HIGHLIGHTS:

- Discusses the migration of the Shuswap Indians into the Kootenay Valley.

Imbert: ...history and the legend. You've grown up with that, of course?

Tracie: Well, I have been raised by my grandmother, you see.

Imbert: Could you tell me about your grandmother first of all? That would be most interesting.

Tracie: Well I've always remembered grandmother as very old, and she was my only mother. I felt like she was mother and father put together, like, you know. She was everything to me. And I always thought she was the only person that knew everything. If I asked her a question she'd tell me about it. And she always had an answer for everything.

Imbert: What was her name?
Tracie: Well, we always called her (Indian) and (Indian) means grandmother in Indian, (Indian). All of us children, even the grown-ups. I remember clearly sitting at the table many, many times and there was an old man -- at least I thought was an old man -- some far relative, he was an Indian. He always called grandmother (Indian) and just at that word I'd jump up when I was a child and I'd tell the man, "Please stop it. That's not your grandmother." (laughs) And grandmother, she'd make a grin. She thought that was something, you know, when I stopped him from calling grandmother (Indian). That means grandmother, you see. And it always make me cross when that man called grandmother (Indian). Nobody else, you know, no outsider was allowed, I wouldn't allow them to call grandmother 'grandmother'.

Imbert: When was she born, about how old was she?

Tracie: Well, my sister Sheila she knows all the dates, you know. She lived in her late eighties, I believe, when she died. And my grandmother she died right in this room here, she got so old.

Imbert: Did she have a English name?

Tracie: Her name was Mrs. Pierre Kinbasket. That was the chief, my grandfather was the chief.

Imbert: Did you know your grandfather at all?

Tracie: Oh yes, I remember grandfather. He was very quiet and yet a very stern chief. Oh, he was very stern.

Imbert: Was he the Kinbasket that brought the people over from (inaudible), the Shuswap, or that was one of his ancestors?

Tracie: Well, my great-grandfather is the one that brought the band over from North Kamloops -- that's in (Indian). Originally they came from (Indian). (Indian) means a lot of lakes in Indian. That's an Indian word, (Indian).

Imbert: Yes, I think I mentioned we were up there a few months ago, up in North Thompson there. Why did he bring them over from there?

Tracie: My great-grandfather and my great-great-grandfather and my great-grandfather they were all, both of them were... (telephone rings) I was going to start explaining.

Imbert: Yes. Would you just start with that, why they moved from (Indian)?

Tracie: Well, my ancestors -- I put it that way because I had a grandfather, a great-grandfather, and a great-great-grandfather. And he was so old, my great-great-grandfather,
that was way before the white man was ever in the country. He, you know what I mean, that was so long ago, like. And he liked to travel, more or less it was in his blood to move, and he wanted to keep moving. And he kept moving camp all the time from one place to the other and he always moved where there was a lot of game. For instance he always had to move into the Kootenay Valley because he figured that was a paradise for hunting. That was his paradise, the Kootenay Valley.

Imbert: So he moved, eventually they moved, the whole family or group. What was it that moved with him?

Tracie: Oh, it was his relatives, kind of a band of them -- quite a few, you know. I imagine it was about maybe forty, thirty of them, quite a number. I know that they always travelled by numbers because they seemed to keep, you know, together.

Imbert: Could you continue the story from there, of coming into here? Anything that you heard about or remember about it. You know, and how anything, any incidents and things in them coming into this valley that you remember.

Tracie: The story, you mean, when they came across?

Imbert: Yes. Them coming in, you see, and settling here.

Tracie: Well, I remember a story grandmother always told. It was a horrible story! It was about this Indian, this couple, this woman she used to do everything for her husband and he demanded everything of her. And for -- seemed like for hundreds of miles from Kamloops on through the mountains, her husband made her carry on her back a dog that was sick, and she carried it and it was heavy. And grandmother often mentioned that they always watch her husband. If he wasn't he looking they were going to throw the dog down the canyon. They just waited for that and it seemed like it was ages before that happened because, you know, he was a smart old guy, you know. And so they had the chance and they throw the dog down the canyon because they felt sorry for this poor woman; she had to pack it on her back all the ways. That is one story I remember. That is when they were first moving over.

Imbert: Do you know the route that they came across? Where would they cross the mountains?

Tracie: That was, they came from Shuswap Lake into... I remember her talking about the Big Bend. Do you know the Kinbasket Lake was named after my grandfather? There's a lake on the Big Bend road, the Kinbasket Lake, and that's where they stayed for the winter. Every winter they went back to the Kinbasket Lake to winter and... of course, there was a lot of animals there to hunt and trap; that is why they stayed there. Grandmother always said the winters were terrific on account of very heavy snow, deep snow, but of course they had their snowshoes.
Imbert: Was your grandmother with them?

Tracie: Oh yes. Yeah, grandmother was with them.

Imbert: How old would she be about that time?

Tracie: At that time? I imagine she was quite young. She wasn't too young but she was more on the...

Imbert: Was she married at that time?

Tracie: Yes, she was married then, yes. Because my mother was born here, she was born at Vermilion -- it's north of here.

Imbert: Do you know about what year your mother was born?

