

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: AMBROSE HOULE
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: TROUT LAKE
ALBERTA
INTERVIEW LOCATION: TROUT LAKE
ALBERTA
TRIBE/NATION: CREE
LANGUAGE:
DATE OF INTERVIEW:
INTERVIEWER: ALFRED J. BEAVER
INTERPRETER:
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Aged 61, non-treaty.
- Loss of treaty status.
- Promises of reserve at Trout Lake.

Alfred: Ambrose Houle from Trout Lake will now tell us his story. But, first he will tell us his name and where he is from.

Ambrose: My name is Ambrose Houle from Trout Lake. I am 61 years old, and I understand that you want to hear what I know of some of the treaty Indians that were enfranchised many years ago. I was also a treaty Indian. I still remember I too was a treaty Indian long ago.

Alfred: What is your real name?

Ambrose: Ambrose Houle.

Alfred: Where were you born?

Ambrose: Chipewyan Lake. I was born there.

Alfred: Have you lived here long?

Ambrose: Yes, for quite long time. I've been here about twenty-five years now.

Alfred: Where did you live before you moved here? (Trout Lake)

Ambrose: Not too far from here (Trout Lake), there are some houses not far from this place.

Alfred: What I meant was, where did you live before you moved here in Trout Lake, was it in Chipewyan Lake?

Ambrose: Yes, it was in Chipewyan Lake. I grew up there and that's where I stayed. Although, I didn't stay there (Chipewyan Lake) all the time. There's a place called Fort McMurray. I stayed there a few times, and also Wabasca. I stayed there also for long periods of time - that's when I was young.

Alfred: Can you tell or remember where your parents grew up in their childhood?

Ambrose: The place called Wabasca was the birth place of my dad and he grew up there, and my mother grew up in Chipewyan Lake.

Alfred: Were they treaty Indians?

Ambrose: Yes, they were both treaty. Both of them were treaty.

Alfred: When you said you lived in Chipewyan Lake, were there any treaty Indians there at that time?

Ambrose: Yes, there were some. I was a child then and I remember. My mother used to come down to the Wabasca River, she used to go to Wabasca River to collect the treaty money. The agent did not go to Chipewyan Lake, but rather he would on the Wabasca River and make his payments there. He never reached Chipewyan Lake. I remember my mother would come down to the Wabasca River too - to collect our treaty money, that was long ago.

Alfred: What were the names of your parents?

Ambrose: Daniel Houle was my father. Daniel Houle. Annie Houle was my mother's name. She was married to my father.

Alfred: Did your parents live in Chipewyan Lake or Wabasca?

Ambrose: My father lived in Wabasca. I never saw my father when I was a child because they separated before I was born. It was my mother that raised me so we always lived at that time in Chipewyan Lake and my father lived in Wabasca. But I used to visit him. When I grew older, I would go to visit him, so they lived two separate places.

Alfred: Is there anything that you can remember about the time when some treaty Indians were enfranchised from the treaty Band lists? Perhaps many altogether?

Ambrose: At that time, we moved from Wabasca. We said it was 35 years ago wasn't it? No, it was 34 years ago. That is what I told (him), when he came and asked me that was 34 years ago. That was when my parents were enfranchised from the treaty. That was also the time we moved from Chipewyan Lake to Wabasca. How I know the exact number of years is that my son is 39 years old now; you said now he was five years old when we moved. That's why I know.

How old did you say?

Mrs. Houle: Thirty-nine years old.

Ambrose: Thirty-nine years. How many years ago was that?

Alfred: Thirty-four years ago.

(Him? Didn't know the name of the previous research worker.)

Ambrose: That was thirty-four years ago, that was when my parents stopped receiving treaty payment. That was when my mother stopped receiving treaty payment. I also stopped being treaty. I was a young man then, that is why I remember. My father was also thrown out of treaty, however they weren't living together at the time. I remember I was a treaty Indian also when I was a child and a young man. My mother used to come down to the Wabasca River to collect our treaty money.

Alfred: Were you ever told why you were enfranchised?

Ambrose: Nothing, we were told nothing. We didn't know nothing. We didn't know anything. We (family, his) were expecting our treaty payment, but we didn't get any.

Alfred: What were you told, when you went to collect your payment?

Ambrose: It stopped, you and your family are no longer treaty. Nothing more.

Alfred: Would you remember the name of that agent?

Ambrose: No, I wouldn't. Even my father's name is barely remember.

Alfred: Some of the agents names that have been mentioned were Baird, Gibson, Basler.

Ambrose: Perhaps it was one of them, but I can't remember. I never used to ask the names of the agents when I saw them. Even today I still don't ask.

Alfred: Just that you were told you no longer receive treaty payment.

Ambrose: That was all.

Alfred: How about when the treaty was first made, did you ever hear stories of how it was first made?

Ambrose: No, never.

Alfred: How about the people that are classified as Metis and some of these received or took scrip?

Ambrose: Yes, I also heard of that; they used to call that credit taking. That's all I heard the old people say at that

time. Namely my mother and my grandfather, I used to wonder what it was they talked about when they talked about scrip. I didn't know. People long ago didn't pay any attention to anything, not like it is today.

Alfred: When you said your mother used to go and get your treaty money, how much did you get at that time?

Ambrose: Five dollars per person and it's still the same today.

Alfred: Where do the people get their money now? The people from here.

Ambrose: From Trout Lake here? Right here in Trout Lake, the agent comes in by plane to Trout Lake.

Alfred: Do you know of any old grave sites in this community where people of long ago were buried?

Ambrose: Yes, there are grave sites in two places, on both sides of Trout River. One across the river and one on this side of the river (north).

Alfred: The people must have lived here for a long time.

