HIGHLIGHTS:

- Elders discuss the loss of traditional religion and values; the relationship between traditional religions and Christian religions; some stories of the creation and the flood.

ELDERS:

Ernest Tootoosis **
Poundmaker Reserve
Cutknife, Saskatchewan
Tribe: Cree
Language: English

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Tribe: Menominee
Language: English

Johnson Wanepee (?)
"Big Drum Society" member
Wisconsin
Tribe: Menominee
Language: English

Barney Dog
Lac du Flambeau
Tribe: Chippewa (Ojibway)
Language: English

Jim Dumont **
** Recorded speakers on this conference tape

Ernest Tootoosis: ...right from the foothills of Alberta, west of Edmonton about 200 miles. They never went to school and they don't take treaty. They don't take family allowance. They just wanted to stay the way they were as a group of Saulteaux people that live up there. And he has heard older people, I guess, talks a little English. He learned it, you know. If he needs an interpreter tomorrow I'm going to interpret for him. But my brother was praying there, he can understand. I understand some words. Especially if we talk for a day or so using our language, I know we'd make out. And the Saulteaux would be the same thing. And as I said here this morning, we all pray to the same Creator, the mother of the earth and the spirits. All people. That's because I think we had the same beginnings only we went. I would like to continue part of that. We have a copy of that, you know.

Some of those legends we talk about, the legends are very important for us to be educated with in learning our spiritualism. Legends were just like Bible is to the Christian people. You need to know that really to understand, because that's where you get the teachings, why these things came to be. And I hear my brother mention - that's what I was told by elders, too - that I do believe in Jesus and that he was sent over there to our other brothers to help those people. But we must pray to Jesus, too. About these two brothers, Wisakedjak and Jesus. That one was sent here and the white man got our brother, Jesus. That's where he went. And he come from the same place, doing the same thing on a different island. In fact, if you just to think about what did Christ want the white man to do, be saved to the next world. And love one another and share. Almost precisely the way our people lived. So I think really the intention of the Great Spirit was, those people that got lost in their garden that used to live like our people, had their beginnings the same way, they lost that. And I think he was going to renew that. What he told these. And he did give spiritual power to the white man. Because he said,
"Walk in my footsteps, I am the only way." He touched the sick; he commanded the dead; they came alive. If that isn't spiritual power, man, that.... So these people that were given that teaching, they should be able to do that here. Not, didn't spoil that, if they did not make it any better than it was, they usually do. They've ruined it. That's why they've got no healing powers. Very few people have that. But basically I think that's the same thing that they were trying to get, they were trying to be given.

But there is stories. Now I'm going to tell you a little story, little parables, like, to teach you why and how these things came to be. You know, my father was a traditional person. His name was (inaudible) and he was a farmer, a big wheat farmer. But he hung on to these things. He raised a big family. And I heard these things all my life from the beginning until I was eleven years old and then I got brainwashed through the boarding school the same way as most of us the same age went through. But I lost all that, then after a while I came back. When I came back, I attached myself to older people that knew these things. I give them whatever they wanted that I had and took them wherever they wanted to go. Let their families have what I get, what my family had and so on, because I was taught to earn it that way. And after these older people knew that I was sincere and wanted to learn these things that.... I made sweat lodges. I built sweat lodges and bring them in there and then ask them to teach me these things, teach me songs. That's how you buy it in our way. You set up a sweat lodge and give them a pipe, whatever. "Here, teach me this. I want to learn these kind of songs." They go in there and they teach you these songs in there. There is a lot of prayer. After I proved myself that I wanted to learn these things, whenever I arrived, soon they started talking about what I wanted. I didn't have to ask them anymore. Because I had already paid and paid for what I wanted to know.

