Golder Associates Ltd.

1000, 940 - 6th Avenue S.W.
Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2P 3T1
Telephone 403-299-5600
Fax 403-299-5606

Golder Associates

Appendix 2 to CEAA 65505

Clearwater River Band and the Original Fort McMurray First Nation

FINAL REPORT

WOOD BUFFALO ELDERS INTERVIEW PROJECT

DISTRIBUTION:

1 Copy	Imperial Oil Resources Ltd. Calgary, AB
1 Copy	PetroCanada Calgary, AB
1 Copy	Shell Canada Ltd. Calgary, AB
1 Copy	Suncor Energy Ltd. Calgary, AB
1 Copy	Synenco Energy Corp. Calgary, AB
1 Copy	Total E&P Canada Ltd. Calgary, AB
1 Copy	Wood Buffalo First Nation Elder's Society Anzac, AB
3 Copies	Golder Associates Ltd. Calgary, Alberta

April 2008 **07-1333-0008**

50 BEST EMPLOYERS IN CANADA 2007

CANADA'S 50 BEST MANAGED COMPANIES

OFFICES ACROSS NORTH AMERICA, SOUTH AMERICA, EUROPE, AFRICA, ASIA AND AUSTRALIA

On behalf of the Wood Buffalo First Nation Elders, we would like to thank the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and Consun Contracting Ltd. for their contributions towards making these books available.

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF WOOD BUFFALO

CONSUN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Wood Buffalo Elders' Interview Project interviewed 30 Elders from the Wood Buffalo Elders' Society about their traditional knowledge and use of land in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB). Interviews were conducted with Elders in Fort McMurray, Anzac, Chard, and Conklin. The geographic extent of information ranged from the Lac La Biche area in the south, to the Fort Chipewyan and Lake Athabasca area in the north.

During the interviews, Elders provided information on traditional land uses such as hunting, trapping, fishing, and berry and plant harvesting. The Elders also provided traditional knowledge on burial sites (marked and unmarked), traditional medicines, changes in the life patterns of Aboriginal people in the region, as well as changes in the natural ecology of the region. Each of the Elders grew up on, or spent large amounts of time on their family's trapline. A large number of the Elders trapped during the time prior to the organisation and registration of traplines by the government in the 1940's. Those Elders who continue to trap, do so on their Registered Fur Management Areas (RFMA). Those Elders who continue to hunt, do so within the larger region, and make use of existing roads to access areas where wildlife is anticipated.

Elders identified changes that they have noticed in the Region over the years. They have observed changes in air quality; both in their senses of smell and sight, and in its effects on vegetation. Elders in Fort McMurray as well as in other parts of the region indicated concerns about both the quality and quantity of water. Generally, they believe that there is less ground water, as evidenced by lower water levels. Also, they believe that there is pollution in the water. While some of the Elders attributed water pollution to oil sands development, others attributed it to development in general. Elders believe that wildlife populations have diminished, especially in the Fort McMurray area, and attribute this to the increase in human population. Other Elders indicated concerns about the health of wildlife, citing observations made while butchering. Fish health was also identified as a concern; often associated with concerns over water pollution. Additionally, Elders

identified economic and social changes in the Fort McMurray area, resulting from the increase in population related to oil sands development. The concerns focused on personal security, local rates of inflation, and issues of drug abuse and homelessness. Lastly, Elders shared their perspectives on how the weather has changed over the years.

Elders shared other stories told to them by their parents or grandparents. These stories are included as part of the Elder profiles included in the report.

Acknowledgements

The Wood Buffalo Elders' Interview Project could not have been conducted without the knowledge, and co-operation of the Elders of the Wood Buffalo Elder's Society. Their involvement is greatly appreciated. The following Elders participated in the Project:

Bill Woodward
William Castor
Eva Huppie
Gertie Castor
Eva McKenzie
Joe Cree
Edward Adby
Flora Tremblay
Myrna Loutitt
Harvey Sykes
Marie Ann Betty (Betsy) Tremblay
Geraldine Jensen
Jimmy Janvier
Lenora Mulawka
Emil Powder
Roland Woodward
Edward Boostrom
Violet Hansen
Walter Cardinal
Jean Powder
Walter Cree
Louise Martin
George Cardinal
Maggie White
Maureen Cardinal
Laurie Gallagher
Madeline Patterson
Hermas Janvier
Ellen Bishop
George Mike Powder

The following people acted as translators during interviews:

- Walter Cree;

- Alcide Boucher; and
- William Castor.

The following companies provided the funding for the Project:

- Imperial Oil Resources Ltd.;
- PetroCanada;
- Shell Canada Ltd.;
- Suncor Energy Ltd.;
- Synenco Energy Corp.; and
- Total E & P Canada Ltd.

John Malcolm (CEO, Wood Buffalo Elders' Society), Helen Evans (Golder Associates Ltd.), and Mitchell Goodjohn (Golder Associates Ltd.) conducted interviews. This report was prepared by Mitchell Goodjohn (Golder Associates Ltd.), Helen Evans (Golder Associates Ltd.), Traci Tanner (Golder Associates Ltd.), and Kim Jones (Golder Associates Ltd).

Ownership of Information

The information in this report, was provided by Elders of the Wood Buffalo Elders' Society. In has been provided to Imperial Oil Resources Ltd., PetroCanada, Shell Canada Ltd., Suncor Energy Ltd., Synenco Energy Corp., and Total E & P Canada Ltd for the purpose of their current project applications in the Oil Sands Region. The information cannot be used for any other purpose without the consent of the Elders who contributed the information.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION **PAGE**

1. INTRODUCTION AND METHOD 1

2. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AREA 4
   2.1 The Boreal Forest Natural Region 4
   2.2 History of Use within the Study Area 6

3. RESULTS OF THE STUDY 16
   3.1 Traditional Plants and Medicines 16
   3.2 Hunting and Trapping 22
   3.3 Fishing 29
   3.4 Burials and Other Culturally Important Sites 33
   3.5 Changes in the Region 33

4. THE ELDERS 39
   4.1 Edward Adby 39
   4.2 Ellen Bishop 43
   4.3 Edward Boostrom 49
   4.4 George Cardinal 51
   4.5 Maureen Cardinal 53
   4.6 Walter Cardinal 57
   4.7 Gertie Castor 64
   4.8 William Castor 67
   4.9 Joe Cree and Walter Cree 73
   4.10 Laurie Gallagher 76
   4.11 Violet Hansen 80
   4.12 Eva Huppie 83
   4.13 Hermas Janvier 86
   4.14 Jeremy (Jimmy) Janvier 90
   4.15 Geraldine Jensen 92
   4.16 Myrna Loutitt 95
   4.17 Eva Mckenzie 100
   4.18 Louise Martin 105
   4.19 Lenora Mulawka 108
   4.20 Madeline Patterson 113
   4.21 Emil Powder 117
   4.22 George Powder 121
   4.23 Jean Powder 125
   4.24 Harvey Sykes 129
   4.25 Flora Tremblay 133
   4.26 Marie Ann Betty "Betsy" Tremblay 138
   4.27 Maggie White 144
   4.28 Bill Woodward 145
   4.29 Roland Woodward 147

5. CLOSURE 154

6. REFERENCES 155

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Elders Interviewed, Date, and Location 2
Table 2 Traditional Plants, Other Medicines and Their Uses from Elder Interviews 16

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Plant Harvesting Areas in the Fort McMurray Region 18
Figure 2 Plant Harvesting Areas in the Fort Chipewyan Region 19
Figure 3 Wildlife Harvesting Areas in Fort McMurray Region 23
Figure 4 Wildlife Harvesting Areas in the Fort Chipewyan Region 24
Figure 5 Fish Species and Locations in the Fort McMurray Region 30
Figure 6 Fish Species and Locations in the Fort Chipewyan Region 31
Figure 7 Burial and Other Cultural Sites in Fort McMurray Region 34
Figure 8 Burial and Other Cultural Sites in Fort Chipewyan Region 35

LIST OF PLATES

Plate 1 Hudson's Bay Company Post in Fort Chipewyan. 10
Plate 2 Hudson's Bay Company SS Fort McMurray at Fort McMurray. 11
Plate 3 Construction of the Alberta Great Waterways Railway near Clearwater. 13

1. INTRODUCTION AND METHOD

The Wood Buffalo Elders' Society is comprised of Aboriginal people of Cree, Dené, and Iroquois descent, whose families have been present in the RMWB, in northeastern Alberta, throughout various times of its history. Many of the Elders do not have status under the *Indian Act*, but are seeking it. According to John Malcolm, CEO of the Society, its goals are:

- to better the lives of the Elders, their children and their descendents;
- to help overcome the impacts that development has had on the lives and traditions of the Elders;
- to help to protect the environment; and
- to preserve the traditional knowledge and culture for future generations.

Members of the Society live throughout the RMWB. Imperial Oil Resources Ltd, PetroCanada, Synenco Energy Corp., Shell Canada Ltd., Suncor Energy Ltd., and Total E & P Canada Ltd., met with the John Malcolm of the Wood Buffalo Elder's Society and agreed to provide funding for a project to interview Elders and record their Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Land Use (TLU) in the RMWB. Golder Associates Ltd (Golder) was retained to manage the Project. Golder met with John Malcolm, and developed interview protocols and TK sharing agreements. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect information on:

- hunting and trapping;
- fishing;
- plant and berry harvesting for consumption or medicine;
- locations of cabins;

- locations of unmarked burial sites;
- locations of spiritual or other culturally important sites;
- stories told to the Elders by their ancestors; and
- observed changes in weather, wildlife and plant health.

The geographical focus of the study was on the RMWB in northeastern Alberta. During the interviews, several of the Elders provided information on the larger Lake Athabasca area, as well as areas to the south that lie outside of the RMWB. That information has also been included in this report.

Most of the Elders were interviewed individually, although in a few instances, closely-related family members were interviewed together. All interviews were video-taped and relevant information was also mapped. Following the interviews, each video-tape was reviewed and a report was prepared in the form of a first-person account by the Elder. Mapped data was also prepared from each interview.

Funding was provided to interview 30 Elders. John Malcolm, leader of the Wood Buffalo Elders Society chose the Elders to be interviewed. Table 1 lists the Elders who were interviewed, the date, and the location.

