

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: CHRIS ALBERT JOHNSON
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS:

INTERVIEW LOCATION:

TRIBE/NATION:
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: 09/08/76
INTERVIEWER: DAVID STEVENSON
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: HEATHER YAWORSKI
SOURCE: OOWEKEENO HISTORY PROJECT
TAPE NUMBER: #IH-BC.13
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC #167
PAGES: 41
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DIRECTOR, OOWEKEENO HISTORY PROJECT OR THE CHIEF COUNSELOR OF
THE OOWEKEENO BAND.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- General reminiscences about his life.

NOTE: The Oowekeeno band name has a variety of other spellings: Owikeno, Oweekeeno and Oweekano. For the sake of consistency, Oowekeeno has been used to designate the band and the language, while Owikeno refers to the lake found in British Columbia.

Chris: There was just Moses and (inaudible).

David: Was this the same village like at (Indian)? Or is this a different location now?

Lady: It's a different location.

Chris: Different location.

David: Yeah. So this would be Albert Johnson living there then, eh?

Chris: Yeah.

David: And did you stay there all year long, in that place?

Chris: Well, came down for the summer. Everybody went fishing and that during the summer.

David: Where did you stay in the summer?

Chris: Kiltala.

David: So you were at the cannery there, eh?

Chris: Yeah. Everybody moved down to Kiltala for a while.

Lady: Yeah. Some used to live in R.I.C. -- the Thompsons.

Chris: Yeah. For instance, George.

David: So when were most of the people living on those islands right at the mouth of the river there, at R.I.C.?

Lady: Oh, we must have been all really young when we used to live there in summertimes. Moved down about spring, eh.

Chris: Yeah.

Lady: And mothers and fathers they'd start working in the canneries and net making, you know, making the nets. The men used to work on making the net lines, you know, painting corks for the cork line, and all the maintenance work in the cannery before it starts operation.

Chris: (inaudible).

David: Did you go out to the mouth of the Inlet at all, very much, for fishing or shellfish, or anything?

Chris: No.

David: So you'd spend... Most of your year would be up at the lake then, eh?

Chris: Yeah. The only time we come out is during the summer months, come to the mouth of the river, smoke fish. And then right back up the lake again.

David: And were there settlements... Where were the other settlements set up at the lake at that time, that you were up at (name)? Can you name the other locations where other people were living?

Chris: The only place I know was (name).

Lady: And I think the Hanuse used to live in (name).

Chris: They lived in...

Lady: And Chamberlains, and who else was it that used to live in...?

Chris: (name), yeah. Well, Pete and Roy used to stay there.

Lady: Yeah. And the rest were up in (name).

Chris: And your grandparents used to stay in (name).

Lady: Yeah.

David: Which island is that?

Chris: Just...

Lady: Just at R.I.C.

David: Oh yeah, yeah.

Lady: And my other grandparents they used to live in (name) on that little island just at Katit. But most of the time they were with us.

David: Were there any houses that you can remember on Katit when you were growing up?

Chris: Yeah, there's one there that's been there all the time (inaudible).

David: Oh, I see. So there was somebody living there.

Chris: Yeah.

David: So during the wintertime, what sort of activities would you be busy doing during the winter? How were you getting by?

Chris: Trapping.

David: When did you start trapping?

Chris: Just about December, I guess.

David: And you were telling me that you were trapping with Sammy Walker?

Chris: Yeah.

David: Whereabouts was your trapline, then? Can you describe it for me?

Chris: Well, we were using his trapline, there. That was

out along Sheemahant, there. Come down to just about (name). That point just where you come out of (name) down there and all the way up to the narrows and the Sheemahant, there. That was his trapline.

David: How long would it take you to cover the trapline?

Chris: One day.

David: One day, you could get around it in one day.

Chris: Yeah.

Lady: He used to bring his gill net boat up the lake.

David: Oh, I see, yeah.

Chris: About twenty-nine footer.

David: Gas engine?

Chris: Yeah.

David: Yeah. Well, was trapping then the main occupation in terms of making your money, or was it as much money coming from fishing?

Chris: Oh, whenever you made money during the fishing season you just put away for early winter months like, you know.

David: Until you could get going in the trapping?

Chris: Yeah.

David: Yeah.