And one day, this old man heard me talk very violently against religion, because I used to be a holy terror in the beginning. When I rejected that, it was with condemnation, you know. I found everything bad about it. And one day he said, "You cannot continue to do that and trying to learn our ways," he said. "That isn't the way. If you're going to learn our ways, you've got to respect that. You've got to believe that's good, but it just belong to somebody else. On one hand you want to believe in God and in our Creator and on the other hand, with another instrument, you condemn them. You've got to smarten up. Our people knew the white man was going to come a long time before he arrived here because of the spiritual contact, because it was going to happen and they were prepared. And they were told what the white man was going to bring here and what it was going to do to us and all this and we all know that through these prophets. We had problems." He said, "One time there were eight older people went out on a hill where the camp was because they used to do that quite regularly. They went and built a fire there before daylight and they were building fire in there. It would get cold so they would burn the
sweetgrass and pray as the sun would come up. They would be there praying. And while they were sitting there, waiting for the coals from the fire, one of the old people stood up. They looked to the east and they seen something coming, just (inaudible), just cutting the air that was coming. (Cree) we called that. And they saw him. It was getting daylight then and they were facing south on a little knoll on the prairies. It came here and it stopped right here in the midair. It was a person it looked like - white with a white gown and light just coming, just radiating light. And there was another one a little further east and another one was coming. And that one stopped right here. They were facing each other right in front of them here, in the air. That was an old man with buckskin robe. He didn't have his braids, just loose little grey hair, loose. They stood facing each other like this, in front of them. This Indian man asked this white one, 'How did you make out where you were standing to give to your brothers?' He answered, 'They rejected what I was supposed to give them. They destroyed my body, and our Creator, my Father, he saved me. How did you make out?' he asked the old man. The old man said, 'They accepted me, that what I was sent to give to them.' The old Indian, he asked this white one, 'Then, what you going to do with them when they are transplanted to the other life?' He answered, 'I will take only those that follow what I was supposed to give them. What about you?' he asked the old Indian. The old Indian fellow said, 'I'll take them all because they accepted what I give them.'" The old man said, "That vision was shown to these people to prepare them that the white man was bringing his beliefs here and those are the histories and this is our belief that if we follow ours, we'll be taken care of in time. And this one here, these other people that brought their religion here, they have to follow it precisely or they'll never make it."

There is an old man in Hobbema, well maybe you know him. His name was Opaytolayoku(?). Understand that? Opaytolayoku, one that comes, his feathers are making noise. He is coming that way, (Cree). His wings are making that cutting noise in the air as he's coming, that's what it says on the Opaytolayoku(?). I knew an old man, his brother-in-law. I learned a lot from Old George Cattleman. He was a gambler, I never saw him work. Always dressed nice, and he used to drink too one time. And they parted - his wife. And then he lost two children; two young men died in a car accident involving alcohol. Then he got sick and he slowly got sick, a couple, three years slowly. Finally ended up in the hospital. The doctors didn't know what's wrong with the old man. He just dried up. He just lost his flesh, his little arms, they were just bones. But they used to have, they still have another man there called Jonas Saddleback. He does ceremonies. He used to keep that old man after the old man got sicker and had no home. He just took care of this old man. And they used to hold ceremonies together, sweats and so on. And they are related to each other. (Cree) Do you understand that?

(Agreeable mumble from the crowd)
That's how they are related to each other, (Cree). Oh, he ended up in the hospital. I didn't see him while he was in the hospital but my brother that lives there went to visit that old man several times. Finally the old man just died. And he sent word to his (Cree). And now you ask Jonas Saddleback to tell you that story, he just don't go ahead and tell you the story. He lights a pipe and he prays first. Burns the sweetgrass before he tells the story. This is a message that the old man gave to us before he died. Finally he says, "My car broke down," he said, "when I got the message to go and see (Cree). I couldn't get it going." He said, "Finally my son-in-law arrived. Heard about it. He said, 'By golly, I'll take you.'" So he said, "He took me to the hospital and I walked in his room. He was just, just laying there, as if he was just going to die anytime, he looked like. Just like he's boiling here. Every now and then he'd breath, he'd stop and then he'd breath again. His eyes were turned over. And so," he said, "I sat at the foot of his bed. I took the chair and I rolled a cigarette and I started to smoke and just to sit by him for the last time. He looked at me," he said, "he opened his eyes and he looked at me. Started breathing, layed back down. Just skin and bone. Just then the nurse came," he said. "He kind of waited around trying to straighten his head and the nurse came in. She said, 'Hey, you got a visitor today, Charlie. You want to sit up a little bit?'" So she kind of raised up the bed like this," he said. "He sat in the bed and he just looked at me." And he said, "His lips started to move. Oh, I bet he's trying to tell me something. So I got up and I went close to his mouth but there wasn't a sound coming. But," he said, "his lips kept moving. And all of a sudden, I could hear him whispering." He said, "That's the time I heard a prayer answered. So I went close like that and he was praying to the Creator. 'If you really have a message for me to give, give me back my voice for the last time. When I have done giving the message, you can take it back. I'll be ready to go.'" Finally he raised his hands like this when he was laying in bed there, praying. His voice came back just like it used to be," he said. "Then the old man sat up and when he sat up, he looked pitiful, just skin and bones. 'Ah (Cree), you've made me suffer so long for not coming when I asked for you to come and visit me. Because' he said, 'I'm ready to go but I have a message to tell you that you're going to have to tell this message and tell the people to tell one another. That message has to spread.' "Uuhh, what is it?" 'Ah, (Cree)' he said, 'you know four different times I have left already. I go south where the old people are.' He said, 'They send me back as a keeper, (Cree). "You're not ready to come here, you've got a message to give. Go back and tell (Cree)."' He said 'You know, (Cree), it's really beautiful over there as the elders say it is. Everybody is the same age over there. There is no old ones; there is no too young people. Everybody is happy over there. There is something going on all the time. And the air is so beautiful you just smell (Cree), whatever we use to make
smoke. Sage or all that. It's such a beautiful place.' He said, 'That's what they're talking about. It's true. (Inaudible),' he said, 'I think I have it. I think I've made it. Although I did not live right here. But,' he said, 'I was made to pay for it right here, to suffer in bed for so long. I had to pay for the wrongs I'd done.' He said, 'I have finished paying for these and I'm ready to go after I tell you this. (Cree) it's true. These prophecies that our people left over, they are going to happen.' He said, 'Don't forget that. They're going to happen, whatever the elders have said. The prophecies they have told. (Cree),' he said, 'it is true that the Creator gave us our pipe and our sweetgrass, our tobacco and our ceremonies. It is true and we need that to go through. We have to go back to that, teach that to your children and try and tell my children that I have left to go back and (inaudible). (Cree),' he said, 'it is true that alcohol is not good for us native people. Remember them two boys I lost with alcohol? They are not over there. But I hear them in the dark way back there, mumbling way back. I don't know where they are. I don't know when they will ever make it if they ever make it. It is true, it's not good for native people. We don't go there when we die with that. We wander around. Tell your children not to use that. Tell your people not to use alcohol. We don't get there when we use it. (Cree),' he said, 'all these ceremonies....' We have ceremonies back home. We call them Sundance, Rain dances. 'The four main ceremonies,' he said, 'these are really good. We have to hang onto those. But you have to do it right. If you don't do it right, you might as well not do it because it will destroy (inaudible). Because if you don't do the ceremony right, there is always a backlash. And the ceremony that we used to do together, that's a nice mild one that one. Hang onto that one, continue to do it. That buys life for your children, it buys life for people. It is true (Cree) that you have inherited that. (Cree),' he said, 'you know what the white man gave us. It is true that he has sinned against the Creator twice. He disobeyed the Creator where he was placed. A messenger was sent to him and he destroyed that one. He has two strikes against him, two sins against him. And this alcohol that he brought here, it's tied in with that. Remember when Christ changed water into alcohol, remember that, that's why that belongs in that area. And the old people used to say,' he said, ....

