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DIRECTOR, OOWEKEENO HISTORY PROJECT OR THE CHIEF COUNSELOR OF
THE OOWEKEENO BAND.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- The woman being interviewed is apparently too far from the microphone to be heard. As a result, in most cases, only the interviewer's questions are available.

John: ...big trouts here, you know.

David: Oh yeah.

John: Big as a (inaudible).

David: Really?

John: Yeah.

David: In the (name)?

John: (Name).

Man: How far up, John?

John: White trapline was...

(Break in tape)

David: That pole was Tommy (name). Where was it located again? Whereabouts was the pole? (Break in tape) I was wondering could you tell me where you were born?

Lucy: I think I was born in this Oolachan Town here.

David: There were houses there, were there?

Lucy: Yeah, there was old houses there before. It's quite a way back. You know, I was eight years old when we live up there (inaudible).

David: What's that word?

Lucy: (Indian).

David: And what does that refer to?

Lucy: To the Oolachan Town.

David: Oolachan Town, eh. (Indian).

Lucy: (Indian).

David: And there were actually houses there, eh?

Lady: You can see some remains of the houses up there, yeah. I think there was about eight of them up there. They were bigger than this place.

David: These were longhouses, were they?

Lucy: Yeah. Used to have an upstairs, you know, these buildings were really high. There was two houses like that and there was two like that, too, in the sawmill. There was two white houses, those were our (inaudible).

Lady: Where did they get the lumber? From the old sawmill?

Lucy: I think they got it from the sawmill.

David: And they built them up at Oolachan Town?

Lucy: Yeah.

David: How many people lived there then? How many families were there?

Lucy: The way it sounded to me, sounds like there must have been over 600 people there before. That was from up the lake and down to around (inaudible) here.

Lady: Do you remember what (inaudible), the place down here was originally called?

Lucy: Gee, I don't remember now.

Lady: It had something to do with knocking wood of some kind.

Lucy: Yeah, I think it was. Because he said that we would come through here and (inaudible) up at the lake on that island. The island (inaudible) Oowekeeno. Yeah, about forty-six now?

David: Were there still houses on the Smokehouse Island at that time?

Lucy: Yeah.

David: There were, eh?

Lucy: Yeah, there was until it burned down. There was a young fellow there, I guess he used to play with this bow and arrow. And, well, I guess he... his old folks were all asleep, and I don't know what he did. He must have used something on the arrow to... Then it was burning on the end anyway, that's the one that started that fire. All the way up -- that's how come all those totem poles got burned down. There was old totem poles up there.

David: Well, the big fire was in 1935, eh?

Lucy: Yeah. They had a fire up there.

David: And did that wipe out the houses too?

Lucy: Yeah.

David: It did, eh? Everything?

Lucy: Yeah.

David: And where did the people move to then?

Lucy: Well, they had to move down here again.

David: Did those houses on the island, did they have different names for each house?

Lucy: Yeah, I think they had different names.

David: Can you remember any of them? Do you know any of those names?

Lucy: No, I don't remember.

David: Were they named after the different families?

Lucy: Yeah, I think there was, because... (Indian) where Franky and them come from that, that Raven and...

David: That's the name of one of the houses, eh?

Lucy: Yeah.

David: Could you say that again?

Lucy: (laughs) (Indian). But ours was... I think ours was (Indian).

David: Did your family spend much time up the lake then?

Lucy: Yeah, they used to.

David: Whereabouts?

Lucy: They used to stay way up there up at (name) or way at Sheemahant.

David: Sheemahant.

Lucy: Yeah. That's where they were because they used to be trapping there.

David: What time of year would they go up there?

Lucy: About May, that's when they go up there.

David: In the spring?

Lucy: Yeah, that's when they go up there, you know, do their trapping and hunting.

David: Did most of the adults trap at that time?

Lucy: Yeah.

David: Did everybody make pretty good money at that?

Lucy: Yeah, they made pretty good with it.

David: What families then would be at (name) during that time?

Lucy: There's Simon, and Henry...

David: Were there other families at other rivers then, like (name) and (name) and (name)?

Lucy: Yeah, there were some there.

David: I'm trying to find out which families were at which location. Can you name where they were? Where would the Hanuses be?

Lucy: Hanuses were... I think they were all in this place here, (Indian). That's where they used to stay. That's where Dave was, anyway. He used to stay in that place.

David: And what time of the year would the people come down, down to the river then?

Lucy: Down here?

David: Yeah.

Lucy: Soon as they're finished trapping up there they'd move down here.

David: Oh yeah. And what did they do down here then?

Lucy: Well, they stay down here and then, like, they wait for the oolachan time here, because that's when they start making grease and that.

David: Or up in the Sheemahant and (name)? Yeah. And did people work in the canneries here then?

Lucy: There was, yeah, there was a cannery down in R.I.C. here and that's where some of the people were living too. And they had, well, it looked like a school to me, because there was a big building there.

David: This on the little island here across from R.I.C.?

Lucy: No. It's just down R.I.C.

David: Oh yeah.

Lucy: That's where they had it.

David: Which families would be living at R.I.C. then?

Lucy: There was Tommy and them, and I know the Hanuses were down there too.

David: Did you work in the cannery yourself? Did you work in the cannery?

Lucy: No, I didn't get to work in there.

David: What was your father's name?

Lucy: Alfred.

David: Alfred Harry?

Lucy: No, Alfred Thompson.

David: Alfred Thompson. Oh, I see.