Table 1 Elders Interviewed, Date, and Location

Name	Date of Interview	Location of Interview
Bill Woodward	April 12, 2007	Anzac
Roland Woodward	April 12, 2007	Anzac
William Castor	April 12, 2007	Fort McMurray
Edward Boostrom	May 2, 2007	Fort McMurray
Eva Huppie	May 2, 2007	Fort McMurray
Violet Hansen	May 2, 2007	Fort McMurray
Gertie Castor	May 2, 2007	Fort McMurray
Walter Cardinal	May 3, 2007	Fort McMurray
Eva McKenzie	May 4, 2007	Anzac

Table 1 Elders Interviewed, Date, and Location (continued)

Name	Date of Interview	Location of Interview
Jean Powder	May 4, 2007	Fort McMurray
Joe Cree	May 4, 2007	Fort McMurray
Walter Cree	May 4, 2007	Fort McMurray
Edward Adby	June 15, 2007	Conklin
Louise Martin	June 15, 2007	Conklin
Flora Tremblay	June 19, 2007	Fort McMurray
George Cardinal	June 19, 2007	Fort McMurray
Myrna Loutitt	June 19, 2007	Fort McMurray
Maggie White	June 22, 2007	Fort McMurray
Harvey Sykes	June 22, 2007	Fort McMurray
Maureen Cardinal	June 22, 2007	Fort McMurray
Marie Anne Betty "Betsy" Tremblay	October 10, 2007	Fort McMurray
Laurie Gallagher	October 10, 2007	Fort McMurray
Geraldine Jensen	October 10, 2007	Fort McMurray
Madeline Patterson	October 10, 2007	Fort McMurray
Jeremy "Jimmy" Janvier	October 11, 2007	Chard
Hermas Janvier	October 11, 2007	Chard
Lenora Mulawka	October 11, 2007	Anzac
Ellen Bishop	November 15, 2007	Fort McMurray
Emil Powder	November 15, 2007	Fort McMurray
George Mike Powder	November 15, 2007	Fort McMurray

Structure of the Report

Section 2 gives an overview of the natural history of the Boreal Forest Region of northeastern Alberta, as well as an overview of the history of use in the region. The results of the study are found in Section 3. This includes aggregated data from the interviews, as well as representative quotes. Section 4 contains profiles on each of the participating Elders. The profile is a synopsis of the elder's information from the perspective of the Elder. The profiles have been edited to remove personal information.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AREA

2.1 The Boreal Forest Natural Region

The RMWB is situated within the Boreal Forest Natural Region of Alberta (NRC 2006). This region includes the following subregions:

- Dry Mixedwood;
- Central Mixedwood;
- Lower Boreal Highlands;
- Upper Boreal Highlands;
- Athabasca Plain;
- Peace-Athabasca Delta;
- Northern Mixedwood; and
- Boreal Subarctic Natural Subregions.

Vegetation within the Boreal Forest Natural Region consists of mixedwood and coniferous forests. Agriculture (cultivation) is limited to areas that have a lengthy growing season. Of the deciduous trees, aspen and balsam poplar are the most frequent. Of the conifers, white spruce, black spruce, and jack pine are the predominant species. Wetlands consist of black spruce, shrub or sedge fens (NRC 2006).

There is a five degree Celsius (°C) difference in mean annual temperature between the warmest and most southerly subregion (Dry Mixedwood) and the coldest and most northerly subregion (Boreal Subarctic). Summers are usually short, with only one or two months in which the average daily temperature exceeds 15 °C. Winters are long and very cold, with average daily temperatures below -10 °C. In some of the northern subregions, average daily temperatures may fall below -20 °C for two months or more (NRC 2006).

The vegetation within the natural region consists of upland forests with extensive wetlands in the low-lying areas. The forest composition and the amount of wetlands changes from south to north within the natural region. In the south, aspen forests prevail, with scattered occurrences of individual or stands of white spruce in wetter areas. The wetlands are often composed of shrubby or sedge fens and marshes. Further north, there are mixed forests of aspen, balsam poplar and white spruce. There is a mix of treed fens, shrubby fens and sedge fens occupying a larger proportion of the landscape. In the far north, there are undulating plains and elevated plateaus, vegetated by black spruce fens and bogs, shrubby fens and sedge meadows. Throughout the natural region, jack pine stands are found in dry, well-drained sandy soil. On the slopes, or tops of northern highlands, lodgepole pine or lodgepole pine-jack pine hybrid stands are found; either as pure stands, or in mixed stands along with black spruce or deciduous species (NRC 2006).

The predominant landform in the Boreal Forest Natural region is level to gently undulating lacustrine and till plains. Cretaceous shales are found under most of the region. Part of this shale, the McMurray Formation, is composed of oil-bearing deposits. They are underlain by cream-coloured Devonian limestones of the Waterways Formation. The heavy oil in the McMurray Formation was probably formed from the decomposition of plant and animal material during Devonian times and forced up by earth pressures into the Cretaceous sand deposits millions of years later. Outcrops are seen along deep river valleys. Luvisols are found on well to imperfectly drained forested sites. Brunisols are common on well to rapidly drained fluvial or eolian materials. Gleysols and organic soils are associated with wetlands, and poorly drained soils. Cryosols occur in the far north where low solar energy inputs, short summers, and thick insulating moss results in permafrost development (Spalding 1980; NRC 2006).

2.2 History of Use within the Study Area

Pre-Contact

Aboriginal people have inhabited the Boreal Forest Natural Region of Alberta for more than 8,000 years. According to oral history, there was a fight between a good giant, "He Whose Head Sweeps the Sky", and a bad giant, Bettsinuli. "He Whose Head Sweeps the Sky" would have lost the fight had it not been for a Dene man who cut Bettsinuli's ankle with an axe made from a giant beaver's tooth. Bettsinuli fell into the ancient sea in such a way that his feet lay in the west and his head reached the area around Cold Lake (Coutu and Hoffman-Mercredi 1999). During the interviews, two of the Elders recalled that their father told them that "[t]here were stories about long ago such as when people came from China when the ocean was frozen over (J. Cree and W. Cree, Elders)."

The RMWB contains some of the highest density pre-contact archaeological sites in North America. While organic materials used by early inhabitants such as bone, leather, and wood have long since decomposed, stone artefacts left behind shed light on Aboriginal culture and survival in this region; including projectile points that may have been used to hunt big game, such as large mastodons, mammoths, sabre tooth tigers, and giant beavers (Russell 1991). Unlike the Plains where large scale communal hunting of herd animals took place, hunting in the Boreal Forest involved capture of single animals in highly dispersed locations, frequently distant from campsite locations (Clarke and Ronaghan 2004).

The northeast area of Alberta encompasses the traditional territory of many Aboriginal people, including the ancestors of the Algonquin Shield Archaic people who moved in from the south 8,000 years ago as the glaciers from the ice age melted, and the Athabascan Dené Taltheilei people, who arrived from the north and northwest approximately 2,600 years ago (Berry and Brink 2004). Cree Burn Lake, the result of a glacier melt, is located within this region and contains a large amount of evidence about the first human activity in northern Alberta. In 1999, it was designated as a Provincial

Historical Site with the highest historical resource value, HRV 1. During the interviews, some of the Elders indicated that the Cree Burn Lake site, as well as other archaeological sites in the region were part of the history of their ancestors.

While there is archaeological information on how the Athapaskan speaking peoples, or Dené, came to exist and survive in this location (Heritage Community Foundation 2005), there is also oral history about Cree Burn Lake's importance to Aboriginal people. According to Coutu and Hoffman-Mercredi (1999), Cree Burn Lake and Pierre au Calumet, situated in the same general area, were gathering places:

> *Traditional knowledge states that the pitch or gum from the Athabasca Tar Sands was useful in canoe building and repair. Realistically, however, the primary use of the bitumen was as a fuel to heat the many tents, which occupied the autumn gatherings at Ena K'ering K'a (Cree Burn). It seems likely that the red pipestone of nearby Pierre au Calumet also contributed to Ena K'ering K'a's popularity as a centre of trade and as a gathering place.*

Pierre au Calumet is likely the source of calumet stone used by the Dene people to make small calumets, or pipes (Petitot 1875, in Coutou and Mercredi 1999). Extensive trade networks had already been in place among the Aboriginal people before the Europeans travelled to the area (MacGregor 1981).

Prior to European contact, the hunter-gatherer societies harvested many of the animals and plants native to the region, including moose, bison, and berries. They also developed agricultural activities, and were known to use clay pottery. However, the further north they foraged, the less involved they became with agriculture and pottery, and adapted a more nomadic lifestyle that required a wide use of the Boreal Forest waterways; hence, the adoption of the birch bark canoe. Before the introduction of firearms and other cultural materials of European origin, Aboriginal people utilised the bow and arrow to hunt big game. This weapon had a rapid rate of fire, accuracy, and required no startling

body movement to effectively deliver the projectile (Reeves 1990). Some of the Aboriginal groups moved farther north and became proficient harvesters of the caribou that grazed in massive herds throughout what is now northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

The environmental adaptation of these Aboriginal groups helped to define traditional territories, as they were related to specific land use, seasonal harvesting, and migrations of wildlife herds (Ives 1993). These territories are scattered with spiritual sites, burial grounds and habitation sites. As a result, many of the mountains, hills, lakes and streams, trails, and portages in the RMWB have Aboriginal place names, and legends that are associated with them (Wood Buffalo National Park 2007). At the time of European contact, both the Chipewyan and Cree peoples were known to be in the area (Russell 1991). This mixture of Cree and Chipewyan peoples is characteristic of many of the communities of the RMWB. Small groups of Iroquois, who acted as trappers and voyageurs for the Northwest Company or Hudson's Bay Company, also ventured into the larger region during the westward expansion of the fur trade (McMillan 1995).

Fur Trade

The Athabasca region of northeastern Alberta came to the attention of European fur traders in 1719 when Wa-pa-su, a Cree trader, brought a sample of the oil sands to the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Churchill in northern Manitoba (Hudson's Bay Company Archives 2007). During the 1700's, the fur trade became the driving force behind European inroads into the interior of Alberta. Before the fur trade, furbearing animals were a natural resource of the Aboriginal people, who traditionally trapped or hunted them on an 'as needed' basis. With the introduction of the fur trade, however, Aboriginal people often became middlemen, trading furs with peoples of the interior, and taking them to the European traders located on Hudson Bay. Although the Hudson's Bay Company agents typically remained on the Plains and Parklands, expanding their line of fur trade posts along the Saskatchewan River, pressure from the competing North West

Company led to the Hudson's Bay Company building inland posts; beginning with Cumberland House in 1774 (MacGregor 1981).

In 1778, Peter Pond built the first fur trade post in the Athabasca region at the junction of the Athabasca and Embarrass rivers. Pond was also the first European to take trade goods over the Methy Portage, and therefore, the first non-Aboriginal to observe the bitumen accumulations along the Athabasca River (Library and Archives Canada 2007). The Aboriginal people had considered the molasses-like substance a valuable natural resource, used to make smudge pots to ward off mosquitoes during the summer months, and as waterproofing for their birch bark canoes (Alberta Government 2007). During this period, fur was the valued resource for European traders, rather than bitumen, and approximately eight years later, Pond opened a second fur trading post where the Clearwater and Athabasca rivers meet (Palmer 1990). Four more posts were established in this area between 1788 and 1821 (Chalmers 1974), including Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabasca, which became the central post in the Athabasca region. The Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company merged in 1821 (McMillan 1995). Plate 1 shows the Hudson's Bay Post in Fort Chipewyan in 1929.

The arrival of the fur trade and the resulting contact with Europeans brought epidemics. On the plains, smallpox and other diseases appeared as early as 1781 and appeared again in 1837 and 1869 (McMillan 1995). In the north, the epidemic of 1781 also affected the Chipewyan, wiping out about 90% of their population. Famine often followed the epidemics (Dempsey 1979, McMillan 1995).



