

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: KINSHIPS - NAMES & RELATIONS
ELI BEAR, PIUS DUSTYHORN,
DANIEL OCHAPOOWAYS, NORMAN
FRANK, MIKE BEAR

INFORMANT'S ADDRESS:

INTERVIEW LOCATION:

TRIBE/NATION: CREE
LANGUAGE: CREE/ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW:
INTERVIEWER:
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD
SOURCE: SASK. INDIAN CULTURAL COLLEGE
TAPE NUMBER: IH-449
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 66
PAGES: 9
RESTRICTIONS: NONE

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Elders discuss names and relationships and how their
significance is being lost.

KINSHIPS - NAMES AND RELATIONS

ELI BEAR:

Today we are asked to talk about names. As you all know there has been quite a mix-up in our Indian way for names. And we will also talk about relations. Like, I will I say this one man uses the name Riding Bird, and his own brother, Little Sun. This is why I say that there is a mix-up in our Indian names. These people have names as if they are not related at all. Even if they're blood brother. But they get named by their Indian names. This happened when they were getting their first treaty and these agents I guess just gave them what Indian name they were called. So they knew they were blood brothers but they had different last names. Some of these people know just like my brother, Edward Bear. We don't know but isn't his name, our name? And this relations, we are told to talk about these too. My grandfather told me some but he didn't tell me just what they meant. He told me but I forgot; it's too long ago, what they told me, my grandfather and grandmother. I forgot most of it. But my father, for instance, had different versions. He used to say, my father, this is your father. And if you say this is our father, this is lesser in meaning. But if you say our Heavenly Father, this is the most powerful as

his is our father. To name him as you say his name, this is the way it is. When you say, my father, know what it means. And this is what we are trying to tell our children today. Because there are different ways of saying father. Some use dad or daddy or nepapa and then I heard people up north use nokomiss even if it was their own father. For us here, nokomiss is an uncle. And this is what we are asked to discuss today. I can't say very much myself as I don't clearly understand just yet about these things. I will be asking the older people about things like this, to try and know. But today I just brought out what was told to me by my grandparents. The Indian of long ago were all related one way or another.

And I will say this too. I was talking to this old man this morning and this is what he said. First of all I shouldn't really say this that these kids born out of wedlock, the bastards we call them, take for instance a young girl or woman. Just like my own daughter, I have a daughter and she has two children out of marriage and when it came time for these kids to be baptized and they use my name as if they were my own children. And they are not my own children but my grandchildren. And this man told me that this is very difficult. These kids have their fathers, aren't they supposed

to use their father's name? These children are the man's children therefore they should use his name. Just like me I have two grandchildren by my daughter. They use my name even if they are not mine and this man said these are the things he doesn't like. (He's not in favor of them.) And this is true we have all kinds of white kids coming into our reserves born this way to our daughters and these children use our names. These kids are born of white fathers and one of our own daughters but I guess there's nothing we can do about this ourselves. I would think that it would be up to the clergy and the government to try and clear this up. But we ourselves should try and make our children understand more about these Indian relations. We are getting away from them today. Ask your children today if they understand when they say my father or my mother. And this is all I can say for now, I just wanted to bring out what my grandfather told me and so this is all I know.

PIUS DUSTYHORN:

I will say a few words myself about relations. I can't say much, for me I still carry or use my grandfather's name. This man that was my grandfather it's his name we use. Long ago these elders used to have their names closely matched as to the closest relation and this way they were close cousins. But what Eli said I guess I will have to go along with that. I'm the same way myself; I was brought up and taught these relations by my father and grandfather. This is where relationship started for me, my father and my mother. Like this man that said the prayers this morning I will say it amounts to the same thing as this man was talking about our father and also our mother as these people brought us up. They say, my son, to me and from there I say the same to my children. I tell my children how

this relationship started and what will happen as time goes on, when they start having children of their own. Where this relationship of grandchild starts from till we come to what we call great-grandchildren. There's not very much I can talk about this, I'll listen to these people. This is all I will say.

