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(SCHOOLBOYS)
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DATE OF INTERVIEW:
INTERVIEWER: MARGARET STOBIE
INTERPRETER:
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- a general discussion with two schoolboys

Margaret: How many are there in the school?

George: About forty.

Margaret: And how many grades?

George: Nine, nine grades.

Margaret: So when George is having arithmetic, what are you doing? Or have you finished?

Roddy: No, we do arithmetic at the same time.

Margaret: Oh, you all do it at the same time. I see. Well, when school's over then what? What do you do?

George: We work. We get wood for the house. We have to go in the bush to get it.

Margaret: Getting wood is quite a job, isn't it? Do you use coal in the winter?

George: No, wood.

Margaret: Wood altogether. So that takes a lot.

George: Two stooks.

Margaret: Well, do the two of you go together?

George: We have another brother that comes with us. He is smaller than us.

Margaret: What does he do?

George: Hardly works.

Margaret: Do you have to go and cut down the trees?

George: Yes, we have to saw them and split them and bring them in.

Margaret: You do that all winter? You would get a pretty good supply in first?

George: Yes. We always go and cut loads of wood in the bush so people buy them from us.

Margaret: Oh yes. This is part of the pulp... Oh no, this would be just for other people. How much do you do of that?

George: They give us four dollars a load sometimes. Four dollars a load. The other winter we cut over 50 loads.

Margaret: Just the two of you?

George: No, and my stepfather.

Margaret: Oh yes. Well, how many people around would that supply?

George: From all over they come and buy it from us.

Margaret: What do you do for fun in the wintertime?

George: Skating.

Margaret: Where do you skate?

George: On the ice some place.

Margaret: Is it smooth in spots and rough in others?

George: Some places are smooth.

Margaret: Can you skate for miles up?

George: No. They don't let us go very far because there is too much snow around the ice. We can't skate.

Margaret: Well, would there be places where the river wouldn't be safe or it wasn't quite frozen over? Is there any current?

George: Yes. Some places.

Margaret: Do you ever have skating parties?

George: No.

Margaret: We used to. We'd would go down to the river and we would go skating as far we could and have to come back and then have a bonfire, wieners and things. You don't do that? You go to your home?

George: Yes.

Margaret: How cold does it get?

George: The highest it was, I don't know how much it was below. It was just white all over the ice. The wind was over sixty miles an hour.

Margaret: There was a terrible storm passing through here, wasn't there? The lighthouse people were telling me.

George: Me and him were going to go to Hudson's Bay for that stuff.

Margaret: How would you go, walking?

George: We came with another man and woman. We go in a group because it was really windy that night.

Margaret: But you got there all right? It must have been pretty cold. How cold was it then?

George: It was about... The wind blows over top the ice, about thirty or forty.

Margaret: Do you have many storms like that up here?

George: Not very many.

Margaret: We got that storm in the city too, only of course it wouldn't be quite as fierce as it is here because there aren't the great sweeps of country. When break-up comes, how about school? How do the students get there? You're all right.

George: The teacher stays over there in a little cabin at the school. It is a nice little house there. She is there with another, they are sisters. They got the mission to manage. There is two other nuns staying there. The pupils, sometimes they take their books home and study them at home when they can't come.

Margaret: This is what we used to do when I was going to school, when I was about your age. The school was at the other end of town and in very, very cold weather we would take our lunch. We wouldn't try to get back. That was always kind of a picnic.

George: Yeah, children do that at school, they eat at school. They never go, except some close people, they go back.

Margaret: But there must be several weeks when some of them can't get across. That must be a bit hard. The school was late closing this year, wasn't it?

George: Yes. The end of June it closed.

Margaret: Did you have a celebration or anything?

George: No, because we are not going to that school any more.

Margaret: Oh, I see. Where are you going?

George: Up the river.

Margaret: Is this school closed down?

George: Yes. They are just going to break up some (inaudible) we are going to go to school in that school. There is man taking it to pieces right now, fixing the walls.

Margaret: Oh, I see. So you'll have further to go next year?

George: Yes.

Margaret: How far will it be?

George: There're no schools up the river. It's all far from where I live. Maybe there will be a bombardier to come and pick us up.

Margaret: I suppose in earlier days, before the bombardiers, they went by dogteam, dogsled? And what are you doing now this

summer? Cutting wood?