Chris: Because your first bunch of furs don't go out until about, oh, a month or so after you've trapped.

David: So it was mostly beaver that you were trapping?

Chris: No, trapping martens, minks. First part there... you don't trap beaver until about May.

David: Oh, I see. It's a spring activity?

Chris: Yeah. The first thaw in May, you know, that's when the beavers really start to come running out.

David: Yeah, yeah.

Chris: They move around fix their dams up, whatever's been washed out during the winter.

David: What sort of things... like when you were out working

on the trapline, what sort of things would the women be doing? Mostly food preparation?

Chris: Oh, a lot of times they'd come out with us. They'd set their own traps, you know, and they'd go up and take a look at their own traps.

David: Oh, I see. So they'd have their own too?

Chris: Yeah.

David: Well, I guess at this time you were using things like rifles and traps, and things from the store, eh, from Dawson's?

Chris: Yeah.

David: What kind of a...? Maybe you could just describe the sort of house that you lived in up there. Was it a traditional log house there?

Chris: It was just a log house with one room, you know. One family stay in one corner, the other family would be in the other corner.

David: Did it have any paintings or carvings in it or around it at all?

Chris: No. Just an ordinary old (inaudible).

David: Oh, I see, yeah. Was there any totem poles at all that you know of, still standing in the lake or in the inlet when you were growing up?

Chris: There's only one there that was up in the graveyard, I think. Archeologists took it out.

David: Oh yeah. Which graveyard is this now?

Chris: That's up in the lake there, just after you go by the island.

David: Oh yeah, right. Just up from Katit, then.

Chris: Yeah. That's the only one I can remember.

David: So when you came down in the summertime to the canneries, what sort of work were you doing? Were you fishing or were you working in the canneries?

Chris: I was about fifteen, sixteen then, I guess. I used to work in the cannery.

David: Did the canneries employ pretty well everybody from the villages?

Chris: Oh yeah.

David: Were there lots of commercial boats?

Chris: Yeah.

David: Communal commercial boats?

Chris: Oh yeah.

David: About how many would there be?

Chris: I couldn't even tell you.

David: Quite a few, eh? Did almost all the adults have gill netters?

Chris: Yeah, a lot of them did rowing and other stuff when I was growing up there.

David: Yeah. They were still using skiffs then, eh?

Chris: Yeah.

David: With sail?

Chris: Yeah.

David: Yeah.

Chris: I got into the last year of that, went out fishing with one there. It was lots of fun.

David: How about school? Did you take in any school at all?

Chris: Yeah, I took up some. Went as far as... finished grade five and then started grade six and that was it.

David: Whereabouts was the school?

Chris: Alert Bay.

David: Oh, you actually went out to the residential school then, eh?

Chris: Yeah.

David: Was there ever a... Was there any school at that time in the village at all?

Chris: No.

David: There wasn't, eh.

Chris: Everybody went to Alert Bay then.

David: How did you like residential school?

Chris: It was all right.

David: Yeah. Did you have any difficulties over the language difference?

Chris: When I first went to school we have, because I didn't know no English then and tried to talk to everybody and nobody understood. (laughs)

David: Oh yeah, yeah. Were there other people there from your village though?

Chris: Yeah. They were used to going to school then and I was the only one running after them all the time. (laughs)

David: Oh, I see. So did they encourage you to speak English and discourage you to speak Indian?

Chris: Yeah. I had no hope -- couldn't talk my own language to everybody and even if I did they wouldn't understand me anyway.

David: So you were forced to turn to English then?

Chris: Yeah.

David: Yeah.

Chris: Had no other choice. A kid there, you tried to talk your language to him, he just look at you and then walk away. (laughs) They came from all over, you know.

David: Yeah, yeah.

Chris: The only guys that used to understand it was (name) bunch and the Alert Bay bunch. They're the only ones.

David: Oh yeah. So when you left school what sort of work did you do? Did you continue trapping and fishing sort of thing?

Chris: Yeah.

David: When did the trapping start falling off and the prices go down? What year was that, about?

Lady: Must have been around the 1947s, because Marshall and them were still trapping when I came to live here.

David: Oh yeah.

Lady: And then just shortly after that the prices went just right down.

Chris: Last time I trapped was about '52.

