Hilda: Maybe that's why I've become a Christian again.

David: Was there any conflict in your mind then, like between what you had at home in terms of religion and what you got at school? Did you have any difficulties with that?

Hilda: Well, never had no religion at home. Of course I used to hear my mother praying in her own way asking (Indian) -- means the Great Chief from up there -- to watch over us when we're going to travel.

David: So the old people did have some religious ideas and other concepts that they...
(Indian), "Is that you?" Well, she calls her name.

David: Those dances, like the Hamatsa dances and so on, were they seen by the people as having religious significance as well?

Hilda: Not that I know of.

David: What do understand then by the Hamatsa? What was it, what was the idea behind the dance?

Hilda: They... From what I heard about it, in order to go in to be a Hamatsa you had to be away from the village, away from the people and go into hiding. I don't know if they called it hiding, or go and be trained to learn how to respect yourself and cleanse youself of every evil. I think that's what it was for. From what I can gather from my mother was that you, how did she used to call that, you're supposed to go by yourself and you have no food whatsoever and you just... and I think there's... I don't know if there's one person goes with you to teach you what you are supposed to be like.

David: So it's fasting then, cleansing yourself?

Hilda: Yes. You don't have nothing to eat, just maybe water.

David: Did you understand that the person who did this was then looking for power or got power in some way? Did the Hamatsa dancers, did they have the power?

Hilda: Maybe that's what they were looking for, I don't know. But mostly I think it was for self-respect, or maybe respect from your fellow man to be able to, not to eat and everything. And when you come back to civilization, as it were... But I think the reason why they have all that noise and booing, and what you call it when they come back, is to show people that they've accomplished something. I remember watching Lila and Pete Chamberlain -- Pete Chamberlain was just a teenager then. Oh, what a noise they make when they got into the big house. And they... The way I saw it, they pretended to be wild because they just came from the bushes, eh. But I don't know whether they really stayed there or not. That I don't know. They might have been just staying in the lean-to or something. I don't know if it was a month or four days or something like that, everything had to be four. When they go around that big fire they have to go around there four times.

David: So then when they would come in wild, the dance was in effect a taming of the wildness, was it?

Hilda: Yeah, they had a bunch of men all in their blankets trying to hold him down so he wouldn't hurt people; he was that wild. I can't really see how Lila used to be able to do it -- she was so tiny. I think she was even tinier than Evelyn is.
David: But the whole dance series then... There were a series of dances that you worked your way up through to be a Hamatsa and so on. Did the other people see them as in a religious terms, as a way of connecting them with, you know, with spirits and with power and so on?

Hilda: There might have been. I really don't know. But the thing is, you know, when you live, when you come to live your everyday life after you've been dancing, there's a lot of respect for that person. And even today if a person gives potlatch, that person becomes respected as a giver of things and stuff like that, even if he doesn't know very much about it.

David: So then when you started going to school the Christian religion didn't... How did it seem to you, that it was a good thing to take hold of?

Hilda: It was to me, it was to me. I liked going to church. I even went to... They used to have Bible studies every Saturday night, I think it was. I can't remember now. But it was your own choice whether you wanted to go or not.

David: It was, eh?

Hilda: You weren't forced to go. And I used to go all the time.

David: So you went to school then for five years, was it?

Hilda: Four.

David: Four years. And then what happened after you left school?

Hilda: Went back to my mother. I was home maybe about... I was fifteen when I left school, so you see I didn't have much schooling. They gave me a choice -- Standfield his name was, was the principal at the time -- he gave me a choice, "Either come back if you want to or graduate now and give some other child a chance to come to school." Well, what choice did I have when he put it that way? I thought with my, the way I always think, give somebody else a chance. So I said, "Okay, I'll graduate," which I was very sorry. I realized that I could have used more education. That's the only thing that I regret is having an education.

David: Well, so when you went back home did you work at all, or did you stay with your mother and help her?

Hilda: Oh yes, I started working that same year I went out, at twenty-five cents an hour.
David: What were you doing?

Hilda: I was filling needles for the people who are getting nets ready for the summer. That was around March/April. We have to move down to Goose Bay.

David: Who moved to Goose Bay? Was it just your family or did most of the village go together to one cannery? Or how did...?

