

**mitoni niya nêhiyaw
– nêhiyaw-iskwêw mitoni niya**

**Cree is who I truly am
– me, I am truly a Cree woman**

A life told by Sarah Whitecalf



**Edited and translated by H.C. Wolfart and Freda Ahenakew
Preface by Ted Whitecalf**

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Sarah Whitecalf (bottom row, centre) at five or six years of age. The boy to her right is Smith Atimoyoo, born 1915.

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Ahenakew, with a preface and photographs by
Ted Whitecalf



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Preface

Ted Whitecalf

This book is the work of my late mother, Sarah Whitecalf, who recorded her reminiscences for two friends she made late in life: Freda Ahenakew and Chris Wolfart.

The recordings on which the present volume is based are highly personal. They were made on various occasions over the course of almost three years, beginning in March 1988 and ending in December 1990, less than a year before her death on 1 October 1991. Some of these recordings were made at my mom's in Saskatoon or at the late Freda Ahenakew's home at Muskeg Lake. Other interviews were done in the recording studio of the Linguistics Department at the University of Manitoba or during one of the many other trips on which my mom went with Freda. She was often in the company of her friends, including for example Cecilia Masuskapoe, Rosa Longneck and Grace Ahenakew, but sometimes also younger Cree speakers such as her grandsons Ricky and Donny Gladue.

My mother and Freda Ahenakew (also known as Freda Greyeyes) had met only a few years earlier – it was the late Smith Atimoyoo who introduced them when Freda was looking for a truly fluent Cree speaker. She wanted him to help with her *Nêhiyaw-waciscwanis*, where young children would be looked after in an exclusively Cree-speaking setting. My mom was a great role-model for the children, speaking nothing but Cree!

The language my mother speaks in these stories is the classical form of Plains Cree, or ‘High Cree’ as it is often called. Her choice of words and the way she constructs her sentences beautifully match the literary form of traditional Cree *âcimowina*. Since the chapters were recorded over the course of three years, some topics come up more than once; this increases the effect of repetition which is typical of spoken literature.

The chapters of this book are truly personal stories of my late mother’s life, they provide sharp insights into her own experiences and, especially, her own views and memories and her own thoughts and perspectives. At the same time, to be sure, they may also be read as a representative account of the lives lived by Plains Cree women on the Saskatchewan prairies over much of the twentieth century. Chris and Freda’s interpretation of my mother’s words add another flavour to what might be heard by those wanting to learn from her teachings.

Family photographs have been used in this book to be more telling of her life at home. I also took a few additional pictures to illustrate the locales at Sweetgrass First Nation where some of the scenes in this book are set.

Introduction

H.C. Wolfart

These memoirs present a Cree woman's view of her world. It is a highly personal document based on the spoken word of the late Sarah Whitecalf (1919-1991), whose reminiscences are here printed in Cree exactly as she recorded them (and without any reference to the English translation on the opposite page). At the same time, her experiences and reactions are also representative of the lives lived by Plains Cree women on the Canadian prairies over much of the twentieth century. Taken together, these chapters constitute an autobiography of great personal authority and rare authenticity.

This book gives absolute priority to the spoken record, preserving the original Cree choice of words and sentence structures and, of course, Cree narrative strategies as faithfully as permitted by the printed page. The translation also follows the original Cree text as closely as possible, even if this sometimes results in awkward turns of phrase in English. But the English translation is at all times strictly secondary to the Cree original, retaining not only all repetitions – both within the individual texts and across the chapters recorded on separate occasions – but also all interrupted sentences and false starts of the kind that are typically smoothed over in a standard translation. If the English style of these translations should on occasion seem strange to readers expecting conventional English prose, we hope that it will in its close rendition of the Cree text prove engaging to those reading the texts for their

literary or linguistic, historical or ethnological interest. Primary documents by any standard, the integrally preserved texts which make up this book are here printed as they were spoken.

