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THE OOWEKEENO BAND.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- General reminiscences of his life.
- Gives Indian terms for a variety of English words.
David: Maybe we could just begin with your own history.
Whereabouts were you born?

Mathew: That island that's just at the mouth of the river.

David: Across from R.I.C.?

Mathew: Yeah.

David: Does that island have a name?

Mathew: I can't remember.

David: What was the settlement like there,? Were there many
houses there at that time?

Mathew: Yeah, there was. That whole island was... Actually,
I couldn't say now. There was a few houses there and they had
a graveyard on the other side.

David: Oh yeah. Was there a church there?

Mathew: Not that I can recall.

David: What kind of houses were these? Like, were they log houses?

Mathew: No, no, they were just single houses like, you know, all in a row. Well, there must be about fifteen anyway. And there were some up where the reserve is right now.

David: At the same time?

Mathew: Yeah. And they have, well, they had houses up in the island up in the top of the lake, I mean top of the river.

David: Yeah. Were there, do you remember if there were many totem poles at that place, at R.I.C., on the island?

Mathew: No, but I knew, what's the name now, George Thompson, George and Simon. They had a whole bunch, I remember that, and masks and everything. That all burned up when they had that fire there.

David: In 1935 there was a big fire.

Mathew: No, that wouldn't be that.

David: Oh, you mean the one at R.I.C.?

Mathew: Yeah.

David: Yeah, that was another fire.

Mathew: Yeah. And then everything burned up there, you know, dancing costumes and everything. This would be about '40, you know, '44 or '45.

David: The houses on the island there, were they just summer residences? Or were people there all year round?

Mathew: They were pretty well all year round, like. Everybody was fishing out of R.I.C. They come home for the weekend, they haven't got far to go. Just go across the road up to the island.

David: Was there a boardwalk connecting the...?

Mathew: No, no, no. They had to go over by a rowboat, like, you know.

David: Oh yeah.

Mathew: You know, stayed there for the weekend and then Sunday night they all go back out to fish.

David: Did everybody who stayed there, did they all work for R.I.C.?

Mathew: Yeah, pretty well. You know, the women they'd work in the net lofts there.

David: Right.

Mathew: But I don't remember the cannery operating, you know. Couldn't say it was working but, you know, as far as I know it was. Besides that, I don't know, but I know for a fact that everybody's working in the cannery, you know, and the net loft.

David: So what year were you born in, around?

Mathew: 1939.

David: Were the people still at that time going, moving up the lake in the winter, up to the Smokehouse Island.

Mathew: Yeah. Like, you know, like (inaudible). Well, that first stop there you make when you're going up, you know. These places they were separated by whose trapline and that up there, you know. And once in a while they'd all get together like, you know, and somebody would have big potlatch.

David: What time would it... Like, would it be a specific time of year for that, to get together?

Mathew: Oh, that would be about, you know, like... Well, everybody's trapping, eh. This is your trapline and this is mine, and this is hers, you know, so on all the way up Sheemahant, (name) and all that. I don't know, it must have been instinct, you know, get together in February or something. Have a big hoe-down and see who's got the most furs or something.

David: Yeah. Did you spend any time on that Smokehouse Island at Katit then?

Mathew: No, I never. Just like passing through, eh. Stay there a couple of days.

David: Were there any houses on that island at that time?

Mathew: No, there was just that one that's still standing yet -- that smokehouse.

David: Yeah.

Mathew: No, I couldn't recall any houses there. Well, that whole island burned off, eh.

David: Yeah. So you went up the lake with your family to trap?

Mathew: Yeah.

David: When your...

Mathew: Well, not with my family. I went with my brother-in-law and my sister and... Well, my sister, she practically brought me up, you know.

David: Yeah, which sister is this?

Mathew: Agnes. They practically brought me up. And I had to start working when I was nine years old in the Goose Bay Cannery.

David: Oh yeah. What were you doing there?

Mathew: Well, I was making boxes for these Chinamen like, you know. Like fifty bucks a month, and man, that's real good money! I worked there, oh, I don't know how many months. Then I went to school when I was eleven.

David: Well, can I ask you then what happened to your mother and father? Did they die when you were very young?

Mathew: Well, yeah. Well, my father died... well, they told me, when I was about three months old or something. And my mom, she died when I was thirteen and she died of tuberculosis.

David: And what was your mother's name?