Hilda: Some of them went to Kiltala. I think we were the only ones that went to Goose Bay. And Dave's mother, when she was still alive. I worked there for... I worked in the net loft in the springtime, then summertime I moved to the cannery. And then if they needed I learned how to mend nets for my mother. If they needed menders on the floats on the weekends I used to work in the cannery, get so many cans and go down the floats and do mending. Which was a little bit more than twenty-five cents an hour, I think thirty-five. (laughs)

David: And how long did you do this working in the cannery? Were you still into moving up to up the lake in the winter or had that stopped then?

Hilda: That had stopped when my stepfather got that big house in Rivers -- that one burned down. It used to stand where the big boat house is, outside Bobby Hanuse's house now.

David: Oh yeah.

Hilda: That's where the big house is, Dave's house used to be. It was quite a bit bigger than (inaudible) because he built it himself. And I used to help him, giving him lumber when he needed it from the ground. That was when I was fifteen, sixteen.

David: So by this time trapping was no longer the main occupation in winter?

Hilda: No, no. If they did any trapping only the men went. We stayed behind in the... Then we had, you know, houses to look after. So the men used to go just by themselves and they did good too. They would go beaver trapping way up Sheemahant somewhere. They'd have to take the canoe overlands in some places, you know, where there was a drop. I guess they couldn't go up.

David: Right, portage it.

Hilda: Yeah. They did still trap, but then it was gradually dying out.

David: So why was that? Were the prices going down?

Hilda: The prices and... I think mostly the prices went down, and then the logging went up there. Then most of them turned to logging.
David: I see. There was more money in logging then?

Hilda: More money in logging then.

David: You mean in that way working for the company, or do you mean hand logging?

Hilda: Well, some of them hand logged.

David: They did, eh?

Hilda: Yeah. And some worked for the company, the one that put through the roads there. Years from the time I left school and the time I was married was working, working, working. (laughs) Canneries, I was working, and the net loft. I still helped with smoking. I should tell you about my... when I used to pole up the river with my grandmother.

David: Oh yeah.

Hilda: That was when I was -- after I left school -- was a teenager then. There was no kickers those days, you have to pole up the river if you want to go up there. And we went up there to do some fishing before my mother and my stepfather went up. There was no Katit then, so Dave asked to do some smoking in the buildings and the hatchery that was there.

David: Oh yeah.

Hilda: The big stove was there, cooking stove, and we made a smokehouse of the boat house. So it was quite huge, maybe about as wide as this.

David: Really?

Hilda: And we can make a long fire and roast about ten sticks on each side.

David: That's big.

Hilda: Yeah. So my grandmother and I had to go pole up.

David: Just the two of you?

Hilda: Imagine. I never poled up there before.

David: How did you get over the rapids?

Hilda: She showed me how. She just told me, "I'll just yell at you what to do, which side to go." But then when you're on the canoe you soon learn what side you're going to be on -- either the right or the left -- because you had to steady the canoe from going.

David: Was the river up high that time of year?
Hilda: During the winter months, around about now, not too much. So it wasn't... didn't seem to be that swift. But oh boy, when you're only a teenager, first time you're up there, oh...

David: Yeah, that's quite a feat.

Hilda: Yeah. And we used to go up and catch salmon, just the two of us.

David: With a net?

Hilda: With a net.

David: Yeah.

Hilda: Just outside the hatchery.

David: Right.

Hilda: And then we take it ashore and put it up where my mother and my grandmother and myself would cut it up for it to dry. One time we got a big spring salmon and couldn't get it into the canoe, we just had to tow it in. And the wind was coming up. Oh boy, was I ever scared.

David: How big was the spring?

Hilda: I don't know, but it would be maybe almost from this. We couldn't get it on anyway.

David: Big as this table then?

Hilda: Yeah. As long as this table.

David: Did you get it in?

Hilda: We got it in to the beach and that's where my stepfather took it from. We made (Indian) out of it. Spring salmon makes good (Indian). And we used to stay in that old hatchery, my grandmother and myself. She used to tell me stories about a long time ago. It's funny, just the two of us in that big building, we used to never get scared. She used to tell me, "As long as we got this light on nobody will come and bother us." Little old gas, not gas lamp, coal oil lamp. The last thing she would do is light up an old pipe.

David: She had a pipe, eh?