THE AUTHOR

Sarah Whitecalf was born on 12 May 1919 at *Môsômininâhk*, literally 'amongst the Moosomins'. At that time, *Môsômin*'s band had only recently been moved to *Kinosêwi-sâkahikanîhk* 'at Fish Lake' (officially referred to as "Jackfish Lake" and often also subsumed under the regional term "at Cochin") from its earlier site between the Battle River and the North Saskatchewan, where his reserve had originally been adjacent to those of *Kâ-pitikow* / Thunderchild and *Wîhkasko-kisêyin* / Sweetgrass not far west of Battleford.

The forced relocation to a site about 35 km away from their former reserve did not, apparently, sever the close ties between *Môsômin*'s people and those of *Wîhkasko-kisêyin*, who had remained at *Nakiwacîhk* (lit. 'at the abrupt edge of the hill'). When Sarah Whitecalf was about four years old, her widowed mother married a man from Sweetgrass, and she herself went to live there about ten years later and, after another three or four years, married into the Sweetgrass band. In the intervening years, between the ages of four and (roughly) fourteen, Sarah Whitecalf frequently went back and forth between her grandparents' house at Moosomin, where she had remained, and her mother's at Sweetgrass.

Most of her childhood, thus, was spent with her maternal grandparents, *Kâ-pêtwêwêmat* and *Osâkikwanêwisk* (who are introduced more fully, along with their colonial names Louis Applegarth and Catherine, in chapters 1 and 3). Their formative influence must have been all the stronger as the household consisted only of these three, and Sarah was not sent to school. The traumatic experience of losing one daughter, already practically an adult, at the Thunderchild Residential School at Delmas without even being told of her illness by the nuns, had caused Sarah's

mother to resist the pleas of the local priest (Albert Lacombe's nephew Ernest Lacombe), leaving her daughter a monolingual Cree speaker.

As a consequence, Sarah Whitecalf remained for her entire life what she put most succinctly (though, characteristically, in the rhetorical form of a chiasmic reversal) as follows:

..., *êwako ohci mitoni niya nêhiyaw,*
nêhiyaw-iskwêw mitoni niya;
 '..., and because of that, I am definitely a Cree,
 as for me, I am definitely a Cree woman;'

Even when she moved to Saskatoon, where she spent the better part of her last twenty years, she essentially spoke no English. She died on 1 October 1991.

Sarah Whitecalf's literary gifts are manifest in the substantial body of texts – many of them the fruit of their travels together – which she recorded for Freda Ahenakew over the course of her last few years.¹

THE FIRST FOUR CHAPTERS: BECOMING A CREE WOMAN

The book begins with Sarah Whitecalf reviewing her life history, giving special prominence to the rôles played by her grandparents and her mother. While the four chapters, representing texts recorded on different occasions, all deal in one way or another with the exigencies of a subsistence economy, they vary in emphasis.

Chapter 1 tells of a nine-year old child being introduced to the domestic chores that will be an inescapable preoccupation for

1 The first volume of her texts to be published was a set of brief lectures given on one of their trips to a group of Freda Ahenakew's students: *kinêhiyâwiwininaw nêhiyawêwin / The Cree Language is Our Identity: The La Ronge Lectures of Sarah Whitecalf* (edited, translated and with a glossary by H.C. Wolfart & Freda Ahenakew, Publications of the Algonquian Text Society, Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1993).

the rest of her life. The most remarkable passage in this text is the author's laconic report of her marriage:

êkosi, piyisk nikî-miskamâson nâpêw, nikî-miskotâtonân, ...
'and so, finally, I found a man for myself, we found
each other, ...'

The form of words used in this account suggests that, contrary to common practice, the choice of husband was hers.

Chapter 2 touches on the ravages of the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1918-20, ending in a brief but compelling account of her older sister's death at residential school. As a consequence of these disasters, Sarah Whitecalf in effect grew up, as she stresses repeatedly, as an only child.