Tracie: There was no records of when she was born. She didn't have a birth certificate.

Imbert: But I mean roughly. How old was she when she died and...

Tracie: My mother? She was in her nineties.

Imbert: And when did she die then?

Tracie: Oh, it's about eight years, roughly.

Imbert: Eight years ago?

Tracie: Yes.

Imbert: Yes, so it was about roughly around '56 somewhere around there, 1956 that she died. Yes, and she was around about ninety then. That gives us a good picture when this trek took place, you see, good idea of when it took place. As I say, it's only roughly, that we are interested in, in that sense.

Tracie: Yes.

Imbert: I would be interested in anything more you could tell about the band and its story and history, and settling in the country, you know, its relationship with other people.

Tracie: My grandmother always said that she remembers when they first set foot around here, by Radium Hot Springs, especially just around here. They called this little creek here, they called it (Indian). That means 'the valley of the birch trees,' this little creek bottom here. That's why they always settled here. And she said when they first set foot here that they couldn't -- when they're speaking to each other, like -- they couldn't hear each other on account of the birds and the animals. There were so many they just made a music. She always said they were so noisy, and the grizzly bears and
all the wild animals were not a bit dangerous because there was a lot of other animals to prey on. But she often mentioned the animals making so much noise right around here. And there was a lot of caribou animals. We don't see caribou around here any more.

Imbert: Did they have, did the Radium Hot Springs, did the hot springs interest them at all in those days?

Tracie: The only thing that they were... I remember grandmother tell is when they went hunting in the middle of winter and they shot a deer and the deer rolled down the bottom and landed in this hot water. And the Indians came home with a joke -- they thought it was a joke -- they said they had warm water to wash the deer in, wash their hands when they skinned the deer. Oh, they thought that was fun in the wintertime to have hot water.

Imbert: I suppose they'd go and bathe there and everything.

Tracie: Well, they used... Well, when they went to the Radium they always went through the canyon and they used the canyon for, what would you call that now? For their practices in spiritual things, what would you call that now?

Imbert: Well, their ceremonies or their....

Tracie: Yes, they went in the canyon for that. And then there was another place down across the river here, they called it Horse Thief. They have caves inside the water where they had those kind of ceremonies again, caves inside the water.

Imbert: Inside the water? You mean they'd have to...

Tracie: Under the water, like, you know, or...

Imbert: You dive under the water and come up into a cave or...?

Tracie: The cave is build right, like in a waterfall, something similar to that. And it's kind of inside. Well, she explained like it was inside the water but it could be a cave beside there, the waterfall. And she said that's where they practiced their spiritual developments in those holes.

Imbert: She didn't, you don't know where this is?

Tracie: Oh, I have an idea where it is. It's like Radium, it's by the canyon there underneath. And they have the Indian writings, did you know?

Imbert: Had they?

Tracie: Over by Radium Hot Springs. You didn't know that? Yes, it's up by the red rock there.
Imbert: And that would be the Shuswap writings, would that be?

Tracie: I wouldn't be too sure, because the Stoney Indians used to come through there to visit them, from the Prairies.

Imbert: Did, what was the meeting with the Kootenays? How did that, where did they meet the Kootenays?

Tracie: Oh, they met the Kootenays by (name) that's north of here close to Golden, by (name). Grandmother said they got up in the morning, early in the morning, and they saw these tracks. And they knew, well, it was different tribe of Indians because when they walked, how would you call it? They walked this way.

Imbert: They were bowlegged?

Tracie: Yeah, their feet...

Imbert: Their feet stuck in?

Tracie: Stuck in, yes. That's how they walked. They saw these tracks and the Kootenays wanted to fight with them but my grandfather was peace-loving and he just refused to fight and he wouldn't fight. And this Indian come to him wanting to fight so much and that was the very first time my grandfather ever set eyes on a granite bowl, you know, mixing bowl. Well, that is what the Indian wore -- a granite mixing bowl. He said he just wondered what kind of a hat he was wearing (laughs), some kind of a hard hat anyways. (laughs) They often mentioned this mixing bowl. I guess he bought it from Missoula, you know Missoula? It's in Montana, isn't it? Yeah, grandmother often mentioned Missoula. For that is where they bought... that's where they bought their first plow, from Missoula. They brought it with the horses, you know, pack horses.

Imbert: This mixing bowl was a tin mixing bowl, was it?

Tracie: Grandmother thinks it was a granite one. See, it was a white one. I think she said it was a white one.

Imbert: It was made by Indians?

Tracie: No, no. It was made in the States, I guess.

Imbert: I think it would have been a porcelain one.

Tracie: Could be.

Imbert: Porcelain, yes, china or something like that.

Tracie: But that really, you know, their eyes just was focussed on that, and they just couldn't get over this funny
hat the Indian was, the Kootenay Indian was wearing. And he wanted to fight so much but my folks they wouldn't fight. They never did fight, my grandfather never did. I mean unless it was by force.

Imbert: Then how did they get on with Kootenays after that? What was the relationship between the two?

Tracie: Well, the Kootenays always wanted to fight and they always called my folks those naked people, because my folks lived in caves and they were naked people.

Imbert: The Kootenays wore more clothes then, did they?