Mathew: Queenie.

David: And she was a... What was her other, like her original family name, her maiden name?

Mathew: Oh, I don't really...

David: Was she a Johnson originally?

Mathew: No.

David: A Walker?

Mathew: Yeah. That was Simon's sister, Danny's... yeah, right. Yeah, she died when I was thirteen and from then on I kept on trucking, eh.

David: So you were raised pretty well by Peter and Agnes?

Mathew: Yeah, pretty well, yeah.

David: So when you went up the lake did you go with them trapping?

Mathew: Yeah, right.

David: What part of the lake would that be?

Mathew: That's on (name), yeah, right there. Well, there was Roy Hanuse's wife. Well, my older brother, Allan, he was there, and Keith. Go trapping there all that winter. And sometimes them guys wouldn't go out and then just me and Pete would go out, you know. And, you know, I don't know, just the instinct in me, I guess. You know, that money meant something. I'd go out with Pete, him and I would, you know, check the whole works, you know. And then get back in and start skinning the fur, you know. Everybody else would pitch in and, you know, we would never deduct nothing off of nobody, you know. Just the idea that was, you know, like one big family.

David: Right. So everything was pretty well shared then, was it?

Mathew: Yeah, right.

David: Did you partake at any time, in doing any of the dances there? Were you involved in that?

Mathew: Yeah.

David: Can you tell me a bit about that, like where you were and what time of your life it was?

Mathew: Well, about six years back now. And I couldn't tell you, you know. Like I told you, I haven't spent much time at home. And I couldn't tell you what kind of dances they were. All I know is, you know, they were a dance to me, that's about all. I couldn't tell you what kind they were.

David: And how old were you when you were doing that?

Mathew: Twenty-seven, I think, you know. We weren't forced to do it or anything, we were just asked to do it like, you know. And, oh, I couldn't remember the people -- they were taking pictures of them anyway.

David: And did you remember any of the names of the dances at all?

Mathew: Yeah, they had names for them but I couldn't recall them.

David: When you were growing up did you receive any Indian names? Apart from Mathew Johnson, do you have any other names?

Mathew: (laughs) No. Well, I have, but that's something I'd let go by, eh.

David: Do you have some names from your father's side or from your mother's side?

Mathew: From my mother's side.

David: They come from your mother's side?

Mathew: Yeah.

David: And are these names, like, were they names given to you when you were very young or when you were older?

Mathew: That was before I went to school. I was about ten years old, I guess.

David: And were they given at a feast?

Mathew: Yeah.

David: Do you remember the feast very well? Like maybe you could tell me a bit about it. What was the occasion for? What was the feast for? Was it a memory of somebody's death or...?

Mathew: Yeah, there was some memorial deal and this guy -- I grew up with him, you know, Dicky Bernard.

David: Right.

Mathew: I grew up with him and...

David: You don't mean David Bernard?

Mathew: No, no, Dicky. Yeah, that's David Bernard's son, you know, he'd be about the same age as I am. Yes, they had a feast for him, a memorial deal. And that's when they gave me that name there, you know.

David: Do you want to tell me that name?

Mathew: No, I don't want to tell nobody.

David: Do you have other names besides that one?

Mathew: What, nicknames and everything else? (laughs)

David: I mean names given to you, you know, in the feasts.

Mathew: No, no, none. In fact, I was telling you earlier, you know, I haven't spent much time at home, you know, a few months here and go off. Well, the first time I've been home in five years was last year, eh.

David: Well, when you were a little boy though, at this time when you were given this name, did you understand that you were... that your family, like your father had a crest and your mother had a crest?

Mathew: Yeah, right.

David: What would your father's crest be?

Mathew: Gee, I couldn't remember that. I know... yes, they were supposed to give me... It's a family deal and you make up all these Indian designs and, you know, carve them all out, eh. And they were supposed to give me one but I never got one.

David: Would that be sort of like a history of your family?

Mathew: What the hell do you call that?

David: I was trying to figure out which families belonged to which crests, you know, whether they belonged to the Blackfish or Raven, or Whale or whatever.

Mathew: Yeah. I know it had something to do with a wolf or some damn thing.

David: With the Wolf?

Mathew: Yeah. Armored thing, I don't know.

David: Would it be copper?

Mathew: No, it's carved out of wood. Something about armored arms or something, I can't remember.