(break in tape)

"...that's happening to old people. You think you have a good friend when you befriend the white man. My friend,' he said, '(Cree) don't forget, the first chance he has, he'll beat you; he'll take advantage of you. Don't forget that,' he said. 'Don't forget.' Now he said a little more but I don't remember it. 'That (Cree) this is what I was told where I went. Four times I went over there and they sent me back. Because you didn't come around, made me suffer a long time (Cree). It's so nice over there. But now I've told you this (Cree) and I'm told to tell you to tell other people, for them to tell each other. To tell that story to all, pass to your brothers. You
do that; take that story home. If an Indian is going to die, very sick, give us that message. Now,' he said, '(Cree), you can go. Don't sit too long here because you won't help me any. I'm going tomorrow. Just when that one's coming up,' he said, 'I'll be gone.' (Cree) took his hand and the old man went back like that and he went back. Passed away the next morning at sunrise.

I believe that story. I knew that old man. And my brother who lives over there and that's my cousin, that Saddleback. When I went to see him soon after that when I heard he had a message, I took a tape recorder. I'm going to tape record his message. He said "No." He said, "You put it here," he said, "in here. I wasn't told to put it on the tape recorder. I was told to tell you, to tell people." And he lit his pipe and burnt sweetgrass before he told that story.

Now us native people, that's the kind of guidance the Creator wanted us to have and he gave us those kind of guidance from the very beginning of time. We had prophets, we had prophets. Powerful medicine we'd call them today, I guess. That told us what was in store for us. And if they didn't, if they didn't tell us and we wanted to know something, all we did was turn on that thing in there. We have people like that. They want to really find out something. We build these lodges for them, put them in there and then the spirits will tell them what's ahead. These are special gifts for the people that were always obedient to the Creator's laws. They belong to us but it's just that we got lost and we don't know how to get them back. But as our brother said here, that's their way of fasting.

Last summer we had 21 young people back in the hills, they were prepared and did fast. They were out there four days and three nights fasting in little lodges back in the hills. That's the way they do it where I come from. They go by themselves and they stay in one place, seeking. There is nothing wrong with that, you know. Christ, how many days that he fasted in the white man's world? Forty days he fasted. The same thing was given to us. That's how you buy that.

Nobody comes around and tells these things to the young people anymore because our traditions, our customs are different ways.

You know, this talking like I'm doing today, you never heard that in the old days until somebody took them out and tell you all these things. It was done through a procedure. When my grandson... I give him this, "Here, go and see this old man and ask him to tell you." That's how it was done. He went over there and he gave tobacco, whatever that the old man... and the old man would tell him what he wants. Or through a sweat. That's the way it used to be done back home, in the old world. But in today's world, we have to live in our world today. I think the older people have to open up now. They have to more or less volunteer to go ahead and tell these things to the young people. And if they want to give us tobacco they can, after they know the procedure. It's too bad. They want to learn but they don't know how to go about it. So we've lost
that there. There is something we lost there that we have to replace that with today's world. A system, how we're going to do that. And I don't grow my own. (chuckles) Yes, sometimes I go someplace and I pack tobacco inside of my suitcase. And I don't smoke very much but my kids do.