Lady: Yeah, it was still pretty... It was going down all the time.

David: Did you continue on the same trapline up in Sheemahant?

Chris: Yeah.

David: Even then, eh?

Chris: Yeah, in about '52, because I think I went beaver trapping in '51. We trapped about two years after that and I used to work in Namu then, and go home about September.

David: In the last few years that you trapped how much money would you have made in the season, trapping, can you remember?

Chris: Oh...

David: Did you usually make enough to sort of get you through the winter?

Chris: Yeah. The last couple of years anyway it wasn't... We had to turn to hand logging and trapping the same time.

David: Yeah. Did many of the adults go into hand logging as well?

Chris: Not really, there was just Simon, Pete, myself. To make ends meet we had to go and get logs for Namu.

David: Was there any difficulty in getting a license to do hand logging?

Chris: Well, at that time they didn't bother us none.

David: They didn't, eh?

Chris: They used to let us get, you know, I'd say maybe one tree every month or so for firewood, you know.

David: Oh I see, yeah.

Chris: And that changed and they got everything marked and you can't even take one out.

David: So that had to be, like to do hand logging and sell logs commercially, you didn't need a license?

Chris: No. It wasn't until just a few years ago that they started to clear very quick, falling trees for themselves, you know.

David: Oh, I see. Because I heard at one time that they passed a law in Victoria that denied licenses to Indian hand loggers, and I was wondering if you remember any of that?

Chris: No.

David: It would be quite a while now, it was quite a while ago. I was just wondering, too, about when people... There always were canneries there when you were growing up, I guess, eh?

Chris: Yeah.

David: Do you think the canneries, the fact that people were working out making money, did that change people's way of living very much, do you know?

Chris: No, I don't think so. Their houses they went to every summer was just like ordinary little shacks. The only thing they were longer, you know.

David: Oh yeah.

Chris: The walls weren't finished, nothing.

Lady: Yeah, you could see through to your neighbors.
(laughs) And some parts of the houses they didn't even have a

partition up on above the eight foot wall that separates you from your neighbor.

David: Did they have different quarters, like for different employees? Like did the white people have different quarters, for instance?

Lady: Pretty well, yeah.

David: So everybody stayed together, like families would stay together?

Chris: Yeah.

Lady: The white people had their own set place, and the Japanese had theirs, and the Chinese had theirs, and the Indians had theirs.

David: Was anybody's houses better than somebody else's?

Lady: The white people's were better.

David: Yeah.

Chris: Not by very much, it was just...

Lady: Not that much.

Chris: Just had a finished wall inside. That's about all it

was.

David: I was also wondering about the reserves. Did the people -- in your memory -- did the people... How did the

people take to the the fact that they were reservations now as opposed to before? Did they have any feelings about that?

Chris: Not up at Rivers, no. It didn't seem to bother them.

Lady: They were still, you know, pretty well isolated and we moved around wherever we wanted to, and do whatever they wanted to do. But now it's beginning to be noticeable because you can't go fishing anywhere. Any time you have to go and get a license to do a day's fishing or... And you can only do it on the weekend now. These people noticed it first before, you know, it really hit. It's just starting now.

David: Well, there's three reserves now, eh? There's one at... the present one where the village is, Kiltala and there's another one at (name).

Lady: There's those others but they're not marked, are they?

David: No. I was just wondering, did the people understand that those were your reserves, or did you understand that you had other places that were yours?

Chris: They didn't understand that it was ours.

David: What, the whole inlet and lake?

Chris: No, it was just that there were three reservations. Yeah, I don't know what ever became of that one in Quay, who staked claim to that. Do you know?

Lady: I think it's Bella Bella now. Because that was the borderline between Bella Bella and Rivers Inlet. And part of Calvert Island is part of the borderline.

David: Right.

Chris: That's where my grandparents they (inaudible).

Lady: Yeah.

Chris: I never ever heard what became of that, which way it went.

David: Well Quay, the people at Quay, they were still considered to be part of Rivers Inlet, were they?

Chris: Yeah, there was some from Rivers Inlet and some from here -- they all lived there.

David: I see, yeah. When you were growing up did you recognize that you were a member of a different... that there were different clans? Were there different clans among the people?

Chris: I never knew.

