More like swimming or something like that, go swimming across it. And sometimes a lot of people never used to make it and they were pulled in, like the current itself. Like, maybe the strong will survive but, you know, it's more like the spirit. The spirit of it. You challenge it or it

challenges you.

Tony: This is the spirit in here, is it?

James: Okay, that's towards the Dreamers Rock area. That's where the most highest point of mountain there is. Like all these rocks in the mountains in Espanola, that's the highest part there is, is Dreamers Rock. When you go on top of it you can see for miles and miles and miles. Have been for, I think it's Badgeley Channel, you can see Killarney from that. Like eventually, well they're mining there now, Badgeley Channel. This Killarney, they eventually see Killarney. But you can see for miles, that is the highest part of all of the mountains there, on that area.

Ernest: I would like to go up in a plane sometime and see the route of it.

James: Gathering Kindling is what it's called.

Christine: That's what that's called?

James: Yeah, Gathering Kindling. That's an old lady there. Native person made that word, Canada. Canendoine, that's what it means, 'where we all live.' And eventually it went into like, let's say somebody trying to read it out like maybe the British, something like that and said Canada.

Ernest: I saw that in a history book when I was a kid. The interpretation was 'collection of huts' but from what language, I don't know. But it seemed to fit there, too, in our language. Because it's an Iroquois word I think. But then it also fits our language.

Tony: So what's the significance of the buildings and the old woman in this, Gathering Kindling?

James: That's where it all began. Really, like say, the English and, or the French. Like the two nationalities living with each other. That's, okay, he has the hardships of it, too. Okay, and we had huts. Okay, when history was more, going

into modern stages, they made people move out of their huts and move into the log cabins and that's the same you would have seen long ago. Like, still gathering kindling and like that. Like, just time stood still for... maybe right now time is standing still. But still, it's Gathering Kindling.

The history makers. That one's the Jesuits I think.

Tony: What have we got here?

James: To be sure, the Settlement and the Mission, yeah. You would say the clashes, too. Like a priest holding up a cross and the medicine man holding up a medicine bag. The same thing and the power clashes in between them, like, say in two separate circles, meeting them halfway between circle to circle.

That's Indian people and, now, like say white people. In the centre of the barrier, they can't come across. Okay, this is my part. And nobody doesn't want to budge. And...

Tony: What are these out here?

James: Sweatlodges, homes, and things like that. And the house there as a priest lives in, or a Jesuit, or a mission, or a church. Look at it through that, through the eyes of that. And their sweatlodge is on the other side and there is two beliefs on the painting. One the obb side, on the native side, it's the medicine man and shaking tents, snake clans, name it. All a bunch of spider clans, name it. And the other side, there is Jesus and saints and things like that. Okay, a preacher on both sides. You obviously want to go into a clash eventually. It started long ago but eventually they just walk on this fence, on both sides of the fence. Like this, just keep walking along. The same pace, but they don't want to cross through each other's fence.

The Merchants. (chuckles) They're something, the Traders, yeah. The Traders in Winter. There was people here who lived here long, long ago. And what the white man knew, like the Indian people knew obviously that color, that gold. And it went across. And that was the trading for something like an axe or a knife or something, that sweet metal. And there is parts here that's, a lot of that stuff is hidden, one of these caves. I think that they stayed around the South Bay area. And there is one person that is looking for that and he bumped into something like sixty-seven caves already. Like, within the twenty year span, when he was searching for that cave. And Mary Lou was talking about that and Keith was talking about

that. There is, like, man was put on there, and he was hit in the head and he was killed in there and his spirit is there. They were trying to get in there... something comes off, shuts off your light or grabs your light or something and kicks you off the first ten feet of that cave or something. It's well camouflaged, I guess, and the person who knew that, he went into a forbidden place. Can't talk, he was too scared. A stroke or name it. But he died eventually without telling where that place, certain place is. Maybe these medicine men got up and they... like nobody touched these, because it's used for bad, really, like money and trading, things like that. And that's what that thing is all about. The traders is taking things. Not stealing them but just taking them where it originated. And like the merchants, like storekeepers and things like that. Like from that little thing alone, there is a lot of history behind it. And it even goes towards the cave and goes towards way beyond that, too. That sweet metal they used to call it.

Tony: Sweet metal?

James: Sweet metal. Well, it's soft. Well, you know, it wasn't in chunks, like flakes. They did something to it. You know, they used to be little bit nuggets too and put holes

through it, you know. Wear it and things like this, you know. And that's what they used to trade them. At one time only, that rock. You know, it used to be abundant. And all across, let's say Ontario, there was people on every square mile of it, looking for that thing. And that's why he can't really see it now because, more like, it's been picked over or something and just signs of it. You can hear it nowadays like what they used to trade, just that. And if they can find it then they went into fur. But I think that's where it originated, the merchant. The Traders.

Christine: It wasn't copper? No?

