- General reminiscences of his life.

NOTE: The quality of this tape is very poor and thus the dialogue is often very difficult to understand.

Tommy: ...and then put water in them. Of course, you know, this land is good for wheat. And then wheat grows up nice. Then the old people, oh, line up, you know. Get knives and bundle them up, tie them up. Keep on that way. They got them all in bundles and then put them on little girl(?), eh. Get six horse, tie them together, you see, and one man stand in the middle, get (inaudible). Smashing the wheat straw. When you got all that smashed, get the oil out and you get that fix the straw, take it out. There's not very good (inaudible) to put the horses in, eh. You got them (inaudible) good. Take everything out, when they dig all that dirt and the wheat... There's about a kind of a little clean place. Well, while they clean it, you see. You got them cleaned, set them all up, pack them to the flour mill -- six, seven (inaudible). Come back
with lots of flour, then last quite a while for the family.

Imbert: What would you make with the flour in those days? What sort of things could you make with the flour? What would you... make bread with it, with the flour? What did you make the flour in? How did you cook the flour? Would you make the bread...?

Tommy: Oh, you got a pan, you got a pan -- make a fire. See, that fix the flour. Fix them up good and hard and then cut a little piece and stick them up and put them on a pan and watch the fire, eh. Got them all cooked, throw them in there, let the kids eat.

Imbert: Did people have plenty to eat in those days? Or was it difficult to get food in those days?

Tommy: Any good enough man he'll be down river making fish, salmon. By this time he'll stay there till everything gets overflow, you know. We have lots of fish, of course. But I know, I remember I was in (inaudible).

Imbert: Do you remember, can you tell me about some of the old people that you knew? You know, were they on the reserve here or around here? Some of the old-timers when you were young. Were there some famous chiefs and people there at that time? Who was the most important man then, at that time?

Tommy: I couldn't remember who is, you know. They all work where I was. Everybody help each other.

Imbert: I wondered if there was some famous old people there at the time.

Tommy: You see, I wasn't very much on the old people bands for long time. When I started to grow up I started to work. I sure work since I was a kid.

Imbert: What was your first job when you were a kid? What was your first job?

Tommy: Oh, making a little wood in the wintertime, feeding the cows.

Imbert: Who did you do that for? Who were you working for?

Tommy: Alkali.

Imbert: Alkali?

Tommy: Alkali.

Imbert: You were brought up...

Tommy: That's where I was, I raised. And then when I get out of that (inaudible) just like he (inaudible) me. I don't
doubt him how much he pay me, no sir. He tell me, "Here. Come here we'll go out and work." I go, I never know to say how much we get, not like it is now. I go with him just like he's feeding me. Of course I never know how much he gives me. When my mother come and ask for something, well, the old fellow take me there, he give me some, he... That's the hardest time. I stay there for long time when I started to grow up. And I started to go out -- I work on cattle, work on the cattle. (inaudible) long time pointing up cattles.

Imbert: What ranch was that on?

Tommy: Gang Ranch. And then when they ship to cattle Ashcroft we cross them on the river, no bridges.

Imbert: You had to swim them across? Was that very difficult?

Tommy: Well, there's no bridges, just swim across. Drove boats to each side, driving twenty-five, thirty head and the tow boats drive them across. That's hard time and now we got in 2-300, 400 -- take us three weeks to cross them. When I was a kid I just herd the saddle horse. And I herd thirty saddle horse and me, I just the same. Lots of cowboys working. Oh, them (inaudible). That was the time I started work, you see, and then I go all over. I don't know what to tell you is the cause.

Imbert: Do you remember the pack trains that used to come down there in the winter?

Tommy: Oh yes, yes. My auntie's husband, he was a packer, old Augustine.

Imbert: His name was Augustine?

Tommy: Yes, he's got lots, getting mules. And he's got thirty, forty. I used to help in (inaudible) packs up there, he's all over.

Imbert: Yes, I heard of Augustine. He was a famous packer, yes.

