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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Concerns of elders. Loss of respect for elders; loss of traditions; problems with younger generation; alcohol-related problems.
- Account of traditional hunting and trapping lifestyle.
- Story of woman who feigned pregnancy in order to get more money.

SAULTEAUX WORKSHOP

SPEAKER NO. 1:

First of all I'd like to thank this Sioux that invited me to come along. Mainly to talk about our Indian culture. I'd talk about our ancestors. I still follow their ways and I feel very thankful. I'm going to talk about the way my old people brought me up when I was a little boy. When my dad was living he told me never forget my Indian ancestry. We made a mistake trying to act like white people. So now I'm going to talk about what my dad used to tell me, but first I will talk about relationship. These young people nowadays have no respect for their elders. The only time these young people think of these old people is when they get their pension cheque and that's only once a month they get respect from their young people. I made certain I never went near my father when he received his pension cheque. It's not that I didn't love my dad but I didn't want people to think I was chasing him for his money. Long ago there was deep respect for old men. If we seen an elder sitting somewhere, a child comes along he'd avoid walking near the old

man. This is how much respect they had for old men years back. Today you don't see none of that. Today if they seen a crippled old man they'd avoid helping him. I used to tell my daughter this, maybe she'd listen but didn't abide by it.

These people from Cote reserve used to live in Pu Paw Plains known to us as nomads. They used to come out once a year and that was on treaty day. For three days it was treaty day for the three reserves in our area where we were brought up. We used to look out for these people as we lived close to the main road. When we heard the dogs bark we knew they were coming. So all the grandmothers and fathers would come out and wait for them. My elders had cows and they'd trade milk butter and potatoes for pemmican, dried meat. They'd also come out for Sundances. We were told to respect these people and the Sundance.

Now again today this Sundance is getting to be different all together. One day we lost my brother, one we had just mourned not too long ago. We lost him one afternoon and we were looking all over for him. Then my father comes along and calls us towards this bush. There he was whistling and shaking these two trees, dancing, making out it was a Sundance. The reason why he played this was he either had to make a Sundance or help in one. So all our family believed in this Sundance. We all danced and took part in this ceremony. We were taught songs that were left by our elders. I travelled all over and attended all these different ceremonies. From our reserve this man made this Sundance and started very early before the sun rose. Now today this is all different again.

Now another thing they call a Council dance. My dad used to give things away when I danced in this, when I took part. One time he gave a horse away when I joined the singers. That's how much respect they had for this and to this day I still follow this. In these Council dances long ago, before the sun set we already heard them singing and dancing. Now today they start at midnight and I don't follow this at all. We had an uncle that made a Council dance. He used to walk around the wigwam yelling. Before, women used to cook for the feast right on the site. Nowadays we see them bringing soup walking from their homes, no matter how far. Was this the way they were taught? And yet this was passed on from our ancestors. This is our reserve I'm speaking of and I really miss this. So this should be all for now.

SPEAKER NO. 2:

I will say a little more. Today when I hear you people speaking I really enjoyed listening. We got to try and hold our Indian culture. That's true today, we already heard the Crees speak of their own culture. If we all join together maybe we will get something done. The one thing we are trying to keep and that's our culture, the way our ancestors left it to us.

As for myself I hear many of our elders speak and I really

enjoyed listening to them. I used to lay on the bed listening to them tell of stories of long ago. They told of how they lived and they were very poor. They never forgot about their culture, their Indian religion as I heard all the other speakers speak about this. I, too, have great faith for this. My grandfather used to tell me many a person is going to say things to you. But don't listen to what he says, he's only hurting himself. As we're all speaking here and they're taping what we're saying we're all thinking the same, surely this is something good what we're doing.

We always hear how alcohol harms a person. It would be all right if a person drank a little but not to extremes, just like what this person said about pension cheques. I have an auntie that receives pension. When the time comes all her grandchildren come for a visit; she gives them money. When all the money is gone you never see any of her grandchildren come close to her. My father received one but I never went close to him when he received it as I had great respect for him. When we have these meetings I really enjoy them and it helps me along. As for myself I don't speak much English. I'm half Cree and Saulteaux. So this should be all for now.

NOTE: Speakers 3 and 4 are not translated.
SPEAKER NO. 5:

First of all I'd like to apologize to everybody for all what I have to say. For myself I'm scared at what we're trying to work at. How much alcohol and cars affects our lives so much. After all I know, this made me suffer a lot. First I will speak about this, my parents never quit lecturing me. They told me it's going to be a struggle. We had two parents and they always lectured us till we only had our father. Still he talked to us. When my father last spoke to me he said, "There is just you, my daughter. You talk to your brothers." Like yesterday I was real glad when I seen my brother here. I explained to him why he was invited here as he didn't understand at first. And I told him what we were working for, our culture. It would be real nice if young adults were brought here to listen to the elders talk, maybe we'd be able to teach them our culture. We are depending on you elders to speak of these things to them. But I can't explain how I feel I really know we have faith in this peace pipe, that is sitting here. Again yesterday I sat alone here telling these people how much truth there is in this peace pipe. The wind really makes me sad thinking about this. And again how the white man is trying to take our culture away on us. I'd say any day I don't really care for the white man for he is the one that makes us suffer for everything. It's not that he really loves us why he let us have liquor. We see that is how this is going to destroy us all. Just for our money, he takes away on us. Even our children, he wants them to only speak their language as some of our children forgot to speak our language already. And I don't see why this should happen when our Manitou gave us our own language to speak. Just like we ignore this and think more of the white man's way. I think of this and wish we would revive all this. But I know we will if we don't quit and we all join

