Clarence: I will go on from there and up to the time they were civilized, you might say, in the early days of the missionaries and then up to the present time as I told Mr. Davis here this morning. Of course, he's visited me so many times now... I mean the cedar wood in here.

Imbert: Was inside there?

Clarence: Yes. The cedar roots is wrapped around.

Imbert: That's the framework though?

Clarence: Yes, cedar wood. You see and that's the cedar bark here. This dug... they dig... I mean the cedar roots, I should
Imbert: The roots are right inside there.

Clarence: Yes, the root. No, this is the roots here, the strings used... I will only refer to the story of the Sechelt nation, which I belong. Other than the tribal wars caused by certain tribes the Sechelt Nation were a peaceful nation and enjoyed their freedom. The Sechelt Nation were not a nation that would go and seek tribal wars. It was just certain nation that came and invaded them and caused wars with them. They've had a few battles with other tribes in return, you might say, where they felt that they should go back and retaliate of what they had been caused by other tribes.

Their living was something different from the Interior Indians, the coast Indians, particularly the Sechelt Nation, their living. They lived and split cedar shakes -- that's their homes -- they build they homes in split cedar shakes -- and cedar bark huts. And their food was deer, their choice meat was deer, mountain goats and some few black bears or grizzly bear meats. And they ate fish -- they were great on their seafoods, fish and shellfish. Berries, when the season was around, wild berries, like wild blackberries, wild blue huckleberries, red huckleberries, and many other berries where they picked during the season and they dried it for the winter use. Sun-dried it for the winter use. I've seen my grandmother and my great-grandmother preserving this kind of food for themselves for the winter. They barbecued this meat and the choice meat, they barbecued them in the mountains. And they packed them down, men packed them in the bags and women packed them in their baskets, and women packed mountain berries in the baskets. And these are preserved for winter use. Also this food is used by certain families like chiefs, chiefs for their winter gatherings, for their potlatches.

The Sechelt Nation usually held their potlatches and their big tribal gatherings at Pender Harbor. Pender Harbor was greatly used by the tribal gatherings. Part of the Vancouver Island Indians used to be invited to Pender Harbor by certain chiefs at that time. Squamish Indians were invited, (various tribal names), the lower Fraser Valley and part of -- right immediately across the border. Of course there was no international border in those days. People were invited and they spent many weeks and months at Pender Harbor. Of course, they also were invited into other gatherings by other tribes, but this is where the Sechelt Nation had their tribes and they'd feast there for weeks and months. And these are occasions where these foods are highly used, these meats and berries and fish.

Their weapons were the bows and arrows, where they go after the game. Spears were highly used for spearing their seals, porpoise, and spearing their fish. Seal oil was highly used by the Sechelt Nation, seal oil. They never went without a meal.
without their oil. And every tribe, I think throughout Canada, had their oil. Like the Interior Indians, I know for sure, they use bear oil, bear grease in those days.

Imbert: What part of Pender Harbor was it that they used to...

Clarence: Around Garden Bay. Garden Bay is where they used to assemble there. By the thousands there at Garden Bay, because it was so sheltered there coming in with their war canoes. Pender Harbor is so... The weather did not bother them there at Pender Harbor.

That's the way our forefathers lived. Up until the time, up in the time of the early arrival of the white man. And the early arrival of the white man, we were told by our forefathers, that they had suffered an epidemic, and this epidemic was the smallpox. And they were dying by the thousands where we have witnessed ourselves the skeletons with our immediate village here. Today we are now like a pine homes with basements, and when we hire bulldozer to excavate our basement we come upon skeleton, upon skeletons. And I'll quote here, I'll quote here in a book a document written by the missionaries, this part of the document here, "According to the immemorial tradition of local Indians Sechelt is built on a site of Shotledge," that's the immediate name of this village, Shotledge, "the home of a tribe that was always at war with neighboring tribes and was finally destroyed by them and by smallpox brought in by white man. Burning with fever they rushed into the sea, died and left mounds of their bones of their shore." That's the first epidemic and these were taken by the early missionaries, early missionaries as told by them by the Indians they had contact with in the early arrivals in this land.

The second epidemic was approximately in 1886, 1886. There again they were wiped out almost completely. In the early arrival of the late Father Plamondon here in Sechelt, there was 600 left out of 4,000. There was 4,000 Indians here when the early missionaries arrived here in Sechelt. The later part of, approximately around 1890 Father Plamondon makes a statement, there were 600 left in Sechelt, 600 Indians out of 4,000. And during the time of my secretarial job for the old chiefs... I was in my early age of fifteen years of age while I was appointed secretary when I left school, by the last of the hereditary chiefs. And in the document I come upon to was, there was only 200 in the census. From 4,000 to 200, ever since they established here in Sechelt where you are now sitting, it's down to 200. Today we're coming back; we have 500 now. They were so hard hit with sickness.