Tommy: Oh yeah, that was a hard time. You got to cross the mud hole and everything, no roads through that time. When those fellows packing horse.

Imbert: Do you remember Cataline? Do you remember old Cataline?

Tommy: Old Cataline, I don't know him, you see. He's around, of course, I help... He was on the road. But I just working on my...

Imbert: You didn't do any packing yourself?

Tommy: No, no. I just riding in the foreman, like. And
teaming -- I used to drive a team, four horses, six horse.

Imbert: Where?

Tommy: On the road to Caribou.

Imbert: Where would you start and where would you come to?

Tommy: Well, I start onward to Ashcroft. Go to (inaudible), Saddle Creek, far as I go. Other fellows goes to (inaudible). Oh, that was bad roads that time, oh my. Muddy, muddy, muddy. That was muddy I tell you.

Imbert: Did you have any, did anything happen when you were driving freight on the road? Was there any incident that happened to you, anything that happened to you in those days?

Tommy: No.

Imbert: No, it was all...

Tommy: You got to (inaudible), you see. I always have a good luck on my trip, eh. I never had any trouble. Only once when I haul this tin roof from Bullion Mine to Mission. That was some hard time. That was the time lots of times I pretty near cry. (laughs) You know, snow steep as this. In some places, you know, where the wind blows them piles. Oh my! Lots of times I like to get away, the boss won't let me, no.

Imbert: What were you hauling then from the Bullion Mine?

Tommy: Oh, that's the tin roof. Tin roof, you know, for the school.

Imbert: Are there any stories about the old days that you remember? Any things that happened, you know, when you were younger? When you were working round, anything that would be interesting, you know, to hear about?

Tommy: Of course, you know, I (inaudible). I kind of forget it all, you know. Course I was working. I still working yet. (laughs) Eighty-four.

Imbert: Are you haying?

Tommy: Eh?

Imbert: You making hay, hay making?

Tommy: Oh yes, I'm stacking. I got one big stack now.

Imbert: My goodness, that's very good for eighty-four!

Tommy: Yeah, eighty-four. I got them all cut and (inaudible) and the boys helped me. Put a... I lay down and the boys put it up yesterday. Oh gee. (laughs) I can stand
it till four o'clock, quit. It's all broke up here, eh. That's from the same thing, moon(?) machine.

Imbert: Oh!

Tommy: All this, yes. You see, I'll just tell you that about noon I, boys was getting (inaudible) moon(?) machine and I make two rounds on that flat. Time I stop about noon and I unhook. Took off everything, that must leave with a bad horse(?) so I doubled it. Oh my! I leaped out, went checking the (inaudible). Machine goes around twice and I'd run (inaudible) collar bone right here. (laughs)

Imbert: Not somebody who's been out haying or in this weather. I don't think he's...

Tommy: (laughing) Maybe (inaudible).

Imbert: You mended up all right.

Tommy: ...feel nothing that day when I get hurt, just... ...no doctor, just Indian doctors. You ever heard of an Indian doctor?

Imbert: I've heard of them. Tell me about them. Some of them were pretty good, weren't they? They had some very good things?

Tommy: Oh God, yeah. I seen once, I seen him. He fixed (inaudible) man. I seen him.

Imbert: What did he do? Could you tell me what he...

Tommy: Well, I'll tell you. He's not in bunch like this. When get that, he out for ten, twenty years, all alone. That's why they did it, I guess, from... I don't know how they get it. Just like when you treat (inaudible). You says (inaudible). Well, that's the one. That's the one, if you smart you'll take the stuff, what you see. (laughs) That's the one.

Imbert: He lived by himself, all alone?

Tommy: All alone.

Imbert: He didn't learn it from anybody else?