David: So did you actually dance in any of the dances yourself?

Mathew: Yeah. Well, that was about '67, I guess.

David: Was that the time Jack Johnson was trying to get things going again?

Mathew: Yeah. Well, he was the teacher and everything else.

David: Yeah.

Mathew: But I didn't go on, you know. Like, they went to Bella Bella and Ocean Falls. I didn't go, you know, because I wasn't in the village at that time. You know, I was out in the logging camps and I didn't go.

David: So how old were you when you went out to school then?

Mathew: Well, I started school when I was eleven years old.

David: Did you go to St. Mike's?

Mathew: Yeah. And then, well, when I finally left there I was sixteen, I think. Well, I got kicked out. Then I went back the next year and the same principal was there and he says, "What the hell are you doing back here? I told you I didn't want you back," you know. And then I went to grade nine for about three weeks, I guess, and then my brother was

reported missing so I just dropped out. My brother was reported missing and then I went home. Well, I call home Namu, eh. everybody was there and working in the cannery.

David: Was Peter working there then?

Mathew: Yeah. And so I went there and... Well, at that time I didn't know my brothers and sisters, you know. But they told me they had something important to tell me. So I went, I dropped out of school and I went and worked in Namu. Got to Namu and my grandfather and everybody was (inaudible). And everybody was, you know, gathered there. "You need a haircut," you know, and my hair wasn't that long (inaudible). My uncle

gave me a haircut and nobody wouldn't tell me anything, you know, and he says, "Well, we got to go out." So everybody took off that had boats. They were looking for my brother at that time.

David: Oh, I see.

Mathew: Well, he had...

David: Had he been fishing?

Mathew: Yeah. He was renting Roy Hanuse's boat -- Violet H-2, I think it was.

David: Oh yeah.

Mathew: So everybody they were going out trying to locate him, eh. So finally, well, my brother's wife, Audrey, she finally told me. She said, "Your brother has been missing." And then I got mad, you know. At the age of seventeen, eh. I got mad and I said, "Why in the hell didn't you guys tell me that earlier?" Nobody would say nothing so I went storming out the door, slamming the door, you know. I said, "Don't worry about me," you know, "I'll be all right." And then, you know, I wanted to be by myself. And then my other brother, Chris, he come after me and I says, "No, I don't even want you near me." If they're going to, you know, pull a thing like that on me without letting me know, go ahead. So I just went off by myself and that's when I started drinking all of a sudden. And after I went in for that soldier's apprentice.

David: What were you apprentice to when you did that? What did you take in the militia?

Mathew: Eh?

David: What did you take when you went into that?

Mathew: Driver's mechanic and signal coding.

David: And how long did you stay there?

Mathew: Two or three years, and after I don't bother going home again.

David: I was wondering about the years you spent at St. Mike's. What kind, how did you find school? Was it a pretty rough place or was it pretty heavy?

Mathew: Some of the teachers, they were pretty heavy, but some of them, you know. I didn't find it too bad. It's just, you know, like... and I don't know, like when I was going to school you used to... Like, you know, you place them here, eh, from Alert Bay on to Port Hardy, you know. That was one whole deal, eh.

David: Yeah.

Mathew: And then from Rivers Inlet to Bella Bella, that was another deal. And then from Bella Bella, Kitimat and, you know, those places, you know...

Yeah, there's very, very few people that can... you know, like I was... After I come out of soldier's apprentice I went hand logging with Simon and Jack. Mary, she used to, you know, never used to talk English to me, you know, and she'd talk our language. That was something, you know, that was driven in there, eh, and I'd never forget it, no. When I go home, you know, I talk to guys, you know, in our language and I can talk and talk to them underneath the table, like, you know. And you know, so they get stuck, eh. And so they get stuck and, you

know, they start talking English to me, you know, and I'm still talking our language, you know. And that's something I was really proud of when I went up there. Well, you know Johnny -- I call him my brother, eh. He tried to talk to me in our language, you know. I'd talk right back to him, swear words, you can name it, you know, I can do it. And we have a hell of a time, you know. And Norman, well, he tried to talk to me in our language, you know. I talked him under the table. Well, like everybody else they're, you know, year around, year in and year out, and I'm never there. My grandparents, you know, they talk to me, they wouldn't speak.

David: What was your grandparent's names?

Mathew: Simon and Mary.

David: Oh, I see.