Tracie: Yes.

Imbert: But it was healthy not to wear clothes, I guess (laughs)...

Tracie: Yes, I believe that. They had the sun on them then.

Imbert: This is interesting. Anything more that you can tell me about those early days?

Tracie: Well, you see, they even didn't wear moccasins, my ancestors. At that time -- that is a long time ago, you see -- they wore... This is odd, I think it's very odd when I think back. They took the pitch of a tree and melt it and then they stuck their feet in it and then they walked on grass and that was their shoes. You see that is way, way back.

Imbert: It gave them something hard to...

Tracie: They could walk for miles on it and it was better than moccasins. It never wore out, you see.

Imbert: It's just something that went around, stuck to the soles of their feet, gave them something tough to...

Tracie: This dry grass.

Imbert: That's very interesting. I never heard anything quite like that.

Tracie: Oh yes, that's the Shuswaps. They were so different -- to me they were very wise savages. Although that they were really savages they were wise.

Imbert: This is very interesting. Could you just tell us some more about that, you know, and about them and... We've just sort of touched on things here and there, but if you feel, you know, you can go on from one thing to another, just go on.

Tracie: Well, talking about this hat, and then grandmother often said when they settled in this little place here, they lived this side of the crossroads on those flats. And they got
this new plow I was telling you about, on horses. They didn't have no roads or railroads at that time, no bridges, nothing. But they happened to have the first plow that was pulled by hand. And grandmother often mentions, she said there was about a dozen women pulling it all the time when they were clearing land. And every time when the stoopie(?) broke -- that's the rawhide leather they pulled it with -- the whole works fell on their faces. And grandmother said they just nearly died from laughing when this rope broke, or stoopie(?) they called it.

Imbert: Had they been, they hadn't been used to plowing before that, I suppose.

Tracie: No, they never did. But one thing -- I do not know if you can see it now -- but when I was a child there was always one or two great big trees in the middle of the field that they left. It was to have their lunch underneath, the shade of a tree. That is why they left the tree there.

Imbert: The Kootenay Indians didn't plow at all then?

Tracie: I don't think so.

Imbert: No. They were sort of nomadic and like the Plains Indians, I suppose. They had horses and possibly cattle and things like that.

Tracie: But I don't think they had the horses at that time, you know. That is a long time ago. They didn't have the horses, because I understand that the horses they came from the Spaniards. And grandmother used to tell the story about these horses. I do not know now whether it was a true story or a fable now, I do not know. But she always said they went to the ocean, down towards Vancouver, all by foot. And then they roped these horses from the water. And that's how they caught their horses, grandmother used to say. I do not know, it seems to me strange.

Imbert: They may have got the horses somehow from that part.

Tracie: You know, she said that they used to make circle, men and women made a circle and hold hands. And they waited for the, what is it now, the tide to come in or...

Imbert: Tide.

Tracie: Yeah, and then they roped these horses with a stoopie(?).

Imbert: Now this is some legend that explains something else, I feel, somehow.

Tracie: It could, yeah.

Imbert: Yes. Obviously there's something behind it, you know, but it's very interesting.
Tracie: And then she spoke about these horses and she spoke about these wee tiny people that came from the bottom of the rocks, she called it, you know, a tunnel in the mountain. She forbid us to go near these holes, said it was dangerous holes in the mountains. There's several -- I know there's one close here, a few miles away where these holes is. She said there was wee people that come out of there and they were very dangerous. They'd steal the Indians. They'd put up a horrible fight.

Imbert: Just like the Irish, little people.

Tracie: Yeah. You see, well, I do not know. She always said that they came from the bowels of the earth and they were very dangerous. To me it sounded like grandmother... See, grandmother said they were awfully -- they smelt horrible. But I believe it would be the fluids they used on their flying. I believe they're flying saucers that they came out of, in. Of course, I kind of mixed the stories maybe, but that is what grandmother used to tell us.

Imbert: What more about those early days and about your grandmother and things that she would say?

Tracie: I was telling you about the plow and them trees in the middle of the field. And at that time my mother was born and she was just a tiny infant. Grandmother says that grandpa used to... Baby with something the matter with it, it would cry all night so grandpa would walk the fields all night with the baby. And it happened for about three nights and so they thought they would do something about this. So they burned -- I don't remember what they burned -- but they put the smoke in their mouth and blow it in the baby's ear. And after the smoke got in the ear some ants came out. That was what was bothering the baby.

Imbert: How would they know what to do? Would there be somebody who would tell them? Somebody who was wise in all these sort of ways?

Tracie: Well, most of them, they had these magic powers and they seem like it was in them to know what to do when anything like that happened.

Imbert: Your grandmother certainly had that, didn't she?

Tracie: She had a lot of that, yes.

Imbert: Can you remember any instances in which she buys things and helped in that way?

Tracie: Well, many times she would be sitting quiet and all of a sudden she'd tell us there was something. She never told us to listen to it but she could hear things and it depended
which ear it was, whether it was the left ear or right ear. I don't remember which it was. One ear brought sad tidings, it always meant that a very close one was dead. And then the other ear meant something else, and then if she had... She always went by her body, like if she had a throbbing feeling in one part of her body it meant something. She was superstitious that way, but it always seemed to come true, her feelings.