In chapter 3, she contrasts her childhood and youth among the Moosomins, *môshômininâhk*, and her adult life at *Nakiwacîhk* / Sweetgrass. While all Cree narrative tends to be punctuated by interjections from the audience, indicating responses ranging from mere attentiveness or recognition to approval or astonishment, this chapter over large stretches takes the form of a dialogue between Sarah Whitecalf and Freda Ahenakew (and, to a much lesser extent, H.C. Wolfart). The early part of the chapter concentrates on the author's grandparents; later she is asked about various sets of siblings and cousins, and her responses show a constant emphasis on having been brought up as an only child. Finally, she recalls a number of the Sweetgrass figures who had dictated their reminiscences to Leonard Bloomfield in 1925 and, in particular, her step-grandfather *Kâ-miyokîsihkwêw* / Fine-day, the primary authority for David G. Mandelbaum's ethnography of 1936.²

2 See Leonard Bloomfield, *Sacred Stories of the Sweet Grass Cree* (National Museum of Canada Bulletin 60, Ottawa, 1930) and *Plains Cree Texts* (American Ethnological Society Publication 16, New York); Mandelbaum's thesis was published as *The Plains Cree* in 1940 and reissued in 1979 (Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina); for a full biography of *Kâ-miyokîsihkwêw* see now also Garry Radison, *Fine Day: Plains Cree Warrior, Shaman and Elder* (Calgary, Smoke Ridge Books, 2013).

Chapter 4 goes into more detail on many of the domestic chores entrusted to the young woman. It also includes another account of her mother's refusal to send her to residential school. In her recollections of the first year of her married life, she once more pays special attention to the duties of a wife as they had been impressed upon her by her grandmother.

THE SECOND FOUR CHAPTERS: BEING A CREE WOMAN

The four texts constituting the second part of this book deal with specific events manifesting a life-changing force. They range from a distressing marriage to murder committed in a jealous rage, and they are altogether exceptional in portraying the personal feelings of a Cree woman forced to deal with a husband's alcoholism and the immense loneliness she suffered while tending a relative's children in a place far away from home – and, apparently just as debilitating, away from the company of other women.

In chapter 5 the author retells her mother's account of her arranged marriage at eighteen to a widower seen as much older than herself (probably in his thirties):

*«êêkwa ê-pakwâtak awa kêhtê-nâpêw,» itwêw;
«wahwâ, nikî-pakwâtên mâna mistah,» îtwêw;
‘«now I hated this old man,» she said;
«oh my, I used to hate it utterly,» she said;’*

This text thus constitutes a valuable addition to the small set of documents recording an unguarded statement of a woman's view of what was essentially a forced marriage. The practicalities of life, to be sure, take up the major part of the text: the camp moved south into Flathead country to join the lucrative bounty hunt for coyotes, with a plentiful supply of illicit beef a welcome bonus, but a great deal of worry and trouble is caused by the riding escapades of her husband's eight-year-old son. A counterpoint is provided by the relative peace of their winter quarters in apple country, but the travails of the return journey come to a sad

climax when she at last reaches home only to find that her older sister had died in her absence.

Chapter 6 is a horrible tale of wife-beating as a prelude to murder and suicide. It illuminates some of the structures and stresses of Plains Cree society as it functioned on the North Saskatchewan River half a century into the reserve period. Speaking as a witness, Sarah Whitecalf masterfully captures the helpless agony of the victim's parents in the face of their daughter's suffering, the deference shown to the headman, the importance of forebodings and portents, and not least the care for the dying, the dead and the infirm survivors – and her account is all the more revealing as these issues are quite incidental to the subject and the plot.

