Alexander Nanooch is my name.

Roger: What about your parents?

Alexander: My father is Harry(?) Nanooch and my mother is Mary.

Roger: Where did they originally migrate from?

Alexander: They were from here (not explicit as to exact location). That is why they resided here permanently. They are both buried here as well. They didn't want to go into a reserve. A house was built for them without even having to request for one. There were attempts made to evict them out of this area. They didn't consent to leaving this place. They were pressured to reside on the reserve but without success. Hence, we have resided at this location ever since that time.

Roger: What was your grandfather's name?

Alexander: My dad's father's name was Nanooch. My mother's father's name was Jean Courtoreille. I don't know my parent's mother's names. I just remember seeing them.
Roger: Where did they make their living?

Alexander: We have always lived here. We would occasionally move to the bush to hunt or live close to a river to fish.

These people have occupied the area prior to the establishment of the Wood Buffalo National Park. They were already here when the meridian was being surveyed. This is what my mother told us.

I guess there was an old man by the name of "Antoine" who planted a garden full of potatoes. This is how the place derived its name - Garden River. That was before my mother was married to my father.

Roger: What about annuity payments? Or the treaty?

Alexander: The permanent residents here were uninformed of the purpose for the survey. After the survey was completed, the buffalo were shipped in. They said that the buffalo were kept at the vicinity of Chipewyan. After all this business was completed it was explained to them.

People hunted freely around this area. There weren't any restrictions. It wasn't only the local residents that hunted around here - people from the north area in general travelled to great distances to hunt. It is seldom that the children who were born here left. This is also the reason why all of our young children here are virtually illiterate. They never left this area.

Our parents are illiterate. Some of the people who are of my age had gone to school. Our means of transportation to leave for school was by boat. There were no planes nor motor boats at the time.

The annuity payments were given out at Fox Creek (note: see pee seek). The people from here would meet the Indian agent over there, which was given out in the summer months.

All the children were baptized at Fox Lake not here. So the records probably indicate that all the births took place at Fox Lake. As time went by the priests finally started moving around to various points around this territory. It was that time when the new born children started getting baptized at the place they were born. I doubt if the church records are accurate as it was their discretion to write the place of birth on the records.

We lived in tipis. The hospitals weren't used at all like the way they're used these days.

Our forefathers have always lived around here. They weren't restricted to any part of the land. They moved around freely. It was just recently when the buffalo were brought into the park.
We have been hearing stories that we're getting evicted from this area now. It seems strange when we have occupied the area for many years. They're attempting to remove the people rather than the buffalo which were brought in by the government in recent years. It shouldn't be the case.

Roger: What was the reason for the location of the park? Why was it set up?

Alexander: It was on account of the buffalos. The government wanted to preserve the animals. There were other animals that were brought in.

Roger: Were there any conflicts between the Indians and the government over the area of land that was taken up for the setting up of the park?

Alexander: No, there weren't any conflicts. There was only one white person who was damaging the people's traplines deliberately. His name was S (?) The owners name was See ka gees. His traps were apparently badly damaged. There weren't any discussions carried on as a result of the person's devious act.

Roger: What was the reason for the conflict between these two men?

Alexander: It was over muskrats in the lake. They both hunted in the same lake. The white person eventually claimed all of the lake. This is what is happening in this country. The white race is claiming all of our territory.

Roger: When did the people start to request for land?

Alexander: I don't know the exact year but they've been requesting land in here.

Roger: When requests are made, they are written. What do you think happened to these documents?

Alexander: They are all probably burnt.

Roger: Who was the chief at the time?:

Alexander: Seeweepagaham.

Roger: Who had authority over Fox Lake?

Alexander: It must be the chief as he is the representative of the Band.

Roger: What about Garden River? Are they included in the band membership?

Alexander: I don't know as we've always resided here. I don't
know if we belong to that band membership. I would think so.

Roger: When the reserve land was allotted to the Little Red River Band, did the people here consent to be included in their entitlement?

Alexander: I don't know.

Roger: When was the survey done and who did it?

Alexander: It was the white people that surveyed the reserve. I don't know the exact year.

Roger: What about the sawmill? How long was it in operation?

Alexander: It was here for about 8 years. The saw was left and used here to cut logs to build houses. Swanson's crew were also here cutting lumber but they left.

Roger: If the Indian people had received a substantial amount of money from the government for economic development projects, do you think their projects would be viable?

Alexander: I am certain. It would create employment for the residents here.

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