Intro: My name is Rose Saddleback. I work for the Indian Association. I'm here to take a tape recording of your story or knowledge about the history of this reserve.

Rose: Could you please first tell us your name?

Dezerman: Dezerman Courtoreille.

Rose: What is that again?

Dezerman: Dezerman Courtoreille.

Rose: How do you spell your first name?

Dezerman: I don't know, I can't write.

Rose: Is that Dezerman?

Unknown: Another person in the background said "Zerman".

Rose: Is that Zerma?

Dezerman: Yes, that's correct.
Rose: What is your date of birth?

Dezerman: 28th of December, I'll be 80. (According to the Registered Indian Membership - he was born in 1900. No month or date given).

Rose: 80?

Dezerman: Yeah.

Rose: Where were you born?

Dezerman: Slave Lake but we weren't at that location for a long period as I was told. I don't remember because I was too young.

Rose: Did your parents reside there?

Dezerman: They lived there.

Rose: So, you were born at Slave Lake and relocated to this place?

Dezerman: Yes.

Rose: What are your parents names?

Dezerman: Sophie was my mother's name and my father's name was Julian.

Rose: Julian.

Dezerman: Julian, yes, Julian Courtoreille.

Rose: Were they members of this band?

Dezerman: Yes, this one (meaning Swan River).

Rose: When the people of Treaty 8 area were initially confined to their reserves or bands, what kind of an arrangement was made for them? What was the deal?

Rose: What was arranged within the bands?

Dezerman: Each band retained its own distinct and separate reserves. Take, for instance, our reserve here. It is different from the other reserve. Our reserve is similar to a county. All the land is split into townships. (quarter sections)

(Note: He's implying that the reserve is scattered. It is not whole as other reserves.)

All the other reserves are whole like Driftpile, Sucker Creek, etc. Apparently, our elders of long ago who took
reserves wanted this reserve to be set-up in this manner. They had figured that it was more appropriate to scatter and take sections here and there. There are white people who own their portions of land between the reserve here.

Our elders who took the treaty wanted it that way. They took patches of land at various locations within this vicinity. We have some land at Assineau. I'm not sure how much land we have at that location. I estimate we have over 1 section of land. It extends very close to Canyon Creek.

Rose: Who owned the patch of land at Assineau River?

Dezerman: Ups chi knees. He used to be a councillor here.

Rose: What was....

Dezerman: We didn't have a chief at the time for this band. There was only one chief who lived at Driftpile.

Rose: What was his name? The one from Driftpile?

Dezerman: Driftpile - Key no say oo was his name.

Rose: Kinoseyoo (means fish).

Dezerman: That is why this place is called Kinuso. (laughter) That is an incorrect pronunciation.

He was called Key no say oo, but now the town is called Kinuso. It's like someone is tall. It has a different meaning.

Rose: Did you use to hear the name Mustus?

Dezerman: He lived at Sucker Creek.

Rose: What about Astachukun?

Dezerman: Astachukun lived at Driftpile in the latter period. That was his brother - Mustus. He was the chief after his brother deceased.

Rose: Was Mustus...

Dezerman: He was at a different place, farther north (meaning north of Driftpile).

Rose: Where?

Dezerman: At Sucker Creek.

Rose: Key no say oo had authority over all other bands. He was the chief residing at Driftpile.

Rose: Astachukun and Mustus, were they just councillors?
Dezerman: From there on we had chief and councillors.
Rose: Upon Key no say oo's death, Astachukun replaced him.
Dezerman: Yes, Astachukun took over.
Rose: Did you ever hear the name Pee sa kunapee?

Dezerman: I used to hear that name but I don't believe he took treaty. They lived at the vicinity of the lake.
Rose: What about a cemetery site?
Dezerman: There was one set aside years ago. We have a cemetery site not too far away from here.
Rose: When the survey was initially carried out for the Swan River Band - what was the name of the surveyor?
Dezerman: The surveyor's name?
Rose: Yes.
Dezerman: I'm not sure.