An autobiographical account or *âcimisowin* in the narrowest sense, chapter 7 stands out amongst the recorded instances of the genre. In carefully relating the author's emotional state, it offers a glimpse into the inner world of Cree existence that is extremely rare. With respect to Cree historical and literary norms, moreover, this text demonstrates that the factual character of an *âcimisowin* or *âcimowin* is not compromised, as readers used to classical European literatures might expect, by the presence within it of supernatural phenomena. On a more mundane level, the detailed account of Sarah Whitecalf's journey back from Montana is remarkable for the ingenuity and tenacity with which she makes her way while travelling alone for the first time in her life – and without English.

Chapter 8 is the deeply moving portrait of a Cree woman determined to protect her grandchildren even if this requires the unprecedented step of leaving husband and reserve and having to establish herself in town. It is a testament to her extraordinary courage and strength that she rose to break the rules governing a woman's conduct which she had been taught by her grandmother and respected all along to take charge of her own life.

THE THIRD FOUR CHAPTERS: THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

The contemplative essay on mourning practices which opens the first chapter, 9, of the third part leads up to a dramatic scene in which the recently departed son implores his inconsolable father and mother to cease of their grief so that he too might be released. The discussion then turns to the consolations offered by both Cree religion and Roman Catholicism.

The three historical reports or *âcimowina* in chapters 10, 11 and 12 relate a supernatural event that took place at *Nakiwacîhk* within living memory. While the wider significance of the case remains to be explored, even a superficial reading of the text illuminates the interplay of secular, indeed mundane, matters with religious issues and their ritual implementation.

From the perspective of linguistic analysis and philological scholarship, these three versions of “the same text,” told on three different occasions and to distinct audiences over a period of almost three years (August 1988 to May 1990), yield a tantalising case study of the structures and processes of oral transmission.

As literary works, these three narratives of a single event splendidly illustrate their genre, which readily includes supernatural figures and their actions in a factual account, established as such by the familiar and carefully identified locale in which both the externally observable and the arcane events are said to have taken place and reconfirmed by the personal authority of named witnesses – in this case one of her step-grandmothers and, most important, the speaker herself.

THE ROLE OF THE EDITORS

The reminiscences and historical accounts which Sarah Whitecalf gave to Freda Ahenakew were spoken Cree texts recorded on a number of occasions between 1989 and 1990.

As shown in the chapter openings and the several kinds of dialogue, the audience addressed by Sarah Whitecalf [SW] in this book from time to time also included Cecilia Masuskapoe [CM],

Rosa Longneck [RL], Grace Ahenakew [GA], Chris Wolfart [HC] and an unidentified Cree speaker [NN] in addition, always, to Freda Ahenakew [FA].

The text of chapter 2 in fact was part of a much longer storytelling session shared by *Kêkêk* / Cecilia Masuskapoe and Sarah Whitecalf and originally published in Cree only.³

The careful transcription and presentation of these audio-recordings, including the insertion of punctuation marks to show the boundaries of clauses and sentences; of double and single quotation marks to indicate direct speech and other cited words and passages; and the division of the text into paragraphs and larger discourse units (identified in print by roman numerals), are the work of the editors. In its initial phase, from 1989 to 1996, this work was carried out jointly by the late Freda Ahenakew and H.C. Wolfart.⁴ Continuing over another two decades, the later stages of linguistic analysis, editorial preparation and translation with their seemingly endless cycles of review and revision (and the errors and infelicities which inevitably remain) are the sole responsibility of the latter.

All editorial additions (mainly of word- or preverb-final vowels elided before a word- or stem-initial vowel in connected speech, or of the occasional word interrupted in the course of narration), including chapter and paragraph numbers, are typographically set off by square brackets to keep them distinct from the text itself. The special symbol ~ is attached to fragmentary words, and ~ marks interrupted sentences.