Mathew: You know they wouldn't talk to me in English, you know, always talk to me when we're working.

David: So Norman and Johnny are your cousins?

Mathew: First cousins.

David: First cousins, and you refer to them as brothers?

Mathew: Yeah.

David: What is the word you would use to refer to them, what is the word for brother then in your language? What would the Oowekeeno word be?

Mathew: In our language?

David: Yeah.

Mathew: It's (Indian). That's your brother.

David: And that could be your first cousin too, eh?

Mathew: Yeah. And then if you're referring to somebody that is younger than you are you'd say (Indian).

David: What about sister? How would you say sister?

Mathew: That would be the same thing. If she's younger than you (Indian).

David: So that would apply whether it would be male of female?

Mathew: Yeah. (Indian) you know if somebody younger than you are. If he's older you call him (Indian). That's your brother or sister.

David: I was wondering, like when you went to St. Mike's did you have much hassle because, over the language thing? Did you have any problems?

Mathew: Yes. Like when I was going to school, and he was there too, this dummy here. And they wouldn't allow you to talk your language, eh. You know, that was, you know, if you got caught talking your language that was capital punishment, eh.

David: What would they do to you?

Mathew: Well, make you scrub. Like they have five floors, eh, and make you scrub the first one until you hit the bottom one. That was haywire, that.

David: How did you... Like, do you have any bad feelings about that? Did it cause you any grief, troubles?

Mathew: Well, in a way, yeah, you know. Some of the teachers that I met there, you know, I'd like to meet today and, you know, tell them what for.

David: Yeah. So that was a fairly difficult part of it, was it, the language?

Mathew: Yeah. You weren't allowed to talk your language. Well, that's the only thing I knew when I first got there, eh. I barely knew how to speak English, you know. Well, my... Chris, well, my brother, he was there, you know. He was the back-up squad, him and a bunch of guys there that I knew.

David: So they sort of helped you out a bit, eh?

Mathew: Yeah.

David: Did you learn anything worthwhile at St. Mike's?

Mathew: I guess I did. (laughs) But I learned most of everything I know now, like mechanics and everything, through that soldier's apprenticeship. Like, well, they told me... Well, it was on Seymour Street, just down here, where I applied for it. And they gave me an application. And my stepfather, he was still alive, so he says, "You going to make that your life?" "I don't know, I'm just going to try it." So I filled out the application and got three years and I really enjoyed myself, you know. Well, what got me was what the white man brought over here, that whiskey, you know.

Man: Fire water.

David: Yeah.

Mathew: Hell, I won two gold medals for half a mile and one mile in the B.C. Centennial.

David: Really? Racing?

Mathew: Yeah.

David: You were a runner?

Mathew: Track and field. Well, before that I went in for boxing, eh. I was doing really good in there, eh. And then, well, like I says, that fire water got the best of me. And then, well, when I won that two gold medals, you know, I went staggering up to the starting line, eh. Them guys says, "Oh shucks, you can't do nothing. For every round you make I'll buy you a drink," you know. And them guys never come across, you know, and I got mad, you know. But I got two gold medals for that.

David: Is that right?

Mathew: Yeah. And that booze really... bingo -- it was down hill all the way. Like when I was in that apprenticeship -- three years -- well, I think that three years is the best time of my life. And then that booze start going and, you know. I think back sometimes, you know, I could be in the Olympics and all that, you know, if I didn't start drinking, you know.

David: Yeah, stuck with it.

Mathew: Yeah.

David: Where did you do that race when you won your gold medals? Was that in B.C.?

Mathew: Yeah.

David: In Vancouver?

Mathew: No, right in Bella Bella here. Oh Christ, there was people from all over the place. Well, I was passed out on the boat and my brother and... well, you know Don Martin? Well, they woke me up -- I was passed out. They going to run that half mile, "Are you going?" And Christ, everybody was in track shoes and everything, you know, and I was just dressed like this. I got up and (inaudible) staggering up to the starting line.

David: I was wondering about the... You said you went hand logging. I was trying to find out some information on hand logging, you and Simon. Did he have a specific area that was his area to hand log or just anywhere?

Mathew: Yeah, right. No, no, you had a place, you know, just below (name), that (name) River there. And you had that place, you know.

David: Who gave him that place, though? Did he have to get a license to do that or was that his place because of the family tradition?