Lucy: He was... the one they called Alfred Harry was the one that they named that old hall they had up here before, that was the name of it.

David: Oh, I see. T.C.(?) Wallace?

Lucy: Yeah.

David: Is that his name? Was that your father's name?

Lucy: No, that was old man Albert Harry's.

David: Oh yeah. Did your father have any other names, then, besides Thompson? Did he have any Indian names?

Lucy: Yeah, he did, he had an Indian name. (Break in tape) Victoria.

David: Victoria. What was her other name?

Lucy: Well... (Break in tape) Yeah, they gave us Indian names.

David: What names have you got then? I was just wondering if you could recall any of your names and any stories that went with them.

Lucy: I really can't remember. (laughs)

David: When you were here, when you were growing up, did your family belong to, like what clan? Like the Eagle clan, or the Raven clan? Were people divided like that?

Lucy: Yeah, I think that's the way it was.

David: And which clan would you be in then?

Lucy: We're in the Eagle I know. Yeah, we lived up there.

Lady: Is that before it burned down?

Lucy: Yeah.

David: Which house were you in?

Lucy: I think we were in the first house on this end.

David: And I was trying to find out when was the last potlatch here. Can you remember that?

Lucy: I think the last one was when Simon was here.

David: Where was that held at?

Lucy: That was up at that hall up here.

David: Was that in memory of somebody or for a special occasion?

Lucy: It was over his granny.

David: Was there any dancing at that time?

Lucy: Yeah, we were... When was it when we had that last dance at the (inaudible)?

David: Was it to commemorate him or...? He had died?

Lucy: Yeah.

David: I see.

Lucy: He drowned. He was the one that drowned at Kiltala. (Inaudible) And a whole bunch came from Good Hope and some from Duncanby and some from Goose Bay that came to that place. Well, all the Bella Coola were there too because it was (inaudible) time, (inaudible) were out.

David: That was the one down in here at Kiltala, was it?

Lucy: Yeah. (inaudible).

David: Oh yeah. So you learned some of the dances, did you?

Lucy: Yeah.

David: Can you name which ones that you know or that you do? Did they have names?

Lucy: (inaudible). Supposed to be twelve (inaudible).

David: There was twelve dances?

Lucy: Yes. Well, they had I think twelve years of Indian dances and each year you learn a different dance.

David: Would you have to dance, like, for four years to get from one level to another? Is that how it worked?

Lucy: (Inaudible).

David: Oh yeah, I saw the film of those -- the ones in front of the clinic, but I didn't get names for them.

Lucy: (Inaudible).

David: Yeah.

Lucy: He taught the girls two different dances (inaudible).

David: Do you remember which ones they were, Lucy?

Lucy: Do you know that girl that came here before? I think she's got all the stories about it and she's got most of what Jack remembers from way back. She took all that, and she's got a tape.

David: Yeah. Yeah, I heard some of those tapes when I was with Evelyn.

Lucy: Yeah.

David: And I read some of those stories, Jack's stories. I was wondering about the dances that you did, that you know, whether they had names.

Lucy: (Inaudible).

David: I was working on a map with Peter getting names of different places down, and I got names of quite a few of the places and I'm trying to put them on the map using Oowekeeno language.

Lucy: Yeah. Likely there's still more and it's got an Indian name in there, where they used to stay. I didn't really go through school, most of the time I was in the hospital with T.B.

David: Oh yeah.

Lucy: I was in there for three years.

David: At Nanaimo?

Lucy: No, in Alert Bay. They had a T.B. torium [sanatorium] there.

David: Oh they did, eh.

Lucy: That's where I was, I was that.

David: What years were that?

Lucy: Well, I think about '65, '64, somewhere around there.

David: Yeah. When did you get married to Jack Johnson?

Lucy: (Inaudible).

David: I was just wondering, like, was the wedding ceremony -- was it a regular Indian ceremony? Were there dances and a feast given at that time?

Lucy: We just got married by Dr. Darby, up in Bella Bella.

David: Oh, it was in Bella Bella?

Lucy: Yeah.

(Break in Tape)

David: Well, you think originally it was (Indian)?

Lucy: Yeah.

David: Does that mean to dry up?

Lucy: Yeah.

David: Were there many people from the village working there?

Lucy: Yeah, there was quite a bit. There was mostly from Smith Inlet, though.

David: Oh yeah. They came over, did they?

Lucy: Yeah, they were working there.

David: So the people moved around quite a bit, did they, through the year? From the lake to here and down to there?

Lucy: Yeah. (Inaudible)

David: That's when you get married. Did they have a different name for the wedding ceremony itself? Like, did they have a word for -- to refer to a married woman, a woman who was married?

[No answer.]

David: When you got married, Lucy, did your family pay some money to the groom's family? Or excuse me, did Jack's family pay money to your family? Was there a payment, an exchange of goods?

Lucy: What they did for me when I was with them, what I got was... Like, they give you a couple dishes or, you know, a set of, like, seeds. And that's what you get from their family.

David: So his family gives you something?

Lucy: Yeah.

David: Yeah.

Lucy: After, maybe after about, like, say three years, I guess, and then you pay it back. These gifts, what they gave you, you have to give back what you got from them.

David: Was there a word to describe that, when you do that?

Lucy: Just (Indian).

David: Could you say it again?

Lucy: (Indian).

David: Is there a word for just when you're engaged, before you get married?

(END OF SIDE A)

(END OF TAPE)

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