In the early arrival of the missionaries of 1860 the chiefs at that time heard of a religious gathering at New Westminster by other tribes. The Oblate fathers had travelled from the United States into the Interior and these Indians here, the Sechelt Nations, heard of this religious gathering. So in 1860 three chiefs from here went together with some of their members of
the family and some of their members, paddled through the north arm heading for New Westminster. And there at that time they interviewed a Father Leon Fouquet. And there they discussed their willingness to be baptized and become Roman Catholics. There was missionaries then on the coast, different missionary, different religion like United Church and Protestant and... but these people chose the Roman Catholic Church at that time. Then they came back then they spread the word to the other tribes along their Sechelt Nation -- that is Jervis Inlet, Pender Harbor, and Sechelt Inlet.

So in 1868 these missionaries then were travelling with the Indians on war canoes. And war canoes -- there was no passenger boat, no steamers in those days -- all their transportation was by war canoes. The missionaries were travelling by war canoes with the Indians from village to village. So it was suggested by one of the chiefs from up the head of Jervis Inlet, Chief (Indian) and Chief (Indian) -- they must have been broad-minded chiefs -- decided that the community should be built. Instead of the missionary travelling from village to village, which was a very lengthy trip for a missionary, they decided to build a village and build one big church for the whole of the Sechelt Nation. So in 1868 they came here. They travelled from the head of Jervis Inlet and stopped in -- that's the Hunaechin tribe -- they stopped at Desert Bay -- that's the (Indian) tribe. They consulted with the chief there and the leaders of that tribe, and they decided to keep on coming down to select a village to build a church and a community village. They spoke to the Pender Harbor people, that's Chief Harry and (Indian) tribe, they also joined them. And arriving here in (name) -- they call this (name) -- they decided to pick this as their community village. Sechelt they call it now, Sechelt.

Imbert: Is that the same name actually, or only the white man's attempt to pronounce it?

Clarence: No. It's not. We're the... we... each place had a name like (name), Hunaechin and (name), and this was (name). But we were the Sechelt Nation -- we are the Sechelt. Sechelt is an Indian name. Sechelt is the pronunciation of our dialect. Then the white men called it Sechelt.

Imbert: What does it mean?

Clarence: Sechelt means that from way, way back, way back, something like climbing over a log, they say I'm Sechelt -- I'm climbing over something, Sechelt. That's where the name originated from, the Sechelt Nation.

Imbert: And the Sechelt, before the white man came, they regarded themselves as the Sechelt Nation.

Clarence: That's right.
Imbert: The whole area here.

Clarence: Yeah, it's from Howe Sound right to Stillwater -- that's the Sechelt Nation and including the inlets, including the inlets. Howe Sound, that was the Squamish into Howe Sound and Burrard, that's the Squamish Nation. From Powell River is the (Indian) Nation, and so on as you go along up, further on up. And when they got themselves established here they went and build their first homes. Then in 1889 is when they first build their first church with the two towers, 1889. And in 1906, on January 14, the church burned down. And all these money was made available by contributions from each member of the tribe, women and all. They taxed themselves with instructions of their chief.

Then in 1902 these people knew that there's going to be some changes made with our people. We are no longer going to live the way they lived at the early days before the white man came. They knew that there's going to be changes made. It was predicted by a lady that there was people coming to this land, strange people. This lady told them, she predicted, "There will be palefaced people. You'll no longer go and pick your berries from the bush, you'll go behind your door and pick your fruits." And that's what you people now call apples, cherries, pears, and that was predicted long before the white man came. It's very interesting. And the meat, we are now buying the meat. We go to the store now and buy our beefsteak, pork chops, and bacon and etc., and this was predicted by the woman. Shows you how true the story is, it didn't say it was predicted by a man, by the medicine man, it was predicted by a woman.

So in 1902 they decided to build a school. The first Indian Residential School was built here just where our present school is now. They built it themselves with their own pocket money and they maintained that school by themselves. They fed the school, they brought down meat.

At that time they had a small little passenger boat then, I think I remember the name of one boat, it was the Whitakers in the Whitaker days -- the New Era was one of them. And they used to take trips up the inlet and they used to ship meat down to the school for the school children, their children and the nuns and the priests, which were then here established as a community. And they provided the school. We were clothed by our forefathers. We were not provided by clothing as they are now in this government institutions are now provided. They enjoy everything provided by the government. But in my time I spent some years in that school at that time and my parents provided my shoes, my clothes, and my food. Even the books was bought by our parents. In the beginning of 1902.

Imbert: In those days it was difficult to find (inaudible) too, wasn't it?

Clarence: It was very difficult but they were people, they were people that never abused their money. The revenue came from
logging. In other words they called it, some people called these people the Beaver Tribe -- they went in to hand logging. And of course it was just a gas town, (name) in those days. And certain people like Brown, and people they mentioned by our forefathers that were trading with these people. And Grossman, people like Grossman, which we see in Vancouver, Grossman. They’re the same Grossman in those days. And they were the people that our forefathers were dealing with. Then of course later on in the years Whitaker came and established himself here and build the first store. And his first arrival here he had nothing -- according to my dad he was out there digging clams for the people and practically raised with the people. But he had some finance backing from England later on in the years and he bought a property and he opened a store here. And later on in the years he was buying logs from the Indians instead of brokers and (inaudible) Whitaker was buying it off the Indians and Whitaker was selling them to the mills.

