

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: MRS. RACHEL SHAWKENCE
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: KETTLE POINT,
ONTARIO
INTERVIEW LOCATION: KETTLE POINT,
ONTARIO
TRIBE/NATION:
LANGUAGE:
DATE OF INTERVIEW: 1974
INTERVIEWER:
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD
SOURCE: NATIVE PEOPLES' RESOURCE
CENTRE
LONDON, ONTARIO
TAPE NUMBER: IH-OL.04
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 194
PAGES: 12
RESTRICTIONS: NONE

HIGHLIGHTS:

- General account of her life.

Inter: Mrs. Rachel Shawkence, right.

Rachel: Yes.

Inter: Wife of Baxter and... What's the date today? Today is the fourteenth. Mrs. Shawkence, I'll be asking you questions here. Well, first of all, about your mother and dad and how far you can remember back.

Rachel: Well, I guess my dad was born here on Kettle Point.

Inter: Your dad is Gilford, isn't he?

Rachel: Gilford Henry.

Inter: And your mother's name?

Rachel: Elizabeth Wilde.

Inter: Elizabeth Wilde. Okay, now they were from Stoney Point, were they?

Rachel: Yes, they were from Stoney Point. They were, well my father was both from Kettle Point and Stoney Point. He was born at Kettle Point. It's not too far from here, over on the second lot from the (inaudible).

Inter: Both from Kettle Point... I mean, not Kettle Point but Kettle Point and Stoney Point.

Rachel: Yeah.

Inter: Is it true that Kettle Point and Stoney Point were both one at one time?

Rachel: Yeah. I guess it was a lot bigger than Kettle Point and Stoney Point.

Inter: Well, somebody was telling me that there was three reserves, Sarnia, Kettle Point, and...

Rachel: And Grand Bend and all around that district and (name), you know. So, I don't know about Sarnia very much.

Inter: Oh yeah. Well, do you remember some of the first families who lived in Stoney Point? You know, far back as you can remember? Do you remember any stories of the first families?

Rachel: Yes, I know a lot of stories but the people that lived there that I remember like Julia, Julia White's, Karen's, her mother was a Johnson. Her name was Mary Johnson.

Inter: You mean originally, Johnson up here?

Rachel: Yes. There was, I think I have a book on that somewhere, of the older Johnsons, you know. From a way back.

Inter: Oh yeah.

Rachel: It had something to do with the schools, you know, the schools that they built. But I just don't know where the book is right now. It's in the house somewhere.

Inter: You got a book on that, have you?

Rachel: Yeah, it's a little yellow book. Mr. Allen was the

teacher here and he had that book made, I think.

Inter: How old is this book?

Rachel: I don't know. It tells the story about all the schools around the district.

Inter: Oh yeah.

Rachel: Yeah, you know, among the white people and the Indians.

Inter: Well, maybe I could borrow it off you sometime or come on over and glance over it?

Rachel: Well, I'll have to look for it.

Inter: Do you remember any childhood experiences like, you know, how is it compared to days like this? Was it...?

Rachel: Well, there was no highways or anything like that and there was... The travelling road was right from here, the foot of the hill and all along the foot of the hill and it would come out there by the Port Franks road, you know, where the... That's where they travelled through. On the other side of Stoney Point, that was all a swamp. And you remember Alec Wilde?

Inter: Alec Wilde, yeah, I've heard of him.

Rachel: Yeah, he was my mother's brother. And he lived on a reserve there for a while but after a while he moved from the

reserve on the outskirts of the reserve and some basket company bought that bush there on the edge of the reserve and they cut all the bush down and there was nothing but stumps there. Well, Alec Wilde cleaned that land all up and he had a big garden there.

Inter: Oh yeah. What year was this, do you remember?

Rachel: I don't know. I must have been about ten years old.

Inter: You were living at Stoney Point, were you?

Rachel: Yeah, I was born there. But I can remember the travelling road. It only went as far as where John Elijah lived and from there it was nothing but a swamp, you know. People didn't use that road, they used the road at the foot of the hill there.

Inter: Oh, just more like footpaths, were they?