Speaker: We discussed what you're talking about. That the old nest: That's right.

Speaker: That's lost. That's just what you're saying.

Speaker: So we think we're going to have to change now. We're going to have to do something different.

Ernest: That's right.

Speaker: That's lost. That's just what you're saying.

Ernest: You bet. And the tape recorder. I believe in it because I live in today's world although I act funny sometimes. I believe in a tape recorder too because I have taken songs from the old people when they consented to it. And there are some, we still have some, they just don't allow that. But I think in today's world, that should be. I allow that; I encourage that, you know. To take, a very high religious ceremony. One of my last uncles that passed away two years ago. And I went and we got this procedure from the old man. Not everybody knows that; a lot of old people today (Cree) don't know that and they don't dare try it because they were not given. It's dynamite to do that. Just like shooting your own family. You'll be punished because you didn't go through the procedure to know this sacred procedure in the ceremony. But my uncle allowed us to tape the ceremony because he said, "That's the only way you young people, even if you don't have the brains that you were given to begin with. They've been damaged, you can't keep anything in your minds, you have to write it down." He said, "Today, you got to put it on tape. Then it'll never be changed, exactly what I say." So we did. We recorded this one night. We went explaining the ceremony; I've got it all on tape. And it's fortunate that we did because we had one elder that's making new ideas about that ceremony. And one of these days I'm going to have to make him listen to that old man and to talk things out. He was sitting there when that was being done, and he's already making new ideas. "No," he's saying, "it's this way," he says. But in the tape recording, the old man is saying different. So I think it's very important, and these things too are very important. Because seeing is believing. Audio-visual recording, you know. It's like the ceremony like that should be recorded that way. For me, I say yeah. For a private person to keep for his own self. Not to be placed in a museum or in a college. No, for myself. That little tape I got is for myself. I'm going to pass that ceremony to my son. If he's interested, there it is. Outside of that... because he
said, "That's the way. You let it go at that. At least," he
says, "burn sweetgrass before you listen to that tape." So I
think it's time that we adjust that way, in order to preserve
what little we have left. That should stabilize our young
people. Don't let the young kids play all over; let them
listen to the elders.

My brother passed away a few years ago on Christmas Eve; he was
84 years old. Our oldest brother, he never did go to very much
participate in ceremonies or anything like that. He passed
away. The year before he passed away, he was very close to my
younger brother. I'm the third youngest of a family of nine
boys and one girl. And the one next to me, my brother Joe, is
very close to my oldest brother, always were. And my younger
brother, he lives in Alberta most of his lifetime. But every
now and then he comes to visit. That fall he came and visited
that brother and they decided they'd leave town and they went
home. My brother was living alone and my sister-in-law was
living somewhere else with her daughter. And he said, "Boy,"
my brother said to his younger brother, "boy, am I glad to see
you. Let's go home to my place." He said, "I am living alone.
Your sister-in-law is living in town with her daughter." Well,
my younger brother, he brought his son along, little boy.
"Well," he said, "I'm going to leave this one here at our
nephew's and I'll come to your house." So that's what he did.
Well, in the morning he said, "Well, we've talked about other
things all night," he said. But in the morning he said, "I
want to tell you something, brother." He said, "I've been
waiting for you. I want to tell you something. You know," he
said, "I'm not here with you, I'm already gone. I'm over there
where the old people go. That's where I am right now. I'm
going to leave you, brother. I'm just going ahead of you. I'm
not leaving you for good." He said, "You people will come
behind me just like I'm going behind our grandfathers. That's
all, that's all that's going to be. But I've been over there
and I got sent back. It's not my time yet to go, but soon I'm
going to be leaving you." My brother Joe said, "Oh brother,"
he said, "don't say that. Think about your children, your
grandchildren, you've got lots of grandchildren. And look at
your brothers, what you're going to do." "No, that's your duty
from now on," he said, "to look after my family, look after my
grandchildren and the rest of our brothers. For you to love
them," he says, "that's yours now. Me, I'm going. And
brother, I'm glad that wherever you go, you've got your pipe
and your things along. Because it is true, that's what it
takes for us to make it over there. These things that we were
told to carry on, I'm always glad now that if you always take
that pipe along wherever you go," he said. "Continue doing it.
That's the one that's going to take you to a good place." 
Brothers, remember the prophecies our people used to tell.
"Brother," he said, "they will happen. They've already
happened some of those. And the rest, they are going to
happen. Whatever the old people used to say about the futures
and brotherhood, it's going to happen. You better get prepared
for that. Try to live right. Tell your children to live right
and your brothers and our relatives and the native people. And another thing, brother," he said, "I'm very glad that you teach your children your language, that they talk Cree." He said, "Don't forget, brother, when they are old they are going to face when they go up there. They are going to have to talk their language. That's the language that is used over there." And that happened November or something; October I guess it was when my brother came back to visit us. My brother passed away on New Year's Eve that winter; just dropped dead. And I don't know. I tend to believe that my brother wouldn't make up a story like that, the old man. I believe that he really did see something about what he said. These are the kind of stories that we have to really look at, because I think they really happened.