Imbert: What did she look like? How would you describe her?

Tracie: Well, you know my description of grandmother might be overdone because I loved her so much.

Imbert: No, but as you saw her.

Tracie: As I saw her she was... To me she was always an old person, very old and I've always wanted to be old like her. Since a child I wanted to be old like her because I thought it was wonderful to be old. And I could always see her wrinkles on her face since I can ever remember her.

Imbert: What size was she and how did she...

Tracie: She was heavy-boned and very big, a big woman. She was big all around and she was fleshy too, you know, quite strong. But she had energy to work with, a lot of energy. She always used to be in the middle of the field after she must have been close to eighty or in her eighties. She used to dig the potatoes all by hand and many times I heard her say they had (Indian) sacks -- that means 100 sacks. (Indian), that means 100. She dug it all by hand this 100 sacks of potatoes, and even more than that she done by hand.

Imbert: When they started to plow what was it they were plowing for? What were they going to grow?

Tracie: I remember her talking about tomatoes and corn. And she said they grow, one time they grow an awful lot of watermelons and that they ripened. That was the white man's idea, I imagine.

Imbert: They must have got the seed from somewhere.


Imbert: Yes, I see. That was their contact with the white man then?

Tracie: Yes.

Imbert: Yes, so as soon as they came into this valley, really, then they began to make this contact with the white man that they hadn't had before, I suppose, up in the North Thompson at (name). They didn't meet any white men up there at all, I suppose. That was long before the white man came.
Tracie: That's right, that's right, yes. But the first white man grandmother spoke of was the priest, the Catholic priest that came in.

Imbert: Can you tell me anything about him in the context of who he was and so on?

Tracie: The priest?

Imbert: Yes.

Tracie: There's one that I remembered so clear. Well, there's a couple priests that I remember used to come to my grandmother's place so much. Always in saddle horse and he came to eat some of my grandmother's cooking. Oh, he said, he came a long ways on the saddle horse to eat this special apples that grandmother cooked. And grandmother had a lot of patience -- she'd cook these apples for him every time. They were these transparent summer apples. Grandmother used to bake when they were really ripe and she peeled them and I think put them in the oven so that they stay white, you know, pure white. And she'd string them on a twine and dry them that way. The same they do with the fish and other stuff that they dry, the deer meat, they dried it too. Only they used fire to dry the deer meat and the salmon.

Imbert: Who was the priest that came there at that time?

Tracie: Father Evans. He was, we often heard that he was a rich priest. He came from England, I think it was.

Imbert: Was he...? He would be after Father Desmet, I suppose.

Tracie: Oh yes, it was way after that.

Imbert: Father Desmet would be the first that came out, wouldn't he?

Tracie: Yeah.

Imbert: Was he before Father Cocola?

Tracie: It was before Cocola.

Imbert: Did you know Father Cocola?

Tracie: No, that was...

Imbert: That was still before your time.

Tracie: There was another priest grandmother spoke of. He's the priest that -- whether he invented, I do not know -- he made short hand for the Indians to read the Shuswap.
Imbert: That's Father Dejeune(?) wasn't it? That was around Kamloops.

Tracie: Oh yes.

Imbert: Kamloops, (name).

Tracie: Yes, he was the one. He spoke the Shuswap language so grandmother could understand him.

Imbert: Did she learn to read his...

Tracie: I don't think grandmother bothered with that, no.

Imbert: Can you remember any stories about the first contact with the white man? The impressions, the... There would be nothing going back to David Thompson days, I suppose. He was the first white man to come in.

Tracie: My grandmother never spoke much about the white man, because she seemed like she just wanted to stay away from them. Of course, if they come to visit it was quite all right with her, but she just didn't seem interested and she never spoke about them much. She was a woman that seemed to love everybody. It didn't matter if they were mean or it didn't matter that...

Imbert: Could you tell us about your own interest in these old days, you know, and how you began to find out more about it and who you spoke to, and any journeys that you made, you know, to discover about these old days? As you say you grew up with it too, but I suppose there came a time when you wanted to know more.

Tracie: To know more about the happenings?

Imbert: About the old days, yes, and about the happenings.

Tracie: Oh, it was after I... of these later years, I guess. It's just these last eight years that I got interested in it. Because I had travelled with grandmother -- even as a child, I remember. She wanted to go and visit her, some of her folks that still lived in Squilax. And we went by train, her and I, and my dad was awfully worried because that was the time just before that, or after that the train got wrecked around Rogers. I don't remember just where it was but we escaped that wreckage and we got to Squilax, grandmother and I. And she visited some of her folks, some of her sisters that were still alive, older sisters. I never forget, they took a quite interest in me because I was just a child.

But oh my goodness! There's a thing that happened there, it was terrible! I'm allergic to bee stings and I had one in each hand, bee sting, you know. It was in the fall where the fruit is ripened and a lot of bees around and swelled up. Boy, oh
big, my hands did. And I couldn't do anything. I was helpless
and I remember these very old Indians -- there was about three
of them -- they said to grandmother they going to fix this
child, this grandchild of hers. They went and took some rose
bushes, and the berries both, and these three Indians they
chewed on this until it got nice and soft. They smacked it on
my hands all over, this rose bushes and berries, and my
swelling still stayed. It didn't help, but they meant good.