Tommy: No. Well, you see, one fellow was telling story. These eight boys kill man and they get away and them boys took him with them. They stay out by Spences Bridge Mountain -- this side. They there for eight years. By God, he hears something. He see the eagle first, eagle, he see that. After a while it come to his head, he says, "That might be the stuff that old (inaudible) get." He don't want to stay with our fathers, you see. Get away all alone. And (inaudible) and coyote. That his friend, only work. See, that's the Indian
doctor, (Indian).

Imbert: What would he do when he cured? When he was curing people, how would he cure them?

Tommy: I don't know. That's, I couldn't tell you anything about it, I don't know. ...what do you call that? Like this.

Imbert: A little stick, a little...

Tommy: Yeah. I watch him. He sing around his (inaudible). After a while he come past here with his (inaudible). He dig that all out and he threwed it into that. Oh, see that blood, oh man! Then he go that fire, get that (inaudible) and burnt and the body, fire. No clothes, nothing.

Imbert: Put the fire...

Tommy: Put the fire through his...

Imbert: His body?

Tommy: Yeah, body.

Imbert: Put the stick through his body?

Tommy: Yeah. We watch him. And lots of peoples says, they'll tell you not to watch him. ...believe it, you see. Of course that fellow we got, he was live not long ago. He die. But that guy, when he work the, oh, he's just going, (inaudible).

Imbert: He made him all better?

Tommy: Make him better, make him work, make him hunt, make him ride around, make him do everything for ten, twenty years before he die.

Imbert: They knew a lot of things, those old people, didn't they? They knew a lot of things. They had a great knowledge about things.

Tommy: Oh yeah, oh my. It would be a real man. They told you he got to be real clean. Got to be real clean to do it. You can't just sleep in house. No, can't do it.

Imbert: Would they go outside and would they pray?

Tommy: Oh yeah.

Imbert: Pray to, you know, they...

Tommy: Fresh air, everything.

Imbert: Yes, I've heard that they had to be very clean.

Tommy: That's what it is. That fellow that he get the
eagle. And when he get the eagle first it was easy to get that
eagle. But when you see that something get down to get him,
it's hard to get them others. Eagle is the easiest.

Imbert: This is very interesting. Is there anything like
that, or anything more like that about the old days you could
tell us?

Tommy: Let me see. I'll tell you when he sees something he
get mad and get some, somebody else. He'd kill them right
there. Just like this lightning. Now those (inaudible). Oh
there's hard people who, what you call Indian doctor, but us
now, nothing.

Imbert: Yes. This is very nice. Thank you very much. Let's
see you think of something else.

Tommy: ...I heard about one time those people, you know,
they don't got no match, nothing. Use stick, you get a stick,
dry stick, and do that. That's where they make fire when they
get a little spark, and a bunch of guys and they blow it and
it'll burn, you see. Once if everybody gets fires, oh, miles
and miles away from there they burn it right through. Going
down (inaudible). Somebody in there will die without fire,
without grub, nothing. Oh, those guys, lots of people in there
dead. And they pass that fire right along. When he thinks the
fire good he said he make a little (inaudible) the fire life,
get it hot. Not go out at all. I know that I heard that a
long time ago. This fellow that (inaudible) come down and old
people, he's dead before the fire get there, see. (Inaudible)
saves lots of people.

Imbert: I was going to ask you, did you ever live in a
(Indian) house? Did you ever see the (Indian) houses? Do you
remember them?

Tommy: No.

Imbert: That was before your time?

Tommy: Before my time.

Imbert: Do you remember stories about the battles between the
Shuswap and the Chilcotin Indians? Do you remember they used
to... Have they had some big battles?

Tommy: I know they going to lose the fight with the
Alexandria people. You couldn't get (inaudible. And Cree
Indians, you have to come over this (inaudible). They got some
young ladies and fight and kill everybody. Steal some girls.
This (inaudible). These fellows never get whipped. (Inaudible)
Oh, lots of fighting before, before I was born I think. I
don't know that but that was the story. Sometimes, you know,
they kill somebody, they just scalp them, them Cree. Take all
his clothes off, take them home, put that stuff on his head and
they'll (inaudible) it around.
Imbert: That was before you time, wasn't it? You don't remember that?