3 This text was originally published as chapter 3, section IV of an entire volume exclusively printed in Cree: *piko kîkway ê-nakacihât: kêkêk otâcimowina ê-nêhiyawastêki*, mitoni ê-âh-itwêt mâna Cecilia Masuskapoe, itasinahamîyiwa ôhi nîso, H.C. Wolfart êkwa Freda Ahenakew [There's Nothing She Can't Do: Kêkêk's Autobiography Published in Cree, Exactly as told by Cecilia Masuskapoe, in a critical edition by H.C. Wolfart & Freda Ahenakew] (Algonquian and Iroquoian Linguistics, Memoir 21, 2010).

4 (with the gratefully acknowledged support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada)

The Cree title of the book itself and the Cree chapter titles are taken from Sarah Whitecalf's texts.

Given the wealth of issues raised by these texts, detailed commentaries would have gone beyond the scope of this book. Studies of the texts as literary, historical and ethnological documents and a detailed treatment of the philological problems encountered and their editorial resolution are scheduled to appear separately.

In presenting the text unaltered, in a form that reflects the *viva voce* performance as closely as print permits, we respect the speaker's prerogative to keep her own history; in leaving the protagonists undisguised, we acknowledge the fact that, in small communities, pseudonyms offer a thin veil at most; against the paternalistic impulse to maintain an unbridgeable divide between participant and observer narratives, the Cree texts we have been publishing are an attempt to document an autonomous representation of what actually happened.

EDITORIAL CONVENTIONS AND SPECIAL SYMBOLS

xxxx	[text in roman type] primary language (Cree in the text, English in the translation)
xxxx	[text in italic type] secondary language (English in the text, Cree in the translation)
«xxxx»	[guillemets] quoted speech
‘xxxx’	[single quotation marks] [1] quoted speech (if embedded within quoted speech) [2] cited word
“xxxx”	[double quotation marks] quoted speech embedded within two outer layers of quoted speech
–	[long hyphen] syntactic or rhetorical break (usually sharper than those marked by comma or semicolon) within a sentence
()	[parentheses] parenthetical insertion (usually spoken at lower pitch or volume)

--	[wave-hyphen within the word] fragmentary word, resumed
~	[wave-hyphen at the end of the word] fragmentary word
~	[long hyphen and wave-hyphen following the word] fragmentary sentence

[a]	[roman type enclosed in square brackets] editorially supplied word-final vowel (elided under the rules of vowel combination and restored on the basis of vocalic, prosodic or syntactic evidence)
[xxxx]	[italic type enclosed in square brackets] editorial comment (including such standard comments as [<i>laughs</i>], [<i>laughter</i>], [<i>gesture</i>], [<i>clap</i>], etc.)
[sic]	['indeed'] confirmation that the preceding word is correctly printed (usually in the case of an uncommon or otherwise remarkable form, e.g., minor idiosyncracies, dialect discrepancies, slips of the tongue)
[sc.]	['that is'] proposed emendation or completion of a fragment; explication or elaboration; omitted where an editorial insertion, marked by square brackets, simply blends into an English sentence
[?sic]	['really?'] caution that the identification of the preceding word remains in doubt
[lit.]	['literally'] literal translation of a technical term or geographical name

mitoni niya nêhiyaw
– nêhiyaw-iskwêw mitoni niya

Cree is who I truly am
– me, I am truly a Cree woman

I

Becoming a Cree woman



Sarah Whitecalf and Freda Ahenakew with children at the *Nêhiyaw-Waciscwanis*,
c. 1988.

1

êkosi nikî-pê-ay-itâcihonân

This has been our way of life

êkosi nikî-pê-ay-itâcihonân

[FA:] *Sarah Whitecalf* awa, nakiwacîhk ohci
kâ-wî-pîkiskwâtikoyahk anohc, *sixty-eight* êkwa
ê-wî-ati-nâtahk. mêkwâc ôma ê-ây-~ ê-~ ôt[a]
ê-wâh-wîcihikoyahk ôma kâ-kakwê-sipwêpayihtâyahk
kanawêyimâwasowin; wîst êkota ê-wâh-wîtapimât
ê-pa-pâh-pîkiskwâtât ôh âwâsisa, mâk
ê-wî-wiy-âcimostâkoyahk [sic] tânisi wiyawâw
ê-kî-ay-is-ôhpikinâwasocik, tânisi ~~, êkwa mîna
tânisi ê-kî-pê-is-ôhpikiniht wiya, ~-ohpikihiht, tânisi
ê-kî-isi-pimâcihocik. êkosi.