Plate 1 Hudson's Bay Company Post in Fort Chipewyan, 1929. Photo courtesy of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (Catalogue N-1987-033: 0320).

In the late 1800's and early 1900's, fur trading became more regulated, which in turn altered the traditional activities and livelihood of the Aboriginal people (Fumoleau 2004). The Hudson's Bay Company established a post in Fort McMurray in 1870, adjacent to the Athabasca River, which continued to operate as a transportation stopover (Hudson's Bay Company Archives 2007). During the interviews, some of the Elders referred to relatives who had worked for the Hudson's Bay Company. In particular, one of the Elders indicated that her father used to operate the Hudson's Bay store in Poplar Point:

> *"My dad used to keep diaries from when he was running the Hudson's Bay store [in Poplar Point]. Everything was so cheap; not like now. Until the time he died, he worked for the Hudson's Bay. He never had a holiday or a vacation. He just worked all the time. ... He helped a lot of Indians around there. He did everything for them. He bought their fur, and gave them groceries. He would pack the furs in big bundles, and send*

them to the Hudson's Bay Company. He would travel by dog team from Athabasca and Fort McMurray to Edmonton (E. Bishop, Elder)."

The fur trade had opened the region for settlement, altering the landscape, livelihood, and traditional activities of the Aboriginal people.

Early Industry and Development

As the fur trade diminished, other industries developed, providing seasonal work to supplement the traditional livelihood of the Aboriginal people. The first significant industrial changes were in transportation. The Athabasca and Peace rivers became commercial transportation highways, and steamboats began transporting gold-seekers to the far north during the Klondike Gold Rush (Fumoleau 2004). Many Aboriginal people in the region acted both as guides, and boat captains for the active steamboat industry on boats such as the SS McMurray (Plate 2).

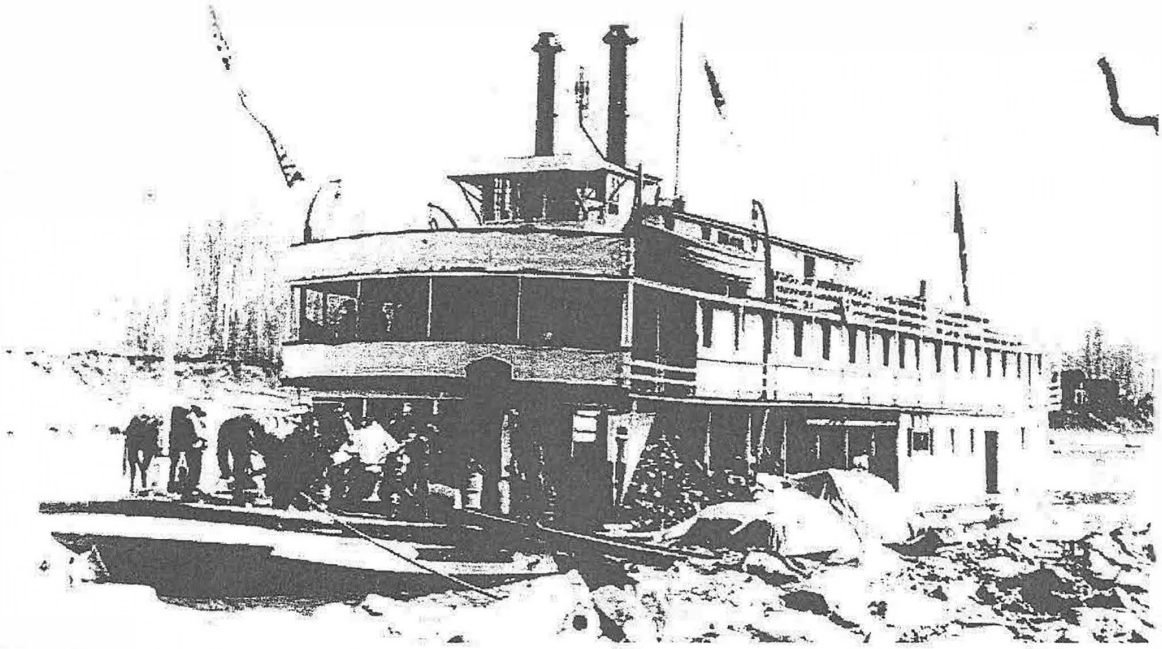


Plate 2 Hudson's Bay Company SS Fort McMurray at Fort McMurray, 1922. Photo courtesy of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (Catalogue: N-1979-004: 0115).

Several of the Elders recalled their experiences of the steamboats; either from watching them, or from having family members working on them.

> *"My grandfather brought one of those paddlewheelers down to McMurray from [Athabasca]. He was the only guy that ever brought one down here through the rapids. The ship was called either the Echo or the McDonald. It belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company and he was the pilot on there* (L. Gallagher, Elder)."

> *"Back in the day, the Echo and the Athabasca were two steam ships with big paddle wheels. When the ships came in to Fort Chip, we would sit on the police dock or Hudson Bay rock and watch them. ... Depending on the weather, it would take a couple of days to get from Fort Chip to Fort McMurray on the riverboat. Back then everything was marked and boats never got stuck on sandbars. When [Lake Athabasca] was windy, all the barges were towed to Uranium. My husband, Lloyd Hansen, was river pilot on a boat named the Radium Trader* (V. Hansen, Elder)."

> *"I worked on the boats for 26 years. There were tugboats but the Hudson's Bay Company owned two sternwheelers that were used to transport freight. The loading facilities were in Waterways. The railway ended right at Waterways. I worked on various steamships. There the one that's now at Heritage Park, the Radium Scout. My dad was the engineer on that one. I also worked on the paddlewheeler. It had a diesel engine* (H. Sykes, Elder)."

European settlement of the area surrounding Cold Lake began to increase rapidly with the passing of the Dominion Lands Act in 1872, which offered land to homesteaders. In large part, European settlement also coincided with the establishment of rail transport in the region. However, this area was still inhabited mainly by Dené, Cree, and Métis people practising traditional lifeways until the early 1950's (Turney 2007). Between 1915

and 1922, the Alberta Great Waterways Railway, now known as the Northern Alberta Railway, constructed a 280 kilometre rail line (Plate 3) connecting Lac La Biche to Waterways (Wetherell and Kmet 2000). The arrival of the railway made it easier for traders to bring furs past the rapids on the Athabasca River. It also opened up the larger region for oil and mineral exploration. During the interviews, one of the Elders explained how the arrival of the railroad changed the lives of Aboriginal people:

> *"With the presence of the railroad, people and supplies were shipped up north, and this became the place for jobs. People moved out of the bush and into communities to work for different companies* (R. Woodward, Elder)."

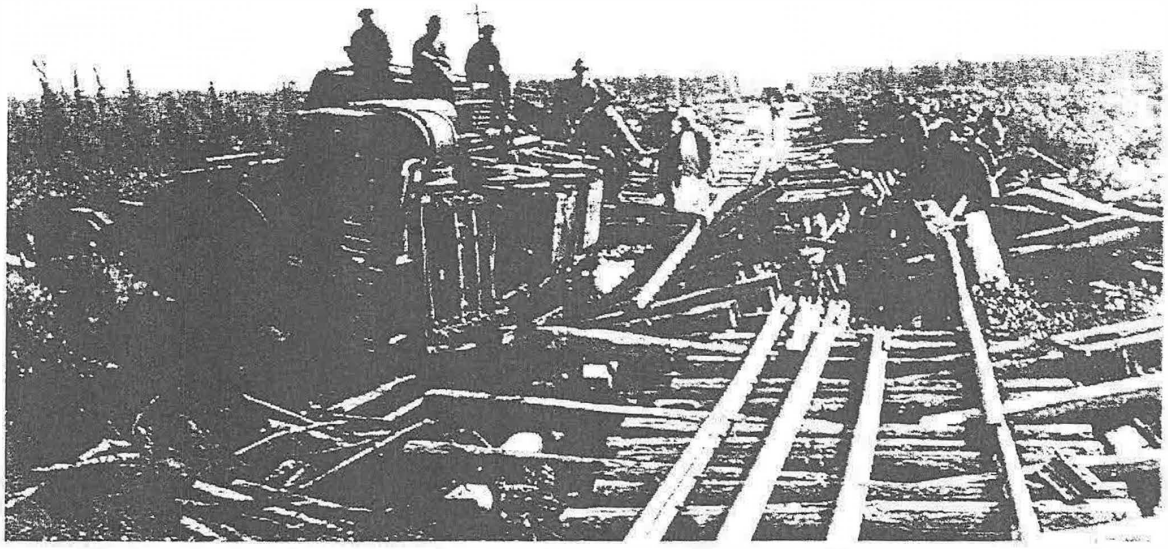


Plate 3 Construction of the Alberta Great Waterways Railway near Clearwater, 1922. Photo courtesy of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre (Catalogue: N-1979-004: 0105).

Railway sidings and facilities were constructed at Chard and Conklin. This provided a source of employment for Aboriginal residents, and serviced many of the people travelling to Lac La Biche or Fort McMurray for supplies. The rail extension not only

improved access to the north, but made room for industry development such as commercial fishing, salt mining, forestry, and eventually, oil and gas (Wetherell and Kmet 2000).

Another Elder shared his memory of working for the railroad:

> *"I started working with the railroad company back in 1947. ... There was quite a bit of work there. It was all hand-based, and very hard work – a lot of shovel work. ... I transported to different places with the section gangs for the railroad. ... I stayed in railroad bunkhouses. There was a bunkhouse for each of the section gangs. That was years ago, and that is how we got work – on the railroad. I also did a lot of trapping to get fur and make a living. There were not too many other jobs besides the railroad* (W. Cardinal, Elder)."

In the 1920's commercial fishing developed in the region. Tons of whitefish from Lake Athabasca were processed at the McInnes Fish Company in Waterways. It was a large, profitable business, which provided wage labour jobs to assist many of the Aboriginal people in the area. During the interviews, various Elders indicated that they worked for McInnes Fisheries. One of the Elders worked in several locations:

> *"I worked for a short time at McInnes Fisheries; packing boxes of fish caught on Lake Athabasca. I also worked at a plant in Horse Creek, where I made 20 cents an hour. The Crackingstone plant was located on Lake Athabasca, on this side of Uranium City. We would catch lake trout, bring them by boat to Fort McMurray and then transport the fish by railroad to various locations. We also shipped buckets of uranium on the boxcars from Gunnar* (E. Boostrom, Elder)."

In 1920's, the Alberta Salt Company was formed to take advantage of the salt deposits located south of Fort McMurray, and in the 1930's Industrial Minerals Ltd. constructed a

salt plant adjacent to the railway terminal in Waterways (Wetherell and Kmet 2000). One of the Elders recalled his experience with the salt company:

> *"The Waterways salt plant was my first job and I made 48 cents an hour. I started when I was 15 years old and every payday I would give my mother and dad three dollars to pay the bills. An operator was paid $1.15 an hour, which is not a lot, but it was good compared to everyone else's pay. In those days you could buy a loaf of bread for five cents. A hundred pounds of flour would be about two or three dollars, and my mother did all her own baking* (W. Castor, Elder)."