Imbert: Did it then go away of its own accord eventually, did
it?

Tracie: Oh, it stayed for it seems like months. Of course I
was a child but it seemed like it was a long time before it
went and I suffered. I suffered with it.

Imbert: Can you remember anything more about that journey
with your grandmother to see the old folks?

Tracie: Yes, I think I do. There was a couple that she was
related to. They were very... I felt so close to them and I
wanted to live with them because they were so good; very, very
old people. And after I heard that he had a lot of magic power
in him and I sensed it. He saved a lot of lives, Indian lives,
through his powers. And sicknesses, it was nothing for him to
take away sickness from people. I remember seeing that old
man. They were very old people but my, they were kind.

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Imbert: ...with your grandmother?

Tracie: No, we just went to Kamloops and... She wanted to
see her birthplace, where she was born.

Imbert: Where was she born?

Tracie: She was born on that -- it's kind of a sandy shore,
the lake there. I think they call it Shuswap Lake. She has an
Indian name. That's what mixes me up, you know, for that
place. And she always wanted to set foot on the land she was
born, so they took her across there and it was just a sandy
beach, nothing there. They used to have an Indian village
there but I think it burned down, there's nothing there now.
Nothing whatsoever.

Imbert: What is the meaning of Shuswap?

Tracie: Shuswap means, Shuswap is a prairie, means a prairie,
but it's full of tiny brush. Shuswap is an Indian word, I
know. It's a prairies but it's full of brush.

Imbert: Did the Shuswap people call themselves Shuswap?
Tracie: They always call themselves (Indian).

Imbert: What does that mean?

Tracie: It means they're real people. That's the name of their own, like. They are the people that they belong to, like, you know, (Indian).

Imbert: Shuswap is just a name that the white man...

Tracie: No, there was a place in town towards, close to Jay's there, where Shuswap is. There's a little town, Shuswap, and that's what they called Shuswap, you see.

Imbert: And they came from there?

Tracie: They used to stay there at times, at Shuswap Lake.

Imbert: But the Shuswap tribe stretches so far. I mean it goes to the Fraser on one side and way over here. And I just wondered how the whole tribe got the name of Shuswap. Wasn't that they all came from this little place, Shuswap? Because they were extended over such a long...

Tracie: I think it was because some of them stayed there and lived there, at Shuswap.

Imbert: In your... When was it that you made this journey to talk to the old people? You know, you went through, you and sister, didn't you, to find out more about the old days?

Tracie: It was about four years ago.

Imbert: Tell me, could you describe that journey and the people you met and any of the stories and things that came out of that?

Tracie: I'll never forget the visit we made to this old Indian. She was 106 years old. And she was blind and, you know, old, but yet she was a happy person, very happy. And we were quizzing her about years back, what she done. And she said that she owed so much of it to this old Indian that had the magic power because he had saved her life three times. She was just close to death each time. And I asked her if she could sing in Indian and she did for us. But she said she could never sing without a drum so I went out and picked a tin can, piece of stick and she used that and she was quite satisfied with it. She sang us a song she called -- in Indian it means the buck, you know, the horns, deer buck with the horns. That's what she was singing, and oh, she had a wonderful shrill voice.

Imbert: You don't remember that song?

Tracie: It was all in Indian.
Imbert: Can you sing it?

Tracie: No, she sang it only once so I would never remember how to sing that. Oh, it was wonderful.

Imbert: This is when you should have had a tape recorder.

Tracie: Oh my, I'd have done anything for that.

Imbert: Did you find out much about the old days from these people?

Tracie: Yes. Well, we stayed as long as we could and then we stayed overnight at their house.

Imbert: You were speaking about this old Indian who had these powers. Was he famous throughout the country?

Tracie: Just among the Indians, that's all, never outside.

Imbert: What was his name?

Tracie: Skaha, that means 'dog'. Skaha, that's a relation to my grandmother, close relation.

Imbert: He had nothing to do with Skaha Lake, did he?

Tracie: No, no, no, no. That's altogether different. But his name was Skaha.

Imbert: Because it seems that from time to time these sort of famous people were developed, you know, within the Indian tribe. There would be one person of outstanding spiritual powers. This has happened in several other instances.

Tracie: Yeah.

Imbert: And I was just interested to know more about it. Is there anything that you can tell about some of these old people, anything that happened, any incidents?

Tracie: You mean how this old gentleman done it, to cure?

Imbert: Well, anything that happened, any stories about them.

Tracie: She said she went blind -- this old Indian 106 years old. She said she was completely blind, she couldn't see. So this Skaha came along and he always took his time at it and he was more relaxed at all times. And she said that he just worked on her for maybe a little while and she got back her eyesight. But she said he made her lay down and over her head there was a lot of noises and she could tell that they were... She mentioned (Indian), that means 'weasel'. It seems like weasels and squirrels were running over her head here. He used those animals. I don't know why but he used them and that's how she got cured and got her eyesight back again.
Imbert: Could you tell more about the story, the history of the Shuswaps in this valley now, continuing from when they came in and they started to plow and they settled? Was there sort of hostility between them and the Kootenays for a long time?