Tommy: Before my time, I don't know that. But there was now, you see, lots of rivalry, lots of things (inaudible). We're just like (laughs)... Oh yes. Well, I never know very much about that, just what I know. Sometimes the old people here goes out to the woods to get those roots, you know, for (inaudible). Lily roots, oh, that's the best eating. There's lots of them in the side (inaudible). It's just something like a turnip stub. Oh, that good eating. That's what they used because, you know. Sometimes when it's hard time before the spring you used to go there and if you got something to burn wood, it would burn wood, and then kind of melt the snow and work at them, take them out. That's for hard times. They just when they have something to eat, old people, long time ago. That's a long time.

Imbert: Do people ever eat those roots nowadays?

Tommy: No.

Imbert: Don't eat them anymore?

Tommy: Oh, there's youngsters is too high, because there's lots of stores. See them stores, they throws -- picks them up and eats them. You know that. Stores there is not spoil something, he throw them out. He come down and he give them to these kids. But, oh, that time my dad was at hard time. I remember when I was kid I used to have... My uncle used to, he'd give us one little muzzle loader, you see. Old Hudson's Bay gun. We used to go out and hunt rabbit. Snow that deep. Go in the snow pile and we see them and shot them. Them trees were low ground. You know how hard time. You see them little holes where the manure is, you see. We look up and some (inaudible), we shot them. That's a hard time. (laughs) Yeah, we kill about four or five and we'll go back. Oh, my mother used to go out and trade them off for something. We don't eat them, just trade them off for a little tea and coffee, something.

Imbert: You used to be hungry in those days?

Tommy: Oh yeah. They don't make salmon, dry salmon; so hungry. I remember that and I start to make it. I make it, I make quite a bit dry salmon and dry deer meat. I make that myself. Now these days I could. I used to have lots of wheat there where I was working. (inaudible) four or five thousand, had enough flour for two years. But oh, lots of people comes in the night and asks for that and we give them that. (laughs) We don't like stores, you know, sell them, you know.

Imbert: Do you remember before the... They had a ranch down at Williams Lake. Who was the first person in there? It wasn't Pitchback, was it?
Tommy: Well, that's Williams Lake.

Imbert: Yes, down where the town is now. There used to be a big ranch there, wasn't there?

Tommy: Well, below (inaudible) Ranch, where the railroad is?

Imbert: Yes.

Tommy: Somebody says that old (inaudible) was right there. I don't know that myself.

Imbert: What old chief was that?


Imbert: Is that what Williams Lake...

Tommy: That's what Williams Lake is now, you see.

Imbert: After old William, eh?

Tommy: Yeah. That's the chief, Williams Lake.

Imbert: He was a chief, was he?

Tommy: Yeah.

Imbert: Where did he live?

Tommy: In there. Williams Lake, that's his place right here.

Imbert: What was his Indian name, do you know?

Tommy: Eh?

Imbert: What was his Indian name?

Tommy: Oh, I don't know, I couldn't tell you. Sure I don't know. I was too young when he... Maybe I wasn't born yet when he die. Oh, that's a long time, boy. Long time. First (inaudible) mission, you see, that site. There's a graveyard there. And then when the school comes in that the government moved the people in here.

Imbert: Down to Sugarcane?

Tommy: Yeah. And they give them little reserve to stay here. That's all we (inaudible). He stays there now and nobody to bother. (laughs) I got to that, oh, that was the First World War. Her father come across from England, shows everything. (inaudible). See these little reserves, that's all we got. The government do as he like with our country. According to the old people, give away. That's the button. (inaudible) in on the (inaudible). Can't do nothing, see.
Can't own this place. What they give us here that's all, all we got. They do what they like with the country. But white people pays taxes, eh. We got something out of it, we got five cents out of a dollar on every ranch here. (Inaudible) in Ottawa, Indians are rich, did you know that?