[SW:] mhm!

[1] â, ayihk, mistahi nitatamihik aw ôta iskwêw, ôma
kâ-wî-isîhcikâsit, môy konita ôm ôta kâ-wî-pîkiskwêhit, nim-~
nikîskisamâk, êkwa mîna sôniyâwa nimiyik. êkosi, tâpwê anima
kwayask ê-tôtahk êwako, ê-tâpiyinîhkâhtahk, nêhiyawî-kîkway
ê-nôhtê-kiskêyihthahk, ê-nôhtê-pêhtahk. êkosi, êyiwêhk
ê-isi-kaskihtâyân nika-kakwê-tôtên t-êsi-pîkiskwêyân. tâpiskôt
mîna, otâkosihk, êkotowahk, kêht-~ osk-âyak nikî-pê-nâtikwak,
mitâtahto-tipahikan ê-ispayik, êkotê nikî-nitawî-pîkiskwân, âta wiya
namôy ê-pêyakoyân, kotak iskwêw nikî-wîcihik mâna, têpiyâhk
mâna ê-nâh-nâtamawit wîst îta âskaw ta-pîkiskwêt. êkosi, tâpwê
ê-isi-kaskihtâyân nikî-kakwê-kitotâwak êkota osk-âyak, kîkwây

This has been our way of life

[FA:] This is Sarah Whitecalf from *Nakiwacîhk* [Sweetgrass] who is going to speak to us today, she is approaching the age of sixty-eight. At the present time she is helping us here as we try to get a day-care running; she is there with the children herself and speaking to them but [now] she is going to tell us how they themselves used to raise their children and also how she herself came to be raised and how they used to make their living. That is it.

[SW:] mhm.

[Prologue]

[1] Well, I am very grateful to this woman here for the way she is treating me, it is not for nothing that she is asking me to speak here, she has formally presented me with tobacco and she has also given me money. Thus she is truly doing the proper thing and performing the fitting ritual since she wants to know about Cree matters and wants to hear about them. And so, to the extent of my ability I will try to do that and speak. Yesterday also, for example, that kind, some young people, had come fetch me, I had gone to speak there at ten o'clock, although I was not alone, another woman had come with me, she was only there to help me out from time to time when she too would sometimes speak. Thus it is true, I tried to the best of my ability to talk to the young people

tahto ê-nôhtê-pê-kiskêyihthakik, êkosi kî-nôhtê-kiskêyihthamwak, tânis ê-kî-pê-isi-awâsisîwiyân, tânis ê-kî-pê-is-ôhpikihikawiyân. êkosi, iyikohk ê-kaskihtâyân, êwako nipê-âcimostawâwak, tânisi ê-kî-pê-isi-paminikawiyân kâ-kî-pê-awâsisîwiyân, môy kîkway nikâtâtôtên, mîna namôy ninêpêwimon; ninakayâskên, tânitahtwâw êkwa êkota, êkosi nikî-pê-isi-mamisîwâtikwak, êkosi mîna mihcêtiwak, êkota kâ-kî-apicik, anima kâ-kî-wîtapimakik ôk ôsk-âyak, ê-ati-masinahahkik tânis ê-itwêyân.