And Whitaker was the one that took the contract to build the first Indian Residential School and the Indians paid him by logs and that's how it was arranged by the chief. They had several meetings at that time at the old hall. They always did have a hall where they have their powwow, where they have their meetings, the Indian Council Hall. They build a church and they build a hall. No more meeting was held around the campfire then; they had the council hall. In other words, the Sechelt Nation are way further advanced than the white men on the peninsula. They had their school, they had their church, they had their council hall -- they were organized, they were well-organized. They had, their chiefs were taxing them, like $100 a year for a male and $50 a year for women, and every penny was saved.

There was so much attached to religion that firewater was not even allowed by chief on the Indian reserve. Mind you, before they joined their religion there was a lot of liquor coming on the reserve, what the whiteman used for trading, rum, particularly rum. I was asked one time by a certain people, non-Indians, what do we call whiskey? I say, "Lam." "Well, where do you get the word lam?" "Rum," I says, "instead of saying rum they say lam. It came from the rum." They say they were coming here, the traders were coming here and distributing rum by the little kegs. It wasn't in bottles in those days, it was in kegs. And they travelled all along the coast here buying fur. Of course they trapped then later on in the years when trapping, when they were able to sell their pelts.

Imbert: Were those the first white men the Indians here ever met, those traders?

Clarence: The traders, yes.

Imbert: So they would be the first?

Clarence: They were the first ones.
Imbert: You don't remember any stories, or any impressions of the white men, you know. How the first impressions were made, what he was like and how he seemed to them?

Clarence: The first impression I was told by certain of our elderly people, like our great-grandfathers, they were sort of -- particularly the women -- they were scared of the white man. When they seen the white man they'd run away from the white man, particularly when the men were up hunting and the women were left alone in the villages and the white man appeared there. The paleface appeared and the women used to run up in the bush -- scared of the white man. And I heard sometime that even the women grab rocks, throwing rocks, chasing them away from them.

Imbert: Did they think that they were ghosts of some kind?

Clarence: Well, probably they were thinking they were ghosts. But they knew that they were people, that they were strangers and they... Mind you, they might have been friendly. I think one of the missionaries here made a statement here. And one page here where one of the priests that came here in the early days trying to preach a religion to these people and they ordered him out of the area, because he was considered a white man. Of course, later on they realized he was a missionary, he was a priest preaching the gospel of God, you might say. Of course they had their own beliefs, mind you, they had their supernatural beliefs.

Imbert: Which were quite... very, very important in the life of tribe. They must contribute towards its morality and everything. Isn't that true of the old beliefs?

Clarence: Oh yes.

Imbert: Is there anything you can say about that, about these old beliefs and, you know, how important they were?

Clarence: Their old beliefs were so important to them that the supernatural beliefs of the Indians... They knew that there was a... You people call God now, Christ, or that is what your churches are referring to people nowadays. They had theirs. In the travels of some of our people, now they're writing the story of Sechelt Nation, we have shown them spots where the Indians have witnessed some miracles by certain people they felt at that time was, what you people now God. Like in Welcome Pass here now there's a little island there where we call (Indian). (Indian) mean in our dialect is God or supernatural power. And there he sat there, according to the legend of the Sechelt Nation, this certain person sat there and they had no water, and even today there's water there on that little island and there's hardly any bottom. There's a hole about so big -- there's water there. And the leaves change there every year, so they gave it a name (Indian). That means, that's a God's act placed by their supernatural belief.
Imbert: In this belief in God -- and it's just a name, of course -- it would change from one place to another.

Clarence: Yes.

Imbert: Would it be regarded that this God, this person with this name, would be the same person as, shall we say, perhaps the nation over in the Vancouver Island, or the Squamish Nation, they would have also their concept of God, a being, a supernatural being? Now would it be regarded that this was the same just with a different name?

Clarence: That's right.

Imbert: Or would it be regarded that this is a special one that belongs to that nation?

Clarence: No. It's the same, it's the same. Everywhere I been travelling -- I've travelled up and down the coast with my father and my late dad here when he was running the fishing boat. And we'd sit down with some of these old people, particularly listen to my dad sitting with other old people up at the canneries. And it's amazing -- their ancient history, their ancient stories, is very the same with ours.

Imbert: And there was no feeling that there was any difference. There was always the feeling that it was the same person that was over the whole country. That was the supernatural being even though called one name in one tribe and another name in another.

Clarence: That's right, that's right. Just a different name according to our dialect. According to our dialect, yes.

Imbert: This is what I thought.

Clarence: Yes.

Imbert: Now do you remember any stories about the white man first coming, shall we say, in the days of the explorers, in the big boats, in the days of Vancouver and people like that? Would there be any legends or any rememberance of that at all, impression of that? He must have sailed along this coast here and named it and things...

Clarence: They, as far back as when, you might say?