Mathew: No, no. He got that license off, what the hell was this guy's name? Well, he was contracting for Crown Zellerbach. And Bill Philips, he was the backer of that.

David: So his actual area for cutting was given to him by Crown Zellerbach?

Mathew: Yeah, right.

David: Oh, I see. So in other words nobody could just go up and hand log wherever they wanted to. It was all controlled by the company?

Mathew: No, no, you can go up there. Well, at that time you can file for hand logging claim.

David: You could yourself?

Mathew: Yeah.

David: What was the fee for that?

Mathew: Oh, I couldn't remember now.

David: Was it a lot of money to get a claim or just a little bit?

Mathew: No, no, it's somewhere about \$55.

(END OF SIDE A)

Mathew: What the hell was his name? He was from (inaudible), you know, sell the logs. And I never got along good.

David: So did many of the other (inaduable)?

Mathew: Well, my time, yeah.

David: And where would they sell the logs to? The companies or up to Ocean Falls?

Mathew: No, I wouldn't know. A lot of the old timers, Albert Harry and all them guys, I know they hand logged.

David: They did, eh?

Mathew: Yeah.

David: Was hand logging like a main occupation, or was it just sort of incidental, you know?

Mathew: You know, like for wintertime, nobody's working, nobody's fishing.

David: Well, was trapping the main thing?

Mathew: Yeah, pretty well, yeah.

David: And then hand logging was just after that?

Mathew: Yeah, you know, like they were... Well, all the canneries there they needed pilings so that's what they went out for -- pilings and float sticks. But other than that I don't know too much about that. That was before my time. I don't know.

David: Another thing I was trying to find out was, like for a while there it seems like most of the men would have been commercial fishermen, eh, with their own boats.

Mathew: Yeah, right.

David: And today in the village there isn't anybody.

Mathew: No.

David: I was wondering, can you tell me why that's happened? How has that come about?

Mathew: I don't know for sure. Well, I haven't been around there and I don't really know.

David: Does it have to do with the closing of all the canneries?

Mathew: Not really, no. I don't know, change in time, I guess and, you know, everybody's gone logging.

David: I just wondered why people would prefer to go logging as opposed to being, you know, having their own boat and go fishing. Is there some advantages to logging?

Mathew: Well, I don't know. You got a chance to work, you know, year around if you want. And I think, I don't really really know, but, you know, people up there they got no place to keep their boats or, you know...

David: Yeah. You yourself had spent some time, what, gill netting?

Mathew: Yeah, right.

David: How many years did you gill net?

Mathew: Oh, about four years, five years.

(Interruption by third party)

David: Mathew, you did gill netting for about five years?

Mathew: Yeah.

David: How did you make out as a gill netter?

Mathew: Oh, not too bad.

David: Good money for you?

Mathew: Well, everybody has a good year and a bad year, eh. So that's putting blunt, eh. Well, in three years I went \$1,500 in the hole. I worked that out in the reduction plant and then after that the company wouldn't back me, eh.

David: Which company was this?

Mathew: B.C. Packers. They wouldn't back me so I had to try it on my own. I tried it on my own, you know. I didn't think that was the life for me, you know, so the hell with it. I wasn't in the hole when I quit fishing, you know, I just broke even, eh, and said the hell with it. I gave the boat back to the company and I said, "You guys (inaudible)," you know, "write me out a cheque for me." So that was game over. Well, I knew one guy there -- he was a great big wheel for B.C. Packers -- and I says, "I don't want to stick around here. Can you get me a transfer, transfer down to (name)?" So I got a transfer.

I worked there, oh, nineteen months or something and... So I worked down there nineteen months and after I went back home and... Well, I had to have, you know, my parent's consent, you know. My step-father he was still alive and, well, I brought these...

David: Who was your step-father?

Mathew: Henry Hanuse.

David: What was Henry's wife's name?

Mathew: Well, that was my mother, Queenie.

David: Oh, I see.

Mathew: Yeah. And so I went home and I had these applications for that soldier's apprenticeship and he said, "Are you sure you want this?" And I said, "Yeah I'm quite sure." So he signed it and then send it in, and they send my fare up and so I went. Came down here and went to the recruiting office and they, you know, give me medical and everything else, you know. And they sent me up to Vernon and then I was there, oh, three years. Well, when I first got there they gave me another medical, and they said I was all right. Then I spent two and a half years there, I think. Then they send me down to Jericho Beach. They wanted people go on that occupational deal over in Korea.