Rock salt was an important and viable business in this region until 1950, at which time, natural gas was discovered in the area, and the Chard Gas Field, located in the vicinity of Janvier, began drilling in 1957 (Wetherell and Kmet 2000).

In the 1920's, settler interest in tar sands bitumen began to grow as demands for petroleum products increased (History of Fort McMurray 2007). By 1921, there was serious interest in developing a refining plant to separate the oil from the sands. Alcan Oil Company was the first to begin bulk testing at Fort McMurray, and by the 1930's, Abasands Oil was the first to successfully extract the oil from the sand using hot water extraction. Still, production was very low. It was not until 1967 that the Great Canadian Oil Sands Plant, now Suncor Energy, opened its first mine, which produced 30,000 barrels of synthetic crude oil per day (Energy and Utilities Board 2005). This was the start of intensive oil sands development in the region that has continued to expand to the present. The rapid increase in development throughout the RMWB has brought many changes to the Aboriginal communities in the region.

3. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

3.1 Traditional Plants and Medicines

Figure 1 shows the plant harvesting areas in the Fort McMurray region identified by the Elders, and Figure 2 shows the plant harvesting areas identified in the Fort Chipewyan region. Many of the Elders indicated that they and their families picked berries. Several Elders indicated that they continue to pick berries, but that it's getting harder to find good locations. Many of the Elders also indicated that their parents or other family members picked and used traditional medicines. Several of the Elders indicated they learned about traditional medicines from their parents or grandparents. Table 2 lists the various plants, berries, and other sources of medicines collected either by the Elders, or by their ancestors.

Table 2 Traditional Plants, Other Medicines and Their Uses from Elder Interviews

Local Name	Other Name [a]	Species [b]	Use
balsam [fir or poplar?]			sap used to treat sores
big bog leaves	[none identified]		treat bee stings
birch [specific species?]			sap used as food or spring tonic birch strips used to make baskets
black poplar	balsam poplar	*Populus balsamifera L.*	buds used for cuts or boils
blueberry		*Vaccinium*	
choke cherry		*Prunus virginiana L.*	
cranberry (high bush)		*Virburnum opulus L.*	
cranberry [specific species?]			used to treat fevers
dandelion		*Taraxacum officinale*	various parts used for medicines
fireweed		*Epilobium angustifolium*	used to treat burns
gooseberry		*Ribes oxyacanthoides*	
grass berry	[grass cloudberry/dew berry?]		
hazelnut		*Corylus cornuta Marsh.*	
horse radish	[none identified]		
kinnikinnick	common bear berry	*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi L. (Spreng.)*	used as a tobacco

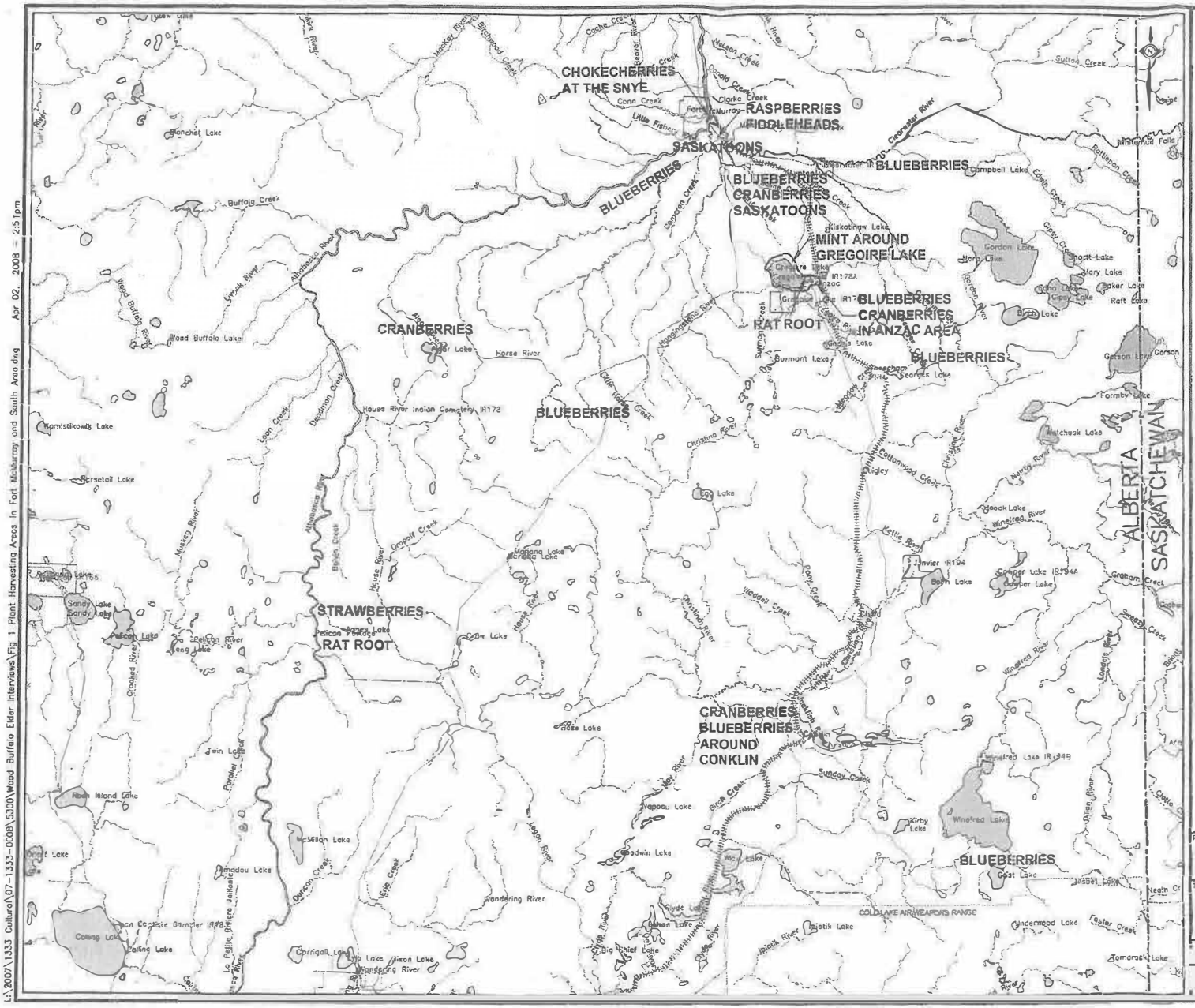
Table 2 Traditional Plants, Other Medicines and Their Uses from Elder Interviews (continued)

Local Name	Other Name [a]	Species [b]	Use
miniature birch	[bog/dwarf birch?]		used to treat mouth sores
mint		*Mentha arvensis L.*	medicinal tea used for colds
moss	peat moss	*Sphagnum fuscum (Schimp.)*	used as diapers
mountain ash		*Sorbus americana Marsh.*	bark used for medicinal tea
muskeg tea	labrador tea	*Ledum groenlandicum Oeder*	medicinal tea used for colds
peppermint (wine violets)		*Mentha piperita L.*	used to make a tonic for colds and clearing the chest
pine bush cranberry	[none identified]		
poplar	[black poplar or trembling aspen?]		sap used as food
rabbit root	wild sarsaparilla	*Aralia nudicaulis L.*	used to treat cuts
raspberry		*Rubus Idaeus L.* ssp. *strigosus (Michx.) Focke*	
rat root	sweet flag	*Acorus americanus (Raf.) Raf.*	root used for colds, sore throats, and head aches
red willow		*Cornus sericea L.*	used to treat toothaches bark used to make tea or tobacco
saskatoon berry		*Amelanchier alnifolia (Nutt.)*	berries used for food bark used to make tea or tobacco
snake root	purple avens	*Geum rivale L.*	
spuce gum	black spruce	*Picea mariana (P. Mill.)*	sap used to make salves for cuts or infections
strawberry		*Fragaria virginiana*	root used to treat upset stomach or diarrhea
willow		*Salix bebbiana Sarg.*	inner bark used for painkiller ('aspirin')
yarrow		*Achillia millefolium*	used to stop nose bleeds, or for other cuts
other medicines			
beaver castors			used as a source of 'aspirin', and for scenting trap bait
skunk scent glands			kills bacteria

Note: Notes in square brackets are author's notes regarding identification issues.

[a] Other names identified from Marles et al. (2000).

[b] Species names identified in Marles et al. (2000).



REFERENCE

ALBERTA NTDB DIGITAL DATA OBTAINED FROM GEOMATICS CANADA, AUGUST 2001. SASKATCHEWAN NTDB DATA OBTAINED FROM ISC, AUGUST 2001. DATUM: NAD 83 PROJECTION: UTM ZONE 12

