

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: ISABEL SMALLBOY
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HOBBEMA, ALBERTA
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HOBBEMA, ALBERTA
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DATE OF INTERVIEW:
INTERVIEWER: LOUIE CRIER
PHILLIP SOOSAY
INTERPRETER: JOE REDCROW
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Establishment of the Montana, Louis Bull, Samson and Ermineskin Reserves.
- Taking of Treaty #6 and the establishment of agriculture.

I am approximately 105 years of age. However my memory is still good. I feel as though I can still see the things that took place during the early days.

First of all, I had two grandfathers, Bobtail and Ermineskin. Bobtail was older. Their other brother was Joe who was killed in the mountains. There were four brothers all tolled. When the negotiations was taking place many old timers took part. One was Little Pine, the other was Big Bear. There were others that were there. This was at Sweetgrass, Saskatchewan.

There were people who lived along the foothills and their closest town was Edmonton where they used to get their supplies. The people that lived at (Min ma tak kat) took treaty before we did.

I can't very well remember the names of all the people because there were many that took part, however they were already being paid.

Now, getting back to our forefathers who took up land at

Bear's Hill which is now known as Hobbema. When the people pitched up their camps they were pretty well scattered. There is a certain hill where Bobtail, my grandfather, set up camp and my dad pitched his up somewhere else. Finally the people accepted the treaty payment of the amount of \$5.00 per head. Our camps were close to a school where I used to go to as the time went on. Bobtail was the head chief at that time. The people liked the country at Bear's Hill. They were used to it. Bobtail was her dad's father.

Already the people that lived in Saskatchewan had long been paid their treaty money. One for sure was Big Bear. This payment took place in Saskatchewan. It was my grandfather (Bobtail) who first took up land at Hobbema. He was the head chief. To start with all of Bear's Hill was one Indian reserve.

Several discussion meetings took place before the people accepted the treaty money which was to be \$5.00 per head. In those days it used to be known as big money. Some say it was not enough. One of the elders who was my grandfather, known as Kay nowatch, says, "Why not try to make it \$20.00 per head?" At \$5.00 was for being enough. Someone wanted to accept the \$5.00 and he went out. That's how the agreement took place.

One day Ermineskin asked his brother Bobtail to try to put a good word for him before the proper authorities had left the area. He said his relatives and friends were following him wherever he went. He wanted to become a chief and to have his own followers.

Before the officials had left they were told what Ermineskin wanted to have done on his behalf. They said, "You two are brothers. There can only be one chief. It is impossible for Ermineskin to become another chief, but he can become another councillor under you." This is a true story that I am telling. In those days I used to have a keen interest in what was being said.

Sometime after my late father accompanied the surveyors and they began with their survey with Bear's Hill Reserve. Ermineskin took off to a certain place with his followers. A short time after he came back to Bear's Hill and they pitched camps near the school. It was there that he succeeded in becoming a chief without being properly authorized.

Everything was finalized eventually concerning the land. I had another grandfather, a brother to Bobtail. His name was Uskeyo moastoos (cow). He too was very anxious in becoming a chief so one day he was successful in becoming a chief without being properly authorized on what is now known as the Bull Reserve.

There was another old man whose house was located near the Hobbema stores. His name was Kah na tuk a soo (Samson). He too wanted to become a chief and was successful at it. There again no authorization was approved on his behalf.

As I have said before there was only one head chief and that was Bobtail.

The Bear's Hill Reserve was quite big at that time but it could have been much bigger. My dad used to say, "If I had gone much farther out at the time the survey was being made." Now everything has been settled as far as the land is concerned. Each chief took up a portion of land.

There was another tribe of people that came from the state of Montana, U.S. and in that group of people there was an old man whose name was Im e sees. When these people arrived, they had no place to live. They were told to settle down on a portion of land now known as the Montana Reserve. The agreement was that they were to use the land on a loan basis.

Summarizing the rest of her story. She tells of how her brother used to plant the fields and how her mother used to plant her garden.

Louis asked her if the people had sold the game, fish, and any type of bird. She said, "No, none of these things were ever sold." The Queen promised the people that they were to go hunting and they would never go hungry. She even went to say that her breasts were big, therefore if the people were to go hungry, then would she feed them through her breast.

Nowadays, maybe the breasts have gone dry. Her promises at the present time do not mean a thing. These were the promises the people were given.