Hilda: Old Chum. And we did quite a bit of barbecuing fish and smoking fish, just the two of us. We'd go out and (Indian). (Indian) means picking up driftwood. Put it in the... fill up the old canoe, go across, take it up to the smokehouse. Day's work in itself, especially if we're just one old lady and one teenager. (laughs) And talk about coming
down the river, just her and I too, with full of smoked salmon and barbecued.

David: So this would have been like in October or there abouts?

Hilda: Yeah.

David: And you'd stay up there maybe what, a month?

Hilda: Yeah. That was after we didn't go up to the lakes anymore, we just went as far as the hatchery. And my grandmother and myself did most of the work.

David: I'm wondering if it might be a good idea to have a break here.

Hilda: I never told you about that dance my brother did. They went down to the beach and got one of these fish that had been dead there for, you know, maybe a month or so. And you know how they are -- just gray and all puffy. You can hardly grab them to hold them. But they were stiff because they were frozen, eh. And Benny Hanuse was the one that went to get it, him and Ned Wesley. Ned Wesley was Pete's uncle, I think, or grandfather. And they went, they came up from the beach. I still remember because I hadn't gone hiding yet. And they went around the smokehouse four times showing everybody that rotten old fish. Yeah, so everybody looked at it. They went and laid it down on a bear skin and my kid brother had to dance some kind of a dance over it, which was Johnny Hanuse was doing it. Dance a few times around it. I'll be darned! That fish started wiggling around, moving around. My mother told me how it was done. (laughs)

David: How did they do it?

Hilda: Well, they had holes through the... There was some boards on each side of the fire, right, and they somehow got underneath there, not very high, and bored two holes through there. When the fish was laid, the fish had to be laid down just so, and the guys downstairs -- or underneath -- I don't know what they did, if they went like this. Told them the sticks come up and they wiggled it around like that. (laughs) That was, I don't know if it was before or after my brother was poked through from one side to the other. And when the other end came out it was squirting blood. I don't know what they used for blood, ketchup most likely.

David: So that was pretty effective then, was it, to see the fish starting to move?

Hilda: Oh yeah. Well, nobody knew how it was done except my mother knew about it and I asked her. Well, it was years later I asked her how it was done.
David: Was the effect of that, like, did the dance... Was that part of the dance? The dancer was making that happen?

Hilda: Yeah. I don't know what kind of a dance it was. Made the fish come alive. (laughs) I don't know what they did, if they went and changed the fish to make it look new, too, you know, once it started.

David: Could you tell me again about Ada's dance? You said you recall her dancing.

Hilda: Yeah, she was. I remember seeing her being put in this big storage box, (Indian), and they had some water in there somehow. And she was dancing around on top, supposedly on top of the water, but I don't know how it was done.

David: You don't know how?

Hilda: No.

David: Yeah, when I spoke with Ada she said something to the effect that she couldn't recall her story, but she said that you probably could recall her story or her song. Do you know it?

Hilda: If only my mother was alive, she'd likely know. Oh, if she would have spoke to me it would have refreshed my memory.

David: Yeah, it would come back to you.

Hilda: Yeah. The only thing is I remember is when she was dancing on top of the water. Before she was put there they pushed (Indian) on top of it. (Indian) is from the insides of... close to the skin of the ducks or geese or whatever.

David: Pinfeathers?

Hilda: Feathers, but they are very... you go like this and...

David: Yeah.

Hilda: But see, they put some of it on top of that water. I guess that's supposed to have kept her up, something did keep her up.

David: Oh, I see.

Hilda: With a little pumping I guess I could remember it. Maybe Roy would, Roy Hanuse would. Gee, it's too bad you came just a little bit late. You'd have got lots from old Jack Johnson too. He used to keep us dancing up there. Made some masks.

David: He did, eh?
Hilda: Yeah. And all the men used to go Indian dancing, you know, just to practise. He was trying to keep it, yeah, he was trying to keep going. And he was trying to ask some young fellows to go sit with him and he would teach them how to (Indian), to be a song leader, you know.

David: Oh, I see.

Hilda: But none of them took it up. I think there was only one willing -- that was Mathew Johnson. He's not at home, I think he's down in Vancouver.

David: How old would Mathew be?

Hilda: He must be close to forty. How old is Chris? Chris is older than him.