David: Oh yeah.

Mathew: And, well, I was named one of them like, you know. But when I got down there, you know, I was doing so damn much boxing at that time, and broke my nose twice, broke an eardrum and...

David: From boxing?

Mathew: Yeah. And then they said, "No, you can't go." A whole bunch of my buddies they went over and I stayed in Jericho Beach. After that I was just going, like, from Jericho Beach all the way back to Vernon again. Then we got discharged, me and my partner, and he tried to join the airforce. And the trouble was that he was color blind. Oh, shit, he come out of that office there crying, you know. And, well, like good friends, eh, I put my arm around him and, "Come on, cool off, buddy. We'll make out all right." And then after that, him and I, we went from here to there. And I got job again and he was out of a job and, you know, I was supporting both of us, like, you know. And I don't know, I lost track of him years ago. He was something, well, he was a German, eh, a really good one.

David: So what did you do then? Did you go into logging after that?

Mathew: Yeah, I really started going in...

David: You did the logging for quite a while then?

Mathew: Yeah. Like I say, you know, I probably could have made the Olympics, you know. But I started boozing and I can still remember that first damn drink I took. That was that cheap old wine, you know. Well, Sammy Walker Junior -- that was my uncle or whatever you say -- he come in just yelling. Well, he had no place to stay and I was staying down at (inaudible). And he come in there and, "Come on, drink." Well he was half cut, eh, and I was stone sober and he was twice the man I'll ever be, you know. He says, "Come on, drink." And I says, "No, I don't want to drink." And he grabbed me by the front of my shirt and he says, "Drink." He start pouring it, you know. He says, "Wait, I'll go and get something to eat."

Soon as he went I went for the window, eh. Everything came up but the old asshole, eh. Then he comes back and he says, "Have another drink," you know. And pretty soon it was going down easier and easier. And after that I couldn't go without it.

David: Well, when I was talking with Peter he was, he said that he had some connection with Bella Coola people through his father. Is that right?

Mathew: Yeah, right, Johnny Hanuse. He was more or less my uncle or something.

David: So there's quite a few connections then with the Bella Coola people?

Mathew: Yeah, right. And some in Kitimat, but I couldn't remember them all. Like some of the guys that live in Bella Bella, they were born in Rivers and they live in Bella Bella now. Him and I and Frank, we got fired, you know, for drinking through the night, but we were ready to work the next morning. He had his rain gear on and everything, and Frank used to put on the (inaudible). He says, "Well, you guys going to drink all night," I don't know what he meant by all night, but anyway I said, "Yeah, okay," and I took my cork boots off, changed my clothes, back in the (inaudible), and Frank, he done the same thing. He says, "What are you going to do Lou?" "Oh, there's a match going, I'm going to." So we had this meeting up in the Queen Charlotte Islands. What I should have done is I should have went right to the I.W.A. office, you know, and I could have been collecting pay right from the time I was laid off, you know, fired until shutdown, eh. And I didn't do it.

Then I went to O.B. Logging and same thing there too. I work there nine days. And, not exactly, we weren't drinking or

nothing, you know. Guys playing pool, guy started hassling me and he says, "How long have you been playing pool?" And I says, "Well, that's the first time I ever played pool in about

three years." And, you know, I cleaned everybody's clock and they didn't like that, and then they start giving me a hassle. And then the boss says, "Well, it's time you have to leave." And I ask him, "What for?"

Everybody, I don't know, you know everybody seems to look up at me and they look up at me, you know. Like Frank or any one of them guys from home, you know, they'd come crying to me, "So and so beat me up." And I say, "Yeah, okay." Sounds like a Mafia deal, eh. So I'd go and try to reason it out with the guy that beat so and so up and, you know. No, I couldn't reason with him, you know. And then he says, "Okay, well, you're the next on the list." So I said, "All right, fine." And I told him, you know, my brother bought me a pair of boxing gloves, you know, and I talk to the guy there again. Instead of going, you know, try to reason with him, eh. So I tell him, "Okay, I got a pair of boxing gloves in my locker." Well, that's where I stored it from boxing, eh. So me and this guy that beat up this Frank, or you know, somebody from home -- I was more or less a guardian for everybody at home then. Well, naturally I was bigger than all of them, you know. So they'd come crying to me and then, you know, and then after that I'd go see the guy that beat up so and so up and I'd tell him, "Okay, come on. Put on the boxing gloves," and then away we'd go, you know. And, you know, that was natural for me, boxing like, you know. And, well, I stuck to it, you know. Then after a while when I went into the army, you know, this guy he was a Golden Glove boxer. And, well, he was the guy that broke my nose twice. He really liked me for his sparring partner because I can switch, you know, and lead with my right and change around and lead with my left. You know, he'd say that I