(Second Version of Same)

Inter: You will tell us of how you know what happened during our forefather's time.

Isabel: I will tell you what and how it happened. I have seen this treaty, for I am 105 years old, but can still get around. My grandfather, Kiskayo (Bobtail) had 3 other brothers and one by the name of Joseph got killed in the mountains. That was before the treaty was made. Big Bear and the rest of the prairie Indians were on their own. Only the bush Indians and they moved out and travelled through Hobbema to trade their furs. Then time came when the first treaty came, like Big Bear and Minabikosis (Pine Tree) made the treaty. So the people stayed and took the land, the prairie Indians.

Our grandfathers moved and came to what it is now Hobbema. They made their camp, went trapping around and they stayed. There is a cemetery towards the river over the hill and that is where my grandfather made camp. My father came across the bridge and made a home there. The rest of the Indians also made camp, wherever they thought best. We bush Indians that

came here, has not taken the treaty yet, this \$5.00 that was given to the other Indians. So we Indian people made our homes here. Time came when there was a school so we tried to go to school. Finally the Indian agent came to pay treaty. The five dollars which the other Indians were getting. The Indian agent asked the three brothers where they are going to take their land for a reserve. "You can pick any place you like," they were told. So they took what is now the Hobbema Reserve, 'cause by now they were used to the place. Kiskayou, he was the chief amongst the three brothers, for he was the oldest of them. One of them is my brothers. They tried to make business for the treaty but the people had already taken the land. Big Bear, the other tribes had made the treaty already. But I do not know where they had taken the land. So finally they made

the treaty and we moved to Sakitchawaskik, that is where they made the treaty, they did not make treaty here. The Indian agent and some higher officials were there and the chief, Kiskayou was called up. It was the chiefs who took the land they want. All the people were having meetings, discussing about the \$5.00 treaty payments. You will be given five dollars per person and the people rejected and said that it was too little. Oh! Some said it was enough, some said maybe. But one of the men said we should ask for \$20.00. That was my grandfather, Kinawatch and he said that five dollars was not enough, some said maybe. So they argued about which way to give, and that he would not take five dollars because it was too little. It was in the Battleford that they made treaty.

So this other old Chief Sikosoweyan, (Ermineskin) told his cousin Kiskayou to go and talk for him, before the officials go. "These people that are going with me want a piece of land, for themselves." I suppose he wanted to be the head of these people who were with him. So his brother went and told the Indian agent that he wanted to separate from them and be with his children. So the agent discussed the problem and said that it could not happen because they were blood brothers and there could not be two chiefs amongst brothers. So it was not agreed that they should separate and they went home, but this other old man made his camp at Onion Lake and he stayed there. Later on he became chief. This is the real story I am relating, 'cause I used to listen to what they were talking about. When we got back to Hobbema, they surveyed the Hobbema Reserve. They made it straight to the river, and then they turned and there is a school, called after my grandfather, and went with the cut-line. On this side of the bridge, really I don't know where he took him, the surveyor, that was my father who went with him.

Finally they finished surveying the land. But there was only one chief and one councillor. There was one called Askiwmostos, that was Kiskayou's sister's husband. So Askiwmostos (Bull) asked Kiskayou if he could get a small portion of the land so that he could be chief and look after his sons and daughters. Oh! I am not the agent, you should have said something about it. So he made himself a chief over at Kispatinay, at the other side. So that is why they are

called a different name. Till my grandfather, Samson, came and he travelled to the south, so that's where he got his nickname Kanatakasow. So things were settling down and later on I heard that Samson was a chief on one end of the reserve. He just made himself a chief, for there was only one chief towards the government and that was Kiskayou. For he was the one that (chose) the reserve. The reserve is quite big, he said and that he should have taken the surveyers on a longer stretch, so the reserve would have been a bigger reserve. So that's the way it went and then they made themselves chiefs. They were

only four brothers when they first started. There were quite a few people when the first treaty came. On these separate reserves which the people made. The time of the rebellion, when it was over, some came here from the States. That is where Amisis, was brought here, and they made camp there, cause they had no place to go, so the land was loaned to them not given to them. Akamiwinisak (Montana) are now on there. We lived close to the priest, but this I do not know if you got some lumber for housing, but anyway we had new houses.