David: I don't know, Chris would be in his late forties, I would think.

Hilda: Mathew must be younger. You never... did you get anything from Agnes?

David: No.

Hilda: No.

David: He did most of the talking.

Hilda: Old Janet Foss?

David: Janet was kind of shy. She didn't want to talk, but I think if go up again, I'll go and see her again, you know, and I think maybe the second time she might be a little more willing to talk. So when you got married, did you stay in Rivers after you were married, or did you leave Rivers?

Hilda: I was there for a while. I was there until my third, fourth child. We had a float house. As a matter of fact one of my girls was born in there, right in the float house in Dardanelles. You know, that little opening between the island and R.I.C.?

David: Yes.

Hilda: Yeah, that one. We had our float house tied along the beach there where you could get water easy. And my husband was working in log camp. And my second girl -- that's Joan, she lives a couple of doors down -- she was born there. We lived in Rivers Inlet till I had four kids, I think. Then we moved down to Vancouver.

David: And how long did you live down there?
Hilda: Oh, we lived down there till 1956, no '57, then we moved back to Namu where I worked for years.

David: Your stay in Richmond then was cannery work mostly, was it?

Hilda: Yeah.

David: Same thing in Namu?

Hilda: Same thing at Namu. I hired on as a cannery worker. When they found out that I could work on nets they put me in the net loft. I worked there until we left there in '61 and went to Rivers Inlet. That was when I was with Tom then.

David: Right. You went back to Rivers for a little while then?

Hilda: Yeah.

David: What was Rivers like when you went back?

Hilda: Quite a bit different. When we were living in Smokehouse Island, next to Katit, I remember the men used to go out hunting or fishing. Hunting mostly in the wintertime. They came back with a deer or two, they cut it up. They never kept much for themselves, give it out to everybody. Everybody helped...

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Hilda: I think that the only one that tried to keep it up was Danny, Danny Walker. He tried to keep it up.

David: So when you went back the practice of sharing in the hunt had pretty well disappeared?

Hilda: Yes.

David: Why was that, do you think?

Hilda: Too much white man's way, I guess. And I remember there was no borrowing. If you needed something it was just given to you, as long as you'd do the same to somebody else who's going to pass it on, you know. Some day you'd probably need it, that person just gives it to you, don't borrow it. Something that you don't see these days.

David: Yeah, right. So that had all gone too, eh?

Hilda: Yes.

David: What prompted the move from Rivers Inlet to Port Hardy then?
Hilda: My kids had no school. They couldn't go to school. There was no school there till the year we left there, then we heard the school went in. They had been promising and promising the school's coming this year, and we tried to give Jeanette and Alex a correspondence. We couldn't get nowhere with it. Well, Tom hasn't had much education, neither did I, and trying to teach two kids right on the same table wasn't...

David: Yeah, quite a problem.

Hilda: Yeah, right. So we just decided we better move somewhere where the kids can go to school. And Tom said either Prince Rupert or Port Hardy and this was closest, so we came just across.

David: Right.

Hilda: We had no way... Didn't know where we were going to live, how we were going to make out, we didn't have much money. But Winnie Bernard had a sister at Fort Rupert, which was Dusty's wife, Dusty Kenwold. She told us to go and look him up and when we came, sure enough, he opened his door and we lived in his basement for a few months before we got a little shack. You might have seen some stories about me in The Province or The Sun about, maybe about four years ago. And this is when these houses were going to built for non-status people.

David: Oh, I see, yeah.

Hilda: And I was in the housing committee.

David: When was that again, about four years ago?

Hilda: It's about four, three, four years ago now. Yeah, about four years ago.

David: You were on the housing committee, were you?

Hilda: Yeah. For the non-status people.

David: Were there non-status people organized here...

Hilda: We were that year. We were trying to do something about our plight -- not being able to get free medication and stuff like that, or hospitalization, or whatever. We were neither white nor Indian. (laughs) And yet you couldn't change your color.

David: Did you make some progress in those areas?

Hilda: The reason, the result was these houses. There's one, two, three, four, five, six, seven houses were built for the non-status people.