And dreams, that's another thing. People don't really understand, especially the younger people. They don't really understand. They know too much about white man's books about dreams. They want that dream interpreted. In where I come from, I never heard anybody interpreting a dream. We were forbidden to tell the dreams to other people. All our dreams. We were told, I was told anyway, "You will know what dream to tell when it comes time to tell it. The rest, keep to yourself. These are messages coming in for you. You go ahead and talk about them, the messengers will draw back, they won't come back because these were not supposed to be shared. They were for you, for your protection, for your guidance." We were told that. And there are so many young people today, they talk about their dreams. But me, I don't go for that. I forbid my children to talk until they know it's time to tell something. It's a warning, something. You will know when it's time to talk about dreams. The rest, you keep to yourself. Be patient. They say in my area - the old people - they will come back four different times and on the fourth time, you will know what it's all about. You know, I get very... I don't know how to interpret that, I didn't have the dream. How am I going to interpret that? I'm not the spirit that gave dreams to these fellows. (chuckles) If I try to explain something, then I'm just talking out of my capacity, you see. And I go through a lot of that, you know.

I will continue from that morning story. After man was created here and started multiplying, the Creator still used to come and talk with his children. Thus, they modified. There was a time came when he came down for the last time, to talk to his children in that one language. Everybody had their last chance to talk to their father, all creations and brothers and sisters, everything. They were all done. And all of a sudden, they claim, a stone - he was almost forgotten to have his chance. The old people said, "Jump in the middle. Hey." "What?" "You almost forgot me to talk to our Creator." The Creator, when you finally brought down this man here, you have created the weakest of all your creations. The most helpless of all your creations, man. You didn't even put any hair on him. No hair on him to protect him. He's helpless; he's weak. He cannot even say what he really wants to say. He won't come
out like that from here. What he wants to talk to you, it won't come out just the way he feels." He said, "I will volunteer to be his interpreter. I will be his translator. I will do the talking for him. Wherever he talks through, I will be the messenger. I will give him a lodge, a sweat lodge, where I will treat his body when he's sick. And from there I will relay messages wherever he talks." They claim that's where the pipe come from. That's the way we say. That's why we still use a stone. That's why we think the stone is really one of the greatest of all God's spiritual creation. He placed rock all over. He's always there to watch us go by and take care of us.

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Ernest Tootooosis: ...believe anything anymore," he said. "They are trying to tell you something." (Cree) He said, "This is where they live, alongside this cutbank here, the river. That's where they are at," he said. "Come here, through these things, because you people don't believe anything anymore. You're just like white people. This is just to show you that the rest, they are still around, these Mimiguishok(?)."

I'll tell you another little story now, I'll try to help you along. About people dying and going to heaven. This old Indian lady died and she went up there and she come to St. Peter at the gate and St. Peter said, "What's your name? Yeah, okay." Looked in the book and sure enough, "Here, Mrs. Sunchild. How many children did you have?" She said, "Fourteen." "Oh," he says, "that's good. "You were created to raise children for our Creator. And now," he said, "you sit over there in this heaven there and be a star over there. Right close to the Creator. You've done a great thing for the Creator." A Ukranian woman come along there. She died too, an old lady. "What's your name?" "Roski." "How many children did you have?" "Sixteen." "Oh, boy you've done great work for the Creator. You were created to raise children for the Creator. You sit right there, close to our Creator, and be a star there." Along comes a nun, a sister who died, too. And she came (inaudible) and a rosary and everything. "Oh, what's your name?" "Sister St. Theresa." "Oh yeah, yeah, what did you do when you were on earth?" She said, "I was a nun." "Oh, what did you do?" "I lived in a convent and I raised Indian children. I prayed every day and I counted my rosaries and I read this Bible every day. That's all I did all my life." "Oh, yeah," St. Peter says. "Oh, that isn't that bad. Pretty good life. Prayed a lot then?" "Yes, yes, I prayed a lot." "Be over there in the heavens," he says. "You're going to be a comet," he says. "A little tail won't hurt you any."