together and help each other. It's our elders we want help from. I was brought up by my elders too and they never received any help of any sort. No pension cheques, more or less welfare. He brought himself up the hard way, working hard and taught his children how to work. We were told to get up early in the morning and we thought they were being mean to us. That's how my brother was brought up too. Our elders taught us how to work and respect them. We know this. I know all of us that are sitting here were brought up like that.

Before we never seen any kind of help; nowadays that's all we see. I guess that is why our young adults are so lazy nowadays. You can't tell them anything they just slap you in the face. Then today if you're going to tell them anything they just walk off like telling you to shut up. This is how I see it. Our elders lived off the reserve. We had everything ducks, rabbits, deer, moose, wood and hay. This is where our elders lived

from. They knew how to work so as their young people because they taught them. Nowadays we don't see only lectures as we're afraid to tell them anything. They think they know better. This is my point of view of speaking up. So this should be it.

SPEAKER NO. 6:

The story I'm going to tell is about this man known as George Stevenson. This is a true story. Nowadays people criticize one another.

SPEAKER NO. 7:

One time when we were first married I can say we had a rough life. I'm sorry he isn't present here now but he will be at 3 o'clock. Once when we went hunting as we were always hunting. I know I did all kinds of hard work helping him in every way. It was the first of March when we left to go hunting. We had two big dogs and a toboggan. We took a case of lard, 100 pounds of flour, sugar and all the main things we needed. We stayed in the bush till about May. We drove dogs and we both had snowshoes. We snared rabbits for the dogs and for us. Then one time we had no meat at all. Then he set a snare for a lynx, too busy snaring for this lynx. Then we were travelling. It's very hot; we made a fire. Jeez, but I'm real hungry for meat. Then here we found a fox that was snared. Then he said I should skin this fox and I told him I should cook the thighs of the fox. Then I fried these thighs. So we started eating and I ended up not eating this fox as it tastes terrible. Then I throw this meat away and I'm still hungry as we were only eating bannock and lard. Then we leave again. We have a little tent and we pitch it up. Then he leaves early in the morning about 6 o'clock checking snares. He comes back with two rabbits then I made a fire. It's very cold out, then I cook the rabbits. The fire I made is mostly of smoke because of the cold weather. Then when the rabbits were cooked we both ate. Both me and my husband own a .22 repeater so we both went hunting our own ways. He went way out in the bush but I stayed close by to do my hunting. I set traps for muskrats and

squirrels.

Then I made a fire when I got back from hunting to skin our fur-bearing animals. I set out my squirrel to dry and I wasn't paying very much attention to it. To my surprise the dogs been getting at it. Was I ever mad! This meant there was no income for my part. Then warm weather set in and my husband insists we go down the hill to take our furs to market. We sell these furs to get enough food to eat for another month. To my surprise we made \$700.00 on the furs we had. This meant a big drinking party to celebrate our arrival to civilization.

Then I woke up in the morning after our big party. Then we plan on going home that day; then we hire a taxi. The taxi cost \$18.00 which we barely had. So this goes to show what liquor does to a person. When you're young you don't think of the harm liquor does to you. This was our way of life when we were young. Oh we had a tough life them years. Today young people don't have to go through what we did. Them years there was no such thing as social aid. I even worked in the bush making cord wood. I averaged a cord a day which was worth five dollars, we got paid every two weeks and within those two weeks I made 14 cords. This is the hardship we had in life. We did any kind of work we can get at. It's too bad he's not present at the moment as he'd tell you the same thing. So this should conclude my story of hardship.

SPEAKER NO.8:

First of all I'd like to start talking about treaty day. The Indian sign treaty rights the year 1874. This was the year the Indian gave their land away to the white man. Also he was strong trying to strengthen the treaty. He paid with the sun, the growing grass, the flowing waters even though he depended on these so nobody would bother his rights. This is one mistake we made. For the first couple of years he was paid \$25.00. After these first few years again it was changed to \$12.00. So many years after again it was changed to \$5.00.

So I'm going to tell you this story about this woman who was kind of spry. She knew five dollars wasn't enough. So she got this notion to get herself pregnant so as she'd get paid in advance. She put a pillow under her skirt; so she walked up to the paymaster. When he seen her he said, "So you're pregnant. Then we'll have to pay you extra five dollars in advance." When she received her money she fumbled a five dollar bill into the floor, then she bent down to pick it up. Her string bust and she had a miscarriage; her pillow fell out. So this was the end of advances on pregnant women. They have to be born before they receive \$5.00. This is the little story I wanted to tell about how the treaty rights became.