James: Maybe in Sudbury. (chuckles) Maybe in Copper Cliff, I don't know.

Ernest: There is copper right on the mainland here, right across.

James: There is a lot of it. There is a lot of stuff here. It's copper, uh - Smokehouse. There is copper, turquoise first, it's turquoise.

Christine: (Inaudible).

James: That's the color of it before you...

Ernest: That's the color.

James: Yeah, turquoise. Then you smelter it, then it comes out to copper.

Tony: What about this one, Jim?

James: Today, that's totally today, right now. Say a native person living in that log cabin. But if he wanted to do something, like bad or good, like say, like on the spiritual side of it. He has to still go outside from his own house, like say the smokehouse could be used as a bad or good place to operate in. Like the smokehouse, like shaking tent, or sweatlodge, or spiritual contact, or name it.

Ernest: Just like Jim said, he doesn't get any inspiration from the city because of the concrete, artificial world the city represents. You've got to come back to nature itself.

James: I did a painting one time called Dreams. You know, like it was a reproduction of an elderly man sleeping and all wrinkles and everything, just sleeping there. And it's all clouds and everything and he is seeing, made a log house and all this. All these hydro lines are, you know, coming out above and things like that. And the story says I can't see the visions that much anymore because if something is in the way. Like this happened around the 1500s or the 1800s. Like, there is something in the way, something powerful. And I guess this is these hydro lines. And these little boxes, he says. There

is something come out of these radios. See, pictures, you know. That's one of the legends, too. He's foreseeing this. Like, you can say sorcery or something like that, if you want to say it like that. Maybe I'm one of those, like these things happening. Like these dreams, they do happen. And they're scaring but I learn to accept them, though. Like you know, something bad and sometimes something good. I'm not saying it's bad or good, they just happened. It's really something to know sorcery. (chuckles)

Yesterday's Treasures. Oh yeah, right.

Christine: Did you forget about it?

James: In a way. But you know, Yesterday's Treasures when you look at it, that's more like the illusion on both sides, like,

say history. Like whites and Indians, or any other people. Okay, that's where they started from really. Like before the cities, concrete jungles, things like that. That's where they began. These farming, heartbreaking stuff and things like that. They're in the city now and then they want to go back. Like sweet-smelling fresh air, like go farm, see the corn coming up and the potatoes, things like that. They can go back to it, but you know, same thing as that school, same thing... that they lost connection, the connection of that hose or whatever. They can go back and they think it's easy up here. That's a lot of work. It's a twenty-four hour a day job, and if you want to go back towards the old lifestye, it's not that easy. But that's the most pure, the purest life you can go through, I think. Like them lost treasures I said is farms.

Like to ours, it's a lot of this really getting into the medicine side of it. Really getting to the spiritual side of it and to your own self, finding yourself. Why are you here more like, like there is a reason. Is there a reason why I'm living in this city and working for something? Things like that. They're up on there for everything. You know, you got a gift also. Just like a gifted person, there is a reason why you let - maybe this is why I'm gifted, I'm an artist, like I'm sharing things. Like even here, we're sharing over here right now and to some people, they don't even know they own something so priceless within themselves. They don't know they got that. Sure, you would say, "Oh, art, oh, so what." But everybody has his own individual self, gift.

Like this Angus Trudeau. Like, he didn't know he was a good carver until on his 75th birthday. And that's when he started making and painting these ships. And a lot of things. Like he seen the Virgin Mary, they said, about twenty years ago down in Killarney. He was sitting behind a brush of trees, red willows I think or a rose garden, and one in rose. Maybe they said that's where he seen them. And he painted them. And after that, he just kept that, and he just tells this to very few people. Like he supposed to paint, that's what I seen, over there in Killarney. That's about twenty years ago now or ten years, something like that, he says. And like, he was gifted.

Maybe he was chosen, him, they chose him to see the Virgin Mary or something. Like the point is, the moral of the story is, everybody is gifted. You know, on this earth. And that's how that painting has originated to The Treasures. The Treasures of Life, I guess, more like saying.

The Hunt. Oh, that one, that's The Hunt. That's what it's called. Ernest, (Ojibway). We were talking about this for a while there, when Mary Lou, when all the paintings were on the Foundation there, on the table?

Christine: Yeah.

James: That was the guy who seen them on, that voices of Dreamers Rock. He doesn't go there that much anymore, the sky. Because maybe he's chosen only him to hear these voices. We've heard of people hearing them, like say the Dreamers Rock thing. And we just got to believe through their say. Like that. But this guy always hears voices, maybe just goes around the coast, that's where it starts. That's Badgeley Channel and goes towards Little Current out. It's all like that, all these little islands, thousands of them. Every time he goes in there, he hears voices, turns back. Just maybe goes to Killarney and back, that's about all. That used to be his fishing groups, all around. And then he stopped doing that because he's scaring himself hearing these voices. Maybe he's chosen only him to hear them. But everytime he goes on a hunt or something like that, he's more like.... He's been a guide here since all I can remember. All I can remember is, you know, for a long, long time already though. That's all he's been doing, is just being that.