SPEAKER:

INDIAN CUSTOMS

I don't know just what I can say myself as I really don't know on how to go about teaching the young our Indian way of teaching. But I used to hear my grandfather say that long ago Indians had great respect for each other, a brother and sister, man and woman. They didn't talk to each other because they respected each other so much and now today the way I see it

it's very different. Everyone talks to everyone else no matter who it is. Say anything, even when they are brother and sister. I don't know how this can be straightened out. Maybe if an elder of the family was to spend maybe four or five minutes each day explaining to his children about relations, that would help some. To my way of thinking this might bring the children to understand more about relations. But this is my own thinking. I can't say anymore. I'll let these older people do the talking.

DANIEL OCHAPOOWAYS:

My dear friends and relatives, I'm very glad to be here with you. I will say a few words about my name, this is not saying it right when they say Ochapooways. This is the whiteman's way. My grandfather was named O-da-ba-who-wao (just like untying something) and this was my grandfather's name. Whenever I say that name of grandfather's this is where I find out what relation I was to a great many people. Just like my nephew here I didn't know him till he told his name and his father's name. Same with one chief here, Harry Paull, my cousin. And I'll say some of these people at Touchwood, File Hills and other reserves that way. Piapot - I was related to him; he was an uncle. When I was being brought up by my father he used to tell that when our Maker made the earth, he gave us Indians different places to go. Some went here, some went there, some went crying, towards the direction of the setting sun. We have relations all across our country. This is what my father used to say. And so I'm grateful for this myself, this relationship to each other. Just like when we say nees-jas or ne-je-wha (cousins). This man sitting here is my nephew. Long ago these were the things that made our Indian life the way it was, of having relatives no matter where we went to these different reserves; and this was good. It is very true that long ago Indians had great respect for each other and this was very good. We don't have very much of that today.

I'm very sorry that my cousin Smith is not here today as I wanted to hear what he had to say to me. Also I was going to

tell him something. And this will be all I will say for now.

NORMAN FRANK:

This is very hard for a man to know and understand what is being talked about. What I think myself. In order for this to go right, the older person himself go to work on it. To try and set things right with his children right at home. This way it would work out right to teach them every day, tell them this Indian way of ours. Because this is what is forgotten today.

To teach these young people on respect and how to be kind to others, to make them understand. And I think it's the parent's job to do this right from his own home. I think this would be for better if done this way. Just like this elder's talking to us here; we understand him. This is the way it should be done with our young ones today. Talk to them easy and in a gentle way and they too will understand. And if this parent can do this right from the home I think this would work. But I like listening to these older people. They are more wiser than I am so I can't say very much more. This is all I can say.

NEXT SPEAKER:

About what Eli said there about these names, yes, I know that this is true of sometimes brothers having different last names (surnames) as if they weren't related; this is true. Just like an older brother and his younger brother they would have different last names even though they are blood brothers; they use different names. By the way what relation am I to Eli? My cousin, I guess. Anyway it's the same way too when he said that his grandchildren use his name as if they were his own but are only his grandchildren. His daughter uses his name and so her children uses that name also. When I was a child we were told that we were related to that one this way and that one that way and that one another way. And there were many different relations. Sometimes a person would go far away some place and meet another Indian. He doesn't know who he is. They don't know each other but they get to talking back and forth, telling each other their names and the names of their fathers, and pretty soon they start to know that they are related. And this was passed on from way back. One person would say, "I heard that name, I'm related to that man this way." Then they would start naming other people till they have all kinds of relatives and this the older people used to say we are all related in a lot of different ways.

And also, what you said about not having respect for nothing, this is also very true. We have lost pretty near all of it in our race. Whenever we meet we usually greet each other with "Hell, there you old son-of-a-bitch" and usually a lot of swearing besides, and this is not our Indian way. We imitate the white man; we get this from the white man. This wasn't given to us. It is true today of our young people have no respect for nothing. They don't give a damn about anything what we tell them; usually goes right through, keeps going

unheard. These relationships they don't have no respect for. Till something scares them real bad and they smarten up and this is where they turn to again. I have seen this already. When they get into trouble or are scared of something then this

is where they come. And what we are doing, this work is very hard but we are gaining. We are turning some of these young people our way. These are the younger people and the younger children also. Right now at their age we should talk to them, try to make them understand. Start with the little children, include all our young people. Get them to understand the Indian way of life. It's true that they hear about Indian culture but they don't believe it because they have the whites' teachings. We should have these kids sitting here with us in our workshop. They would get a lot out of this. The work we do is hard. There is a lot of travel involved and it runs into a lot of money. This job is not that easy. If it's a bad day a person often gets stuck somewhere.