George: No.

Margaret: Do you do any fishing?

George: I go and work at the fishing stations.

Margaret: What do you do there?

George: I make boxes and other things.

Margaret: But you still have a little time off for having a little fun?

George: Yes. (all laugh)

Margaret: You go swimming and what else do you do?

George: We always go and visit some places.

Margaret: Well, you boys wouldn't have been out hunting yet, would you?

George: We went hunting lots of times.

Margaret: You do?

George: Last year I went way up to Pigeon River with some other guys, five of us. We went sixteen rapids up.

Margaret: You portaged the rapids?

George: Yes.

Margaret: That is quite a job, isn't it?

George: We went up to a lake called Round Lake. There is a forester there. One house on a tower. There is man that stays there and we visit him too.

Margaret: What did you get on your hunting trip?

George: We only went fishing for sturgeon. We saw over twelve moose on our way. One big bull moose, I went right up to him. Just his antler sticking out of the water. We just circled right around and we jumped up behind him. I never thought I'd ever go close to a moose.

Margaret: Was he as surprised as you were?

George: Yeah. We tapped him with a paddle on the horns and he jumped up and went away.

Margaret: He must have gone pretty fast then.

George: Yeah.

Margaret: But you saw twelve others, did you say?

George: Yeah. I just saw two little fawns, that's all, just two. On our way coming back they were swimming across, two little ones and big one. We just about caught them.

Margaret: Do they ever catch the fawns or do they let them go?

George: They let them go.

Margaret: Is there a lot of hunting around here? Do the older men go out a lot?

George: Yeah, the other day a man went to the Pigeon River. He killed a moose. He brought some meat here, in parts.

Margaret: Was this the meat that....?

George: Our stepfather is going to go any time to hunt the moose.

Margaret: Where is your mother from? Is she from here? Was she born here, do you know?

George: Poplar River.

Margaret: Poplar River. Have you been up and down the lake quite a bit?

George: Yeah, lots of times.

Margaret: How do you go? Do you go on the Kenora or on your own boat?

George: On my own boats.

Margaret: I had a trip across to the lighthouse yesterday and going across it was pretty choppy. Do you come across that weather?

George: Yeah. Sometimes when it's windy we just go like this sometimes.

Inter: And then 'bopp!' How often do you make trips like that?

George: Lots of times.

Roddy: Nearly every day, somewhere fishing. Swampy.

Margaret: Well, that is supposed to be a good place. And there is a beach there?

Roddy: Yeah, there is nothing but stones around, big lime stones.

Margaret: Yes, several people have mentioned that as a place to go. Are there any other fish in the Sturgeon to catch?

George: There is pickerel, catfishes.

Margaret: I guess this is Catfish River down here.

George: Catfish River, Catfish Creek.

Margaret: How far do you go in your own boat?

Roddy: To the other side of the (inaudible).

George: I went on a trip with just a boat and motor to Poplar River. We had to stop for four days because of the wind. We saw lots of bears. The first time I saw him I got real scared and close up to it, a small one. He tried to come to us, we were in the woods. One guy there was pretty crazy, he was going to shoot it. And then he jumped into the bush. And the next day we had to stop there because there was a storm so we went walking, me and the son of the man that shot. And we come down and we see that little bear coming around and he would peek. And that day too we went away far on the sand beaches. Nothing but sand beach all over. Big geese, I think seven big geese. We were walking a long time. All of a sudden that man's son jumped back. He was trying to fool us, I thought. Then he said he saw a big bear, he was standing like this and next I think I'll look so I took a look and there was this big bear standing there. I didn't get scared. We scared him away, we shot up in the air with a shotgun and we scared all these ducks that he was going to shoot. (laughs) He shot at the bear.

Margaret: Well, I wouldn't think that is a very good hunter, that scares away all the things he wants.

George: Oh, he is crazy. It was crazy at Poplar River.

Margaret: Do you go duck hunting?

George: Two or three usually do last summer and the others don't. Never went to Sandy Bay this summer.

Margaret: Did you get a lot of ducks?

George: Not very many. Sometimes we would get ten.

Margaret: You would go out very early in the morning?

George: We go out in the evening and come back in the evening.

(End of Interview)