was confusing, him, you know. And he really liked it. So I kept it up there and finally he broke my eardrum and just chewing on my, you know, from about third round, I guess, chewing on the shoelaces trying to get my gloves off and I said, "Oh, I'm finished," you know, and so on. I climbed out and then he tried to talk to me and get me back, you know, and I said, "No way, I'm not going back." So I started taking track and field and that came natural too. You know this guy, well, I tried the 100 yard dash and, you know, that was, I don't know. This guy, he was top man on the team, eh, on track and field and I beat him. And he done that 100 yard dash in 11.8 or something like that, and I done it in 9 and I thought, "That's not for me." So I tried long distance and I was really cool on that.

David: I was wondering about the time you spent up the lake. Can you tell me any stories or legends to do with any parts of the lake, or any stories that you know about the lake?

Mathew: No, not really. Just, you know, when I was up there, you know. Before I went to school I was with Pete, and my brother, and my sister, Roy and his wife and, you know, we were trapping, eh. You know that's, you know, that's too far past like, you know, what I mean.

David: So the time, though, spent up at the lake, like during the trapping, people got along, worked together pretty well, did they?

Mathew: Yeah, pretty well, yeah.

David: So families worked together and then they come together for the dances, eh?

Mathew: Yeah, right.

David: Was there much drinking at that time, at the feasting time? Or was drinking saved for later?

Mathew: No, like everybody would, you know, be doing dances and everything else. And after, you know, they more or less put up a potlatch or something, you know, somebody's birthday or some damn thing like that. And then after everything was finished, you know, they'd go to another place and then they'd start drinking. And they had these wood stave barrels -- home made wine or whatever, raisin wine, raisin jack, whatever you call that. Yeah, they'd have that. And I remember one time there, my sister, two of my sisters, we started eating these raisins from the leftovers, you know. There was no more brew in there but we started eating these raisins. I was passed out this way, my sister and my other sister, we were all flaked out just from eating them damn raisins, you know. She's in town here, living in Richmond right now.

David: Oh yeah. So the families, when they were doing this, trapping like, they got along pretty well, did they?

Mathew: Yeah right.

David: It seems like in the village today there's some sort of friction, you know, between the families.

Mathew: Yeah, right.

David: And I just wondered where it started, you know.

Mathew: I wouldn't know.

David: Where did that start?

Mathew: Well, I wouldn't know. It was already starting when I was here. Well, you know Norman. He's living in my house, eh. And I don't know how that friction started.

David: Did it have to do with the band council that came in when the village, you know, when the houses got built there?

Mathew: I doubt it. You know, I haven't spent much time there. Well, that's another reason I wouldn't go back there, you know. And, you know, supposing you were there and I tell

you that, "Hey, that guy, he's no good and," you know, "he's a freeloader," and all that bull shit. And then later on you'd leave my place and you'd go and tell him, "This is what Matt said about you," you know, and all that. There's too much of that, you know, you...

David: That sort of started it, eh?

Mathew: Yeah. You know, and I don't like that. You know, it's not my nature. And, you know, I've been with white people and everything else too long. And, you know, I...

(Interruption by third party)

And on his back he went and smashed the motor up, eh, the bottom unit. He never came and told me, eh. After a while, next time I went out, you know, go get some groceries. You know, I was living by myself, and my house wasn't even finished, you know. Had a roof on there and parts of the walls weren't even put in but I was living in it. Well, I figured I'll go and get some groceries today, you know, I said to myself in the morning. And all I had a was a gas stove, Coleman. Well, I put that on, put on a couple of eggs and

bacon and I went down went down to the boat, start her up. Oh, it started beautiful, eh, and then I put it in gear, you know, wouldn't go in gear, wouldn't do nothing. So I went over and lift the motor up -- there's no bottom unit on there, you know. And so who should I go looking for was him. Gave him hell and what for and he says, "Sorry about that partner." I told him, "Why didn't you come and tell me as soon as you got in?" You know, everything would have been all right. But no, he wouldn't. I just turned around and I walked out, I slammed the door on him and went back home. And, you know, I was frustrated, eh. And so I'm putting up the walls and I'm hanging onto a nail, I missed the nail and hit my thumb. God damn (inaudible).