Ambrose: Yes, for a long time. Even myself, that was quite a long time ago, and people lived here long before my time. The place that is called the Narrows, between Trout and Peerless Lake, that is where the people used to live also. There used to be many houses there (Narrows when I first moved here, Trout Lake). It was from Wabasca I came. When I first moved here (Trout Lake) and when I first saw this Lake. Then from here I went by way of Peerless Lake back to Wabasca, then I came back here again, then I stayed here (Trout Lake).

Alfred: When you were still living in Chipewyan Lake, as a treaty Indian, did you ever hear of stories or anyone mention the treaty Indians being promised a reserve or a parcel of land being set aside for them to use as an Indian reserve?

Ambrose: The people in Chipewyan Lake, no I never heard. The only place I heard about was in Wabasca where people were given Indian reserves. Those reserves have been there a long time. But over in our way, there was never any promise made - a reserve.

Alfred: How about the people in Trout Lake or Peerless Lake, did you ever hear of any promise made of a reserve?

Ambrose: Yes, I have heard of a promise being made. There is one old man in Peerless Lake - Colin is his name. Colin Trindle. I often hear him mention that a reserve was promised to them. He often says it was written (on forms or documented), in fact he said that not too long ago.

Alfred: When he (Colin) mentioned the reserve that was promised, was it every surveyed?

Ambrose: Around here some place.

Alfred: Yes, even to mention the area being surveyed?

Ambrose: No, I don't think so. However he was promised the reserve at that time he was a band councillor of the Bigstone Band. He was a band councillor for a long time. He was promised, they would be given a reserve here (Peerless Lake) that is why he still talks about that promise, he thinks they should have a reserve. I don't think it was just anybody that made that promise to him.

Alfred: How many of you are there in your family? Number of children.

Ambrose: In this community?

Alfred: No, just your family and children.

Ambrose: Ten children. Ten of my children. With my wife there are twelve of us and my children are alive.

Alfred: Then, I imagine they are all classified as Metis.

Ambrose: Yes, all of them, all of them are registered as Metis. Two of my daughters are registered as treaty. They married treaty Indians. That's all right now. This one (girl present) is presently living common law, but she is married yet.

Alfred: How many of your brothers and sisters are alive?

Ambrose: Only two of them. One of them is my mother's daughter. She's my full sister. And my father's son - my half brother, plus one half-sister, so that's three blood relatives.

Alfred: What are their names?

Ambrose: Caroline is one of my sisters. Felix Houle - my older brother. My older sister Amelia, that's my mother's daughter. Amelia is her name.

Alfred: Do you know their last names?

Ambrose: Yes, I know their last names. My sister's last name is Noskiye. Amelia Noskiye in Chipewyan.

Alfred: Where does she live?

Ambrose: In Chipewyan Lake. There is also one relative in Grouard. That one I don't know her last name and my brother, Felix Houle, perhaps you know him from Calling Lake.

Alfred: Yes, I know him. So, these would also be treaty then?

Ambrose: Yes, they would have to be treaty, yes, I think they would have to have been treaty. They must have been enfranchised at the same time I was enfranchised. Because I remember both my parents were treaty before being enfranchised.

Alfred: Then your parents should have remained treaty Indians?

Ambrose: Yes, they should have remained treaty, because if I was born treaty then they must have been treaty Indians. They (parents of Ambrose) must have been enfranchised at the same time I was enfranchised. Because I remember both of my parents were suddenly enfranchised. I also remember they were both registered treaty Indians previously to being enfranchised.

My father was a treaty and my mother was also a treaty. Then at the same time they weren't give any money. I am positive my mother was not given any money at the time.

Alfred: What are the names of your wife's parents, both of them?

Ambrose: David was her father's name. David Richards was his name. But, he is no longer alive. Her mother's name was Jenny; however, her mother is still alive.

Alfred: Where is the old lady now? (Jenny Richards)

Ambrose: She is at the town called Peace River. Those people (his wife's parents) used to be treaty also, that is why both my wife and I went to Wabasca to collect our treaty money. She (wife) was also a treaty because we were legally married. So, we would have received quite an amount. However, we weren't given any money.

Alfred: That time that you went to Wabasca, was it also at that time that her brothers and sisters were enfranchised or what happened?

Ambrose: All of them, my father-in-law also started being a scrip person; term categorizing people classified as Metis: I remember he started being a Metis from that time on. So he must have been enfranchised at that time. I didn't see him (thrown out enfranchised) enfranchised at that time. So from that time on, he was one of the people from our area that was enfranchised.

Alfred: Does your wife have relatives or brothers?

Ambrose: Yes, she has three brothers, and all are still alive. They're all (Scrip Persons) Metis not treaty.

Alfred: Where are those people (his wife's brothers) now?

Ambrose: There is one here who stays with, but he is in the bush right now. He is trapping, he lives not far from here where the grave site is.

Alfred: What is that man's name?

Ambrose: Maurice Richards.

Alfred: What about the other two brothers?

Ambrose: There is one in Chipewyan Lake. There are two there now. One of them is named Sammy Richards and the other is called Isadore Richards. They're both in Chipewyan Lake.

Alfred: And are they both Metis?

Ambrose: Yes, they are both Metis. There is also one in Wabasca. She had four brothers. One of her brothers died.

Alfred: What is the name of the one in Wabasca?

Ambrose: His name is Malcolm Richards. She also had three sisters.

Alfred: I know both Malcolm and Sammy Richards. I believe that is all at this time.

Ambrose: Yes.

Alfred: I will tell you the same thing, I have and will continue to tell everyone I talk to, whatever transpires from here on, you will be informed, because you are the people who provided the information for us. Again I thank you.

(End of Interview)

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