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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Gives his recollections of the early treaty terms.

Thomas: A lot of difference now than there used to be. When they first come together you're supposed to be free, everybody free. They can go out without order. Queen said so. Says, "As long as there's sun there's not going to be change." All this here reserves is going to be lined and nobody's going to break it. It's just like a concrete where the chain drags. That's only garden, just a piece of garden, only garden for the peoples. And they can plant something that they can use. As long as they can work on a little farm they show them how to plant in the first place, you see.

And Queen has got some man coming every day and they says, "You're going to use everything that the white man make. You're going to use it free. You're not going to pay no tax or nothing. Rifles, anything they make you're going to use it. As long as this sun is working." It means the sun goes out and nobody is going to change it. That's what the Queen said in the first place. Everything is going to be strong. Even the rock, white man is not going to rule it. That grass or anything around the outside is in the Indian reserve. No white man is going to come in there and dig around, pull the grass, rule the rock, anything. Highway is going to make and it's just going to be allowed through the reserve, just allowed, that's all. No fifty feet outside, no, just allowed. So they get out and the government, the ground, then they can so many feet outside.

That's right, that's what when we was kids. They'd come along and talk to the old peoples, you know. But them days you got to have an interpreter. Of course, old people don't understand white talking. And I don't go to school myself, but I work with white people and I pick up all this words. So that's about all I can tell you.

Imbert: Do you remember any stories about when the white people first came, the people that saw the first white people coming? Do you remember any stories about that?

Thomas: Oh yeah. They used to go from here to Kamloops. The first store, Kamloops. That's where they used to go up with about fifty salmon, fifty pink salmon and then they pack it up and trade with the tobacco and shirt. And the old timers used to get lots of fur, and Hudson's Bay pile it up, up to the height of the gun and trade off. That's the first one. And gold, they used to measure it in the gun, muzzle loader gun. Put, pour the goal in and they got a load, you see. And they measure it by the finger -- one dollar each finger. That's in the early days. That's the stores, Hudson's Bay they call them. Yeah, ten fingers -- ten dollars. You know, you got... you guys got big fingers, twice as big as mine. One dollar for one finger, that's it. That's the gold. And you get these furs on trade with the muzzle loader guns, you know. That's a long gun, about that long. You got to load them with... Well, you've got a rock to hammer, rock like...

Imbert: Flint.

Thomas: Yeah, flint. That's what they used, no rifles them days. No, not for long time no rifle. And there's lots of game. All kinds of game. You go up here a little ways and you can find all the game you want; ducks, grouse, anything where there's a little water, full of them. Salmon used to run about six or seven feet each side of the river from one end to the other. Sockeye, fish, and they go up and spawn, and then they... You move one of them rocks any place along the river, it's just like worms. And the old timers say that's fish. High water take them down and they come back again to the same place where they left. They come back the same way, always.

Yeah, now it's different. They're trying to raise the fish and they don't know what... When you turn them out they don't know which way to go, see. But them fish, they come out from the

creek, they come out from any place of water, they're going back the same way when they come back. Well, that's as far as I can get you.

Imbert: Did you hear any stories about when Fraser first came down the river?

Thomas: Well, that's... The old-timers used to say that's Fraser come down this river, Fraser River, and Thompson come down this Thompson River, they call him. They call them now is Fraser River and Thompson River. That's Fraser River they come down. That's them two men come down in that. Come down in a boat.

Imbert: Do they remember anything? What it was like when he first came? What people thought about it when he first came here?

Thomas: Well, of course it's pretty friendly. Get together and good friends to one another, you see. Good friends. I seen more French them days, more Frenchmen. More Frenchmen, as long they get farms all the way up Caribou. French. And they are good people, them people. Yeah, you get there when you're running around, you get there noontime, they're having their eat, well, they'd put you at the table and eat, never charge you nothing. Yeah, them French, that's all I seen the first time. No Englishmen had a farm here, just them people.

Imbert: Were the French farms around Lytton here, or were they further up?