Rachel: No, there was a wagon road.

Inter: Oh yeah, but, you know, not regular roads like we got today, eh?

Rachel: Well, in the wintertime, the white people would come in and buy wood off the Indians, wagonloads or sleighloads. The Indians would cut wood and the white people would come and buy the wood off of them for their use and so they made the roads good to help.

Inter: What were the living conditions? How were the houses when you were smaller?

Rachel: They were frame houses and log houses.

Inter: Log houses.

Rachel: Yeah, my father built a log house there and we lived in a log house.

Inter: How was the heat? What did you use for heat, just wood?

Rachel: Wood, yeah.

Inter: Wood?

Rachel: Yeah. Everybody used wood. And they all used oil lamps.

Inter: There was no electricity at all, eh?

Rachel: No. When you go outside, you hold your hand up in the dark, you couldn't see it. You'd have to, you'd know your way around though, you know where the paths are. You could walk right through the dark and never get lost.

Inter: What about clothing and all this, was it like today or...?

Rachel: Well, after the...

Inter: (Inaudible)

Rachel: You know, when the white people came in, they started wearing white people's, same clothes like white people would wear, you know. But before that they, before white people's time, they all wore clothing made of buckskin and things like that.

Inter: Is this around your time? Did they wear that when you were small or...?

Rachel: No, just for a special occasion, maybe for a show or something like that.

Inter: It was bought clothes then. Did your mother ever make any, like?

Rachel: Oh, she was a great sewer. She used to make quilts and baskets and... She used to like to raise chickens and in the summertime we used to pull flax, you know.

Inter: Pretty busy woman, was she?

Rachel: Yes, she was a real good worker and she canned fruit and pickles, homemade pickles and fruit and have a garden and prepare a lot of food for the winter. She knew how to store food away. And she knew how to store that meat away too, you know. She'd put on a pot of boiling water and I don't know how she fixed it. I think she might have put salt in there and dipped the meat in there and then hung it outside to dry in a cold wind, like. And then when the meat was ready to be cooked, the soup of it would turn real white.

Inter: That's interesting.

Rachel: Yeah, and she used to make her own soap. She used wood ashes.

Inter: Wood ashes?

Rachel: Yeah. And soft water, rain water. And she'd go uptown and get tallow, you know, and she would use tallow and the liquid after she boils the wood ashes and she'd make her own soap. And she had all, she had everything. And I think she taught a lot of Indian people how to make that soap. It was kind of strong but it served its purpose, you know.

Inter: Do you remember any of the dances they used to have? Did they have any special kind of dances on Stoney Point or...?

Rachel: They weren't much for dancing there. Just once in a while, you know. Like when they had a job someplace and they would finish their work and then they would maybe have a little party when the job was all finished. Or Christmas time, they used to have big Christmas parties like, you know, and a New Year's party. I think they exchanged parties at Christmas and New Year's. Like Christmas would be at Stoney Point and New Year's at Kettle Point. That about the way they used to have them.

Inter: Don't run away, I'll check the soup. (Break in tape) Okay, now...

Rachel: Oh, you were talking about those parties like.

Inter: Yeah.

Rachel: Well, they had speeches and that, and singing at the parties. And everybody would take food and they wouldn't charge for the meals, you know. Everybody would just have a happy, good time.

Inter: Do you remember any special songs they'd sing? Indian songs, not white inspired, you know.

Rachel: No, they had Indian hymns and I think it was mostly all hymns they sang in Indian. But for New Year's parties they had speeches in Indian like, you know. That was the way they could tell their speech good, in their own tongue, like.

Inter: Yeah. We'll get back to the food. What type of meals did your mother cook up? You know, in general?

Rachel: Well, I think it was pretty well like we're eating today, you know.

Inter: I mean, was there any special Indian foods she cooked?

Rachel: Yes, all kinds of different kind of meat. Whatever the menfolks would bring home.

Inter: Was there any names to these special dishes? Do you remember?

Rachel: I know they used to eat, they would have a, they had wild turkey they used to have.

Inter: Oh yeah. Would they have an Indian name for that?

Rachel: Yeah, I think it's called (Indian).