Imbert: That would be back to 1790, 1800. It would be 150, 160, 170 years or so?

Clarence: Yes.

Imbert: A long time ago. But I just wondered if there had been anything lingering on as a sort of memory of that first coming?
Clarence: The first coming of the explorers, not the trading?

Imbert: No. The explorers.

Clarence: The explorers. I didn't hear too much of the explorers. The story which I gathered most was from the trading when they were travelling by this sailing ships, which dropped anchor and seeking trades from the Indians, particularly fur, but not too much exploring in this immediate area.

Imbert: They wouldn't best (?) to be the Hudson's Bay people, would they?

Clarence: Yes, the Hudson's Bay. The West Coast I think have, like in Nootka. But I wasn't told too much about it within this immediate area, the Sechelt Nation, of the explorers.

Imbert: I don't believe that the Hudson's Bay were allowed to use rum in trade. Now the ordinary independent traders did this.

Clarence: That's right.

Imbert: I think the Hudson's Bay would use other things -- blankets and so on.

Clarence: Blankets.

Imbert: Do you remember any stories about contact with the Hudson's Bay? Or did the Hudson's Bay not come in this area?

Clarence: Not too much in this area. The Hudson's Bay didn't seem to hit this part of B.C. too much. But as you say, the independent tradesmen, they're the ones that were here, particularly using rum and, of course, money at that time. And clothing, as you say, like shirts and pants and maybe watch. You know what we are now using, clothing. Not too much money involved at that time because the Indians at that time didn't know too much about the value of money, you know, and where to spend it. They were more of less concerned with their clothing then at that time, a change of clothing. They started to wear shoes -- not too much shoes -- but pants and shirts and blanket.

Imbert: What was their clothing before that?

Clarence: They had certain kind of clothing like buckskins from deer hides, and mountain goat hides, and bear hides, bear skin hides. Of course then the Indian blanket was the hair taken from the mountain goats. They had trouble with these trading ships. I recall very much once my grandfather tell me one had dropped the anchor at the mouth of North Arm, and they've had a lot of trouble in the early days with the white man. There had been a lot of murders, and as you might have heard in the Sir James Douglas days where they had... I don't know what they had
in those days for, they didn't have soldiers at that time, I don't think.

Imbert:  Sailors.

Clarence:  Sailors, yes. And this particular instance where Indians went trading their fur and particularly some of them that were, that you might say they were cheated out of their fur. And every tribe had what they call a warrior, a warrior. You people call a gangster, you might call it, always looking for trouble. So he overheard two of the Indians coming to shore from the ship. They asked him, "What did you get for your fur, for your pelts?" "Oh, they gave me a very bum deal, you might say. All I got is my pants and a shirt." And this man was listening, and before daylight he went out there and he slaughtered the whole crew. Of course it caused quite a disturbance here with the government. And one time there was a mill at that time in North Arm where an Indian went and picked up an old file. And a mill worker, a white man, came there and shoved him right out of there, you know, very boldly, just kicked him out of there. Well, these things heard that he's hurting people and of course, naturally, there were some more killings there. And there was a lot of that in those days, there was a lot of that. And in some instance there the certain person I'm mentioning now, the certain Indian, the government offered $1,000 for his capture or his death. Something similar to what's going on in Vietnam, you might say. They had lots of that in those days. You could expect that, because the Indians, they had a sense of feeling that when they're treated right they accept it, but when they were not treated right they knew they were not treated right. Naturally they, there was trouble.

Imbert:  Really, of course, before the white man came, I gather from what you were saying the Sechelt Indians were very peaceful.

Clarence: That's right.

Imbert:  And the warlike people are more likely to be the Haidas and such that came down. I mean, the whole approach was fighting to them, I think.

Clarence: Oh yes. They had small little tribal war, but they were not people going out looking for trouble or tribal wars, you know. But in the early, the later part of 1700 is when they really went to work and then they logged and fished. There was not too much trapping then with these people...

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Imbert:  Who was the first priest that was sent up here? You mentioned his name.

Clarence: Father Durieu was one of them, Father Durieu.
Imbert: He became a bishop, didn't he?

Clarence: Became a Bishop Durieu, yes. Yes, Father Durieu. It says here, "When Father Durieu first visited the Sechelt Indians they refused to give him food or lodging, or to have anything to with him because he was a white man, and the white man, they knew, had brought them smallpox, wanted their money and etc." So they did not accept Father Durieu when he first come to Sechelt.

Imbert: Who established the first mission here, then?

Clarence: It was Father Durieu. Then later on he was accepted then. That is when the chiefs adopted the Roman Catholic Church into their nation there.

Imbert: Was this a rather difficult thing to do in view of their well-established beliefs and so on? Was there a problem, a conflict, in adapting Roman Catholic Christianity?

Clarence: Well, I think if it hadn't been for the church, I would say the white man's church, I think there would have been a total destruction here amongst the Indians. Because they were getting wiped out, you might say, by sickness, and liquor being brought in by the white man. And the white man was invading their villages, as it states here, and they were taking their women away when they were drinking -- on their drinking sprees. And in my deep thinking I think the church was responsible of saving the Indian nation in this country. The more I look at it the more I'm convinced they are, regardless what church they are.