Imbert: There's a lot of money there, yes.

Tommy: Yeah, rich. But we don't get it. I get the pension, of course, right now I get my money. (laughs) Yeah, all the (inaudible) cause we don't lose them. We got something out of it, put it in the bank, you see. Everything what he get here, what he get from the country, miners, stuff, everything. Indians got some because they got a little reserve here. (laughs) That's the one we got on the cord here, eh. I will have it three weeks before everything settled. I know why it is. Get a little reserve, that's all we got. About 8,000 Indians.

Imbert: I'm just going to see how much more there is on the tape...

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Imbert: Do you remember what they told you in the way of old stories? Where did they live? Where did your people live in those days, in the old days? Where did they live?

Tommy: Oh, you know, these (Indian), that's where they live. You don't have (inaudible). That's where they live. They live anywhere (inaudible). Sometimes when you find something, little stuff stuffed to stay there, they stay there. Get that stuff to eat, because we can't get nothing anywhere else, eh. There was (inaudible). While didn't gets fish, while didn't get roots, while didn't get salmon there. (Inaudible), that's why they stays. They don't have (inaudible).

Imbert: Did they tell you anything about stories and animals and things like that? Were there any stories that were told when you were young, you know?

Tommy: Oh there, you mean those grizzly and wolves?

Imbert: Yes, yes, the animals in those days.

Tommy: Yeah, I remember that my uncle used to say, he used to tell me that, not to fool around where the grizzly is because he'll kill me. Because those old people got no gun, nothing. Got maybe only something was a knife. You got a stick over his hand, you see, sharp with end. When the grizzly come to fight with him, grizzly open his mouth -- put the stick in there. Grizzly can't shut his mouth no more. That's what he did. He couldn't fight with this and then he's bound to kill him.
Imbert: He had to be very brave to that, didn't he?

Tommy: Yeah. Oh, people before, you know, it's just like animal to fight with the animal.

Imbert: They'd have to have a really long stick so that he's...

Tommy: Yes, yes, those bears, you see that. But I don't know anything about it. But I see them arrows, of course. They don't do little rocks. You fix that up, sharpen them up and put them on the end of... They kill deer, bear, anything.

Imbert: What did they make the bows out of?


Imbert: What made the string? What did you make the string out of?

Tommy: Oh, the string, you see, there's lots in here. That's why I could tell you them. Them little grass grows up nice. It's (inaudible) up and fixed the string with it. He knows how to make it. Oh, I seen him make it. You see, he got the stick and then clean the bark off. Get the string, fix that up, he makes breaks that with (Indian), fishing salmon.

Imbert: Same stuff?

Tommy: Oh, lots in this place. I see that.

Imbert: That's stronger than the leather, is it?

Tommy: Yeah.

Imbert: Yes.

Tommy: Well, he use the same thing as these people now -- these strings. That's the same thing. What the old people used to make around here -- there's lots in this country. You can cut them and pile them up and dry them up and then work with them. Old people that use that. Sometimes he makes that for his own blanket, his own clothes.

Imbert: In the old days, before the priests came, before Christianity came, they used to believe in... They had their own religion then, didn't they? They had a very, they used to believe... What did they believe in those days, before Christianity came?

Tommy: Can't answer, that's the hardest thing. I can't understand it. Because first to come in here there's, what do you call, Hudson's Bay -- that's the ones who the people do think like them. But before that I don't know.
Imbert: They didn't tell you what it was that they believed in those days?

Tommy: No.

Imbert: Nobody now knows what that is?

Tommy: Oh yes, now they knows everything. I got lots of books now in here. (laughs) Oh, those days, I don't know, boy. (Inaudible), but Hudson's Bay come in here and before causes lots of fighting before he made it. Indian and white people bad. Lots of fighting before he stay in this place, Hudson's Bay.

Imbert: Fighting with the Hudson's Bay?

Tommy: Oh I was, oh my!

Imbert: Do you remember the gold miners going up? Do you remember the gold miners coming through here, going up to Barkerville and places like that?