David: Was there different crests, like Raven or Whale or Killer Whale, or anything like that? Were people organized at all along those lines?

Chris: I never even noticed.

David: So, like your father, would he have been a member of one clan or set as opposed to another one?

Chris: I guess they must have been because, well, the Johnsons stayed here, Walkers stayed there, and Bernards stayed there. There must have been, but I never even paid no attention to that.

David: Well, in the wintertime then, were they still... As well as trapping and so on, did they still have feasts and dances in the winter?

Chris: Oh yeah.

David: Yeah? What month would that happen in?

Chris: Well, more or less whenever they felt like getting together.

David: Were there organized dance series then, like levels of dances to work up?

Chris: I never even noticed. It was just always another party for me.

David: Oh, I see. Well, were there things like potlatches, special feasts or special events?

Chris: Not after this school, no. There wasn't too much of that.

David: There wasn't, eh. Did you ever attend a potlatch, a proper sort of potlatch where...?

Chris: Oh yeah.

David: How old would you have been then?

Chris: Geez, the last one I was at about, I was oh, about fourteen, I guess.

David: And where was that at?

Chris: Kiltala.

David: At Kiltala. Who held that one?

Chris: I couldn't even remember.

Lady: I think it was (inaudible) people.

Chris: (inaudible) for drowning or something.

David: Somebody had drowned, eh?

Chris: Yeah, a guy from (name) drowned.

David: So that would have been about, what, 1939, or thereabouts?

Chris: Well, somewhere around there, yeah.

David: So when you were growing up, potlatching wasn't really very... like formal feasts and so on. There wasn't that many of them then, eh?

Chris: (Inaudible) every weekend. Just one at Kiltala there every weekend -- something to watch.

David: How about names? Other than the name you've got now, have you ever been given any names, Indian names, that you have?

Chris: Yeah, but I can't remember.

David: You can't remember them?

Chris: No.

David: So you have some other names, eh?

Chris: Yeah.

David: What, they were given to you as a child?

Chris: Yeah. My father's name and there's another one that Aunt Edie gave me -- couldn't remember that one. And your dad gave me one, I couldn't remember that. Couldn't even remember it. (laughs)

David: Have you given your own kids any names other than their proper names?

Chris: No. Probably have to take them home first. (laughs)

Lady: Find out what set they come from and then give them the names.

David: Well, nowadays there are very few commercial boats coming out of Oowekeeno. How did that happen? Like at one time there were lots of people fishing, with gill netters and

so on, and now there's no boats. How did that happen?

Chris: Oh, they all lost interest after the logging started there.

David: Was there more money to be made logging?

Chris: Oh yeah. Well, it was steadier, you know. You were able to work most of the winter months where you only go gill netting for three months.

David: What year did they start logging up in there?

Chris: '68?

Lady: Something like that. Could have been even before that. Did (name) leave when you went there?

Chris: Yeah, he was only there for a year or so.

Lady: Yeah, and he was gone for quite a few years and then it started up again.

Chris: Yeah, (name) went in. Must have been about '65.

David: Did most of the adults then sort of turn into logging work?

Chris: Yeah.

David: So it wasn't... It was just that logging was a better job, eh, is that the idea?

Chris: Yeah, it was more steadier anyway.

David: Yeah. But did the people have any idea that this logging company was logging in their territory, their logs, or did they just generally recognize that it was provincial land?

Chris: No. There's that first logging camp that went under that was logging on their land.

David: Oh, I see.

Chris: And after that the guy moved way up the lake there.

Lady: You know, I don't even remember. Maybe Pete might remember something. Yeah, they used to pay so much per log for hauling the logs through the village.

David: Oh, I see.

Lady: And something happened -- I don't know when or where. Somebody said William and Johnny Hanuse and I can't remember who else -- Dave, I think, or somebody that were in the council

when... Irene mentioned about that road being, having been taken over by forestry. So now people don't even get anything out of the logs that are being taken through the road now. Because the village used to make their money from all the logs that went through the village.

David: They charged a fee, eh?

Lady: Yeah. (Name) built the road and paid the village so much, you know, for the logs that he takes out. And then sometime I think I was already in Bella Bella when it happened that the forestry took over. And it seems to me they didn't even know exactly what was happening when they signed this paper.