Imbert: What was very interesting, of course, was the Sechelt people early on adapted an economic way of living. They didn't... They went into the logging trade.

Clarence: That's right.

Imbert: But this is also one of things, that of their own initiative, it seems helped them to compete with the white man.

Clarence: That's right.

Imbert: In so many cases this didn't happen.

Clarence: Yes.

Imbert: In so many cases they just went on living, trying to live, with the old economic ways. And this must have contributed a great deal to the endurance of the Sechelt people. Is this so?

Clarence: That's true. According to the Book of Knowledge, which I read here once, that the Sechelt Nation was the most
industrious tribe in British Columbia, if not the whole of Canada. And that's, I read this in the Book of Knowledge pertaining to the Indians of the country, you might say, in British Columbia.

Imbert: Yes, it varies a great deal from one tribe to another, it seems.

Clarence: Yes. Building a community today, like what they build at that time, building a building like that. There was over a hundred of us at that school they build. I have the pictures here -- I should have had them out here. And building two big churches like that and a village like here. The old village were so close together, within the same area they were only about six feet apart, which proves that there must have been hundreds and hundreds of them when they established themselves here in Sechelt as a Catholic community. Of course, we burned all the old houses here since 19--., the early part of 1940, when I became a secretary and spokesman for the tribe. The last of the hereditary chiefs had passed on then. And before the elective system came I was appointed by the government to be acting chief until such time the legislation passed that elected system would be approved by Ottawa. Of course, we as an organized Indians then were asking for elective system, because a chief in those days were lifetime chiefs and they had so many business, like the Squamish and the Sechelt were coming into business, and the chief did not know what they were signing. And at that time there was members then that had a few days of schooling, like myself. I could read and write. But we could not voice our opinion or any suggestion to the old chief because they were lifetime chiefs and they, what they said goes.

Imbert: Yes, there's no, it was difficult to make new ways and new thoughts.

Clarence: That's right.

Imbert: ... against the old traditional...

Clarence: That's right.

Imbert: Well then, you were saying earlier, perhaps you could tell us how Sechelt came together and what it consisted of? When these people, for instance, came down from the north, did they pull up their villages there and just come and all live here, or was it just to come down to get baptized and go away again? How did that work?

Clarence: This is more or less considered as a community, Catholic community village. After Christmas, like we'll say in February, when they feel that the snow is already gone they go back to their village like (name) and (name), Pender Harbor, along the Sechelt Inlet here. Easter came around, they all come back Easter to Sechelt. Of course, they came here for
church gatherings and they came here to baptize their children. In those days, perhaps maybe with the non-Indians too, it's only recently where we been registered in Victoria. That's not looking down at my census here, none of us is registered in Victoria. In my time -- I was born in 1908 -- I was not even registered in Victoria and I got no birth certificate. Sometimes a government official ask me, "Where's your birth certificate?" I've got none. He cannot believe that I have no birth certificate and I have to go further back and tell them why we have no birth certificate. The only people that has got our baptismal certificate is the church.

Imbert: This happened, of course, with the white people every bit as much as the Indian people in those days, because many of them they weren't registered in Victoria. And we've time again had old-timers tell us that they had to go back to some old record or somebody's memory to prove that they were born in such and such a place around the province. So it was the same there too.

Clarence: Same too, yes. At the time of the, when the Indians -- perhaps you've heard, at the time of the pension, the old age pension, Indians were excluded at that time. And we were already then an organized, an Indian organization called the Native Brotherhood. And their argument was this: the government says, "You are already wards of the government. We are already looking after you people." In other words we were excluded of the pension plan. But through the efforts and the powers behind the organizations of the Indians of the province, we delegated. The reason why I mention this part is coming back again to prove their age. When it was... finally we were included into the pension plan. The next big headache was to prove their age, who was eligible for the pension. In my immediate area here I travelled back and forth to the Indian Office, Indian Office, to try and prove that these certain Indians were eligible for the pension. Of course, the Indian Office at that time -- I don't know where they got their documents but, you know how government officials are here, they'll do everything they can to keep you away from such plan. So I had to travel, do a lot of travelling, do a lot of research work. I looked into their baptismal certificate, I look into their marriage certificate, at what age they were married and what age was their oldest child. And there I trace it back and sure enough every one of them was eligible for the pension.

Imbert: Were the records kept in the church? Is the baptismal records from the earliest time still there? They didn't get burned?

Clarence: That's right. Still there, yes, because the school burned down but the rectory didn't burn at that time. We still got our missionary records of all Indians when they first became the Roman Catholics. And the old records prior to this record was held in New Westminster -- it's now transferred into Mission. At that time it's amazing to see these Indians
with their Indian names. I've seen the documents and seen the records. And when I see so and so it doesn't say, "Oh, this is Jeffery from way back or Joseph," that states there with their Indian name on it, written by the missionaries. Our Indian name, as you know now, we're one nation that we lost our Indian names.

