

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: MADELINE SEWEPAGAHAM  
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: JOHN D'OR PRAIRIE  
ALBERTA  
INTERVIEW LOCATION: JOHN D'OR PRAIRIE  
ALBERTA  
TRIBE/NATION:  
LANGUAGE:  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: AUGUST, 1978  
INTERVIEWER: ROGER NANOCH  
INTERPRETER: ROGER NANOCH  
TRANSCRIBER: J. GREENWOOD  
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Born at Treaty #8 signing.
- Wood Buffalo National Park; impact on trapping and hunting in the area.

Madeline: I was raised from Big Slough by my father on this side of the area. That's where he made his living, by fishing, hunting and trapping. Finally I am beginning to remember when... How old I am, about seventy years old. That's all I know of my age and when the park wardens first asked for land I was there as a young person. But I can remember Timse saying to my father-in-law, "Chief, this land which is yours, you cannot lose it." The next time he came with papers. These papers said you will not be able to lose your hunting, trapping, and fishing areas so you can kill whatever you like on this Wood Buffalo Park.

Everyone was invited to listen, even young people. I was twenty years old, with one son. I thought why are these people here, what do they want and why all those papers? I was asked to speak too. My father-in-law laughed. "I'll tell you how long I was here," said Timse, "number eight and five (in Cree). But why I am here is to help you not to lose your land." As he said, he smiled. "You will never be able to be sent to court for killing anything. This is your land." My father-in-law said, "That's right. I have made my living here for a long time, ever since I was born. I have more rights than the wardens

towards the land now called Wood Buffalo Park." But I didn't say anything, I was young and not too bright.

Roger: What were your parents' names?

Madeline: Louie and Mary Bushe.

Roger: Where did they make their living?

Madeline: Here at Big Slough. He used to stay here during the winter, killing moose, rabbits, and fish. He went to the store often to get tobacco, but it was too much for him to bring us along.

Roger: How well do you remember the treaties?

Madeline: I was told about them. Before the signing of the treaties my Mom was sick and I was born during the signing of the first treaties. After they finished signing and I was born, they gave me my treaty money right there. People laughed, your name will be Mary Madeline they said, Mary Madeline, St. Madeline, the old people said. That's why I have that name.

Roger: Who signed the treaty for all the Indians?

Madeline: The big chief. His name was Wayakeesk. He was the one who signed the treaty. I can't translate that to English, but his name was Wayakeesk. Johnny Peechemow's dad signed the treaty.

Roger: Did they have a good interpreter, one who spoke both Cree and English good? Something like I am doing now? Did they do the interpreting well?

Madeline: Our translator's name was Wooden Hat, Mistick Astootin; he helped his brother. Everytime they spoke his brother stood up and translated. His brother could not hear good. Wayakeesk Martin was his name. He signed the treaties.

Roger: Where did he live?

Madeline: He lived at Birch River area at the mouth of Birch River around Big Slough area.

Roger: And now about the park, when was it formed, before the signing of the treaties? Can you remember?

Madeline: Yes, I was twenty years old then when licenses were handed out. I saw the person who gave out licenses. Timse, no it was not Timse. The next time it was Louie McDermitt. He was tall. He gave out licenses. Often these were used in families, one license per family. He said too that they can kill whatever they want. "You don't have to be afraid to lose your land." I was quite young. I asked, "Why are these people

handing out papers?" I asked the chief's wife. I used to live with my mother-in-law.

Roger: Where did they trap?

Madeline: At Isadore Lake. That was their family trapping area, inside Wood Buffalo Park. We used to have log houses out there. My father-in-law, Michele Antoine and his younger brother.

Roger: When and why did they build the park?

Madeline: They thought the people were killing off buffaloes but they were drowning. We were first told not to kill buffaloes. There used to be buffaloes here before, one herd.

Roger: Why was the park extended? Were you told of that?

Madeline: My father-in-law, Chief John Baptiste Sewepagaham, told his children and his people's children may later on need

more land so he agreed this might happen. Therefore, he signed more land over.

Roger: About Garden River, when was it started?

(End of Side A, Tape IH-254)

(Side B)

Roger: When did Garden River people ask for land?

Madeline: Yes, that was quite a long time ago. I had about three children.

(End of Interview)

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