Tracie: There always was. The Kootenays always figured they were more superior. I think why today they are.

Imbert: But of course they have become mixed up now, haven't they?

Tracie: Yeah.

Imbert: The situation is different. And intermarried a lot, I suppose.

Tracie: Yes, yeah.

Imbert: So is there anything that happened in those old days either that you remember yourself? Of course you don't go back so very far. When were you born? What year were you born?

Tracie: 1912.

Imbert: So yours mostly would be hearsay, then. But any incidents, you know, before that time, the 1880s, 1900s and so on that would be interesting to recall about the stories?

Tracie: Oh, one thing grandmother always said that they never will forget the time this river here, it went muddy for months. And why it went muddy it was like the end of the world, she said. For a while there it was a huge noise. They just kind of deafened you, the noise did. And they found out that it was the... on the old, old road that's close to the river, you know, there was a bank that fell over -- a clay bank -- and it fell right in the river and that's what she says, it was like the end of the world, this noise.

Imbert: It made a rushing noise?

Tracie: Yes. And then it made the river muddy for months, she said. That's one incident I remember.

Imbert: Any other incidents in the tribe, or incidents with white people, you know what I mean? Do you recall what happened in more recent times? I mean in the early days of the century or before that.

Tracie: When the boats were running grandmother said that they sold a lot of beef and butter and milk to the boats.

Imbert: They were real farmers, eh?

Tracie: They started farming -- grandfather and grandmother, you see. And my aunts and uncles they started that.
Imbert: Started the farm.

Tracie: Yeah.

Imbert: Where was the farm?

Tracie: Well, it was down below here and above here. I was telling you where they first got their plow was on that stretch by the crossroads. They had traded with another Indian and got this place here down below here and above. They liked this water here, the creek, that's why they traded and moved down here.

Imbert: Were the Indians at that time, all of them, more or less farming? The Shuswaps, that is?

Tracie: Yes, they were great farmers, because they grow a lot of wheat and they sold that to the boats as well, and to the mines that were going. They sold a lot of their farming stuff.

Imbert: They developed crops and farming much more than the Kootenays.

Tracie: Oh, they sure did, yes. They're great workers. And I remember when my uncle got killed by horse -- that's a Kinbasket again -- I remember that real clear. There's a piece of rock up on the mountain here above. Well, he used to always go to hunt and he called that a salt lick and the animals came a certain time to lick the salt and he'd ambush the animal there. When they come to lick the salt he'd shoot them then. So one time he went up there and he came back and he was all in tears. I was with grandmother when he came at the door and he visited grandmother and he told grandmother that he had a horrible feeling when he was up there. He could see the whole universe up on top of the mountain there, like, you know. Instead of hunting he got lost with his mind and he said he could just look at this valley and he loved it so much. And at the same time he had a sad feeling come over him. He felt like he had lost his country or his place like, you know. And about a day after he got killed by a horse. Grandmother often mentioned it. She said that Eric Kinbasket seems to sense he was going to get killed and he went up to look at everything before he got killed.

Imbert: Any other stories about the mountains, people and things happening in the mountains?

Tracie: Yes. My grandmother's -- I think it's a sister -- I have a picture of him. He looked like a woman. Oh, that's years and years ago. He lived at Chase. You know where Chase is? It's close to Salmon Arm or close to Squilax. Chase -- that's an Indian stamping ground, this Chase. Right at Chase there's a little lake and that is where the story starts. This
man was up in the mountains hunting and he got a grizzly bear attacked him. And he had to fight with the grizzly bear and they rolled down the mountain for miles. And he was just about unconscious from the fight, and they called this Indian (name). That means the mountain is just splattered with blood. And that's what they called him, (Indian). But he was supposed... They wondered why he didn't die from the horrible wounds because he lost one arm from the fight. And at Chase there's still a little lake there where he, when he came home he jumped in the lake to wash his wounds.

Imbert: I'm going to have to... That's a very interesting story. Anything more like that, about the mountains?

Tracie: That was about a lake and, I mean that's in Chase.

Imbert: Yes, that's down...

Tracie: Yes.

Imbert: Anything about the Rocky Mountains here, when they came?

Tracie: Well, the only thing that grandmother often mentioned is this paradise. It was a real home for them, the Kootenay Valley -- that's the next valley from here. They always went there to hunt and fish.

Imbert: That's the valley of the Kootenay River over...

Tracie: Yes, yes.

Imbert: Anything about that, anything more about the Kootenay Valley?

Tracie: The priest used to go through there. Oh, the horses, the short cut, like, you know. And he found gold there one time and he was going to come back to build a church right on the spot where this solid gold rock was. And sad to say he died before he came back. And the Indians, of course, at that time I don't think they valued gold, or they didn't care for it then. And that was all I can remember about the gold in the Kootenay.

Imbert: What priest would that be, would that be Desmet?

Tracie: To me it sounded like he was a Catholic priest but I never could remember which it was.