Imbert: Wouldn't give the what, their other name, would it? Their... as well as their Indian name, would it?

Clarence: Well, of course, nowadays we have the English names now. The cause of it is from the baptismal. Like now I'm Clarence Joe. I'm supposed to be Clarence Joseph, but it's such a bad mixture now -- not only here in Sechelt, you will find in British Columbia here hundreds and hundreds of Joes. Well, they were meant to be Joseph, which is a Catholic name, Joseph. John, it's a common name amongst the Catholic Indians. And yet the other religion, like further on up north where you find the Anglican church, and on the Indian reservation, this Robinson and so forth, English names then, you see. And these are the things that a lot of the non-Indians don't seem to make a study of it. Which Frank Calder told me one time, "Clarence, you're way ahead of me. You're doing a lot of research work." (laughs)

Imbert: I suppose what happened is that they merely gave them their first names, Catholics.

Clarence: That's right.

Imbert: And assumed possibly that their last name would be their Indian name.

Clarence: That's right. That's quite true.

Imbert: Whereas the Anglicans said, "No, you'd better get an English name too," or a Scottish name or whatever.

Clarence: That's true.

Imbert: And they just would choose.

Clarence: Yes.

Imbert: Is that...

Clarence: That's right, yes, that's what happened.

Imbert: Could we hold it just (Break in Tape)... moved away from the various villages around on some of the reserves and so on, or is that not done so much? Are they still mostly really all living here now?

Clarence: We have to live here now with our... Well, our immediate families have to stay here now because we have
children now going to day school. The boarding school, the
Sechelt Nation has turned that completely over to the
government for unprivileged children, children from isolated
Indian reserves. There was quite a problem here a few years
back where our children were, where the government were trying
to place these children in certain schools from isolated Indian
reserves. So in 1945 the government approached us, asking us
if we would convey our Indian boarding school to the government
and they would in turn build us a day school. At that time
there was few of the old chiefs still alive, they said, "No,
the school belongs to us, we built the school." So when the
old chiefs passed on I was then a band councillor then. I was
promoted from being a secretary, an interpreter and I was then
appointed by the band here as a councillor. So in 1951 again
the federal government approached us asking us if we would
convey the boarding school to the government for the purpose of
servicing children from isolated reserves to attend school for
education. So at that time we took a different system from
the old people -- we took a vote -- a more democratic system,
you might say. (laughs) We took a vote in our village and
ninety-nine percent voted for a day school. So out comes our
children from the boarding school and attend school and it tied
up the parents here in Sechelt and stay here. Just the men
folks had to go away and earn their living, and that's the way
it is today.

Imbert: They knew what they were doing in voting this way,
that they would tie themselves up.

Clarence: That's true.

Imbert: Well then, this school up here now then is from,
children from anywhere on the coast, I suppose, that are
Catholics and that are isolated.

Clarence: That's true. In our school here we have children and
some from unprivileged children, that is broken homes, broken
homes where parents split up and they have to come to this
school here. But mind you, today again we're further than that
again. We are now sending our children to non-Indian schools,
public schools, which I think is one of the major steps we have
taken, some of us leaders of the Indians in this part of the
land.

Imbert: Well, this is happening all over.

Clarence: It's happening all over, yes. I think my daughter,
my daughter you see up here, she was the first Indian girl that
attended Elphinstone High School. She was the first one to
break the ice there, my daughter.

Imbert: It was quite an occasion when that happened.

Clarence: Yes. We have come a long ways in a short time, in
other words speaking. A long ways in a short time. We've done
a lot of talking. Of course, this federal vote and the provincial vote, as you might know, we were not privileged to vote in either election. Today we are able to cast our votes and by doing so we are eligible to voice our opinion. We have a strong voice in the government now.

Imbert: Well, to go back to the old times and the people, would you repeat what you were saying -- the special, the people with special memory?

Clarence: They speak... There wasn't every Indian that was gifted with memory. There were certain people, male Indian or female Indian, were gifted with memory. I have met Indians in my time, in my travels up and down the coast where I have lost a name, I will say a mountain, and I would have a group of Indians heading back to our old villages up in the inlet. And I would turn to one, I would say, ask him the name of this mountain. And he wouldn't remember. Then I would turn to others and finally I'd come to one that would remember every mountain, the name of every mountain, the name of every creek, the name of every bay and what happened here years ago, and what took place here years ago. It's not every Indian were gifted with memory.

Imbert: Now what is it you remember about these people telling you about the old days? I mean these special people and how they would sit around. You were telling me about that.

Clarence: Now, for instance? Like what?

Imbert: Well, these were the people that would be the repositories of the knowledge and their memory of the people, of the Sechelt Nation. The people that remembered the things from way back, they were special people. You were saying that they were appointed or chosen. Do you remember that there are some specially chosen people to remember things?