We are here to talk about our Indian ancestry as far back as we know, hoping at least some of our young people know and understand this. To talk about our Indian religion, we have Sundances, Rain dances, Council dances. This is what our

forefathers left to us to carry on. So I'm asking for the power of our dear Manitou to help us achieve this. This is what he gave us to know and believe. Many Indians ask the elders to speak up for them. They give ribbons and tobacco to ask for

life of our dear children growing up. This is why I wish and hope for the power of our Manitou to help us have the strength to let our young people know all about this. For this is our great teacher, he gave us dreams as he'd know what he's doing. This is what gift he gave us by sending us a message. So I'm hoping our young children would carry this on. After all this is what we were gifted with. So I'm hoping we'll all join together and help each other. We won't finish it all today but it will take time. We will meet again and still try our best to get this message across to our young people. So this should be all for now.

NOTE: Speakers 9 and 10 were not translated.

SPEAKER NO. 11:

Now, my dear people, I'm finally running out of stories to tell about, we are expected to talk about. But first I'd like to talk to our Manitou. To pray that he gives us the power for all of us to be one. This is what I hope we all believe in as I know there is a lot of truth in this peace pipe that is sitting there. Now today as I sit here I'm so worried about what my sons do to me. They go to trial today on account of their foolishness. I don't wish them any bad luck as I always try my best to tell them things they shouldn't do. The only time they come is when they are in trouble wanting their mother to get them a lawyer. Now today it's not my fault they're in trouble. If they had any faith maybe they'd know better.

Now today what you people are talking about, try your best to get the message across to the young people. I have a grandson just crawling around and I often wonder what life he will lead, as I won't always be here with him. If we achieve anything here maybe then he'll know and understand what we're trying to get across to our young people.

SPEAKER NO. 12:

I will talk about the last culture of hunting, meaning how much our elder really respected our animals before. How these animals were respected. I seen for myself how these men used to use the... if they killed anything then they'd have a feast. Today you see none of this. Like a white man when he goes hunting, he goes out hunting just for pleasure. That's what these young people do nowadays. The ducks. You see if you killed your first duck my father used to tell me to preserve it and keep its feathers. To this day I still follow this but I think I got them mad as I can't kill any now.

And another thing our elders used to get together and help each

other with everything. I remember when I was a boy I used to help making hay. Like my dad he was real good at this, stacking hay and everything. One of my brother-in-laws, Thomas, used to teach me how to stack hay. One of my grandfathers used to try and always compete with me. We were stacking hay and my brother-in-law told me, "You should be good at this now." As we're finishing off, we hear dogs barking. We see a rider coming. I see my grandfather coming as I am on top. We look at each other and he's sitting sideways. He tells me, "See the way I'm sitting that's just how your stack of hay looks like." Then we started another. When we're finished here, I try to fix the other stack of hay. Near evening my grandfather comes again and he tells me "Jeez, you're good at this." That's how it was before; our elders were always helping each other with everything. If they were short of anything they'd lend it to each other. Today you see none of that. If you're out of anything, that's it. We used to have a community farm, making gardens for each other. We used to carry a drum around, then we'd sing in the evening when we were finished. This is one thing that is missed again.

Not too long ago about three weeks ago these elders told us how we made a mistake. These children that are given an Indian name, we had forgotten to make things right to our old people that we lost. They told us again, "Think of what your father told you before he died. Don't forget the traditions your old people left you. For the start of it, it's a real struggle." This made me think a lot. From then on it's different; like my thinking is more clearer and I feel a lot better. This is why I thank this person a lot of inviting me here. So we got to try our best not to lose our culture. My parents used to tell us to try and attend all these ceremonies as much as possible. Then gradually my brothers quit attending. I, for myself, tried to follow this but still I made a mistake. I have children that have Indian names. I used to do things for them to follow this. Then after they grew up I told them to continue on their own with this. But this they didn't do for themselves. This is the mistake we made why we had so much bad.

SPEAKER NO. 13:

The way these people are working here sitting here. I'm sure it's for a good cause. The way we seen things happen before. It's even 100 years since we signed the treaty. The white man has been passing his teachings on to us for so long. Then he turns around to tell us he can't teach us anything. This is not true. I for myself don't believe this. I see the white men is poisoning us with his teachings. He's polluting the rivers and everything.

These young people when they have money they head straight for town. I always try my best to lecture my sons. They tell me, "You drink too so you can't stop me." That was before as I don't drink as much now. I don't bother anyone when I drink. I respect people and our religion. We see these jails; all we see are Indians in there. That's the poison in liquor white man sells to us that causes this. If we all get together and

work on this I'm sure things will change. For our young people are forgetting everything. I went to war and I used to feel sorry thinking. Campbell Brass had a little pipe. He promised me something to take with me. He gave me this pipe to wear on my pocket. He told me if I was scared to fill it with tobacco and smoke it. I really thanked him for it. I used to get scared. Then one time in Sicily I thought of this. We were told to guard. I'm really scared; I think I see somebody. Then I take this pipe and put a cigarette in it. I light it on the (?). After I smoked it I feel happy as if I wasn't afraid. I know there is a lot of faith in this as I found out for myself. My elders used to tell me to respect ceremonies, even the pipe.

(End of Interviews)

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