Thomas: Well, they was further up, further up. All from between Spences Bridge and Ashcroft and Caribou. They all had farms. That's the first one. All the French. And the French was hauling freight and Mexico, packing trains, Mexico. That's

the first people I seen. And when this railraod was worked, the Chinamen finish it. Must be ninety years now this railroad finished. Chinamen finish it. I'm ninety-one years old now myself. Coming last year November.

Imbert: Where were you born?

Thomas: I was born at Spences Bridge. That's up here, that's my original place, that's where I grow. But I just, my wife is here and I come down here and transfer, but that's where I was raised.

Imbert: What was Spences Bridge? What's the other name of Spences Bridge up there where you were born?

Thomas: Well, (Indian) that's the name of it. But people,

lots of people come here, like Lytton. Maybe your name was Lytton. Well, they call the place Lytton, you see. And Spences Bridge -- Spences used to watch the bridge, so much cross. Spences, that's what they call it Spences Bridge, you see.

Imbert: What does the Indian name mean? Was there a meaning...?

Thomas: (Indian) that means, like, mouth of the river, like, mouth of the river. Get together, you see, (Indian). That's what they call here (Indian). You see, they used to cross in a boat, old-timers used cross in the boat (Indian). That's what (Indian) language was like when the first (Indian) up here before. That's where they named all (Indian) language like, you know.

Imbert: And not Thompson language.

Thomas: No, it must be, I don't know how far down. (Indian) used to be around here and all the names, they got little names, (Indian). That's when you're travelling a little ridge, you know, (Indian) that's it. (Indian) that's (Indian) language. (Indian), that's (Indian) language, that's the water, springs come out from the grounds, you know. (Indian) that's what they call it. All that (Indian) language.

Imbert: Is that quite different from Thompson language?

Thomas: That's a lot different. It's from here to Ashcroft. And then it's (Indian) areas. And from here to (name) that's our language here. But from there, well, different language again, you see. (Inaudible) as far as our language, and from there it's different language again. Lillooet, from there it's different language. Just here, through Ashcroft, (name), (name), Lillooet, that's all this same language. But you get down here a little ways and then it begin to kind of change the way the (inaudible) change, you know.

Imbert: Do you remember some of the famous old chiefs up here? Wasn't there a chief called (name)?

Thomas: Yeah, David (name). That's the guy who was talking. Those big fellows come from the Queen. They was talking to the old fellow after everything was settled. They was talking to the old fellow, and then there's going to be, we're going to make a fire and the first Indians first and then the whites. Water, we're going to drink from water and they drink water. Everything is going to be just fun, like. That's Queen's, Queen Victoria. Everything is settled as long as the sun,

there's nobody going to change it. As long as this sun is running that's the law going to be standing, right there.

Imbert: Was it changed after that?

Thomas: Well, there was a lot of change, of course, you know. There's a lot of change in there. We never used to have a permit, every Indian is just free. He's not going to get no orders from nobody. Just go out whenever he like, going out in the hills and hunt. And he's got the rifle. Everything the white man make, he's going to use it free. No tax as long as there's sun. See, that's changed now.

Imbert: Anything more about this famous old chief, or any of the other old chiefs that were here? Any stories about them, anything that they did?

Thomas: Well, there's one David (name) and there's another one at Spences Bridge. See, they meet there. That's their system. There's two of them. Chief and Chief, there's just two chief. All the rest priest, church. But that's a ground. Ground Chief too, David (name) and (name). I got the picture there of that guy. There's a picture hanging in there. Their hair is long there, never was cut like now.

Imbert: Anything that they did, any stories about them that you can remember?

Thomas: Well, they used to get money, they used to get money from... You go there in the town and they pass a hat around, David (name), they get money. As long as they live, that money is going to come as long as he lives. And it supposed to come all the time, but after the church peoples here, it kind of changed. They take it away from them. They get the paper, you

know, and they take it away. And the Indians supposed to be half-fare on the trains, half-fare. You go anywhere you pay half-fare.

Imbert: Could we hold it there?

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