Clarence: They were not exactly chosen, but it was passed on to all of them. They'd sit around in the evenings, you might say, around the campfire. I've seen the campfire days up in the Jervis Inlet area in the evenings where they'd sit around and they'd be finished having a feast, we'll say, now seal meat. And they'd sit around the campfire -- families and their children -- and these certain old people would tell, relate stories and history of the Sechelt Nation. Perhaps you've heard some people, the non-Indians, say we originated from Asiatic, from the Chinese, and Japanese, and some people even say from Norway, or Sweden, or even the Scotchmen say we originated from Scotland. Came across through the Bering Sea and etc. We keep telling them, "No." And we base ourself to the old ancient story of our Indians telling us that we had been originated here years and years, thousands of years ago, going way back. And my reply to some of these people that are inquisitive as to ask us if we were originated from people from the old country, I keep telling them no. I would ask you the
same thing, "How are you originated in the old country where you come from in the old country? How did you become people in the old country?" The question is a vice versa question. Then they're stumped of course, some of them. We've been here just as long as you people were in the old country, and it's now been proven, that their science now has been found that we've been here for thousands of years, the ice age, you might say.

Imbert: Do you remember any stories of the beginnings, the creation, any of these legends? Because these are part of the memories that they passed down, of course. Do you happen to remember any of these legends and so on?

Clarence: I remember some of these legends, we'll say now in Pender Harbor, where they originated there. I think, if I remember right there, I think they were the people that came there to this earth, you might say, according to their legend, were canoe builders. And in Saltery Bay where the ferry lands there, there was Indians there that originated there. They were making paddles. And I seen with my own eyes an old Indian here that originally came from there. That's all he did was hewing paddles, which proves the story is right. People from there were people that hewed paddles. And the people that, they call us (Indian) in our language, they were dropped from heaven down to this earth and with them they had the bows and arrows, and they were the hunters of Jervis Inlet. The hunters of Jervis Inlet were great hunters.

Imbert: What do they call...?

Clarence: (Indian) they call them. That's the word they use in our tradition, the story from way, way back. I don't know what the white man calls their story, how they originated in the old country from where they started from.

Imbert: What was the story? Do you know that story about Jervis Inlet?

Clarence: I don't know too much about the story, but they were the people with the bows and arrows. They were the people that done the hunting. They were the ones that roamed the mountains.

Imbert: So that was the hunting country?

Clarence: That was the hunting country. Down here was the canoe. They go after the seals and the porpoise out in the open, they call this water (Indian). (Indian) is the name of the open water here in what you see is now called the Gulf of Georgia. They come here and they spear their porpoise, their seal. Of course, there was seals up in the inlets.

Imbert: The name of this place, before it was called Sechelt, did that have anything to do with the fact that it was a narrow piece of land between...?
Clarence: No, (Indian) means outside, just where we are now, (Indian) that means outside. If you go to (inaudible) Bay, supposing you were talking to me, "Clarence, I'm going to (Indian)," that means I'm going outside. (Indian) meaning the peninsula here, the inside and the outside. (Indian) they call that over there, which the last part of the word, you might notice, (Indian) after (Indian), the (Indian) you might...

Imbert: Is that the side?

Clarence: Yes, (Indian) and after (Indian). So (Indian) was the immediate name of, the immediate place here now. Like (Indian) that's the head of Jervis Inlet. (Indian) means the head of the inlet. So where I originally came from, on my grandfather's side, that's Desert Bay they call it the (Indian) tribe. That means Sheltered Bay, Sheltered (Indian).

Imbert: Does Jervis Inlet have a name, the whole inlet?

Clarence: Yes, (Indian). The whole inlet is called (Indian).

Imbert: What about, for instance, Princess Louisa Inlet, does that express...?

Clarence: (Indian).

Imbert: Did you ever live in there in the summertime?

Clarence: Oh yes. When I was a youngster I was practically raised up in the inlets until such a time I came to school. And my holidays was back up there again, up in the inlets.

Imbert: Did you run into the Johnston family in the...?

Clarence: I know them well.

Imbert: Tell me about them, what were they doing in there well.

Clarence: The Johnston family, according to my dad, my late father, their first arrival up in Jervis Inlet, they had come down by canoe. I believe from up Alaska, if I remember the story right with that family. And they had nothing. And they arrived up in Jervis Inlet and they lived with the Indians up there. And the Johnston boys were just young boys. Old (Indian) they called them -- that's the father, (Indian). I don't why they called him (Indian). I don't remember what name he had, but they called him Old (Indian), the Indians called him (Indian). He reached there with his wife and these boys. So these boys grew up with my father and they became great hunters, together with my father and that generation. They were people, they were boys that roamed the mountains like our forefathers, just with a gun and maybe one blanket and salt, that's all. And they'd stay up in the mountains for weeks. In fact Jud Johnston at Saltery Bay there, if he happened... Of
course his memory is gone, I noticed here a few years ago when I was there, it must be worse now. They were great friends with my dad, they were like brothers with my dad, Jud Johnston. And never, they were never parted, you might say, they were always together. And these boys, that's all they did was roam the mountains in the summer, the Johnston brothers.

Imbert: Can you remember any more about them? This was very interesting, you know, your impression of this family living out there alone by itself. They were quite a big family, weren't they?