Inter: (Indian).

Rachel: Yeah. I have all the names written down somewhere in a book.

Inter: (Indian). Okay, and...?

Rachel: And (Indian) for coon. They used to roast that coon and eat it, and muskrat. Muskrat was...

Inter: What do they call a muskrat now?

Rachel: Oh, let's see. (Indian).

Inter: (Indian). Okay.

Rachel: And (Indian), black squirrel.

Inter: Used to have all kinds of...

Rachel: Yeah.

Inter: Fishing, did they do a lot of fishing over there?

Rachel: My dad used to make a little fish made out of wood, you know, about the size of a herring. And he'd paint them up and he'd put a little piece of lead inside of the fish. And he'd make his own sleigh and a little, like a little house, you know, made of little pieces of wood. And then he'd cover that

up and he'd take it out on a lake and make a little house over the ice. And his beer and everything and he'd go way out in the lake there from Stoney Point. He'd cut across, you know, right through over the hills and by the bayous and way out in the lake and he'd stay there all day and he'd come home just about dark with a big sturgeon or trout. And have a big feast on that.

Inter: Do you remember... When you were young, do you remember any special children's games you used to play?

Rachel: I often think of a game. I don't know why we used to play that game. I know, I come from a big family like, and my sisters and myself, they used to get those golden rods, you know, when they were ripe. And they would make like a great big house, you know, just a frame of a house in a room. And they'd tie these cords across and like as if they were making a house, you know, and doors and it would be two doors to every room. And we'd play tag through there.

Inter: What was the name of the game?

Rachel: I don't know what they call that. We just used to go and make up that. It was a big house we were in, like, and we would be chasing each other around.

Inter: What did your dad work at during those times to keep you? His family was quite big, wasn't it?

Rachel: Yeah. Well, in the wintertime he used to cut wood and hunt and make axe handles and baskets and... My mother helped make baskets and we helped. That's how I learned to make baskets, you know.

Inter: Yeah, you're one of, you're just one of the few basket makers around Kettle Point here, eh?

Rachel: Yeah.

Inter: Do you know any of the others, actually?

Rachel: Well, we have a number of baskets inside the council hall now.

Inter: I mean the basket makers. How many is there of you? Is there quite a few?

Rachel: Oh there's, yeah, about a half a dozen, I guess, maybe a little more.

Inter: You should learn... You're teaching the kids to make them now, aren't you?

Rachel: Yes, and they're really interested. We teach them on Monday night and Tuesday night.

Inter: Was there any assistance? Like a long time ago when you were small, did the government assist you in any way with food and clothing or anything?

Rachel: No.

Inter: Not like today.

Rachel: No.

Inter: You had to make do with what you had.

Rachel: Never even thought about government. (laughs)

Inter: And do you remember when they took the land over there when the War started?

Rachel: Well, there was always somebody after something and when it come time hunting, there was always some men somewhere with a gun and... I remember one time my mother telling me, she said an Indian went through that trail there, like from Stoney Point to Port Franks, there used to be a trading post there. And the Indians would go down there and take their furs down there and trade and get food, you know. Well, this Indian, he took his fur down there and bought what he wanted. And he bought a big piece of pork and he had a lot of money in his pocket and he was coming home through the bush and he never came home.

Inter: Somebody killed him or...?

Rachel: Yeah.

Inter: Foul play?

Rachel: Then later on, there was some man bragging about it, that he shot an Indian like a muskrat.

Inter: Oh yeah.

Rachel: But they didn't think anything of it, you know. They thought it was a wrong thing that he done so they never bothered to try and find out who it was.

Inter: Were the Indians... Was there a lot of prejudice in those days, more than now? Or were the Indians looked down upon more in those days than they are today?

Rachel: I don't know.

Inter: Never really noticed, eh?

Rachel: No.

Inter: Oh yeah.

Rachel: I think they would say when they saw a white man

coming, "Oh, (Indian)." That means a white man is coming and they would... Someone would go to the door and find out what he wants. Not talk too much to him, you know. But if it was something good, well, they would talk more to him. They were more frightened of them long ago.