[I]

[2] êkos êkwa, kik-âcimostâtînâwâw, nêhiyawî-kîkway kâ-nôhtê-kiskêyihthamêk, tânisi k-êtâcimostawakik anik ânita, namôy ômatowihk [*points to audio-recorder*] otinamwak nipîkiskwêwin, mâka masinahikêwak osk-âyak, kahkiyaw ê-têtipêwêpicik, ati-masinahikêwak ê-pîkiskwêyân. êkos êkwa, nipê-âcimostawâwak tânis ê-kî-pê-is-ôhpikihikawiyân, ê-pê-awâsisîwiyân, ôtê ‘môsômininâhk’ k-êsiyîhkâtêk askiy, êkotê nitaskîhkâninân, kâ-kî-ayâyân, êkotê [ê] ê-kî-tas-ôhpikihikawiyân ê-pê-awâsisîwiyân. êkosi mîna, nikî-pê-pêyakôsâniwin, namôy âta miton ê-ohci-pêyakoyân, mâka nîtisânak kahkiyaw ê-kî-mêsci-pôni-pimâtisicik, niya piko ê-kî-iskwahpinêyân; êkos êkwa, mistahi nikî-sâkihik -- nikî-sâkihikwak kêhtê-ayak, nôhkom nimosôm. êkwa nikâwiy (ê-nêwopiponêyân êsa kâ-kî-pê-onâpêmit ôta *Sweetgrass*, êwako ‘nakiwacîhk’ k-êsiyîhkâtêk askîhkân, nitaskîhkâninân), êkosi niya nêtê ê~ nikî-kisâtinikawin môsôminêw-âskîhkânihk, êkotê nikî-tasi-kanawêyimikawin. mê-mîskoc [*sic*] âta wiya nikî-pimohtahikawin, kâ-kas~ êkâ ta-kaskêyihthamân, nikâwiy ê-kî-pê-itohtahikawiyân, êkwa mîna nikâwiy êkotê ê-kî-pê-nitawâpamit.

there about as many things as they wanted to know, and in this way they wanted to know how it had been when I was a child and how I had been brought up. Thus I told them as much as I could about how I had been treated when I was a child, I do not hide anything in telling about that and I am not shy in speaking; I am used to it, having spoken there many times, and thus they have long relied on me for this, and so there were many who were sitting there when I sat with these young people, and they took notes on what I said.

[I] [Childhood and Youth, Marriage and Motherhood]

[2] Now then I will tell you about the Cree things which you want to know about, what I told them at that place, they did not record my speech on that kind [*points to audio-recorder*] but the young people took notes, all of them sitting in a circle, they took notes as I spoke. Now then I told them how it was when I was being brought up as a child over there at *Môšômininâhk* [Moosomin], as our reserve is called, that was the place where I used to live, that was where I was being brought up as a child. And I also was an only child, although I had not really been the only child, but all my siblings had died, without exception, I had been the only one to survive; now then she really loved me — the old people loved me, my grandmother and my grandfather. And my mother (I was four years old reportedly when she had come and married a man here at Sweetgrass, that reserve which is called *Nakiwacîhk* [Sweetgrass], our reserve), and thus I had been kept back at *Môšôminêw-âskîhkânîhk* [Moosomin Reserve] and continued to be taken care of there. They did take me back and forth so I would not be lonesome, bringing me back to my mother, and my mother would also come to see me over there.

[3] êkos êkotê nikî-tas-ôy-ohpikihikawin, â,
 kî-kitimâkisiwak kêhtê-ayak, mitoni kî-kêhtê-ayiwîwak
 kê-kî-kanawêyîmicik – nôhkom, mitoni kî-nôtikwêwiw, êkwa
 mîna nimosôm, miton êtikwê têpakohp tahtomitanaw ayiwâk
 kî-itahtopiponêw nimosôm. êkos êkwa, êwako nitâtôtên, nama
 kîkway sôniyâhkêwin ohci-pê-ayâw nimosôm, osâm
 ê-kî-kêhtê-ayiwit. kîkwây [sic] piko kê-pipohk, kîkway
 sôniyâhkêwin ê-kî-kaskihtamâsot nimosôm, ê-kî-pakitahwât
 ê-nôcikosêwêt, êkota ohci ê-kî-atâwâkêt kinosêwa kê-piponiyik,
 êwako piko ê-kî-wâpahtamân kinos-~ ê-kî-sôniyâhkâkêt êkotowahk
 nimosôm. êkwa niya, nôhkom mâna nikî-wa-wîtapimâw,
 nikî-ka-kanawêyîmicik.