David: And how about things like medical care and so on? Did you make some progress there?
Hilda: No, we still have to pay for our... if we need medicine, which is expensive. We have to pay for it, glasses, teeth and so on. Whereas some people on the reserve they just put a little bit down and it's theirs. But I think we're learning how to stand on our own two feet, which we have been doing for years, especially with these houses. You see sometimes it's only me that's working and Tom's out of a job. But we still manage $150 a month plus utilities and stuff like that.

David: Well, I gather then that Tom was non-status as well?

Hilda: Yes, he's... maybe he can tell you himself.

David: Yeah, okay. What, it was fairly difficult then for non-status people here in Port Hardy was it, for a while?

Hilda: Yes, really we were one... Well, when we got together and formed a local, hence these houses. I think that if we hadn't started... The people that really started are gone now, they moved out to Vancouver -- Larry Alger and Clara Alger. Clara came from this village here and I don't know where Larry came from -- up Rupert way somewhere. Anyway, when we formed a local here we heard about the housing that they might build if we could do something about it. So I went to some meetings and they call it assemblies. I went to one meeting in Penticton and I went to Courtney quite a bit for these houses. So I've learned quite a bit from it.

David: Yeah, you're fairly active in it, eh?

Hilda: Yeah.

David: Where's that at today, the non-status organization?

Hilda: Oh, the non-status broke up because of, what happened now? Well, we just barely got through with these houses and then they broke up. I don't know what they're doing now, if it's under another name. They used to call it McKenzie(?). One of Tom's... well, he always calls him brother but he's really his nephew, Daniel Smith. Do you know him?

David: Yes, I met Danny, yeah.

Hilda: Well, he came up here and was asking about this -- what we think about, what was it, becoming recognized just as ourselves and never mind non-status. So we would have been throwing back and forth, we don't know what we are. (laughs) The only thing we really know for sure is we're Indians and that's it.

David: Yeah. And where you came from.

Hilda: Yeah. I know Mike had (inaudible) daughter, the one
that is down in the States, you know, she's had problems. They
don't believe her that she's part Indian and I said, "I don't
see why." I said, "You should just show them a picture of me
or, one look at me." She says, "But Mom, I can't bring you
down here." (laughs)

David: I got some names of people that have come up in
conversations I had with Peter and with Evelyn, and I'm just
going to ask you if you can tell me who they are and what their
connection is. You mentioned Ned Wesley already, who was Ned
Wesley?

Hilda: Ned Wesley was, he was kind of a taught, self-taught
man. He knew how to read and write and I don't think he went
to school.

David: Where did he come from?

Hilda: He's from Rivers.

David: Well, where does the name Wesley come from? What's
his native name?

Hilda: I don't know. It might have... Most of the people
that have last names have been taken from either from a doctor
-- Thomas Crosby sort of thing -- or from, what do you call
them others, the fishery office, or the hatchery -- people used
to work in the hatchery. When the people had to have last
names, they took some of theirs, you know. Or the Indian Agent
just, well, "We'll call you so and so." You're friends with
him and stuff like that.

David: Why did they have to have last names?

Hilda: I don't know.

David: For Indian Affairs?

Hilda: For something to do with census or something.

David: Oh, I see, yeah.

Hilda: Most Indians just had either their first name or
their Indian name.

David: So this Ned Wesley, who would his relatives be then?
Did you know who his parents were?

Hilda: Isn't he, didn't Pete say he was related to him?

David: Yeah, he did.

Hilda: Yeah, he's...

David: Well, he didn't actually, he just said, "You know a
Ned Wesley?" He said that to Evelyn and Evelyn told a story
about him. And who is Ned Wesley? I have never heard of him.
Hilda: Oh. Well, Ned was related to my dad too, or to my mother, I can't remember which now. But he used to be a great storyteller, I hear. My brother might have mentioned him -- John.

David: So which family would he be closer to, the Thompson family then?

Hilda: The Thompson family and the Chamberlains.

David: And the Chamberlains. So he would be in there, eh?

Hilda: Yeah. He was hard of hearing little guy, but kind of a comical guy too, as far as I can gather from what my mother used to tell me about him. I guess he used to tell stories to my brother John when he was just a small kid. And I hear my brother used to want and sleep at his house just so he can tell him stories. (laughs) No T.V.s, no radios at those times.

David: Right. Another name that Peter used was (Indian) to refer to I believe it was one of his uncles, or his great-uncles. Who was (Indian)?