Note: Some unknown voice in the background was saying "Miller." This old man doesn't think he's ever heard of the name.
Rose: McLean?
Dezerman: I think so.
Rose: Approximately what year was that when the band obtained it's reserve allotment?
Dezerman: Pardon?
Rose: What year?
Dezerman: I don't know. I can't remember.
Rose: In 1912 roughly. I guess the Swan River Band held a meeting and agreed to take in five families from over there? Do you recall any of those names?

Note: I made this old man puzzled as I didn't make myself clear as to the location of this place. Someone else said "Slave Lake"?
Dezerman: I think they're probably the Twinn family. They are the ones.
Rose: What are the names?
Dezerman: Edward Twinn - an old man is definitely one of them, has deceased. (Isabella is another - background).

Rose: What about Wards?
Dezerman: I don't think so.
Unknown Character: Benjamin Potskin.
Rose: That was in recent years?
Dezerman: That's right.
Rose: The period I'm talking about is 1912.
Dezerman: Yeah, I know that. That was another person - Francis was his name but he lived at Sawridge. He was in the council. I think those were the only two who came to Swan River. You said they were five families, just Edward and kids and wife.
Rose: What were the children's names?
Dezerman: One was Louie, the eldest and another was Frank known by all of us as Frankie.
Rose: I wonder who was present at the meeting? Your council or headmen?
Dezerman: When did you say this took place? 1912. That's a long time ago. Ah yeah, Stow was the headman at the time.
Rose: What's his English name?
Dezerman: August Chalifoux.
Rose: So just the Twinn family came here? How do you say that in Cree?
Dezerman: Nee soo tay sis.
Rose: That the only family that came here?
Dezerman: I don't know of any other who was of another band to have transferred to here. I think that's all.
Rose: I guess after McLean completed the survey for the Swan River Band, the white people settled on the land that was set aside for the Indians. Do you recall any of the white people's names?

Dezerman: One of them was Coal.
Rose: Coal?
Dezerman:  Sam Coal.  He lived on an Indian reserve. Ah yeah, Stow's father lived at that location.

Rose:  What about Jim Posey?
Dezerman:  Yes, I remember that one.

Rose:  What about Mose...
Dezerman:  Mose Cariveau?
Rose:  Yes.
Dezerman:  I also remember that one.

Rose:  What about Albia Whiteman?
Dezerman:  Albie Whitman.  That's the one you mean?  Mee see katch kak si kutch sit.

Rose:  All these white people mentioned, where were they located from here?
Dezerman:  It's straight north of Kinuso.
Rose:  Is it by the lake or where?
Dezerman:  No, it is not right by the lake. The land at the site is of top quality (i.e. rich and fertile). About a mile and a half, the man named Coal lived there.

Rose:  I wonder if they were aware that the Indians wanted those parcels of land?
Dezerman:  I think there were some fraudulent deals going on. Take for example, when the railroad bought the town of Kinuso, (Ups chi nese), a councillor, was involved in that agreement. There was no other Indian involved. We didn't have a chief for this band at the time.

Rose:  Ups chi nese - is that the Giroux?
Dezerman:  Yes.

Rose:  Felix?
Dezerman:  No one seems to know where the money went to. (He seemed to be saying that an investigation was conducted to look into the accounting procedures).

The band members had tried to regain the lost portions of land but without success. That was a reserve land. That is the town now.

Rose:  Assineau River - Was that set aside for Ups chi nese or who?
Dezerman: Yes, it was specially for him since he always lived there. It was surveyed for him.

Rose: Was the survey made after this area was completed? Did he make that specific request?

Dezerman: Yes, he asked for it.

Rose: Was he the only resident of that place?

Dezerman: Yes, just himself.

Rose: Was he the only one that made use of it?

Dezerman: Yes, just himself.

Rose: Who has that land now?

Dezerman: Presently there is no one.