And again I'll go back to these relations, when you said that these young people just throw this away. I've seen this happen; they don't care about relations. Some young people meet each other, go together and they don't even know they're closely related till maybe sometimes it's too late. I've heard about cases where these kids were thrown away by their parents when they were very young and they get raised by white men. These kids were adopted by white men in different places and when they were young and grown up they happened to meet each other and after a while they got married. What these young people didn't know that they were brother and sister brought up by different white men. These young people were left by their parents when they were very small and this is how come this happened.

It is no good to have our Indian children raised by a white man because they forget who they are related to. When an Indian child is raised in a white home he thinks he's white. He speaks English, forgets his own Indian language. When you speak to him in our Indian language he doesn't understand. I know of two young men from where I come from. They were brought up in a white home. They don't know their Indian language or the Indian customs. They figure they are white men as they were brought up by white men and this we shouldn't let happen to our Indian children. This is no good; it's a bad thing. I will say that if we can talk to the government and have some kind of funds available to get a building somewhere and have all these kids that are thrown away by parents kept there and have an Indian in charge of this place not a white man. Get a big place where they can feel at home and they get taught there as well. This is what I think would be very good. These children would know who they are related to and they would be taught respect.

This white man has gotten in our way in many things and has prevented us from going ahead. But our biggest problem today on our reserves is the alcohol; this is our downfall. We see Indians drunk every day no matter where we go. We just cannot

stop using it. I don't use the stuff myself. I used to drink long ago. I went on many drunks with my cousin here but when I knew this was going to get me nowhere in the future then I quit; this was a long time ago. I never feel like wanting to have a drink, none whatsoever. It's quite easy to quit using alcohol. A person has a strong will power and uses it right. This way a person has no trouble stopping. A person doesn't have to go to the A.A. side; a person can quit on his own. I don't think it helps any sending these people to the A.A. centres. They go there, they are okay for a while, and they are right back from where they were before, maybe worse. But if a person uses will power and has a strong mind, think of pleasanter things in life, then he will be able to get along without alcohol. This is all for now. I bid you all a good day.

NEXT SPEAKER:

I can't say very much about this relationship myself only what I've been told. Long ago my grandfather and my mother used to always tell me, "You're related to this person this way." For instance it would be my sister - in our Indian language a sister, in whiteman language today, we call them cousin. Just like my mother had a sister, and her children, my mother called them daughters. This is the respect the Indian had for each other long ago. They always looked in the distant future. And I know this is very hard for us what these people are talking about, these kids being born out of marriage. I'm in the same way myself. My daughter had a little boy without getting married and this little boy is in my name now. It is going to be hard for this boy in the future when he is grown up. If someone should ask him about his father what is he going to say. It will be hard for him. And this I guess is got the best of us. I think it has us beat; there is nothing we can do about it. But we people that are getting on in age we should have someone talking on respect, Indian customs and all our different ways of life to these young people. And maybe, just maybe, it would go to these young people's heads. It is also true what was said here about how the white man has been our tormentor for a long time. We can take these kids going to high school or the Indian kids that are brought up by white. They forget our Indian ways, they forget about respect and relations. When they finally come home to their reserves they know who is their close relation.

Now I'm going to tell about what happened out our way not so long. Like this young man's mother died and his father married another woman and this was his stepmother. But I knew that he was going with this woman on the sly. This was his stepmother. And as time went on his father passed away and so they stayed together after that, living together this stepmother and

stepson. Finally they had a boy and after a while a girl. Now these children use the same surname as the deceased person as it is his son's surname also. And I just wanted to tell this, the mistake this man made. A person don't hear this happen

very often. And about the people that live together without getting married, we have lots of these on our reserve. The ministers and Indian agents have talked to these people at different times but they won't get legally married. Could be that this is the white man's doing again. And again all the children that come from these families use their mother's surnames. And these are some of the happening that are bothering us today. This is all I can say.