15 0 15
SCALE KILOMETRES

PROJECT

WOOD BUFFALO ELDER INTERVIEWS

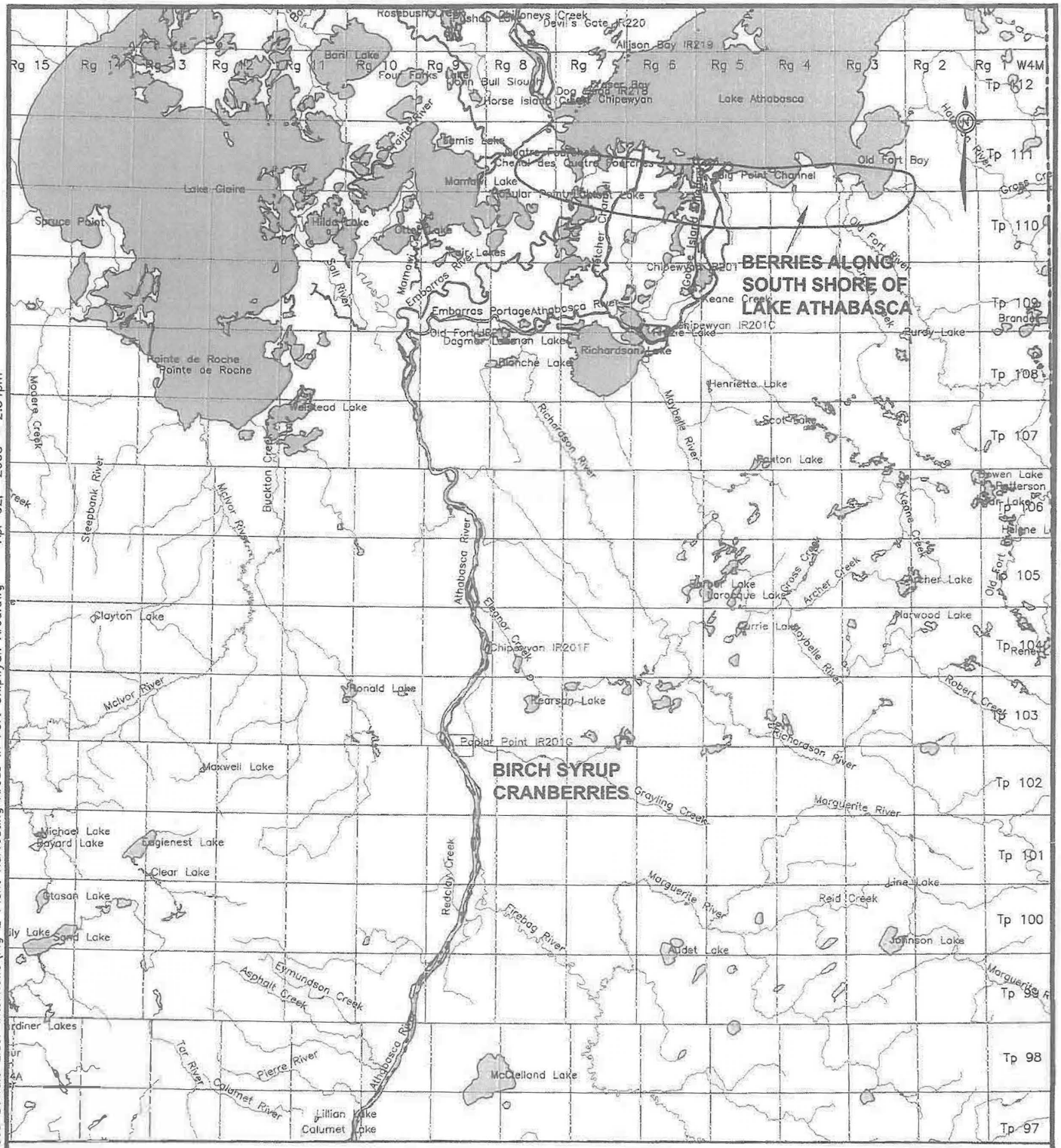
TITLE

PLANT HARVESTING AREAS IN FORT McMURRAY REGION

Golder Associates
Calgary, Alberta

PROJECT 07-1	3800as 5500	FILE No.	Burial Sites
DESIGN	MC	26/02/08	SCALE AS SHOWN REV. 0
CADD	FN	14/03/08	
CHECK	MG	02/04/08	FIGURE: 1
REVIEW	MG	02/04/08	

L:\2007\1333 Cultural\07-1333-0008\5300\Wood Buffalo Elder Interviews\Fig 1 Plant Harvesting Areas in Fort McMurray and South Area.dwg Apr 02, 2008 - 2:51pm



L:\2007\1333 Cultural\07-1333-0008\5300\Wood Buffalo Elder Interviews\Fig 2 Plant Harvesting Areas in Fort Chipwyan Area.dwg Apr 02, 2008 - 2:54pm

PROJECT

WOOD BUFFALO ELDER INTERVIEWS

TITLE

PLANT HARVESTING AREAS IN FORT CHIPEWYAN REGION

REFERENCE

ALBERTA NTDB DIGITAL DATA OBTAINED FROM GEOMATICS CANADA, AUGUST 2001. SASKATCHEWAN NTDB DATA OBTAINED FROM ISC, AUGUST 2001. DATUM: NAD 83 PROJECTION: UTM ZONE 12

Golder Associates
Calgary, Alberta

PROJECT 07.1333.0008.5300		FILE No.		Burial Site	
DESIGN	MG	26/02/08	SCALE	AS SHOWN	REV. 0
CADD	FN	03/03/08			
CHECK	MG	02/04/08			
REVIEW	MG	02/04/08			

FIGURE: 2

Numerous Elders indicated that the area in and around Fort McMurray has been a good source of berries. According to two Elders:

> *"We used to go picking berries all the time around Fort McMurray here. There's a wagon trail that used to be the old airport road. Before that, they called it the Little Lake Trail. It went right to Anzac, and that's where we used to pick blueberries and cranberries. There were lots of berries up there in that area when it was all sand. We went and picked some fiddleheads recently, and there aren't any berries anymore* (G. Jensen and L. Gallagher, Elders)."

Another good location for picking berries was near Prairie Creek:

> *"We collected blueberries and cranberries toward Prairie Creek, from the jailhouse all the way up to Jackpine Ridge. There were blueberries and cranberries all over, especially near the old wagon road going toward the airport* (G. Castor, Elder)."

and around Horse Creek:

> *"We used to pick raspberries with my granny and my aunts every weekend around Horse Creek. It's still good for raspberries there today* (E. Powder, Elder)."

In addition to collecting berries in and around Fort McMurray, Elders also indicated that Anzac, Cheecham, and Conklin were good collecting areas. Further away from Fort McMurray, Elders said that they used to pick berries in places where they used to live or trap, such as Pelican Portage, McClelland Lake area, Algar Lake, and along the south shore of Lake Athabasca.

As well as describing the types and locations of plants used for food or medicines, some of the Elders shared ways in which they or their families used various plants as medicines. For example, rat root can be used for sore throats:

> *"My granny ... used rat root for colds, sore throats or anything like that; but it's mainly for your throat. Just bite a little piece off. It's very strong, and it will numb your throat. Some people also make tea with it, and it's bitter* (L. Gallagher, Elder)."

Another Elder also acknowledged the bitterness of rat root and explained the way that she prepares it in a tea:

> *"I've made tea with [rat root] when I've had a cold. You just take a piece, and boil it in water. Then you can put a real tea bag in, because it can be quite bitter; or you can chew it. The longer you chew it, the stronger it gets* (G. Jensen, Elder)."

Elders also indicated that the syrup from both the poplar and birch tree can be used either as a treat, or spring tonic:

> *"In the springtime, if you peel apart a poplar, you can scrape the juice off of it. Take the bark off first, then take a cup and take a knife and just fill your cup. That stuff tastes just like watermelon. It's sweet. You do it usually when the sap is running. Earlier in the spring, we used to make syrup out of birch sap. Just make a little 'V' shape and put a little clothespin or something there, and get a pail under it. Put a nail up on top and put a pail under with a wire on it. The next day, you would go and see how much sap was there, put it all together, and boil it, which takes a long time. You don't get much out of it. It you had a big gallon pail, you'd be lucky to get one little jam can of syrup. It tastes sweet; just like syrup* (L. Mulawka, Elder)."

Some medicines were obtained from non-plant sources. For example, some came from skunk glands:

> *"The skunk ... was really an important medicinal source. ... Although it stunk, people consumed the dried scent glands. If you believed, it would kill bacteria* (E. Adby, Elder)."

Another Elder pointed out that beaver castors had 'aspirin'-like qualities.

While Elders shared stories on the types of plants and their uses, others also reflected on some of the people who were knowledgeable about medicines:

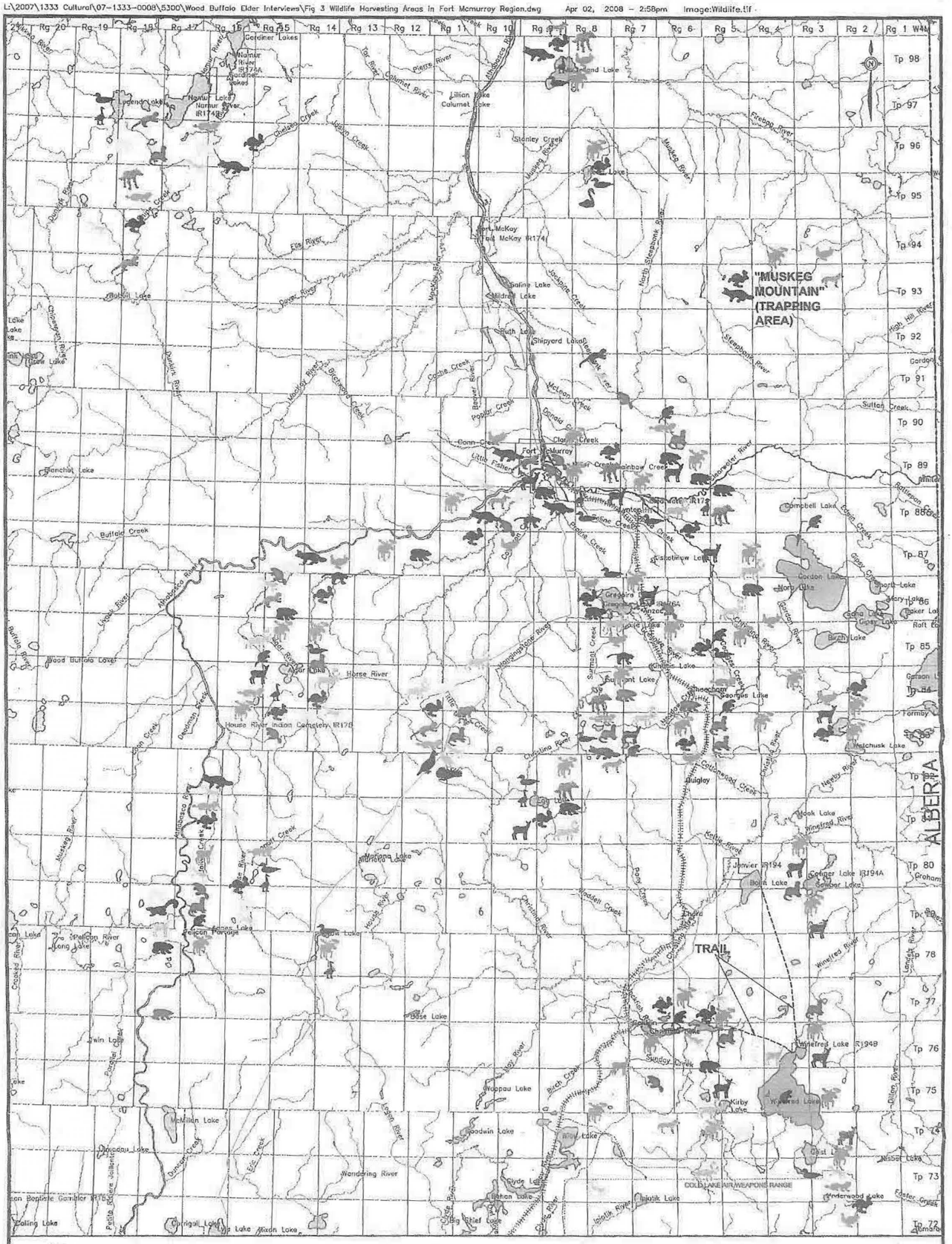
> *"There was a good medicine woman. She had the 'gift', so she knew what to pick, when to pick, the preparation and the doses. Really, she was our doctor in Anzac* (M. Patterson, Elder)."

> *"Our dad used to get [medicine] from the medicine man. We learned a few things from the medicine man too. He'd get some tobacco and put a match on it and give thanks. He knew what to do, and what kind to pick* (J. Janvier, Elder)."

3.2 Hunting and Trapping

Figure 3 shows wildlife harvesting areas, as identified by the Elders for the Fort McMurray region. Figure 4 shows wildlife harvesting areas identified in the Fort Chipewyan region. Many of the Elders trapped with their parents or grandparents when they were young. Areas identified were around the Fort McMurray region, and south in the Cheecham, Winifred Lake, Conklin and House River region. North of Fort McMurray, trapping took place along the Athabasca River, in the McClelland Lake region, Birch Mountain area, and in the region around the south shore of Lake Athabasca and Embarras Portage.