Clarence: They were quite a big family. They moved, and I don't know too much of their... All I know that they lived, and they lived with the Indians, they ate what the Indians ate, you know. And they were like Indians because they had nothing when they had moved in there, they had nothing. They didn't even have the proper clothing, according to our old people, when they moved in there. And of course, as I say, they grew up with our parents -- the young Johnston brothers. And of course, there was logging going on there and they done some logging.

Imbert: Their father was a great, tall man, wasn't he?

Clarence: I don't remember their father. He must have been because Jud and them were great big men. In fact Steve Johnston is my wife's brother-in-law, and Jud was married to my wife's cousin so we're pretty close in the family relationship.

Imbert: He spoke of how close they were.

Clarence: Yes.

Imbert: And he spoke particularly about an old woman who had a marvelous quality of being able to mend broken arms and things like this. And the way she used to bind things around them. And she was a very great friend of theirs. You wouldn't know who she was?

Clarence: We had several of those, women that they were called any time of the day. I've seen that with my own eyes, a sick child or somebody sick, and this particular woman would be called, I've seen the last of that. And anyone with a broken leg, from his hunting trip, or a broken arm, they'd come and put a splint, you know, wrap it up. That's one thing I can say. Sickness in the early days before the white man came, there was hardly anything known about sickness. But they had accidents -- they had broken legs from their hunting trips. That's something that we cannot overlook in our story. Then again people wonder, "Well, how did they cure that broken leg?" Well, they had their herbs and there was ways of healing their broken legs, or broken arm, or whatever the injuries they had.

Imbert: And it seems they knew how to manipulate it too.
Clarence: That's right.

Imbert: It wasn't just... because Jud himself tells how he broke an arm and this old lady healed it in such a way that the doctors, when he went to the war, were amazed.

Clarence: That's right. I've seen the, I've seen in the ball ground here where a boy dislocated his shoulder and no doctors in those days in our area. This old man went there -- threw his shoulder off sliding into home base, (laughs) -- this old man one day and in a few minutes he had his shoulder back in its place, his arm. Just felt it around there and gave a twist. It's just natural to them, some of them.

I think we're exceptional in my father's time. They might have been in my grandfather's and my great-grandfather's time but they didn't speak too much about it. They did mention few but not too much, they didn't seem to be too much concern about their part of that story, you know, when they're relating their story to us younger people.

Imbert: What was your father's name?

Clarence: My father's name was Basil Joe.

Imbert: What was his Indian name?

Clarence: (Indian).

Imbert: He was a chief, wasn't he?

Clarence: He was a member of a hereditary family, a chief, yes.

Imbert: Would he get that through his mother?

Clarence: Through his father, mother, yes. His mother, that's true, mother.

Imbert: And he was for many years a hereditary chief then?

Clarence: That's right, yes. My name, my Indian name, which I think we are the last generation to have the Indian name, is (Indian). I was named by an elderly woman, according to my late mother. She picked me up at Princess Louisa -- that's (Indian). She was a lady then about the age of a hundred years of age. We've seen Indians live right up to their prime age at that time. As a youngster I've seen them. Many, many old people walking around here with canes, very old people. The certain old woman picked me up and says, "I'll take your baby and I'll give him a name." And that was me. They called me (Indian). "And this will be my last one, be the last baby I give a name." Three days later she died. (Indian) means... this chief he named me after, his home was then all totem poles, carvings, post of his home, carvings that means (Indian). (Indian) means in our dialect if I write something
here I (Indian), that means I write. (Indian) is the meaning of that word. His house was all carved with totem poles.

Imbert: You were a writer. In other words, you were the person that learned to write, too, in effect, weren't you?

Clarence: I became a secretary. I was the first, I was the first secretary, I would say. It's even mentioned by the anthropologist, Hawthorne, that kept books and filed papers for the last of the hereditary chiefs. I was the first one that sort of made an office of it.

Imbert: When you went to boarding school here did your family live somewhere else?

Clarence: Yes. Yes, they lived up in the inlets and I stayed in the boarding school. But I was very unfortunate though. I only had one year in the old school and it burned down. They burned down the school that I was referring to a little while back here, the one that was built by our forefathers. That was destroyed by fire in 1916. So we were deprived of our school -- the boys and girls that I went to school with -- for several years, until this one was built. In 1923 it was completed.

Imbert: There was no school in between that period?

Clarence: They finally did have a small school several years later to try and keep up with our schooling. But in those days the schooling wasn't the same kind of schooling they're having today.

Imbert: There were nuns, weren't there?

Clarence: There were nuns. And we had to do our own farm work, little farm work and we had little cows there, and little gardens. And we had to cut our own wood. It was what they call Industrial School. Of course we had our school classes and...

Imbert: Did you like this? So many native people have found it...

Clarence: It's quite true. It was something there you couldn't... There was a lot of Indian children that run away from this Indian school. They'd walk for miles to get home to their parents. The Indian parent is not like the non-Indian parents, we're so attached to our children...

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