Imbert: Did you see much, or did they see much of the Catholic priests in those days? Did they have a strong hold on the Indians here, on the bands?

Tracie: Oh yes, they were, really. Well, the saddest part of it, they made them throw away their magic powers. That was the first thing the priests did.
Imbert: And they became very devout Catholics then?

Tracie: Yes.

Imbert: And the priest had quite a lot of control?

Tracie: Oh yes, he did. But my grandmother, quietly, she still believed in her, you know, her place from way back. She seemed like she believed in reincarnation very much.

Imbert: She seems a very remarkable woman. It would be interesting to know anything further you could tell us about her.

Tracie: Oh yes, so many stories about her. She had a lot of patience with us kids.

Imbert: Remember we were talking about the stamina of Indian people, the stamina, the ability to withstand things. Can you tell me about that, what you feel about that?

Tracie: Well, they seem like... My grandmother was home and I went with my Aunt Rosalie to town and we came back and we had a runaway with the team -- it was with a democrat. And it smashed my Aunt Rosalie and it hurt me, knocked me out. But somehow or other we managed to get home here and my aunt was badly hurt, she was smashed. And I remember the doctors coming to see her all summer. But she was managing her work and still working on, carrying on.

Imbert: What were the reasons that you felt that the Indian has so much endurance?

Tracie: I think it was because I always thought grandmother was the almighty like, you know, and so naturally I thought her people were part of her.

Imbert: But the, the Indian could stand so much, could take so much, you know what I mean?

Tracie: Meaning sufferings and injuries?

Imbert: Suffering and injuries and so on like that. Tell me about that.

Tracie: Well, this (name) that rolled down from the mountain with the fight with grizzly, well, my grandmother always said that if he didn't have the magic power he would have been dead before he started rolling. But that's what saved him. Grandmother was sure of that.

Imbert: The white magic has a kind of meaning for the white man of something just a little bit unbelievable, you know what I mean? It's been used so much to mean hocus-pocus, you know. And when one translates something, magic power, when one uses the word magic power, it tends to falsify the real meaning. Now what would the Indian word be for that?
Tracie: Well, that's... The Indian for that is (Indian).

Imbert: Now how would you translate that?

Tracie: (Indian).

Imbert: Not using the word magic, which sounds like magicians and fairies and things like that, you know what I mean. I'm trying to get at some other meaning of it.

Tracie: The way my grandmother explained it, (Indian) was a man that cured everything. He was a man that for everything he'd do the impossible. They had men and women both, you see. And grandmother always told us whenever there was one they would never walk in front of him unless they excused themselves and they regard him as a great man. And they never walked behind his back or they dare not scare him. They were very careful how they treated (Indian).

Imbert: And this is the name of a man, but is it also the name of the power?

Tracie: (Indian) it means more than... Well, it is a combination of the man that has that gift. It's hard to explain in English. You see, the Shuswap is... The language, in the Shuswap language is a picture, to me is a picture language. One word describes and you could see a picture. But then you try and translate it into English, I just can't do it.

Imbert: No, that's why I felt, you know, the word magic power doesn't explain.

Tracie: No it doesn't, no.

Imbert: But a person has some, a quality. It is more a quality -- it is a power too, but it is a force or something like that. I just wondered how it would seem to you. What do you picture? You picture a man, do you, when you say that word?

Tracie: (Indian) yes. The super, like it's a super, what would you call it now, super... He's everything to them, he's everything to them.

Imbert: Really he contains this power?

Tracie: Yes.

Imbert: Yes, he has an ability to...

Tracie: Like they never had to want when there was a man around. Like I believe I told you this story before. Grandmother said they were starving, the whole camp was starving one time, and he came to this woman and spoke to her
gently and told her that they had nothing to eat, to get
something. And she always walked in the forest and then
shortly after she came back there was a flock of geese up above
and they all dropped right in the middle of the camp, hundreds
of them, grandmother said. They were very busy with the geese
after. She often spoke about this flock of geese and she seen
it with her own eyes. It happened.

(Break in tape)

Imbert: ...kind of a speech itself and what it means, you
know. The quality of it as you see it.

Tracie: Yeah. Well, grandmother used to sing a song to me
when I was a child -- it was all in Shuswap. And now that I
got big I try my best to translate in English, it doesn't sound
the same.

Imbert: Could you sing the song?

Tracie: It doesn't sound like it, oh yes.

Imbert: Would you sing it in Shuswap?

Tracie: Yes. A little bit of it, not much.

Imbert: Just a little bit of it. Sing it, would you.

Tracie: (Sings in Shuswap) That's way up above the mountains
where this song is supposed to be. Way up and the person is
walking up into a canyon, in the bottom of a canyon. And he
singing about (Indian) -- that's an animal. You see, I get
mixed up between the Indian words and the English. (Indian),
I'm sure that's the caribou. The caribou, see, run up and down
dthis canyon.

Imbert: Could you, would it be possible just to think of
those words that you sang just now and...

Tracie: That's what it means, yeah, this...

Imbert: Could you say it sort of literally? Now the first,
the first...

Tracie: (Sings in Indian) you see that 'um', you've heard of
'um', haven't you? That means 'great' to me. And grandmother
often used that when she put us to sleep like, you know. This
isn't running is it? When we were babies, you know, when she
was going to put us to sleep, she used that song.