MIKE BEAR:

I will say a few words myself about what these people want us to talk about. I feel I'm old enough now to speak at these meetings; I'm 67 years old. And I was also brought up by old people myself. My father was called Muskwa and he was pretty well-known among Indians and he told me a lot about life and all the good that a man can do. Also about relationships to each other, he used to say they had great respect for their relations long ago and so it has gone down to where we are today where we now have very little respect for one another. Today is starting to get very different but what to blame for this is the white man. The way they multiply in our country. When I was young I used to remember we had to travel for miles before we'd find a store where to buy stuff. There was just an odd white man around then. The towns of Spiritwood and Leoville weren't there; there was nothing there. Now today they are pretty big towns. There were a few white men and the ones that were here were very scattered. There was one halfbreed who lived just outside our reserve. We used to call him LaFleur and this man had three sons. Their names were Charlie, George and Rod LaFleur and we used to give these men Indian names as we used to get along with them pretty good. The oldest we call Semaganisegani because this man was in the Army; and the middle one we called Keeskejeje (Cuthand and Cutfinger) as one of his hands was cut off; and the youngest one when we used to see him he used to call us LeSavage and this is the name we gave him, Le Savage. And this I can remember happened in my young days.

Also I'll tell you about a man and this relation business of how much they respected it long ago. One time I guess a hunting party set out and this one hunter went with his in-laws. This man was a good hunter but apparently the other people in the hunting party put a curse on this hunter and he couldn't kill nothing. The other people made him unlucky. They went hunting again and again but each time they came back empty-handed. Finally they were very short of food. And in

those days the respect for each other was so great that this hunter didn't want to say anything to his in-laws. One morning after they got up this old woman, I guess she had some birch bark gathered up, she was busy heating these bowls over the fire so they would go round. Anyway this hunter was sitting by the fire with his head down and he was thinking heavy and the old woman had long thread and was sewing this birch bark bowl together. She touched her son-in-law by accident with the cup and this hunter thought that his mother-in-law was handing him

something to eat. He made a grab for it but the old woman [said] that it was an accident (Neah). Anyway this hunter was terribly embarrassed. He was very embarrassed so he thought I'll go away, far away from here. It's all right I'll go and starve to death someplace far away. So he left their camp. He went far away and this goes to show that the Indian was tough long ago. So this hunter finally thought this was far enough. He came to a little hill and this is where he stopped for a rest. He thought he'd lay down for awhile as he didn't think there would be any animals around close. He must have dozed off while he was laying there and as if in a dream, he dreamed as if someone was pointing at something. When he came fully awake, sure enough there was a moose there. This was God-given. So he took all he could carry and headed back to his hungry in-laws. When he got back to their camp, his in-laws had their heads down and were feeling very sorry for having embarrassed him so much. And the old woman was very thankful for her son-in-law for having good luck. And this is my story.

(End of Interviews)

INDEX

INDEX TERM	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
ADOPTION				
-by non-Indians	IH-449	KINSHIPS	66	6,7
ALCOHOL				
-abuse of	IH-449	KINSHIPS	66	6,7
CHILDREN				
-adoption of	IH-449	KINSHIPS	66	6
CHILDREN				
-illegitimate	IH-449	KINSHIPS	66	2,3,5,7
EDUCATION				
-traditional	IH-449	KINSHIPS	66	4,5
ELDERS				
-as teachers	IH-449	KINSHIPS	66	4,6
FAMILY				
-taboos	IH-449	KINSHIPS	66	3,4
FAMILY				
-relationships	IH-449	KINSHIPS	66	2-9
NAMES (PERSONAL)				
	IH-449	KINSHIPS	66	2-8
SEX				
-extra-marital	IH-449	KINSHIPS	66	2,3,5,7,8
STORIES AND STORYTELLING (GENERAL)				
-hunting	IH-449	KINSHIPS	66	8,9
VALUES				
-respect	IH-449	KINSHIPS	66	4,5,7,8
VALUES				
-loss of	IH-449	KINSHIPS	66	4,5,7,8