David: The band council did?

Lady: Yeah. And then later found out that they weren't going to be paid any more for logs that go through. And it's Crown Road now, is it?

David: Yeah, it's a provincial road now.

Chris: Sure worked funny there. They only paid a dollar for the right of way for the road.

Lady: Yeah.

David: Really?

Chris: That's all they paid, a dollar, just to put that road in. And I remember when that paper was signed. Johnny was on, William, Johnny Hanuse and Johnny Johnson.

Lady: Oh.

David: Well, did they not understand what it was they were signing, is that...?

Chris: Well, they understood what they were signing but it was the way it was put to them, you know. This guy just came up and explained how it was going to work and all that, and how much the road was going to do for them and all that B.S. and kept going. Instead of reading the paper they just all signed.

David: Right, yeah.

Chris: Never found out till later what the paper said was different from what he was saying. (laughs)

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Chris: ...hands up after a while. And I haven't any ink coming out of that pen.

David: What year did you come out from Owikeno then, to here, Bella Bella?

Chris: What year was Allan born?

Lady: '61.

Chris: '62. Yeah, about '62.

David: Now I'm curious to know, like the population of the village has gone down quite a bit, and I'm just wondering why people left Rivers to work and live elsewhere. What were your reasons for coming here?

Chris: Well, mine was for my wife. She couldn't take the water up there. She'd break out in blisters and that on her hands.

David: Oh yeah. Was schooling a factor too?

Chris: Yeah. At that time there was no school there.

David: When did the present school get built down there, then?

Chris: The year after I left.

Lady: Yeah, it must have been.

Chris: Yeah, it was a year or two after I left.

Lady: And the kids used to have to walk about a mile to school.

David: Well, the school's moved now, up to the village.

Chris: Oh yeah?

David: They moved it, it's two years now. Well, was employment better up here in Bella Bella than it was at Owikeno? Was that part of the reason for coming?

Chris: No. We had better employment up there logging. When I first got here there was nothing to do during the winter.

David: Oh, I see, yeah. How many years did you spend at Namu?

Chris: You mean with my family or...?

David: Yeah.

Chris: Oh, must have been there about three years. Something like that.

Lady: He worked in the...

Chris: Pool house. I was there for '62. That's when that cannery burned down.

Lady: Oh yeah. And there was the cold storage, the cannery and the reduction plant, as well as maintenance, in Namu when we used to spend winters there. The cannery operated in the summer and so did the cold storage, but the reduction plant it worked just about all year round. Like on fish, and the herring time kept the reduction plant going.

David: And you've been working the (inaudible), have you, for quite a while now?

Chris: Yeah, going on ten years now I guess. They're all finished now, they closed this place down.

Lady: Is it?

Chris: Yeah.

Lady: Oh.

Chris: Got to work tomorrow, just to clean up, I think.

Lady: Oh, so I guess all the fishermen have moved out now, eh?

Chris: Yeah.

Lady: Oh. I didn't even know that.

David: So now the people who have been working there now have to find other employment for the winter, sort of thing, find other things to do?

Chris: Yeah.

David: So it's still a... Is that a problem now for most people, that they're unemployed for most of winter?

Chris: Yeah, for some, yeah. Guys who worked long enough they can draw Unemployment, you know.

David: I wonder if you could tell me again what we were talking about last night, when the winter you were up trapping and you got iced in.

Chris: Oh yeah.

David: How long were you up there that you had to stay there?

Chris: Well, what was it? We start trapping in about November and then we had to keep trapping right through to May.

And we stayed in there too long for Christmas. (laughs)

Lady: In really cold winters part of the upper end of the lake used to freeze up.

Chris: Yeah. That was the worst I ever seen it down there. Go out one day and chop the ice around the gas boat. Next day it's the same thing again; about a foot and a half of ice.

Lady: I barely remember one time when this happened. And the ice got too thick and we didn't have a gas boat, I don't think, because I remember being put on a canoe and all the women stayed in the canoe and the men pushed the canoe along the ice until you get to that second narrows.

Chris: Oh yeah.

Lady: That I remember.

Chris: Yeah, that's the only way we used to get to see our traps.

Lady: Pushing the canoe along the ice.