Christine: What kind of voices?

James: Nobody, nobody can't say what they sound like because they sound really, like a really sweet tune. Not a specific chord, like an A minor or something. Like you know, it's really good whistling or them kind of sounds. Really, can't really explain them. But they are. Yeah.

Tony: Take that off the wall?

James: Yeah, take it off the wall there. Badgeley Channel.

Tony: This one is stretched on a piece of plywood, heavy.

James: Just put it up there someplace. It's a, what do you call it, cardboard painting. This one's located just before you get to Killarney, you got to go through that cove. And I think that's the deepest place there is too, I think. Badgeley, Badgeley Channel. Like sometimes people, like that's one of their routes. They used to go to the mainland, let's say to the mainland near the highway 17. You got to go through that current. And when you get caught in there, you can't survive. It's only about three quarters of a mile you can go through in there. And the waves inside there, sometimes they

reach up to twenty, twenty feet. And sometimes the boats can't survive. And there is no way you can go towards the shore because the rocks are just straight up on both sides, sheer, all rock.

Tony: So what are these two figures in there?

James: Maybe they're the ones that make the water so turbulent, not to, a boat just survived to go through there. So that's what they do. You just stand up like that.

Tony: That's about it I think.

James: Over at, let's say Cape Smith. Sheer drop like over there.

Ernest: (Inaudible).

James: This one is, let's say it's about, it would be a seventy-five foot drop. Something like that, it just ends. Like literally ends. Maybe that's where the Niagara escarpment is or something. Like say the Niagara Falls, it's like that too, I guess. They take the water off.

Ernest: It's like that around Thunder Bay, eh.

James: Where it begins, yeah.

Ernest: Around there it's sheer.

Tony: Sheer drop.

James: Yeah, like that. Maybe something, maybe. Well, they called it Precambrian Shield, eh. That's the oldest rock there is. I guess it just goes on and down like a... let's say that West Bay. On the end it just goes drop, too. There is a drop. Okay, come down again and sheer drop again. And this one goes all the way around till practically South Bay. All the way around to South Bay. You can see some of it when you go out to South Bay mouth. Right across the bay there, that's where it all starts to begin, all the way around.

Ernest: The north shore drops.

James: Yeah, drops.

Christine: Are there stories about how the island was created? How the island itself was created?

James: Well there is really a lot of things to it now. There is one, well, more like to do with water quite a lot. There used to be just three points here one time; Dreamers Rock and Cup and Saucer and the Cape Smith. They say it all began with water going down. The time the great flood water went down too much and all these little islands came up. And there is another one, and like (Ojibway) his spirits or something like

that. There was scapegoats more or less. These paths, they were put on there so these guys will step all over the place just to go across, you know, faster.

Tony: Oh, like stepping stones.

James: Yeah, like that. Just, a lot of things.

Ernest: There is a rare dramatic version of the creation of this by the Great Spirit. That spirit picked the very best of the surrounding countryside and put it all together because they knew nobody is on the island. Where, like, they got evergreens, the evergreen of the north shore, which we have a lot of on the north shore. Not much hardwood. And yet we've got a lot of hardwood here. You've got a little bit of southern Ontario on parts of the island. Apple trees and this and that. And a lot of it resembles the north shore very close. It's like the story says, the prettiest parts of the surrounding area are all incorporated into Manitoulin.

Tony: Sort of made a paradise.

Ernest: Yeah, made a paradise.

James: Paradise, yeah.

Ernest: I've got that in that outline.

James: Really something. A little bit of everything. Yeah, there is an old man that lives down the hill here, he used to have plum trees.

Ernest: Oh, there used to be a lot of plum trees. Lots of plum trees. Even some people, the settlers grew pear trees. Didn't grow too well but they grew.

James: There is some parts here, really, you know, fruits. Like say, across the bay over there. Used to be settlements over there and people moved towards the village and there is a lot of stuff over there.

Ernest: Cherry trees...

James: Yeah, like that and apples, eh.

Ernest: A lot of apples. Used to be a lot of apples.

James: They grow like pumpkins. (chuckles) Maybe they are pumpkins. (chuckles) Pumpkin trees.

Ernest: That's good. I like that building. It's like an architect's drawing.

James: I like doing stuff like that. You know, depicting these angles. They are challenges. If you want to paint them, the easiest way if you want to make something is to start off with the roof. Then you work down. Just like the skies. (chuckles) Start working there and all the rest is easy. And

you're, you know, if you're a good pool player and a thirty-five degree angle. Just look at that.

Ernest: They say that's the difference between the man made thing and what God created. There is no angles in God's creation. It's the man-made everything, straight lines and angles.

James: Yeah. What else you want to talk about there?

Tony: What else do you know?

James: (chuckles).

(End of Side)

(End of Interview)

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