[4] êkwa kê-nîpihk, nayêstaw kîkwây [sic], maskihkiy
 kî-mônahamwak ayisiyiniwak êkospîhk, ‘omînisîhkês’ [sic]
 kî-isîyîhkâtamwak ê-nêhiyawêhk, mâka ê-kî-atâwâkêhk anima
 maskihkiy. êkotowahk piko ê-kî-sôniyâhkâkêcik kêhcê-ayak, ahpô
 nîsta mâna nikî-osîhtamâkawin kîkway ta-mônahaskwâkêyân.
 êkota mâna, k-âti-nîpihk ôma, kê-sâkikihk anima maskihkiy,
 nikiskisin mâna ê-kî-sipwêpiciyâhk, konit îtê pâtot-âyîhk [sic]
 ê-papâ-wîkisiyâhk, êkwa mâna ê-kî-mônahikêt nôhkom, niya
 mîna, nimosôm. êkwa, cikêmâ nama kîkway kaskihcikêwin,
 nititwân, nimosôm ê-kî-tôtahk, êwako pikw ânim
 ê-kî-kakwê-isi-sôniyâhkêsicik mâna, t-ôh-pîhtwâcik, êtikwê
 kîkway êkos îsi t-âyâcik, cikêmâ kayâs kî-wêhtakihcikâniwiw,
 namôy tâpiskôc anohc; iyikohk kahkiyaw kîkway kê-sôhkakihtêk.

[5] êkos êkwa, tânis ê-kî-pê-isi-~, êwâkw ânim
 ê-kî-pê-isi-kakwê-pimâcihocik wîstawâw kêhtê-ayak
 kê-kî-ohpikihicik, ê-kî-~ kayâs kî-mihcêtiwak pihêwak,
 ‘ê-kî-nîmihitocik’ kî-itwâniwiw mâna k-ôski-nîpihk. êkotowahk
 mâcika mâna wiya nimosôm ê-kî-papâ-nôcihât, ê-kî-tâpakwamawât,
 itê ôma kê-matwê-pâh-pêhtâkosiyit, êkotowahk

[3] In this way I had gone on being brought up over there, well, the old people were poor, they were very old when they took care of me – my grandmother was a very old woman and my grandfather also, my grandfather must in fact have been more than seventy years old. Now then, that I have already told about, that my grandfather did not have any way of earning money, he was too old. The only thing in the winter, the only means my grandfather had of earning some money for himself was to set nets and catch fish, and with that he used to sell fish in winter, that was the only thing I used to see with which my grandfather earned some money. Now as for me, I used to stay at home with my grandmother and she used to take care of me.

[4] Now in the summer, there was only one thing, in those days the people dug seneca-root, *omînisîhkês* they called it in Cree, but this seneca-root used to be sold. That was the only way of earning money for the old people, and even for me they made something to dig seneca-root with. At that time, in early summer, when the seneca-root was coming out, I remember that we used to move camp, moving our little camp about somewhere into the wilds, then my grandmother would dig, and I too and also my grandfather. Now of course there wasn't any earning power, as I said, my grandfather used to do that, that was the only way for them to earn a little money to use for smoking and to have things like that, I guess, of course things were cheap in the old days, not like today; when everything is so expensive.

[5] Now then, that was how they tried to make a living, the old people who raised me, in the old days prairie chickens used to be plentiful, 'they are dancing' one used to say of them at the beginning of summer. That kind for instance my grandfather used to go about and pursue, he used to set snares for them wherever