

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: JIM YELLOWEYES 2  
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ALBERTA  
INTERVIEW LOCATION: SUNCHILD RESERVE  
ALBERTA  
TRIBE/NATION:  
LANGUAGE:  
DATE OF INTERVIEW:  
INTERVIEWER: ABRAHAM BURNSTICK  
INTERPRETER: RIK YELLOWBIRD  
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD  
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Tells something of life before the taking of treaty, and his interpretation of Treaty #6.
- Tells a legend of people saved from a flood by building a large raft.

My name is Abraham Burnstick from Hobbema and I am sitting here talking to my relative. What is your name? I would like you to tell of what you may have heard or may have been told of the treaty?

Jim: (Ko-Sow-Wus-Kaw-Wa-Poo) My relative comes here today to seek information in regard to the time the Queen's representative came here to borrow the land and the elders met with him and discussed the turnover of what had been given to the Indian by the Creator.

It was said half a foot was all she wanted to borrow so that her children could make a living on it. She said that she wasn't buying the land only borrowing it. Just so her other children could draw a living and sustenance from it.

She promised that she would take care of the people as long as the sun shone and rivers flowed. She said that she didn't want the animals as the people used them to live.

She also stated that every year at a certain day the people would gather for payment. She gave us \$5.00 a person but I

think it is too small a payment. Yes, she takes care of us but not all of us. She feeds us and that is still going on but again, not all of us. In my case, she doesn't feed me but I do get a pension cheque every month. It isn't enough when I have to pay for electricity and wood. Some are given wood but not me.

Abraham: What did you hear of the discussion beforehand. Did the elders pray or follow ceremony and why did they use the sun and rivers in the treaty?

Jim: There was a priest then but the elders still clung to that which they had been given and followed ceremony. They had many different ways of following ceremony.

Abraham: So we didn't sell the land?

Jim: No, she stated she only wanted to borrow six inches of the land, enough to break with a plow.

Abraham: What of mineral rights the oil and gas the white man uses and minerals etc. did we give them away?

Jim: No, we didn't. She only wanted the land six inches of it and nothing underneath it. She never mentioned oil and gas and now today you see wells all over the place.

Abraham: What of the water, lakes and rivers?

Jim: They didn't give that away either.

Abraham: What of hunting, trapping, and fishing rights? Did we give them away?

Jim: What was mentioned was that all the creatures of the earth were the Indian's for his livelihood.

Abraham: What of education and medicines?

Jim: That was mentioned too except that the Indian had his own medicines so the commissioner never said anything in that regard. The Indian had been given cures for illness so that was his and nothing was said of it.

Abraham: Do the white leaders still follow these promises?

Jim: It still holds in some places, but today they are trying to break them and lead the Indians astray from his rights. They lie more as each leader replaces another.

Abraham: Do you think the children of today still follow these promises. Do they care?

Jim: Not here, the young here are without knowledge and are losing the old ways. They are foolish. The chiefs choose each other but the successive chiefs know nothing of the past. The white man controls them easily as they are without wisdom. I

was a chief for four years and two years councillor and six years band manager on this reserve. As I grew too old I rescinded those duties. I said then that the elected should have knowledge and wisdom whereby he could meet the white man on mutual terms.

Abraham: Before the treaty what was life like?

Jim: Life was very good. The Creator had given the Indian many things and much knowledge to help him live on this earth. Life was easy and strong.

Abraham: There must have been plentiful animals?

Jim: Wah Wah, there was many but as more and more whites came into the country and built stores along the big rivers to here.... One of my grandfathers served as a hunter for one of the first stores here. The many things gotten from animals were shipped back east. Furs went east back to the land they came from. Guns were sent here and the people used them.

Abraham: What of farm implements whereby they could live on agriculture?

Jim: At the start, they were promised plows, grain and seed, sows, and that happened. The people were taught how to grow crops. Many tried this way of life.

Abraham: Why did the old ones hang on to the mountains and why did they hold them in such high regard?

Jim: They kept the mountains as there were many animals there but as they changed so did the regard for the mountains change also. The people didn't live as they should, the river flooded and drowned the people. Those that were good were rewarded. There had been one chosen by the Creator to build a raft out of trees. A huge raft and on these he loaded two animals of every creature and seven tipis of Indians. They came to a part of the mountains the water hadn't flooded and here they lived, those that had been good.

The same happened to the white man. There was one chosen to build a big boat and he was thought to be crazy when he loaded two animals, one female and one male of every creature that they had there and they were rewarded as they had lived a good life.

Abraham: What of the grasses, trees and rocks? What use did our forefathers have for them?

Jim: The Indian was given the knowledge of how to use all that he had been put on the earth with. When one was sick they took willows and made a hut. Then they heated the stone to make them hot. They put water on the rocks. The sick one sweated out the poisons of his sickness. The grasses and plants he used to make medicine to cure himself when he was ill.

Abraham: What of pipes?

Jim: Yes, they used stone to make pipes. There was much stone all over.

The mountains has many animals that live there. There is many sheep and deer, fish, moose all these things are evidence why our elders kept them. There is much life there. There was and is much use in the mountains. There is much use of it, a good use. I am 88 years old now and I see this too.

Abraham: Who told you of this story?

Jim: My father and my grandfather A-Moo-Ka-Mik (Bee Hive). He was the one who hunted for the storekeeper. There was jealousy as he was a friend of the storekeeper and did well. Bad medicine was used on him that drove him crazy. He didn't live too long. My grandfather was dead before the scrip. He never saw the treaty payments either nor was he at the meetings. My father was there all along; he heard the meetings and all that transpired there. My father was against it as he believed it would not last long. He said he would wait until he saw if it was good. So therefore, he did not go along with the treaty.

Abraham: What of the reserves? Was there mention made if they would receive more land if the reserves got overpopulated?

Jim: I never heard of it. I did hear they had the choice of land and the amount. It was their fault that they didn't choose enough.

Abraham: Who sold the land?

Jim: The Indian people figured that they would have future benefits but he made a mistake.

Those that took the scrip received a lot of money. They were as if like halfbreeds. The Indian had made mistakes.

Abraham: I think that is all we can ask you. Thank you.

(End of Interview)

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