Till time came when they were given oxen to try and put some crop in. To plow the land but were helping each other. When one was finished they would move on to the other. The women were very good workers, so they cut fence rails and just dragging them from the bush. My mother was helping, that's why I know these things. When my father had finished putting the crop in, they fenced it with rails; it was barley he sowed. I am going to tell you a little more, cause the Indian people did not know any better. When he finished, they were given harrows and a disc, they worked the land. According to the measurements of the people, it was a ten acre piece. So when the time came to sow, they were given some barley in sacks. My father put the sack around his neck and went to sow, he took a handful of barley and threw it on the cultivated soil. These women were dragging the fence rails, made a fence and finished it. They also were given some cattle for milk. Finally most of the people put in a few acres in crop and helping each other. They were also given oxen carts and they made some kind of a hay rack, whenever they made hay, used it for hauling hay. They were given mowers or scythes to cut grass on slough and the man would cut willow sticks and shape them like a fork. Then the women would make coils. You would see lots of them. Then they would haul hay in the carts, using oxen. Take (?) people (?) and they were very good workers. This is what I know of how the Indian people made a living in farming. So people stayed and put in garden seeds and got vegetables and one time my mother got a sow and she raised pigs. So she put in a good crop of potatoes for she was a good worker. One morning when my father got up and looked out the window, he saw the pigs and he went to wake my mother and said to her, "Old lady, your pig is digging the potatoes out. So I killed him and we will eat it." They did not have the pig long, so we ate this pig. Then the crop was ripe the women had some kind of scissors to cut the grain with. Not like today they have farm machinery and they could not make a go at farming. Then

somehow my father made a threshing machine with some wood and sticks. They would put a big canvas on the ground and that is how the women threshed the grain. So that fall we got at least 10 sacks of grain. These other pigs that were digging, he shut them in. The next morning the pigs got out and when he went to see his grain, the pigs were there first spilling all the grain.

Inter: Did you ever hear anything being said about the Indian people selling any kind of game like moose, fish or any animals with the treaty they had made?

Isabel: I did not hear if they sold any animals. My grandfather and father used to say to me that the Queen told the Indians that you will not go hungry. "This is your country which we are asking to live on. My tits are very big and you will never eat them all, that's how rich they are. Just as long as the river runs, that the treaty will run." Her tits must have vanished 'cause the promises she made are gone. That's the promises the Indian people got. That's where my father took the land and still living here.

Inter: You will be told the real story of this 'cause now the white man is simply forgotten the promises that were made to the Indian people. So now the young generation do not know what the treaty is about 'cause the white man makes them forget. This is one thing we cannot abolish and that we have to try and keep and respect. The other people who have told their side of the story related about the same tone. But today the white man makes money from big game, moose, fish. Those are the things the white man has stolen from our treaty right. So in the future we would not like to see our reserves taken away from us, so we can keep living on them as long as the treaty is still going on for he is the one who made the treaty. It is not for the (-----) progress or take way our pride. That is why this whole deal is for, that we go around to visit people. The government is secretly trying to misplace the Indians from their reserves. Even he uses the priests to mislead us and also among the Indian people some are trying to do the same. When the young generation come up to some misunderstanding, they will think about the old people's story and they will look upon the words that were said by their great-grandfather about the treaties that were first made. This agreement should have been written down and kept by the Indian. But unfortunately the Indian people did not speak nor write, that is where we got stuck. But take it like today, many of the young people have the education, they can go to the white society and talk for themselves. Even there is no old people now, who can go around and talk to young people, like they used to. I was raised by my grandmother and I know how to listen to old people of what they say to me. Whenever the government feels like changing the by-laws that were made to the treaty rights, he can. He can write or put whatever he likes. So that is why some Indians go for that. We people who goes around taking tapes about the treaty rights, we want to have the positive proof that it is how the treaty was made. the people who work on this line are from Edmonton, and we are

told on how to approach the old people so they can tell their side of the story and that's some of the older people you have just mentioned, have their pictures in the office. All these stories will go to this office and will be sent to the government so he can say, that is the way the first treaty was made.

Isabel: Other people came and try to have me tell my story, but you are the first one I have told of how I knew about the first treaty. My grandfather Kiskayou took this reserve. But the oldest of my grandfathers and all of us arrived, he took sick and died that fall. But he used to go to meetings but he was not much of a speaker, not like this youngest one.

(End of Interview)

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