Chris: Yeah. Simon ride in the back and Pete and I would be up in the front and the ladies would be sitting down in the canoe and they're running along. All winter long we did that. Got iced in there. (laughs) Yeah, I suppose it was just in behind... You know where that fishery shack is, on that side?

Lady: Oh yeah.

Chris: Anchored out there and next morning woke up and... just overnight there.

David: Well, how did you get by that winter? Did you suffer from lack of food or anything like that?

Chris: No, we had more than enough there. Smoked fish, barbequed fish, salted fish.

David: How about game? Any game at all?

Chris: Well, that time there was no deer or anything there.

David: There wasn't, eh.

Chris: Only thing we had to go after was, what do you call it, geese.

David: Oh yeah.

Chris: Run out of shotgun shells so we used to have to throw rice on the flat. Throw rice there and then put beaver traps down. Every morning we used to have two, three. We'd go and

wring their necks and take them home. (laughs)

David: So you had no trouble in the way of supplies or anything, getting through till spring, eh?

Chris: No. Because we used to go to Dawson's early part of the fall, you know, and get maybe four hundred pounds of rice, sugar, dried fruit and all that.

David: And that would do you the whole winter, eh?

Chris: Yeah. Live on smoked fish -- fresh fish every so often. Chop holes in the ice and throw a stick through, the next one and pull in net, pull net underneath; next morning go down and pull it back in. (laughs)

David: That was a gill net was it?

Chris: Yeah. That's a small net for trout. And we have fresh trout every so often.

David: Did you learn any songs or stories from your father, or from Simon?

Chris: Well, I listened to them all the time. If we had (inaudible).

David: Can you remember any of the stories?

Chris: No.

David: Songs?

Chris: No. Never made it a habit to remember them. Yeah, every morning they'd chop the kindling there, humming away.

David: Oh yeah. Another thing I was wondering is, was there very much -- up in the lake, like during the winter -- was there very much cooperation between the various families, or was every family pretty well on its own for the winter?

Chris: They were all pretty well on their own. But like, if you needed help, you know, they'd gladly come over and help you. Needed help for anything.

David: So was there much visiting between the different village sites up there?

Chris: No, not too much. Just every so often you run into each other and then stop and yak for a while. Other than that they more or less stayed to themselves.

David: Yeah.

Lady: There was always too much work to have any real time to go visiting around. And usually if you got stormbound you

stopped at one of the villages and stayed there overnight or something like that.

David: So when you, both of you were growing up and you were spending time up on the lake, the whole part of the culture that had to do with the dance series and so on...

Lady: It was all gone then.

David: Pretty well all gone, eh?

Chris: Yeah.

Lady: Some evenings, you know, they would talk about what used to happen a long time ago and I think that was about the only way we heard of it.

David: I'm wondering then, like, what were the reasons for stopping that whole thing? What caused that to stop, the dances and the feasts, and the potlatches and so on?

Chris: I really don't know why they...

Lady: There was so many people died there in the smallpox. And then there was that law put against Indian dancing by the Indian Agent, the police and the missionaries. Ever since then everything had to be done in secret. And by then there wasn't that many people in Rivers Inlet itself during the winter to do anything like that.

Chris: Then every time the (inaudible) R.C.M.P. would come in, ask around if anybody betting, or is there any money been...

David: So they used to actually come in and check you up on that, eh?

Chris: Yeah. You know, everybody used to throw a few cents in and you either lost it or doubled your money. (laughs)

Lady: We were just kids and we used to sneak out to go and watch the (Indian) games during the summer. (laughs) Do you

remember any of the places that you guys used to go to in the wintertime up in Sheemahant River? Any place special about them?

Chris: I hardly went up there in the winter, winter months, just in in May.

David: They tell us something about a goat up in there. Can you describe that again?

Chris: Your dad ever tell you that?

Lady: Yeah.

Chris: You're going up the river there. See that little white sail boat there?

Lady: Oh yeah.

Chris: The goat looks something like that, he's way in the bluff. You're going up and it's looking right at you.

Lady: Up the Sheemahant River?

Chris: Yeah. And then you get to a bend, you start turning and it seems like the goat's turning with you. He's looking that way when you get to that point. And here when you're coming up it was looking right at you. And it's just something white on the rocks, right on the bluff there.

