I was born in the fall of 1906 in a tipi. They lived in tipis at that time. As I was growing up and got to know things, there was no flour. When we left the settlement, we had run out of it already. All we had to eat in the bush was fish and meat until Christmas. When we came back we got a bit of flour to eat while we stayed here in town. When we got to be young men and women, there was lots of stuff in the store.

All of our children were born in different places as we moved around hunting and trapping up north. We looked after them in the bush as we seldom stayed in town. There was a school at that time so we let a few of them go to school.

We are old now but we are being looked after real good. We
get money every month to get groceries. I can't work now to make a living since I had a heart attack. I can't walk anymore.

We made a living by trapping. They make more money now than we did in those days. Lots of people work now to make a living. Hardly anyone goes trapping. No one traps where I used to trap. People don't move around as they did years ago. Long ago we would never hear of news from the settlement until someone came for a visit.

The way we were brought up was by hunting and fishing and that is the way we ourselves brought up our children. That is the way we fed our children. We never did get help from anyone as they do now like family allowance and welfare. In our day we worked hard to make a living for our families. It was hard to bring up a family in our days.

In those days, there was no warm clothing for the children in the winter.

In the spring, travelling on water, all we used was birch bark canoes. When there was ice, we could not travel by canoe as we would make holes in them, so we had to go after the lakes were clear of ice. If we had to travel before the ice went, we had to make a lot of portages on the points where the ice would block us. A way of travelling during the winter was by dog team.

When I was a child, my father built a house. We stayed there all of the time. We did not move from place to place as was done in his father's time. The only time we moved was going to Stanley Mission by dog team to go to church at Christmas. We used to travel with a lot of other people.

Before there was cloth to make clothing, we used a lot of rabbit skins. People made blankets out of them. Many would cut rabbit skins into strips and these would be hung outside to frost-dry. Then they wove these into robes. These blankets were real warm. They used deer and caribou hides for mattresses and they were real warm too.

We lived in tipis. We made a fire in the middle of the tipi. When the fire went out, no one made a fire in the middle of the night. We kept warm in our rabbit bed robes. Sometimes there was fog inside the tipi and it was so cold. In those days, the people could stand the cold. Also, children used to play out in the cold weather. The old people were used to the cold. Now, people stay indoors most of the time. I guess that's what made them strong. Even women, a few days after they gave birth they would be working.

The babies were wrapped in rabbit skin and moss. The moss soaked the water up. They did not have diaper rash. They used to warm the moss before putting it on the babies. They carried the babies in cradle boards. That's how the baby was kept warm. We also used cattails for our babies.
I remember the 30-30-44 guns they used in those days. There were others they called single barrels which they used for ducks. My father told us that the only kind they used at first were the ones where they put the pellets and other things right in the barrel.

To build a birch bark canoe, they would find a sandy hill, dig a trench in the shape of a canoe. Then they would nail down poles around the shape of the canoe. Then they put the birch bark outside this shape and sewed the bark together. They split pine trees for the inside of the canoe. They made needles from the small bones from the moose leg. This is what was used to sew the bark together to make the canoe. After it was all sewn together, they would take it off of the frame. The sewing was done by the women. Then they pick spruce gum, the real sticky kind, and put it on the seams to fill in the holes. Then they put sticks all around to make it strong. These canoes were easy to break. Almost everyone was barefooted as you could not land with these canoes or they would break. They used to get out in the water so as not to bump the canoe on rocks. This is the way they made and treated their canoes as I used to see them. They also used to carry them on their shoulders, sideways too. They must have had real strong arms as it is hard to carry a canoe that way.

My father told us once that he travelled up Montreal River and landed at Montreal Lake and walked to Prince Albert. From there they were using birch bark canoes, a big one. They bought lots of things at Prince Albert because there was not enough stuff in the Bay store for all of the people to buy. There is lots now which they could not get at the store at that time. They had to go to far places to get the other things they needed. They used to carry heavy loads on their backs. Also, they were always barefooted on the portages. I was real surprised at my uncle, my father's brother. He was running, carrying a canoe, barefooted.

Mother and Father did not remember when this church at Stanley Mission was being built. All they remembered was the church standing there where it now stands. The people in those days thought a lot of their church. All of the old people did, as they always went to church. In the evenings you could hear them singing hymns and saying prayers in their homes. In those days, you would never see children running around late at nights as the parents really taught their children to obey and respect people.

There used to be a lot of young preachers sent to Stanley Mission, those that were learning to be ministers. One I remember is Ahab Spence. He was a teacher there. He was there for a long time until he finished his lessons for a minister. There were also some white people that were there as teachers while learning to become ministers. They also took the services on Sundays.
I remember seeing that church when they were working on it. They built a big house. This where they were using planes and axes to work on the logs. After the men were finished that work there, that big house was used for a school during the summer months. One old man used to help with the saw that was held on both ends. I heard also in the big house that they made a rack above a big stove to dry the split logs. They used these for the whole church. That's how come the logs that are used on that church did not split. I remember seeing that church when the logs were getting bad at the foundation. The foundation was about four feet high and where the logs stand into the rock foundation, they were rotting. They built the foundation about four feet high and where the logs stand into the rock foundation, they were rotting. They built the foundation like they used to make open fireplaces. On this church they used square nails. That's the only kind of nails they had in those days. I was only a small child at that time. The man that came to fix the church, his name was McKay. He was an old man. He had the men take out the bad logs and put good ones in. My father helped them. There was no money for the men to get paid. The minister and the Bay man helped too. The Indians did all of the sawing. All of them helped at the church without pay. In these days people would go around to all the homes and tell them they were going to work at the church. Everyone went and helped in whatever work was to be done at the church.

I remember reading about money for the church in books that were left behind by ministers. What is written in that book is the amount of fur the people gave to the minister. One name was James Cook. He gave the minister six mink at Christmas time. I guess lots of people gave lots of fur for their church. When we sold our fur to the store, they gave us pieces of paper and these are what we gave to the church.

Now no one attends church. Since liquor got here, no one thinks of going to church. These children growing up now, they don't even know there is a God. It is too bad all of these people forgot their God. The poor children never go to church to learn about God.

A minister used to hold Sunday School here. Mr. Morris used to teach us. There was also a woman to help him. They used to use a small picture with a Bible story written on the back of it. This woman would talk in Cree to us. We don't know of anyone doing that now. They used to let us take the pictures home with us. Every Sunday there was different pictures.

People were kind to each other in those days. Anyone was friends with everyone else, not like today. Some people hate each other. People used to visit each other anywhere and speak kindly to and of each other. Now today, they hardly know each other. Sometimes I ask children and other people how their friends are and they don't know. That's how much they think of each other. I guess. Long ago, everyone knew each other. If
you asked them about their friends or our friends, they knew how they were or where they were living at that time. This is all gone now. No one seems to care about anyone else.

I notice today that parents don't teach their children respect. They break into homes and break the windows even with people living in them. If no one is living there, they break everything in the house. They even tear off roofing. It is the same at Stanley Mission. Even when someone dies there is hardly anyone to help dig the grave. Only the ones whose loved one died. Norman McLeod said to me just lately, "We are not doing so good since liquor got here." People don't go to church. We are forgetting to pray. This is why everyone and everything is going down - everything.

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