Hilda: (Indian) must have been one of his uncles or his dad. I thought it was his dad.

David: Maybe it was.

Hilda: Or one of his uncles.

David: Was there a... was Lewis one of his uncles?

Hilda: Lewis...

David: Or Louis, Lewis, I think he called him.

Hilda: Louis Lewis, that was my dad's uncle or older brother. (Indian) was one of Pete's uncles or even his father. I thought Pete was (Indian) right now. Didn't he tell you?

David: He may be, but he didn't say that.

Hilda: I think he's (Indian).

David: He is now, eh?

Hilda: Yeah. (Indian) means four, four times over. (laughs)

David: Oh yeah. He also told us a story of Huntley Quanis. Do you know that story?

Hilda: Who?

David: Huntley Quanis.
Hilda: Huntley Quanis. Is that about a little bird? I've heard it but I can't remember. Huntley Quanis was one with a bow and arrow.

David: Yeah.

Hilda: That's who, no his name was... Huntley Quanis, he was good with his bow and arrow. I think that's the story. It sounds like it but I really don't know the whole story. It touches onto everything that you live on or something, the reason why you're alive or to help one another. I think that's the moral of the story.

David: Yeah. There's also another name mentioned in the one that (name) did, (Indian). Does that name mean anything to you, (Indian)?

Hilda: (Indian), isn't that (name) Thomas?

David: Yeah. Is there a story that goes with that?

Hilda: I wouldn't know.

David: I got another name here that I think refers to, it might be your father's name, (Indian).

Hilda: (Indian), say it again. That must, that sounds like my dad or his dad. I think...

David: It might be your grandfather then, eh?

Hilda: Yeah. I think that's been taken for... When one of John's daughters got married again, Elsie, that name was taken and given to her husband when they got married. I think she's married to Larry (name). No, what's his name? Have you ever met Elsie Jackson? She's my niece. Well, she married again because Jimmy died about two or three years ago, and when she remarried my brother phoned here with, together with Pete, wanting to know what name they can give to Elsie's husband to be from my brother's side, or our family. And that's the name they gave him, (Indian). I think that's, that was either my grandfather or it was my dad.

David: Another person that Peter mentioned is somebody called Lake Joe. Who was that referring to?

Hilda: Lake Joe.

David: Is that Joe Chamberlain he's talking about?

Hilda: I think that's Chamberlain.

David: Because it sounded like it was somebody different from Joe Chamberlain, that's why I asked. Because if there was some other person called Lake Joe, it wasn't quite clear.
Hilda: That must have been, I think it's Chamberlain.

David: It would be one and the same person, would it?

Hilda: Yeah.

David: How about the name Old Sampson? Is there somebody named Sampson that you know?

Hilda: Yeah, he was... He must have had some kind of... He must have had polio or something at one time. He used to drag one leg. You know, at least it didn't seem to be, I barely remember him.

David: Who was he related to? What family did he belong to?

Hilda: Old Sampson must have been belonged to (Indian), I guess that's Nora. She's another a person you could see, Nora Webber.

David: Lisa was asking Ada about Nora and she still is not... it's still not clear to me where Nora fits into the picture. Who would she...?

Hilda: Nora Webber was Johnny Carol's granddaughter. And somehow Johnny Carol borrowed some money from some people that used to go up to Kitala for the summer. And Johnny borrowed money from them, Johnny Carol borrowed money from them. They came back the following year and they wanted him to pay the money back and he didn't have the money so he asked, "Could you take my daughter, granddaughter?" So these people took her, and she grew up, gee, I don't know where it is, across Alert Bay or...

David: So she was pretty young when that happened, eh?

Hilda: Yeah. Her mother was my mother's cousin, I think. I used to have pictures of them. I don't know what happened to them -- we moved around so much.

David: Yeah, yeah. So would Nora know much about Rivers then or...?

Hilda: Well, she would know her father's name, her mother's name, what relation they were to my dad or to my mother.

David: Right. Does the name Charlie Edwards mean anything?


David: He's another person that Peter mentioned in passing and telling a story. It was Charlie Edward's boat, he said. Maybe I can go back and check with Peter some time, I just thought maybe you might know.
Hilda: Yeah. I've heard that name, I think my mother mentioned him. I think he was one of the Bella Coolas that stayed up at Rivers or...