Tommy: Oh yes, I remember that.

Imbert: Did the Indians around here ever look for gold in the river?

Tommy: No, no, no. Never know what money is before, till the Hudson's Bay started. And then Hudson's Bay learn them how to trap beaver and things like that. You see, the Hudson's Bay's gun -- oh, about that high. They'll pile the beaver till they come level to it. Beaver maybe over $1,000. (laughs)

But how would they get guns before? That's what I heard. I don't know that but I heard that. How they get the guns, you know. You don't have, you don't have the guns like that, you know. Got a little rock on the...

Imbert: Flint.

Tommy: Yeah. When they got that thing, got a little rock to hammer that thing, and the gun will go off. I seen them things, them guns, but I don't know where it is now.

Imbert: That's what they got when they traded them for the furs?

Tommy: Yes, for beaver. They show them how they trap it, they show them which one to kill. (Inaudible) and then when they kill them (inaudible) trade you the gun. Buy the beaver from that high level -- that's trade.

Imbert: The level of the gun?

Tommy: Yeah. Long time ago. That's what I hear, but I don't see that myself, no. Course I don't know much about this, you see. That's... Oh, I was working all the time, work,
work.

Imbert: When you were little did they tell you stories? Did they tell you stories when you were little, to the children?

Tommy: Oh yeah.

Imbert: What sort of stories would they be?

Tommy: (laughs) Now tell stories when you get out in the (inaudible) long time ago, them old people. I can't understand. I forget them all. Used to go all the time and stay out where there's lots of fish, stay there all summer. Make his crop.

Imbert: You'd move around from one place to another in the summertime?

Tommy: Yeah, move around. Like everybody always... We can move around, we could do that. Lots of fishing places in this country. These fellows here they wouldn't do that.

Imbert: They can go and buy it all in the story now, can't they?

Tommy: Yeah. I was to stop that thing. They opened that stuff, you know, and makes this boy crazy. Hardly anybody likes to work. You work a few days and get drunk. That's the worst of it. All these boys that, oh my! I watch them. Of course they like that stuff, I don't know why.

Imbert: Yes, it's too bad.

Tommy: Too bad. I don't like. Lots of people die on it.

Imbert: Just go and see how we are. Lots of them have been killed on the highway and...

Tommy: Oh yes. See, they don't know what they doing. They just get drunk and go. (inaudible) Tommy had the worst of it.

Imbert: Yes, it's just about finished now. I'll just... There isn't anything else you'd like to say about your life today or life yesterday? Anything you'd like to say about it?

Tommy: Sure, I'll say anything. I like to tell you good before I tell, you see. I wouldn't want to... Oh that, (laughs) I don't do anything much, you know.

Imbert: Well, you've told us some very interesting things. Oh yes, you have.

Tommy: You get the wrong man here. Maybe somebody else would know better. (laughs) I'm a working man, that's all.
Man: Which was better, the life today or the life yesterday? You know, when you were young, was it a better life than it was today?

Tommy: No. Today is all right. Only this thing that's opened now, it's no good.

Man: The whiskey?

Tommy: Why, before it's all right. It's nothing but working and (inaudible), doing everything, eh. We work for our living, go out hunting, do everything. Now those boys are... you don't know that now. All they know is drinking. I'd like to see them quit that. Thousands and thousands dead every year just doing that. You know how before we never do that, because you get sick to die. Now they'd be alive like that, strong. Old Dan rolled over the bend. That's on this (inaudible). A lot of them die on the whiskey. Now maybe you didn't like what I'm saying.

Man: You're right, you're right.

Tommy: I'm right, sure I'm right. If I'm riding with these boys with little, oh, I don't like it. I get -- why I like jump out of there. (laughs) They don't know where they're going. Run over the hill (inaudible).

Man: Well, thank you very much here.

Imbert: I'll take this off you here now.

(END OF SIDE B)
(END OF TAPE)

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