David: Was there any story attached to it, or any significance that...?

Chris: Never mentioned. All he told me was just watch it when you're going up. It's a nice flat place going up there, you know, no rapids or anything. It just goes, pulls real slowly and you watch that thing, and turn around and look the other way.

David: And did the old people have songs or chants that they used when they were poling canoes?

Chris: Oh yeah. Old Simon, he was always humming away.

David: He was always singing, eh?

Chris: Yeah.

David: Did you learn any of them, or sing any of them?

Chris: No. There's a hot spring in there too.

Lady: I got to the small one -- it just barely trickles -- and you look further up and you could see all that steam coming up. I never got to that one.

Chris: Where that... you got a hot spring on side and you got a glacier on the other side.

Lady: I guess.

David: How far up is that, quite a ways?

Chris: Oh, that's quite ways, yeah.

David: Did the people used to go there and use it, the hot spring?

Chris: Oh yeah. Used to be called the (name) Creek, hot

spring.

Lady: That little creek?

Chris: Yeah, little lake there -- it was real big before. It's quite wide (inaudible). And you just go along there, you get to a little deep hole there. That's where they all did their swimming in there. Yeah, used to call it the (name) Creek or something. And you look right across from there just a great glacier coming down on the other side.

David: That's the same name as Tommy (name)?

Chris: Yeah. There was a real nice little pool a little further in, quite deep. Well, you could stand in there. Oh, maybe two days, I guess. Right on top of the mountain, there, you see a guy standing there, his wife on one side and the little boy and the dog right in front.

David: That's a rock formation, is it?

Chris: Yeah. Looks like a real man standing there, got a packsack on his back. He's got one hand like that, he's got one on a stick and it looks like a dog jumping up in front of him, you know. It's way up on the side of the mountain. You can come out in the river there and you notice it way up.

Lady: And it's two days by canoe, eh?

Chris: Oh, that was about our tenth day, it would be.

Lady: Oh, going up the river. Gee, you guys must have went way up, eh?

Chris: Yeah, we went up about twelve, thirteen days, I think. Poling every day. We just stop off, set a few traps here, and then stay there a couple of days and move on again. Like that all the way up it was just, you know, beaver ponds, all the way up.

David: You do that all winter then, would you?

Chris: No, just the month of May.

David: Yeah.

Chris: Went up for about fourteen days and then we start coming back down again.

David: Did that rock formation have a special name, or did they give a name to it?

Chris: No, never mentioned anyway. Get up the Sheemahant there -- after you get so far it just flattens out. Just a big swamp. You wonder where the river comes from.

Lady: Yeah, I was looking at it on the map. Gee, it looks like a long river.

Chris: Yeah, it's quite long. You got, well, fourteen days anyway and it just flattened out to a big valley like that, like the flats in there. You know, little creeks here and there, all over, little sloughs. Never went by that. You get this far and then you look at the bank of the river, look like great big salt...

Lady: Crystals.

Chris: I don't know what it was, I never took a good look at it. White rock or something. The whole bank was all white. And then you notice the dirt on top of that about... I should take one more trip up there just to see what this...

Lady: I'd like to do that sometime, too. I was reading up on some of the stories and they tell you where you see these kind of rock formations. And Ben, he was telling me one time, too, that Alfred and my dad, and... I guess they was really young, (inaudible). And they went up the either the (Indian) River I think it was, or the (Indian). And they were told about... that somewhere around there where the (Indian) was killed. That where they dug the pit to drop him in... And he said somewhere along the bank of the river there's pillars. He brought some back and they were about this big, some were about that long and some were about that long. These pillars, they are all along the bank of the river.

David: Oh really?

Lady: Yeah.

David: That's the (name).

Lady: Yeah, probably. Did you ever go up that far?

David: No, no, I never got up there.

Lady: And it's further up from there that this big pit is. And in the story (inaudible) (Indian) and his sons dug a pit

and, you know, and of course start telling this (Indian) about this. He asks them, "What stories shall I tell you?" And then he starts to begin his story, and never... there's no real, anything to it. And I guess he was hypnotizing the (Indian) and he start to fall asleep and then they took the props out from behind his chair and he fell into this big pit with hot water in it.