(laughter)
Mani Boyd: There was a circus in a town north of where Barney lives, and they were moving to the next town. Langlanders, they called them. And they were (inaudible) there in one of these trucks. (Inaudible) These people tried to catch him. He went through the woods towards where they lived and (inaudible), "Keep these other animals down there, then we'll come back," he said. So they went down and they trailed that elephant in the woods. Come to an Indian village. She raps on the door in one place there and said, "Did you see an elephant around here?" "I don't know what an elephant is," he said. "But there is some kind of animal in our garden," he said. "He wound his tail around a turnip and he stuck it in his hind end." (laughter)

Ernest: ...our feast at a rock. We're going to take our dinner here, sandwiches, tea and coffee, maybe a case of soup. And these elders will do a pipe ceremony at a rock site, at the Dream Rock there. (Voice: Bell Rock) And we'll make offerings, we'll leave offerings there. Just like, I know the old people used to do that here, too. And I think, for me - as I said today, I think we should - I go and tap that rock a little bit and I pray. And I pray and I tap that little rock a little bit and make it ring. I just thought maybe that's how it used to be done a long time ago. Maybe it gave messages (inaudible).

And I was talking about that Sliding Hill that we have down there. I remember in - oh, I'd say maybe 1939 I guess, after I come out of school in 1932, 1939 - I went up there with my cousins, the Fineday boys. We went there on horseback. And there was all kinds of cloth in the bush there, you know, the old people were still.... The fireplace is still on top that hill. They claim there has been fire built on that hill for so long, there is a hollow place on top that hill like this where we still build a fire. And then there is a span of time that the churches really took over. The old people died and just brainwashed, boarding school students came. They didn't bother about that. There was a time there that nothing, just the souvenir hunters came and picked up all kinds of stuff on top that hill where the old people used to make offerings. They even had guns hanging on the trees down below there, you know. Give them to the spirits. And when I brought those Irish girls up that hill there last Monday, that bush, again there is all kinds of cloth hanging there. That fireplace is... just lately somebody has come to pray on top that hill. That has come back and maybe this could happen here. (Inaudible) Go touch that rock. Ask him to lead you. It is just fantastic what can happen there, you know, if you are sincere and pray and ask them.

Mani Boyd: We have a rock at home and people used to take offerings. But they made a mistake, they put a sign there. Right beside a highway, story about that rock. That rock used to be high as that window. Now, it's about that high.

Speaker: Really?
Mani Boyd: Tourists, you know. Souvenirs.

Ernest: Oh, no.

Mani Boyd: Almost levelled. It was shaped like a man's head. People always took their offerings there. I remember when I was a little kid in a horse and buggy, it was right here then. Now geez, (inaudible). I remember that because we used to climb over it.

Ernest: There is all kinds of things like that, you know. I have a picture of Ribstone, Alberta, west of Wainwright. Ribstone, Alberta is their name. There is a prairie there and there is just one little high hill like that in the prairie and there is this rock. It's a different kind of rock sitting there. Just like they have been carved, big rocks like that. Just like they've been carved. And this whole side of a... just like a buffalo side here. A rock that shape of a whole side of those. And they've been carved like this, the ribs. That's why we called it Ribstone. (Cree), they call them. The stone that has ribs. And it's still sitting on top that hill there, (inaudible) you know. Well, they tell us that when Nanabush, (Cree) the last trip he made, he left that there for us. Sliding from Thunder Bay.

And there is another, Picture Butte in Picture Hill. Painted Hill we call it. Further east from my place, there is another hill there. He left all these signs all over to show us that.... He used to say, "In time, a long time ahead of time there, my little brothers will know I was here." And I know that it must have been the same way here because they relayed messages to their people from this rock. Nanabush must have said that's the way to be done, just like on our hill. If we dig medicine in the vicinity of this hill, when the roots are dug up, for sick people, regardless how they're sick, they will be cured. And some of us make an effort to go and dig medicines that grow around there in the vicinity of that. Yeah, you get that.

There is Old Man Laying Hill in Southern Alberta, towards the Alberta/Saskatchewan border by Alsask. There is a big hill there. And my brother-in-law has told us lots of times before he died, if you go on top that hill there and the ground is sunk deep like this, just like a man is made like that. They claim his fingers used to be like that, just like a big man is laying there and pushed the ground in. And when Nanabush took a nap there on his travels. All kinds of signs like that. Tramping Lake, Saskatchewan. Right on the baldheaded prairies there is a little knoll or a little hill. My father used to say there used to be three footprints there, big footprints, right on top that hill. That's why the Indians, they called it (Cree), Where Somebody Stepped Hill. And the white man calls it Tramping Hill. And these are all over North America, because I hear stories about people coming back and telling me. Where our brother, our big brother travelled through here.