David: What happened to him that he's not fishing anymore?

Mathew: No, he start working in the reduction plant as a foreman.

David: Oh yeah. At Namu?

Mathew: Yeah, Namu. And then he start working as a foreman there and so... Well, not actually a foreman, like a shift boss, you know. They have two or three shifts there. And then he finally sold his boat to a guy from Ocean Falls -- I know him really well. And then Johnny, he had his own boat -- that was Sally's (inaudible). Anyway, that...

David: What happened to Johnny's boat?

Mathew: Well, it sunk once and they took it up and then he went fishing. And then after a while he just gave up fishing.

I used to run away with it all the time, you know. One time, middle of the night there, they told me to... Well, I was

just a kid, thirteen or something and I can start the engine, you know, (inaudible). And I'd run around all night long with it, you know, and one day I... Well, this friend of mine, he took my brother's boat out and I had Johnny's; we had a collision. Oh, (inaudible). I thought, you know, we was going to sink both boats or something, so we went and tied up and then we left. (laughs) And then...

David: Yeah, it's hard to keep the boat going.

Mathew: Yeah, right. Like, you know, you have to go so far and, you know, have it fixed up. I think that was mostly the reason why everybody quit fishing, you know. You have to go so far to have to have it repaired. (Break in tape) No, not really, we all worked in the cannery. (inaudible). And, you know... Well, I don't know how many years I put in at Namu. Well, Norman and Johnny, they've been there, you know, a few years.

David: So Norman, and Johnny, and yourself and Peter were all working at Namu at the same time?

Mathew: Yeah.

David: Oh, I see. So there's quite a... most of the people were there then, eh?

Mathew: Yeah. My brother and pretty well just about everybody. And then, you know, during the winter we'd go home and do some trapping and Martin would be making oolachan grease. And, you know, that was like a cycle, eh.

David: Yeah.

Mathew: I don't know when, you know, put up this and all that. Still going on today.

David: Yeah.

Mathew: Well, I don't know...

David: Ever since you've been there, the times you've been up there, did the people do much food gathering out at the mouth of the inlet, like abalone or clams or mussels?

Mathew: Well, once in a while they'd go out. But, like, you know, when they have to go to Bella Bella on a hospital case or something, you know, they'd bring things there that they'd trade off with the guys from Bella Bella; sea weed and all that, you know. And they traded off sea weed or abalone or whatever the case may be. Well, once in a while everybody would, you know, go out on the boat and then go dig clams or abalone.

David: Can you tell me some of the locations where you'd get, you know, food at the mouth of the inlet, either clams or abalone? Was there any special places that were more popular than others?

Mathew: Like, what the hell is it now? He knows it. Clam Beach? Open Bay or whatever it's called, Clam beach. And that's where everybody goes, you know, (inaudible) picking it like, you know, and get away from everything, and dig clams.

David: Do you know very much about the rock paintings in the lake?

Mathew: No.

David: Are there any stories to go with them or...?

Mathew: No, I, I, that's nil to me. You know, I haven't (inaudible). Katit, that's where that name started from.

David: Oh yeah.

Mathew: Out around, (name) there.

David: So the name Katit comes from out there?

Mathew: Yeah, and then they moved it in, like. I don't know, there was so damn many different tribes like, you know, Sheemahant, (Indian), and what do you call that other place now, (name) and...

David: So were each of those families considered like different tribes?

Mathew: Yeah, like different tribes, like, you know. Even like, you know, say about ten years back, you know, they'd have a dance or something and they tell me that you're from (name), you know.

David: Right, right. So where would, what part of the lake is your family connected with then?

Mathew: (name).

David: Right.

Mathew: (Name) and then down the island, you know, just across from R.I.C. So everything is, I don't know... But like I say, I don't know too much about that.

David: What word would you use to give a feast?

Mathew: I'll need some time to think. Gee, I don't remember.

David: What would you say for mother?

Mathew: Mother? (Indian).

David: And father?

Mathew: (Indian).

(END OF SIDE B)

(END OF TAPE)

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