David: Did they cover him up then?

Lady: He got cooked in there and then they threw his remains out, and they said that this will be the mosquitoes that will bite the next generation. So I guess that's the story about (inaudible) and all these insects come from,

because the (Indian) used to eat the people.

Chris: Jack, he was the trying to teach the younger fellows and nobody seemed to pay too much attention to him, you know.

David: Oh, I see.

Lady: The culture had already pretty well died out and they didn't know what these dances were for, and what they meant, so they weren't interested.

David: Oh, I see.

Lady: And it's only now that people are starting to get interested, you know, in just learning how to dance. But we still have to get interested in why those dances were danced and the reasons behind it, you know. It's the history of our beginners, you know, our forefathers.

David: I'm just curious, then. Like, why did the young people not have an interest in the dances? Were they busy doing other things?

Lady: They were in the generation when all this was banned in school.

David: Right, yeah. This is the generation that went out to residential school, right?

Chris: Yeah. Must have been less than that again. Might have been more, I don't know, because I was too young then. So when I really came to they must have been all of twenty.

David: Then there was what, more people living at Sheemahant?

Chris: Yeah.

David: And then at (name)?

Chris: Yeah, there's some at (name) there.

David: And at (name)?

Chris: (name), yeah. Dave and them were at (name) every winter.

David: Did everybody trap then? Did most of the adults set a trapline at that time?

Chris: Oh yeah, yeah. And they trap the whole lake. Yeah, I did all my trapping with Simon. Sure enjoyed myself then. Go out every day.

Lady: Always something new to see and hear. It's funny, we

never seemed to feel how cold it was in those days too.

Chris: No. They never used to have a thick jacket or anything.

David: Really?

Chris: All they had was just a summer jacket and running around all winter long. Got snow and the only thing I ever used to put on was a raincoat, go out do some duck hunting. Now I can't even do that (inaudible). Yeah, from break of dawn there till dusk, we'd be out all the time. Every day.

David: Well, things have certainly changed. Like, there's no trapping going on there now, and there's very little hunting, and there's no canneries there now. So it's all totally changed. People are confined, I guess, to working in the logging, for the logging companies.

Chris: Yeah. Used to go along there, never have to worry about drift or anything. Now you got to have your eyeballs peeled all the time.

David: Yeah, for deadheads and debris, yeah.

Chris: Never had to worry about a stick in there, though. Now you go check the trappers and "Wham!", something comes through your boat. (laughs)

Lady: They never ever pointed out where the old Indian village was in the Sheemahant River, eh? Did they ever tell you whereabouts it was?

Chris: The only place I know of is where that big flat is in there. It's all grown over with alder when I went through there. But they said that's where the village was before, on the outside of it.

Lady: Oh, on the right hand side going up?

Chris: It's on the left hand side going up.

Lady: Oh.

Chris: It's a big sand flat, mostly sand there. It's real flat at one time there, no trees, nothing there. The time we went up the alders were about three, four feet, I guess, all covered over.

David: Were there were any old house posts or anything?

Chris: You couldn't notice any. Maybe even now you go and look through there, it's logging camps must have been through there, anyways.

Lady: Probably.

Chris: Because these on the same side. Cedar bark,
(inaudible). (laughs)

David: What kind of game would they play with it?

Chris: Something like soccer, I guess.

David: Kick it around?

Chris: Yeah.

David: Oh yeah, yeah.

Chris: And you wouldn't want to kick that barefoot.
(laughs) He was saying something about a ball about that big.
You know, you take a cedar bark and you just rub it, soften it
up. Did you ever go to his house, it was up the river, old man
Simon?

Lady: Which one?

Chris: It was up in the river, Sheemahant River.

Lady: No.

Chris: No? It was in the bank on that side. Last time,
it's down below the falls, not too far from the falls there.
Yeah, he built a little shack in there. Last time I went there
it was half way up the bank.

Lady: The river?

Chris: Yeah.

Lady: Washed out from the river, or what?

Chris: Yeah. The river just kept washing the bank away,
then maybe it went down on him. Because every time we come
from beaver trapping that's where we usually left our beaver
traps -- hang them up on a nail. Same with the one in (name).
There's no shack there but there's a great big cedar tree
there, just made rope out of cedar bark.

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