L:\2007\1333 Cultural\07-1333-0008\5300\Wood Buffalo Elder Interviews\Fig 3 Wildlife Harvesting Areas in Fort Mcmurray Region.dwg Apr 02, 2008 - 2:58pm Image:Wildlife.tif



LEGEND

MOOSE	DUCKS	GRIZZLY BEAR	FISHER	SHARP-TAILED GROUSE
COYOTE	GEESE	COUGAR	CHICKENS	DEER (UNSPECIFIED)
LYNX	MUSKRAT	WOLF	FOX	WHITE TAIL DEER
CARIBOU	MULE DEER	RABBIT	PARTRIDGE	
BEAVER	MARTEN	MINK	WEASEL	
SQUIRREL	BLACK BEAR	SKUNK	RUFFED GROUSE	

REFERENCE

ALBERTA NTDB DIGITAL DATA OBTAINED FROM GEOMATICS CANADA, AUGUST 2001. SASKATCHEWAN NTDB DATA OBTAINED FROM ISC, AUGUST 2001. DATUM: NAD 83 PROJECTION: UTM ZONE 12

15 0 15
SCALE KILOMETRES

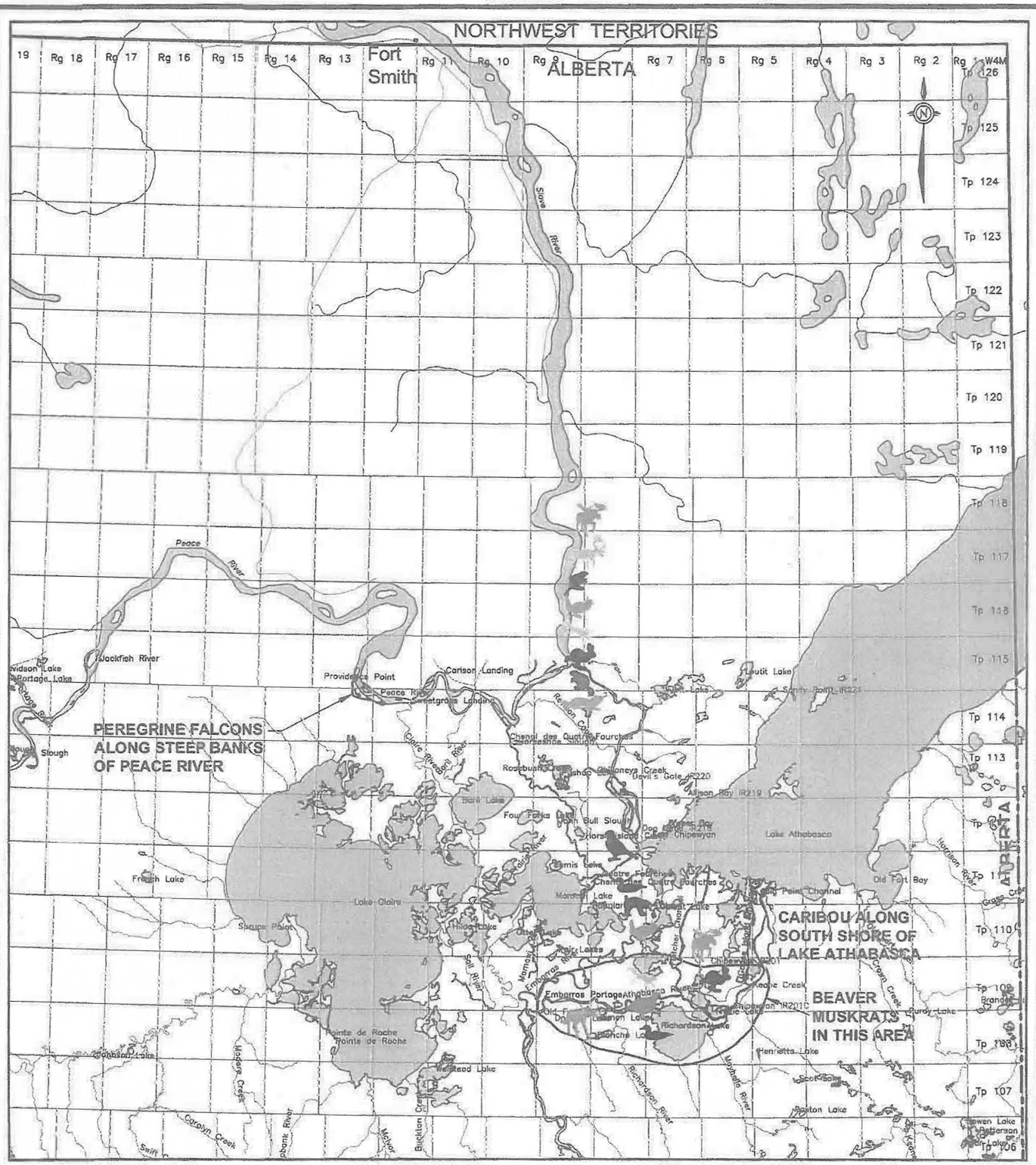
PROJECT
WOOD BUFFALO ELDER INTERVIEWS

TITLE
WILDLIFE HARVESTING AREAS IN FORT McMURRAY REGION

Golder Associates
Calgary, Alberta

PROJECT 07.1333.0008.5300			FILE No.		Wildlife
DESIGN	MJ	01/05/07	SCALE	AS SHOWN	REV. 0
CADD	FN	13/03/08			
CHECK	MG	02/04/08			
REVIEW	MG	02/04/08			

FIGURE: 3



LEGEND

- MOOSE
- LYNX
- WOLF
- SQUIRRELS
- RABBIT
- CHICKENS
- PTARMIGAN
- GROUSE
- DUCKS
- CARIBOU
- WEASEL
- BEAVER
- MUSKRAT

REFERENCE

© DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES CANADA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
ALBERTA NTDB DIGITAL DATA OBTAINED FROM GEOMATICS CANADA, AUGUST 2001.
SASKATCHEWAN NTDB DATA OBTAINED FROM ISC, AUGUST 2001.
DATUM: NAD 83 PROJECTION: UTM ZONE 12

PROJECT

WOOD BUFFALO ELDER INTERVIEWS

TITLE

WILDLIFE HARVESTING AREAS IN FORT CHIPEWYAN REGION

Golder Associates
Calgary, Alberta

PROJECT 07.1333.0008.5300			FILE No. Wildlife Areas–Ft Chip	
DESIGN	MJ	01/05/07	SCALE AS SHOWN	REV. 0
CADD	FN	17/03/08		
CHECK	MG	02/04/08		
REVIEW	MG	02/04/08		

FIGURE: 4

L:\2007\1333 Cultural\07-1333-0008\5300\Wood Buffalo Elder Interviews\Fig 4 Wildlife Areas in Fort Chip Region.dwg Apr 02, 2008 - 3:04pm

One of the Elders identified a trapping area known as 'Muskeg Mountain'; situated north of Fort McMurray, between the Steepbank River and the Firebag River (W. Castor, Elder).

All of the Elders interviewed spent portions of their childhoods on traplines; and many referred to trapping in the timeframe prior to the creation of registered traplines in the 1940's. Three of the Elders indicated that they continue to trap on their Registered Fur Management Areas (traplines).

While many of the Elders indicated that their family trapping areas were also used for hunting, others suggested that hunting areas were, and continue to be, more broadly based. One of the Elders indicated that he makes use of various roads to access hunting areas.

During interviews, Elders indicated that the following species were trapped either by themselves, or by their ancestors:

- beaver
- fisher
- lynx
- mink
- squirrel marten
- coyote
- fox
- marten
- muskrat
- wolf

During interviews, Elders indicated that the following mammals were hunted, either by themselves, or by their ancestors:

- black bear
- cougar
- grizzly bear
- moose
- rabbits
- caribou
- deer
- lynx
- musk ox

During interviews, Elders indicated that the following fowl were hunted, either by themselves, or by their ancestors:

- 'chickens' (refers to any grouse or ptarmigan-like bird)
- ptarmigan
- spruce hen
- ducks
- ruffed grouse
- grouse
- prairie chicken
- partridge
- geese
- sharp-tailed grouse

As indicated earlier, each of the Elders grew up on their family's trapline; and it was during this time that many of them learned to hunt, and trap. Some recalled how they received their knowledge from family members or other trappers:

> *"Mostly we hunted for water animals like the beaver and the muskrat. ... The muskrats lived in the sloughs and they would make these little mud houses. If the trappers saw that there were no new push-ups or mud houses, then they would leave the slough alone so that the rats could breed* (M. Loutitt, Elder)."

> *"My dad showed me how to set traps for beavers and how to find their runs to their house. You look for bubbles under the ice in the wintertime. Then you can see where the doors are* (E. Powder, Elder)."

In some instances, school lessons were taught on the trapline as well.

> *"My family used to trap, and I have spent half my life n the trapline by the House River. We also had a trapline at 16 Mile Cabin, and we used to have a cabin near the lumber mill that once stood at Jackpine. My father took me out of school in grade eight so I could work on the trapline. The teacher always gave us homework, and my father was as strict as any*

teacher. He ensured our homework was completed and correct. We were always glad when my dad went to check the traps, because then we could relax and not do anything (G. Castor, Elder)."

One of the Elders interviewed grew up and spent most of his life in Camsell Portage:

"I grew up all my life in Camsell Portage, Saskatchewan, trapping in the wintertime. We trapped mink, marten, lynx, and any kind of fox. Our trapline was straight north of Camsell ... in the Northwest Territories, near the barrenlands. ... There was nothing but willow and barrenlands. My dad hunted and trapped there (G. Powder, Elder)."

One of the Elders recalled shooting his first moose:

"My parents and grandparents taught me how to hunt moose and caribou. I can remember shooting my first moose. I was about 11 years old. My dad tracked him and made me shoot him. Dad and I sat across the way from a creek and we waited, not making a sound, until the moose was about 50 feet away. I shot him and he turned, and started jumping. I shot him again and he finally went down. I was so happy! (G. Cardinal, Elder)"

Elders noted changes in wildlife species observed over the years. For example, one of the Elders noted a decline in the bear population around Cheecham:

"When I was growing up in Cheecham, there were only brown and black bears; no grizzlies. Now, the area is pretty much clear of bears. There's a few here, but they're getting fewer every year (W. Cardinal, Elder)."

Others noted changes in the bird population:

> *"In Anzac during the 1940's and 1950's, there were all kinds of ducks and geese. No one lived around here. It was all bush right up to the farm here where my father-in-law used to live* (E. McKenzie, Elder)."

> *"There were many geese and ducks along Kearl Lake. Today, all the birds seem to be missing, and it is even hard to find a whisky jack in the bush. Magpies entered the area ... five to six years ago and they seem to have taken over the whisky-jack population* (E. Boostrom, Elder)."

While hunting and trapping was a source of food, Elders identified other uses for animal parts. For example, rabbit 'rope' was used to make blankets:

> *"My mom used to make blankets out of rabbit rope. She'd skin the rabbit, cut it and make a rope out of the hide. Then she'd hang them out for a couple of weeks to let all the hair fall off. She'd take a piece of canvas, make a hole in it and make a bunch of loop holes in it and then weave the rabbit hide through. This made a really warm blanket* (L. Mulawka, Elder)."