Rose: Is it still a reserve?

Dezerman: It still belongs to this band.

Rose: Did he not pass it on to someone else?

Dezerman: No, there used to be other families that lived there but they all eventually relocated to this place.

Rose: Who were they?

Dezerman: That was prior to the survey.

Rose: Do you recall who they were?

Dezerman: Yes, one was Sowan (Samuel Sowan). He came back to this location. Another person was Benjamin Giroux.

Rose: Did you say Benjamin Giroux?

Dezerman: Yes, there was also Mitchell Giroux. They all moved back.

Rose: Was that his son?

Dezerman: No.

Rose: They were both members of this band?

Dezerman: Yes, they are our members.

Rose: There are a few bands at the surrounding area. We are not familiar with the local names for the bands here so if you know the Cree names of the following places, please tell us:
1. Take for example: What is the Cree word for Swan River?

Dezerman: Wap so seepee.
Rose: And Sawridge?
Dezerman: Kiss si puk ka mak.
Rose: Driftpile?
Dezerman: Nim taw tak kow Seepee.
Rose: Sucker Creek?
Dezerman: Na nay pey oo Seepeesis.
Rose: Are there four bands at this region?
Dezerman: Just the four. (Grouard was forgotten.)
Rose: Many years ago many people believed that all the bands living around Lesser Slave Lake were in fact a single band. Therefore anyone living on any reserve could go and live on any other reserve.
Dezerman: That was very true. All the four bands were into that practice. It was common even though all of them are not a great distance apart.
Rose: Did they believe that they were a single band? (and not separated)?
Dezerman: It was their decision to have all bands separated and have their own reserve allotments.
Rose: Those were the leaders who accepted the treaty?
Dezerman: Yes.
Rose: Who was in charge of this reserve?
Dezerman: That person I was telling you about - Ups chi nese.
Rose: Was he the chief?
Dezerman: A councillor.
Rose: Who was this councillor answerable to? Who was above him?
Dezerman: Key no say oo. That was all, our chief.
Rose: He was responsible to this band?
Dezerman: Yes. These days the system is different. Each
individual band maintains its own system. We have an election every two years for our chief and council. I wonder if your band is on the same system. The chief is elected?

Rose: Yes.

Dezerman: We have elections for council at a later date.

Rose: I wonder when the people were prevented from entering other reserves, i.e. going to live freely at other reserves which they don't belong to.

Let's take for instance, if you wanted to move to Sawridge (even though you are a member from here) you were able to make the move without any restrictions attached. Who abolished this practice?

Dezerman: No one is actually responsible for it. On the other hand, the chief must have stopped it to a degree.

Rose: I wonder why the people thought this was a single band? They believed this was one large band. Later on the people knew that they all have their reserves (bands).

Dezerman: That's true.

Rose: What was the reason for it?

Dezerman: I don't know. At that time I was very young. I did not pay any attention to important matters. I think different these days as I'm reaching old age. In those days excitement was the only thing going for me. (laughter)

Rose: Was Key no say oo responsible for entering into treaty?

Dezerman: Yes, that's the one. You're talking about the first time the treaty was taken?

Rose: Yes, did he live at Driftpile?

Dezerman: Yes, Driftpile.

Rose: Did he have authority over all the other bands here?

Dezerman: Yes, that's right.

Rose: Did they listen to their own councillors? You mentioned that the bands had councillors locally.

Dezerman: The councillors followed the chief's orders.

Rose: Now, the people that were appointed or selected to be in the council they came to be known as councillors (leaders). Did the people listen to their councillors or did they mainly listen to the chief?
Dezerman: The chief was the only one that was always burdened with the business. All the councillors followed the chief's directions.

Rose: Just like the 'Giroux'.

Dezerman: Oh yeah.

Rose: All of them were brothers? i.e. Astachukun, Mustus, Key no sayoo.

Dezerman: Yes. they were all brothers.

Rose: That will be all for now.

(End of Interview)

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