- Briefly describes his mother's recollections of the signing of Treaty #7.

They found there was hardly any snow along the valley of the Upper Still River (Indian name for Saskatchewan River). This area was found where they could survive. And realizing what kind of a place it was, they chose this place as their land because there was no snow at all. The upper stream of the Saskatchewan River, the north fork to the head waters was called May (Hay?) River by the Indians. Up in that area, these Indians hunted. And towards the area where the Jasper Highway is now, the south fork of the waters was called Bear River. The names were given by the Indians themselves. They used that area for their hunting ground. That is exactly what these people did as they walked their pathway.

They said, "This Kootenay land is where we are going to make our living. (I wonder how this would be.) When they journeyed to this land, one of them was sent to spy (as Indians will say, to see what it was like secretly). When this was done, it was found that some Kootenays already occupied the spot. The spy reported that the spot was good land. There was no snow there while all the surrounding area was covered with deep snow. They said, "Let us raid their encampment." And with this they attacked the camp and fought the Kootenays until half of the entire camp was killed off. Then the leader commanded them to halt the battle. So they drove these people away until they got near the main summit of the mountains where they left them.
After that they made this their land at the place where they hold the Cavalcade, called Tied Wood Together (meaning Wooden(?!) Fox Holes). I have seen it while the Cavalcade was on last fall; it still shows the trace. So-called Tied Wood Together means a place that was dug in the ground to make trenches. When one peeps his head up from this he would get shot. That is what is meant. The marks still show and if anyone wants to see it, I'm willing to show them where it is at.

Interviewer: That's very good.

Peter: For this particular reason, ever since then, this was the land that the Stoney Indians have occupied; this land which has been their home land. For their future, as time goes on, they could be here for sure.

A time came when some money was to be given to the Indians in exchange for making peace with the government. They took the journey to Sand Hill (Blackfoot Crossing) and when they got there a white or halfbreed was used as an interpreter, according to what my mother used to say. My mother said she was there at that very important time. That was the time when she and my dad got together for the first time. The Indian men sat in a row at the front and the women sat in the next row. She said, "Each one of us women had with us spears made with flint-rock heads and the men had bows and arrowheads made out of flint rocks. The people in the third row had skull-crackers in their hands while the proceedings were on. The meeting went on and on like that. Finally we got so impatient. The buffalo chips that we were using for fire supplies were used up. The rations distribution to us came in big quarters of beef, flour and one sack of sugar to each family. When they did not like it, the beef remained there in a pile just outside the camp."

Some Stoney reasoned among themselves at night time and said, "There are two ways to make decisions. The situation is so tiresome. Tomorrow we will either fire the shot or say yes to the agreement." One way or the other, the question would be decided. One of them suggested, "Let us ask the governor what the main point was." On the morrow, the chief asked him (lieutenant governor) what was the real meaning of the proposal. The answer was, "To make peace between us. We will have friendship when and wherever we meet. I am asking you to put your rifle down in exchange for peace treaty. The money I am just about to give you is for this purpose -- not to kill each other. And furthermore, I am not going to take over your land, but I am willing to pay you money if you put down your rifle and make peace with me. This is what I mean." This was the answer given by the lieutenant governor. Then the chief asked his people what they thought. Some of them wanted to fire the shot to start the battle, but somehow or other they persuaded each other and said, "Let us try and see what it would be like. But if it is not good for us, we will turn back and fight the battle with them and wipe them out."
So that was how the peace was made and that is the way it was. Nothing besides peace-making was talked about. The chief had been told that he could still use his land in the same manner as before and there would be no interruption either; these were the final words put forth by the governor through the interpreter. My mother talked and understood Cree very well. That was why my mother understood all the conversations held between the governor and the chiefs.

Inter: What was your mother's name, can you remember?

Peter: Eliza.

Inter: What was her surname?

Peter: Wesley. (Eliza Wesley)

Inter: What was the Cree interpreter's name?

Peter: That, I cannot remember. Although she did tell me his name, and she used to tell me all those things. She did that as far as I can remember because the story may sometime (in the future) become useful. But I was not interested in those kinds of things. These few things are the only ones that I have kept in mind. So I cannot recall the name of the Cree halfbreed who was the interpreter. Anyway, everyone agreed to accept the treaty. They put down their weapons and the treaty payments were received. As told to me by my mother, the governor said to the chiefs, "When the next treaty payment is issued, then we will discuss the land situation," but at the second payment the question never came up, and nothing was done. That was what the white man planned to do, to let it go like that. "We will use the land later on in the future," were their thoughts, so they did not remind them. On the other hand, the Indians did not cry for any more treaty payments. They did not want to ask for it because they would rather be on the warpath. They did not know what to do about it, because it had not been very long since the day the peace treaty was made. All that time they were not really sure if peace had been made or not, but anyway they had received treaty payments already which they had to abide with.

Inter: How much did they get, and what was the agreement that was made concerning this?

Peter: She used to say, twenty-five dollars was given to each person. Yes each person got twenty-five dollars and the head chiefs got forty-five dollars each.

Inter: Do you know for how long each person was to get this twenty-five dollars according to the promise that was made?

Peter: When the third payment came, the government official told the chief that he would get half of the full amount, "The rest would be put in a saving account, so this could be used by your future generation. This does not mean that I will take it away
from you altogether, you will use it someday in the future."
All this was heard by my mother.

Inter: What was the name of the chief at that time?

Peter: Wearing Fur Collar was the chief, I do not recall the recent chiefs.

Inter: Does he have a white man's name?

Peter: I have no idea if he got that kind of name.

Inter: Do you know the name of the government official who made the treaty with the Indians?

Peter: I do not know his name. Shall I recall the year when the first treaty was made? It was the year 1877, when the first treaty payment was made. When this was done, the promise was made that the government would take care of us (meaning all members of Treaty No. 7), under the flag. The government said "You will have no poverty from now on nor in the future. As I travel back and forth around here and plan to stay for the fall of the year, I would like to request some part of land, say about from three to ten acres, that I can lease and cultivate it, and use it as a garden and grain patch." I wonder if someone else remembers this. That was the request made by the governor about the land. This was what my mother told me.

(PERSONAL COMMENTS BY PETER WESLEY)

Ever since then you white people do not know what the Indians can do in so many ways in which to provide for your survival. You can only know this continent by accident and because of your off-course direction you found this land. Nowadays you are collecting money from it all; from all kinds of ways the money just overflows to you. At the same time looks as though you are causing the Indian to slide backward. That is what you white people are doing now. This is what I think. Since I have knowledge to tell the differences, it comes to my mind that the white people are going to take over all the rich resources and leave nothing for the Indian people. In this way the white people will get the best of the Indian people. As for my part, I want you to consider this and see what you think about us and can do for us. I hope you will do the things that are good for us and will satisfy us. You ruined the Kootenay Plains area which was once a profitable trapping area, according to the number of animals guessed by the Indian to be in this area. You have spent so much on labor and operation for this dam site, about the same figures as the price of fur that has been taken from this dam site area by the Indians in recent years. Therefore you ruined the area that was valuable to the Indians. The rest of the area beyond the site, I want to keep it for my own use, because that is the place where I was born and raised. In fact, this is what I think and hope to obtain by backing those people concerned.
Inter: Were the Indians already living here before you were born?

Peter: Yes, even way back in years when there were no white people around.

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