The following is a description of how to tan a moose hide:

> *"My mom tanned moose hide and she taught me how to do it. It is very hard work. They didn't have the equipment that we have now. They take the hide off the moose, and they take the meat off. Then they cut all the fur off, and soak it in salt water to let all the fur come off. Then they would stretch it all out, and dry it until it was very hard. Then they would soak it again with something different in the water. That would make it very soft. ... After it was soft like a cloth. they would wrap it up and make a fire and*

smoke it, because it smelled so much. It was very hard work (E. Bishop, Elder)."

One of the Elders shared a story of how he came to quit trapping:

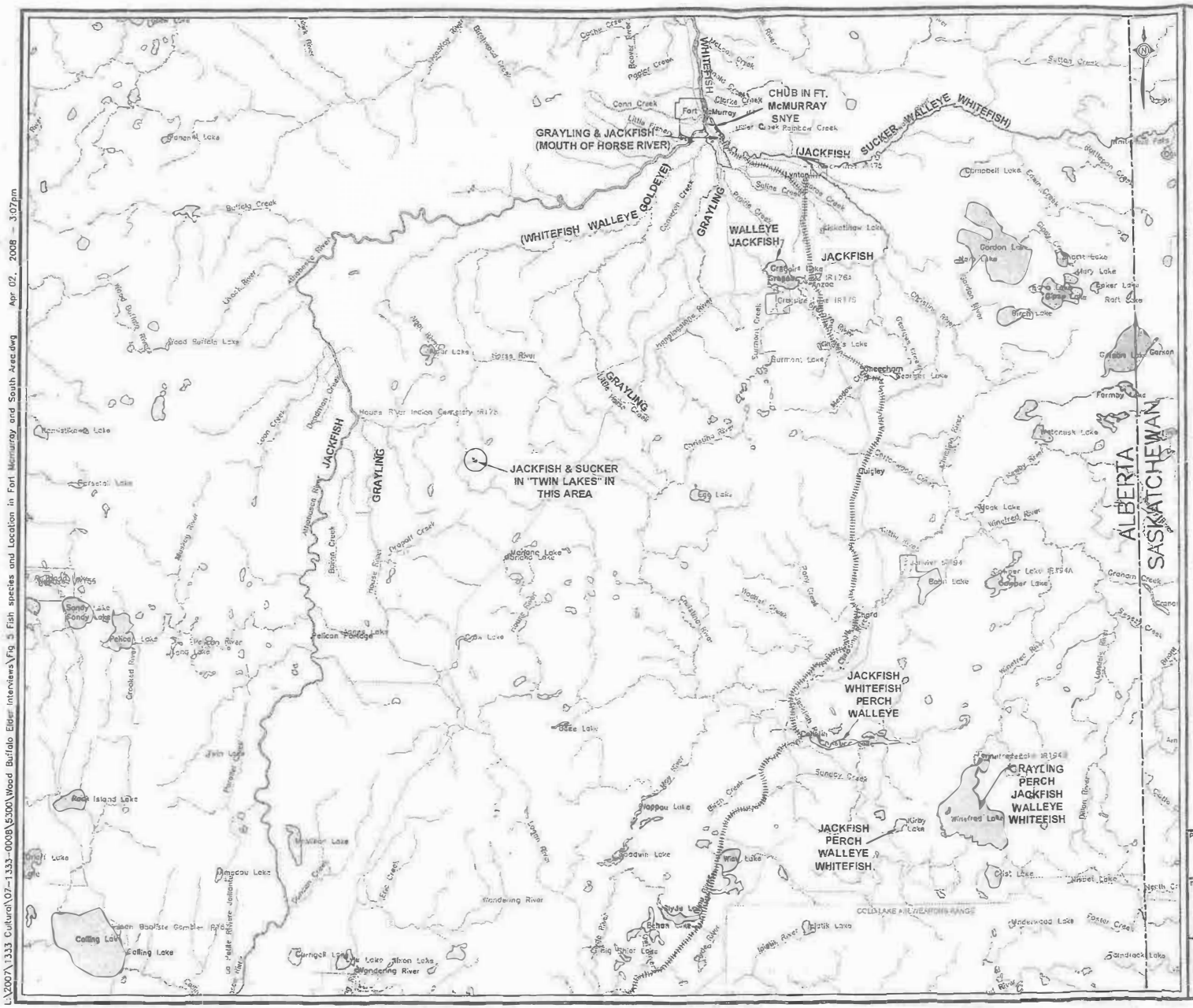
> *"I have trapped since I could walk. When I was young, I had an experience that left me feeling sorry for the beavers at Swift Rapids. I would go and watch them every day because that is how I learned to trap – from the animals. I would watch them all day long to see what they were doing. One day, I went to my trapline along the creek at 2 pm, and there was a little beaver helping his mother pull and gather sticks to build a dam. He was working as hard as the old beaver. I watched them both for approximately four hours as they tried to build their house. They put bits of mud between their hands, and I thought they were working very hard. I would not trap beaver after that because they worked too hard to make their living* (B. Woodward, Elder)."

3.3 Fishing

Figure 5 shows the location and species of fish harvested in the Fort McMurray region by Elders. Figure 6 Shows the location and species of fish harvested in the Fort Chipewyan region.

Lake Athabasca was noted for its large lake trout. However, Elders also explained that the larger the fish, the poorer eating they are:

> *"In the summertime, we would fish for lake trout. About the 15th of September, they started spawning. ... I caught an 80 pound lake trout. ... They're not good eating when they're that big. It was mostly fat; too rich. Even a 20 pounder is too fat. Those little three or four pounders; five pounders; there's no fat* (G. Powder, Elder)."



REFERENCE

ALBERTA NTDB DIGITAL DATA OBTAINED FROM GEOMATICS CANADA, AUGUST 2001. SASKATCHEWAN NTDB DATA OBTAINED FROM ISC, AUGUST 2001. DATUM: NAD 83 PROJECTION: UTM ZONE 12

15 0 15
SCALE KILOMETRES

PROJECT

WOOD BUFFALO ELDER INTERVIEWS

TITLE

FIGURE: 5

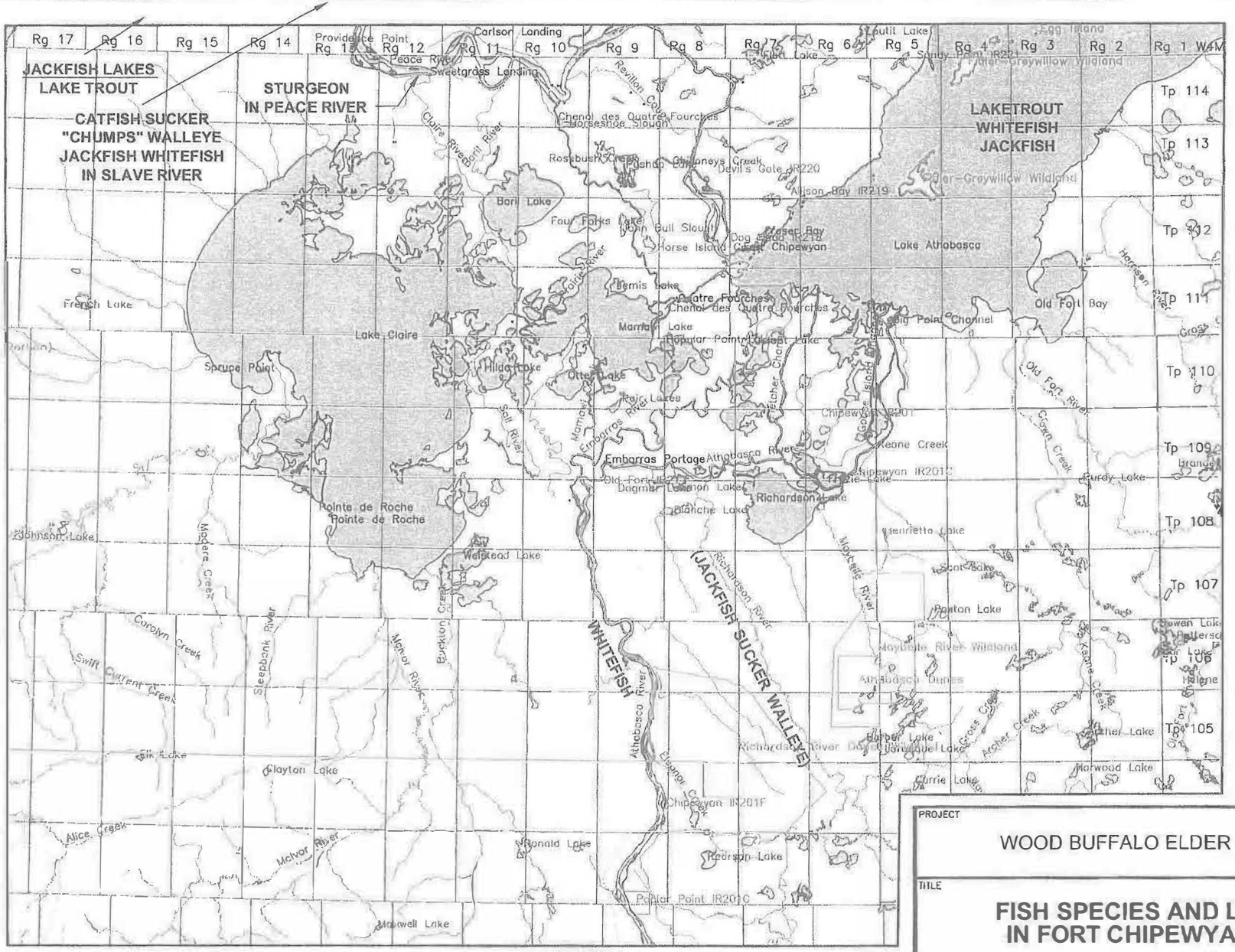
FISH SPECIES AND LOCATIONS IN FORT McMURRAY REGION

Golder Associates
Calgary, Alberta

PROJECT 07.1333.0008.5300			FILE No. Fort McMurray Area		
DESIGN	MJ	03/03/08	SCALE AS SHOWN	REV.	0
CADD	CMF	01/04/08			
CHECK	MG	01/04/08			
REVIEW	MG	02/04/08			

L:\2007\1333 Cultural\07-1333-0008\5300\Wood Buffalo Elder Interviews\Fig 5 Fish species and Location in Fort Mcmurray and South Area.dwg Apr 02, 2008 - 3:07pm

L:\2007\1333 Cultural\07-1333-0008\5300\Wood Buffalo Elder Interviews\Fig 6 Fish species and Location in Fort Chipewyan Area.dwg Apr 02, 2008 - 3:09pm



REFERENCE

ALBERTA NTDB DIGITAL DATA OBTAINED FROM GEOMATICS CANADA, AUGUST 2001. SASKATCHEWAN NTDB DATA OBTAINED FROM ISC, AUGUST 2001. DATUM: NAD 83 PROJECTION: UTM ZONE 12

15 0 15
SCALE KILOMETRES

PROJECT

WOOD BUFFALO ELDER INTERVIEWS

TITLE

FISH SPECIES AND LOCATIONS IN FORT CHIPEWYAN REGION

Golder Associates
Calgary, Alberta

PROJECT 07.1333.0008.5300			FILE No. Fort Chipewyan Area		
DESIGN	MJ	03/03/08	SCALE AS SHOWN	REV.	0
CADD	FN	11/03/08	FIGURE: 6		
CHECK	MG	02/04/08			
REVIEW	MG	02/04/08			

Other Elders noted the presence of other large fish in Lake Athabasca:

> *"I remember an airplane pilot telling me he was flying over Lake Athabasca and he saw three giant fish. He said they looked the size of a shark, and they were heading for the deepest part of the lake. That was back in the early 1980's* (E. Powder, Elder)."