Imbert: This is very interesting. Now I wanted to...

Tracie: "Um," she used that. That's the Indian way of
lullaby.
Imbert: Well then, (Indian), how would... I would like to know what it means to you.

Tracie: (Sings).

Imbert: What it means to you.

Tracie: To me it means awakening up, like a trumpet, would it be? That's what it means to me. It's a trumpet that...

Imbert: Sound that's...

Tracie: Wake you up.

Imbert: Yes. That's what that first phrase of the song...

Tracie: (Sings) and they have the expression to it too that goes up.

Imbert: And what's the next part of the song?

Tracie: (Sings).

Imbert: And what does that mean to you?

Tracie: Well, that means those caribous, they run up and down the middle of the, the bottom of this canyon. In the bottom of this canyon that has the water, you know, the water coming down. They try stamping on this water. It's hard to explain it. They're running inside the canyon in the water and they're making a splash and frolicking, I guess that's what it is. Up and down the mountain that way, in the canyon.

Imbert: Now what's the next phrase?

Tracie: That was all I can remember. Sad to say but grandmother used to always sing that to me.

Imbert: Well, this is beautiful. This is... The point is, you see, that what I'm trying to get at is the poetry of the feeling. I know it's very difficult to translate it because it's so much in the sound, I suppose.

Tracie: Well, you see, as I say, one word would mean so much in the Shuswap where I could never explain it in English. English is dead to me -- it's got no meaning.

Imbert: Because it hasn't got the associations in the word, in the Shuswap, is associated with so many other things.

Tracie: You see that's why it always hurt me when anybody called grandmother (Indian), because (Indian) meant so much.

Imbert: How much did it mean? Can you give me the things...?

Tracie: Well, it meant grandmother, mother, father and
everything put together to me. It had such a great meaning, the word (Indian).

Imbert: Can you remember any other examples of song or poetry, expressions and things?

Tracie: Oh, grandmother used to tell a lot of fairy tales. She would, well, when we were... she was putting us to sleep, she'd sing us a lullaby.

Imbert: Could you just tell us about the lullabies, yes?

Tracie: Well that, I was telling you about (sings). That's how she would put us to sleep, it's just that "um". It had a kind of hum, buzzing noise -- that was all there was to that one.

Imbert: You were saying that she'd tell you fairy tales.

Tracie: Yes. Mostly of the wild animals. Always was about a coyote, he was very foxy.

Imbert: Can you remember the kind of... Can you remember what the stories would be about?

Tracie: Oh, I know a lot, but I have them written down. Some of them, most of the stories that I know, I got in book now. But there were so many that...

Imbert: Could you tell a little one?

Tracie: A little story?

Imbert: Could you tell it in the Shuswap as she told it?

Tracie: As she told it?

Imbert: Yes. And then perhaps just translate it sort of rather literally in English so that we get a sense of the poetry of it. That's what I'm interested in, you know, the kind of expression of it.

Tracie: You want me to say it in Shuswap first?

Imbert: Yeah.

Tracie: You see some of the words I cannot remember -- that's the trouble. But (Indian) -- that's coyote's wife, (Indian) -- that's the field mice. That's the coyote's wife. You want me to start in Shuswap now?

Imbert: (Inaudible) the sound of it, as it was, you see.

Tracie: Now let me which story to tell. I've got to think first. I do not know just which story I should tell. Oh my, I cannot think right now about a story.
Imbert: Is there any little other little incident or something?

Tracie: They were full of fun, all those stories were, you know. They just put us to sleep because she was really good at telling the story; very, very good. Oh, I know so many that I just, you know how it is -- you just can't pick up one.

Imbert: And they're quite long too.

Tracie: Yes, they are, yeah.

Imbert: You have them written down?

Tracie: Yes, most of them.

Imbert: You should record them too in the original Shuswap language.

Tracie: Oh yes.

Imbert: I was just really sort of trying to expand the idea of the poetry, you know, and the imagery and things like that that was in the language. I'm trying to get a little...

Tracie: Oh yes, a little bit of that.

Imbert: Yes, as you sang me the song. And is there anything more like that?

Tracie: In the fairy tales there's a lot of songs in that too. There was quite a bit there, I remember. I'd have to do some thinking though. (Break in tape) He's the one that wanted to come here, you know, just for something. And when you look at (name) and look at this valley there's a lot of resemblings, isn't it? But the mountains are not as high, I'd admit, at (name).

Imbert: It's wetter at (name). There's more trees and forest. It's a beautiful climate.

Tracie: Yes.

Imbert: There was a lot more snow there probably.

Tracie: Yeah.

Imbert: But is there anything to tell about the old days, even of the turn of the century, around 1900 and so on, before you were born?

Tracie: See, talking about (name), there was some Indians from the Prairies that stole one woman from (name). Took her through the pass way into the Prairies. And that woman she was heartbroken, she was lonesome. And I forgot how many months it
took her to run away and walk back. She made it home, yeah.

Imbert: I suppose that more warlike tribes were always trying to attack the Shuswap?

Tracie: Yeah.

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