(break in tape)
Jim Dumont: ...all those teachings that tell us about how things were, how things came to be and why they came to be like they are today. All these things have been talked about and all these things have been handed down so that they... The people long ago knew that we would reach a time like this when we would lose almost everything. And then, almost at the last minute when it was almost too late, then people would begin to gather together again and try to put together the knowledge that was still there, traditions that were still there. And then there would be a turning around. People would begin to look for their ways again and practise them once more. And it's at that time when young people, especially those who had experienced maybe the worst of it, those whose parents and grandparents had turned their backs on their own traditions and their own ways and followed another way, their children would grow up without any knowledge of these things. But they would be the ones who would go searching for these things that had been lost. They, who had nothing, would go looking for that life that used to be. And that's the way it has been over the last ten years or so. Because those who grew up with no knowledge of these traditions, those who had nothing, would go looking for those people who still had something to give, those people who still held on to those things in spite of all the changes that came about.

It's said that when the earth was created, that this place here, this earth, when it was finished, it was the most beautiful place that anyone could ever imagine. Maybe even beyond our imagination. The beauty that was here when the earth was young. And it stirred the Creator so much inside, they say he cried because he was so happy at what he saw when he had created this earth and when she was young. And his tears that fell on this earth was the first rain. The first rain that caused the seeds to grow that he planted on this earth. The seeds that he sent with the birds carried to this earth. And when he had finished all of creation, it's called the seven fires of creation. The seventh fire of creation was when he made man, when he put man on this earth. And it's said about man, that there was no need to create him in order to finish creation because it was already complete without him. But the Grandfather, the Creator, wanted someone to walk on this earth who was created in his own image, to whom he could give his seeds, his thoughts. One to whom he could give his own dreams and his own visions, his own imagination. So he could be a creator like him on this earth. It's in that way that man was created, not to finish creation; it was already finished. But to put someone here that would walk on this earth with his own image. So when he created man, he gathered together four sacred parts of this earth and molded that earth together in his hands. And as he was shaping the shape of man in the palms of his hands, it says that through his fingers some of that earth spilled out. And that earth, those grains of sand that dropped down to the earth as he was making man, those little grains of sand that fell back to the earth, they
sprang up as medicines on this earth. And so it's said that all the medicines on this earth that can heal us, that can cure anything, any disease or ailment of man, they come from man himself when he was created. And so there is nothing of this earth that can happen to a man that cannot be healed by the things that grow around us here on this earth. And as they grew on this earth, as they multiplied on this earth, they never forgot what those medicines were. And so they were always able to heal themselves by the very things that grow from this earth. Because these medicines that grow, they are made from the same materials that we are made of and it's those things that will heal us. And we don't need to manufacture anything in order to heal us of any disease or any illness. It's all around us. And the way that we are today, the reason that we are this way, is not because those medicines have disappeared, but that our knowledge of them has disappeared or we don't pay attention to those things anymore. Because we have come to believe that other people can cure us by the medicines that they make, man-made medicines. And we have come to believe in those medicine doctors and the medical profession and the hospitals. And because we believe in those things, we left behind those natural medicines that are all around us, that were made the same time that we were originally made.

But it's said that at one point in our history, we had begun to forget our ways, a long time ago. And when we began to forget, people even began to use the good things that were given to them to do harm to others. It had gone that far. So that there was a period of darkness on this earth, so that even the Grandfather, the Creator, was ashamed to look down on the earth because of what man was doing. It was at that time that the Grandfather saw fit to cleanse this earth of everything and to start all over again. And that is the story that many of you probably already know. And it happened in other parts of the world as well as this island here where we are. That was the time of the Great Flood. The Great Flood happened all over this land and it cleansed everything. It cleansed this earth and it cleansed the earth of the kind of people that we had come to be at that time. There was only one said who was pure enough, who was sacred enough, and it was he who helped to rebuild this new earth. He was the one who asked the animals to dive down under the water and to bring up that little piece of earth from the bottom of the water so that the earth could begin anew. It was the turtle then who offered his back to carry that earth on, on which this new earth was rebuilt again. And it's that reason that this island here, this North America that was called our island, is called a turtle island, because it rests on the turtle's back. And so that this earth that we see here around us, is really the second earth that was created. And many people have said that that was the story of creation when Nanabozho created the earth and that's how earth was created. But that was the second time in which the earth was made. After this earth was cleansed and purified and through that one man and through those animal beings that were saved after that flood, it was in that way that the animals
came back onto this land again and began to multiply. And it was through that one being that the people began to grow on this earth again and to spread over this island that we know as North America.

But it's said about those people that they called the second people, that there was something missing about them. When they multiplied and spread over this land, there was something that was not complete about them. And they were a very pitiful people in the way that they were. They say that as they walked around on this earth, and when they're children were sick, their old ones were feeble, that they were walking right over top of medicines, stepping right on it and they didn't even know that it was medicine. They didn't know how to cure the sicknesses that were there. They were hungry and some of them were starving and yet they were walking right over food that could be eaten, that came up from the earth, and they didn't know it was food that they could feed to their children. The way it was in their lodges, they could hardly build a lodge properly. So that the bark covering of that lodge was full of cracks and holes. And if you were to look into that lodge, you would see the little children and the old people huddled around this pitiful little fire that burned in the centre, just to try to keep warm. That's the way that the people were.