David: Yeah, I see.

Hilda: I think, I'm not sure.

David: Another name that was mentioned two or three times was Beans, Wally Beans.

Hilda: Oh yeah.

David: And who would he be? Who was he?

Hilda: He was related to... he was... he used to call me (Indian). (Indian) means sister, so he may have been related to us too.

David: Where would he come from?

Hilda: I know who his mother was. Her name was (Indian). I don't know her white name. I think her name was Susie or Kitty or Alice. (laughs)

David: And did he have any, did he marry and did he have children and so on?

Hilda: He was married to Edie, Edith Johnson, but they never had no children.

David: When you were living in Rivers did burial customs change much over the years?

Hilda: Oh, quite a bit. But they still give a feast after the funeral. Sometimes not as elaborate, but some of them... You seen what they did at Bella Bella?

David: Yeah. That was common at Owikeno too, was it, to burn food for the departed one?

Hilda: Yeah.

David: What is the reason for doing that? Is there a story that goes with doing that or...?

Hilda: Well, they... Well, when you go from one place to another you're not accustomed to what they have, eh. So they say you should take some with you until you do get accustomed to what you eat after, because they believe in after, life after death. And the only way you can get it is through burning it.

David: Right. So it's to help the one who has passed on into, sort of, the spirit world?
Hilda: Yeah. I remember one time my mother was... She doesn't know whether she was really sleeping or not but she heard my sister calling her. (Indian), we used to call her (Indian). It was just a loving name. And she was (Indian) to everybody up there. She woke up one night, well, she thinks she woke up and she heard my sister calling her. Right away the next morning she came to our door and told me that, "We have to get together some food and burn it, because your sister was here. She was asking for something. I don't know what it is but we better burn some food." So I had to do it right away.

David: Well, usually is it done like four times after... following of the death?

Hilda: Yeah.

David: And this is still done then today at Rivers, is it?

Hilda: Yes, it's still done if someone's, you know, responsible enough to go and do it.

David: I see, so it has to be somebody who's close to the departed one, eh?

Hilda: Yeah.

David: Is there a name for that ceremony, that burning of food? Is there a name for it?

Hilda: They just call it (Indian). (Indian) means burn. And you just know what it means when they say (Indian). (Indian), we're going to burn. You know right away what it means.

David: I see. Would they use that same word if they said they're going to burn some old papers or garbage or something?

Hilda: Yes, but you name what you're going to burn.

David: Oh I see. Are there any other customs associated with funerals besides the burning?

Hilda: When you burn it you have to go around four times before you put it down. Some people put it upside down, but I've been taught to just put mine (Indian), just put it on top of the fire with the plate and all. But I've seen some Bella Bellas, they turn theirs over.

David: Turn theirs over, yeah. Another thing that happened there was Beatrice bathed.

Hilda: Yeah, that has to be done four times.

David: That's a common custom as well, is it, for the widow, say, to have to bathe?
Hilda: It is supposed to be for both. If the wife should die the man would do it too, but I think he does it on his own. But one being so young and... Well, how long was she with him?

David: Two years.

Hilda: Two years? I guess it's long enough for them to do it.

David: So that would be four days in a row, in the morning?

Hilda: Early in the morning. They didn't do it in the house before, they used to go out in the woods. And what you use when you're bathing you just leave it, the whole thing there.

David: Oh, I see.

Hilda: You don't bring it with you. That's completely giving all that was of you, in you.

David: Oh, I see. Well, was there any fasting associated with that, not eating? Are you supposed to fast?

Hilda: Not that I know.

David: Oh, I see.

Hilda: I know my mother had to. She had to go and bath out in the cold.

David: Was there a name for that? For bathing to cleanse yourself like that?

Hilda: (Indian). (Indian) means complete wash.

David: Would you use the same term, like if a man were cleansing himself for hunting, would he use the same term?

Hilda: No, there's another word for it.

David: Was it common for men before they went hunting to do the bathing thing?

Hilda: Yeah.

David: Like for four mornings or whatever?

Hilda: You have to dip in the water four times, not in four mornings.

David: No, but four times you've got to wash.

Hilda: Four times in the water. As a matter of fact I seen an old man used to do it, old Louis Lewis.
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