Inter: Yeah. What about the school system? Do you think the school system is better today than it was in your days?

Rachel: Well, I can remember when I went to school, we had a hardwood floor and the children all used to get together on a weekend and scrub the floor. And teacher would make a big bowl of taffy and pay us with that after we finished.

Inter: Do you think the conditions are better today? Like the kids being integrated in the white school, do you think that's a good idea?

Rachel: I think they're learning a lot. Well, I think they should learn both ways, you know. They should keep up, not give up their Indian ways because there's an awful lot of good things that are being destroyed.

Inter: Yeah. Most people agree with that.

Rachel: And I was thinking that today when I went along the roads, you know. Went to town and I was looking to see if I could see certain things along the road that should be along there. And there wasn't anything because it was all destroyed by... Maybe they use some kind of spray and they called it all weeds, but it would be something that would be good for a person.

Inter: Do you think that since you moved from Stoney Point that the Indians really weren't progressed lots, you know, from the old days to what we are at the present?

Rachel: Well, you know, when we lived at Stoney Point it was different, you know. But after the War was over, the government saw that there was a lot of Indians that were in there that, in with the War, you know, and a lot of people helped and then there was different people come around and offered more help.

Inter: Oh yeah, I see.

Rachel: And the Indians asked for help and new houses when the War was over. So they got new houses but they weren't, you know, not too good, but they're getting better all the time.

Inter: Do you remember any main events over the years that, you know, led to this, our present state? Like guys who went out and talked to government officials and all that, you know, people who contributed to the way we live on Kettle Point now?

Rachel: Nobody never didn't want to part with Kettle Point and I don't think they'll ever part with it. Because I think

they should have Stoney Point back too.

Inter: Yeah. That would, I think the whole reserve would be for that, getting the camp back.

Rachel: Yeah.

Inter: And now I'd like to ask you about some legends from as far as you can remember, you know, all these. Do you remember your parents talking about and what you heard around? Like this is one, back of the inland lakes back there, I hear there's something about a snake or... A lot of people talk about it. Do you know the name of it or...?

Rachel: Well, I guess there must be a, I don't know... That's an awful swampy place and boggy and I think there's some snakes all over the swampy old place. You know, not only, the children, school children said one time that those men that work at Camp Ipperwash, you know.

Inter: Yeah.

Rachel: They found an old skin there and they brought it up to the school and it was the length of the schoolroom. The teacher showed that.

Inter: The length of the schoolroom?

Rachel: Yeah. When Bud was a little boy, he said Mr. Clemens... Well Mrs. Clemens was a teacher there and he brought that old skin, old dried skin they found in the bush.

Inter: But they never found the snake, where it come from?

Rachel: No, it was just some, what they left.

Inter: Oh yeah. What is the name of that snake they called?

Rachel: I don't know. But the story that I heard one time, long, long time ago, that the people were scared, you know. I don't know if they just thought about it or scared of the snakes or what. But there was a lady who sang with all her might, you know. Way down there some place, maybe it was in the pinery or somewhere in a night, you know. She used whatever she had, you know -- Indians always carry something with them to protect them and she put that there on a fire and she sang with all her might. And she was singing like to somebody from heaven, I guess, and there was a fire come down and it hit that snake and killed that snake.

Inter: That's a legend, is it?

Rachel: Yeah. And the women got... The girl fainted. There was an old lady and a girl and... I shouldn't tell you those things by rights because of, you know, if it was turned to... The outfit could make a lot of money on it but if it's for the Indians...

Inter: It's for the Indians kids all, you know, across Canada and here at Kettle Point. This will be one of their books.

Rachel: Well, this lady must have had a mighty voice and she must have been a person that really believed in God for her protection. And she hurried and built a fire and sang there beside that fire. But she put special things on that fire. Indians, you know, believe in what would protect them.

Inter: Oh, I see.

Rachel: Yeah. And the girl that fainted overcome, and then she saw that dead thing laying on the water there. And the grandmother took the girl and they travelled on in their canoe. That was a long time ago before white people were here. You know, people told me this from long...

(END OF TAPE)

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