There was something missing about them, something that they needed. And it was at that time when the grandfathers looked down on this earth that they felt great pity for the way that the people were and they saw that there was something missing. So they gathered together, seven grandfathers. They held a great council in their universe where they are, in their lodge, and they were able to decide on what was missing and what had to be done. And so they gathered together in a huge bundle, all the things that were needed to bring new life to the people. And then they called on a helper to go to this earth and look for someone who would be able to carry these sacred things, this sacred life down to earth, to these people, so that they might know how to live properly on this earth and so that they would have a balance. So that they would have the true four directions again. And when they had done that, then it took seven times for that (Ojibway) to come down here. It took seven times before he was able to find someone who was pure enough, strong enough to be able to carry these ways back to the people. It was only on his seventh time, after he felt like giving up - every time he came down and looked at how pitiful the people were, how pitiful their living conditions were, how pitiful their lodges were - that finally he found a new born child who hadn't opened his eyes yet to the problems of this world, who hadn't yet opened his ears to the hardships and the cries of pain that could be heard all around him, the sounds of sickness of these people. This new one he took back to the grandfathers and it was him that they taught all the things that were to be brought back to this earth, the seven sacred teachings of life, the seven great gifts that were to go to the people. And he gave him the knowledge of what life is, the knowledge of medicines and of healing. So that once
again the people of this earth could have life in its truest
meaning and that they could have healing for their people. So
after preparing him, this newborn, he was seven years old by
the time he was ready. They brought him into the lodge and they
gave him these things and then they sent him back to this
earth again. And it's said that by the time he reached the
people he was an old man, bent over, and he walked with a cane,
when he reached the village of his people from where he was
taken. And he brought back this bundle and gave life to the
people. And that, among Anishnabe, was the sacred ways that
were given to us. And it was through that little boy, who
returned to the people, who was taken by the grandfathers, that
life came to us; through a newborn child that life was given to
us.

And after that time, it is said that the people once again
knew what the four directions was. They knew where the four,
the true four directions were and so they had balance in their
lives. They knew, they relearned the medicines again. They
received the teachings of life and they could sing again in
songs that gave life. They knew again the ceremonies that
brought the people's heartbeat back into time with the
heartbeat of the universe. And so life was returned to the
people again.

And as the people grew strong in those ways, when they were
still in the east, it's said that seven great prophets came
among the people. And they told them of the things that would
be, things that would happen to them throughout their history
from that time on. And it's through those seven prophets,
those seven great beings who came to this earth to give that
knowledge, that we as a people were told even about the way
that things are today. They talked of how a new people would
come to this land. They talked about how when these new people
came, that we would begin to turn towards his ways and we would
even give up the things that was most precious to us, that gave
us life in order, to follow this new path that was brought
here. Even though those prophets warned us to be very careful
about the way that these people came (whether they came with
the face of brotherhood or whether they came with the face of
destruction or the face of death), even though they warned that
they could come bringing false promises (and if we chose the
road that they put in front of him, that we might stand to lose
everything that we had), still, they said, if you do accept
these things then the cup of life, which is water, the cup of
life would almost be stilled. If you accept these things, then
the young ones of your people would begin to turn their backs
on their grandfathers and grandmothers. They would turn their
backs on their ways in order to follow this new road. And if
that were to happen, then there would come a time in the
history of the people of this island, of the Anishnabe, when
everything would almost be lost. Almost, they said. It would
be at that time when everything was almost lost - the culture,
the language, the traditions, the knowledge of life, the
understanding of the road that we are to walk on - when all
those things were almost gone and even the people themselves
would almost disappear from disease, from sickness - not just physical sickness, but from the sickness that comes when we give up the things that mean life to you and you take on a different road. That would cause even the old people to die of the sickness of the heart, of loneliness, because no one wanted to listen to them anymore. It would go that far until.... These events that were happening were talked about as fires. Each time was a fire and each fire was a long period of time. The time that the new people came, for instance, was the time of the fourth fire. So that by the time of the sixth fire, everything would almost be lost. And then it's said that the children of the children of the sixth fire would begin to look for these ways that had been lost. And these children of the children of the sixth fire, it seems as though that's my generation. So that my grandparents, that age, they lived during the time of the sixth fire, when everything was being given up, when people were sending their children off to schools and were not teaching them the language anymore, telling them to forget about their culture and their ways because, "You'll never survive in this society if you stick to the Indian ways. Forget about those things and go over there. Learn how to read and write. Go to school and get educated, and that's the only way that you'll be able to survive in this time." That began in my grandparents' time....

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