> *"There used to be grayling in the area of the Hangingstone and House rivers. While they used to spawn in the Hangingstone River, it is likely that beaver dams located near the Hanginstone River and Little Horse Creek block fish access into the area* (E. Huppie, Elder)."

In addition to subsistence fishing, commercial fishing also occurred in the RMWB. McInnes Fisheries operated in the northwest region of Saskatchewan. Some of the Elders' families were employed by McInnes and moved with the fishery.

> *"In 1928, my family moved from Buffalo Narrows to Cheecham, and I spent five days sitting on top of fish boxes that were transported by horse and wagon. We moved because McInnes Fisheries, after 10 to 15 years of depleting the fish stocks, pulled out of Buffalo and moved to Lake Athabasca. People employed with the company moved to keep their jobs* (B. Woodward, Elder)."

Fish were hauled to Cheecham, where they were put on the railroad for shipping. Several of the Elders interviewed worked for the commercial fishery.

> *"There was a road going from Cheecham over to La Loche. They used to fish at La Loche and haul fish from there to the railroad. There were a lot of natives bringing fish to the railroad, and also trapping, hunting, and berry picking* (H. Sykes, Elder)."

"Cheecham is one of the older towns along the railroad. They started a freshwater fishery there in 1920 or 1923. ... They started out in Winnipeg. McInnes was one of the subcontractors who freighted fish from Big Buffalo, Massy Lake, Gordon Lake, Gipsy Lake, Jackfish Lake, and Whitefish Lake to Cheecham. It was from there that fish were freighted by rail to the south (R. Woodward, Elder)."

3.4 Burials and Other Culturally Important Sites

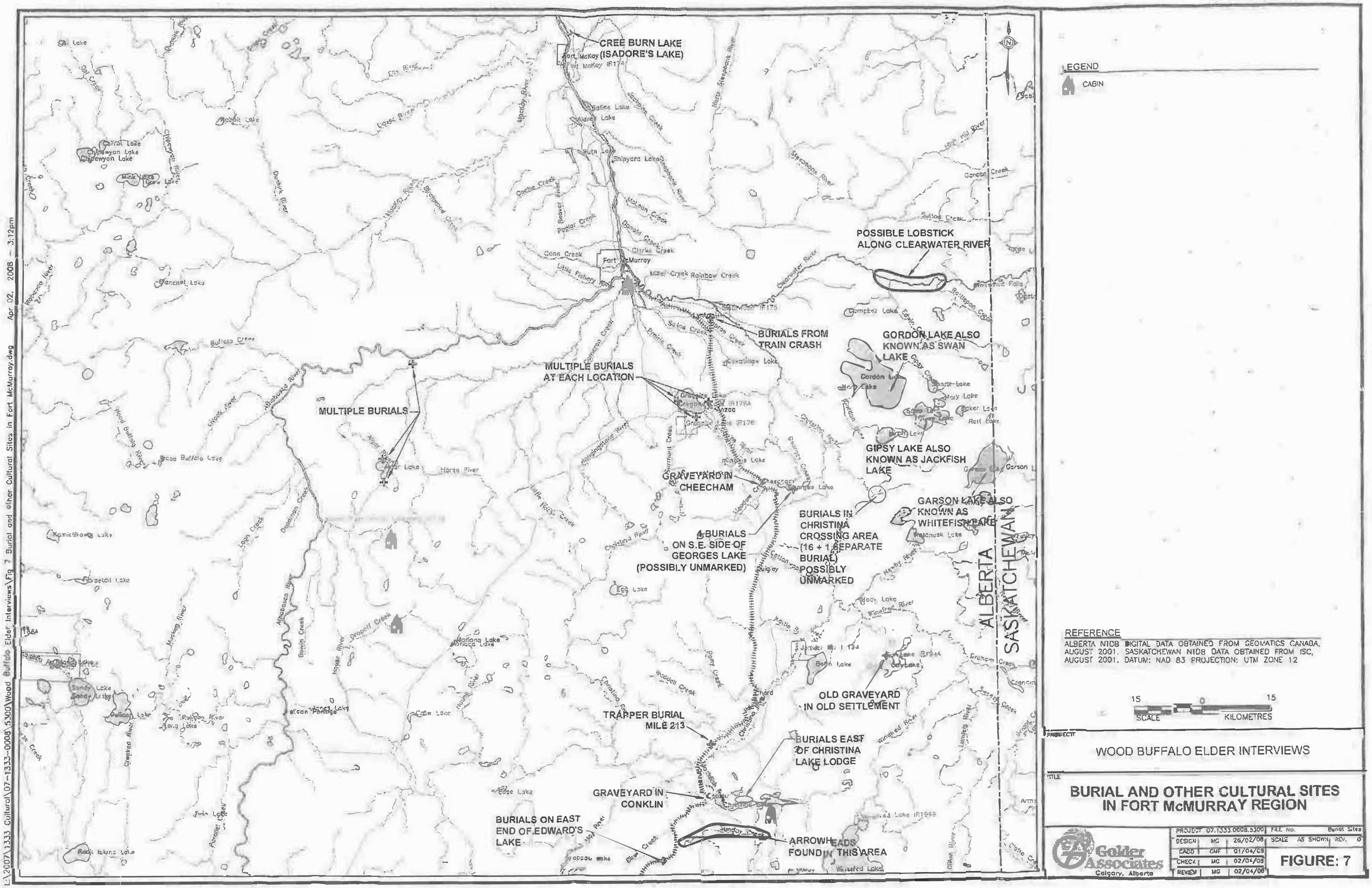
During the interviews, Elders were asked to identify the locations of any burial sites, especially unmarked burial sites that they were aware of; as well as any culturally important sites. The location of burial sites and other culturally important sites in the region of Fort McMurray are shown in Figure 7. Burial sites in the region of Fort Chipewyan are shown in Figure 8.

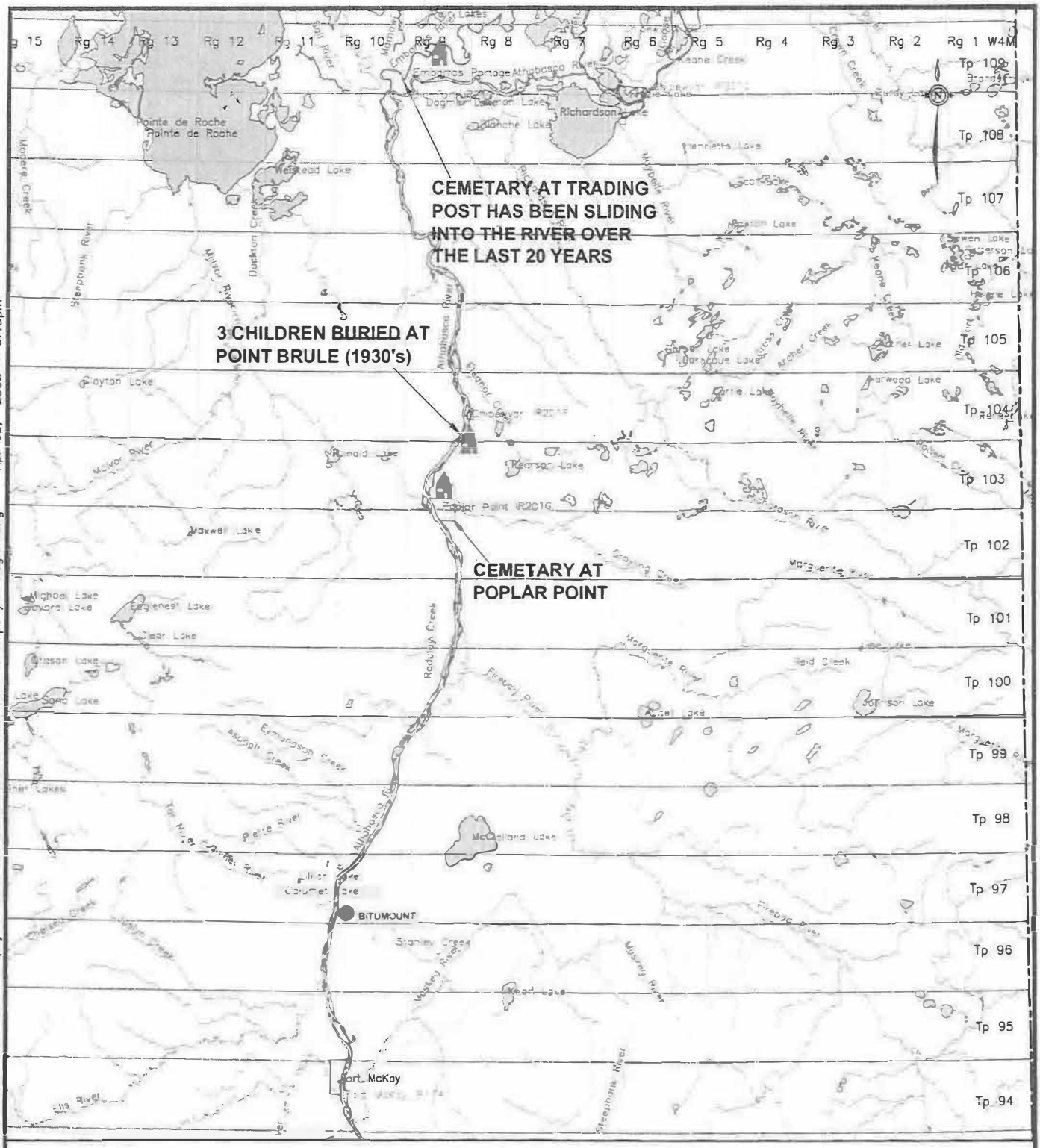
Many of the Elders identified gravesites in the communities in which their families had lived. Several mentioned gravesites along the railway. For example, they identified a gravesite near Linton for a casualty resulting from a train derailment and crash on the spur line there in 1924, as well as a cemetery at the east end of Georges Lake, south of Conklin.

Elders mentioned the House River Indian Cemetery (IR178) located at the confluence of the Athabasca and House Rivers, as well as burial sites in and around Algar Lake itself.

3.5 Changes in the Region

During the interviews, a majority of the Elders noted changes that they felt could be attributed to the various forms of development in the region. The issues identified by the Elders can be grouped into the following categories: air quality, water quality, vegetation, wildlife, fish, economic-social, and weather.


CREE BURN LAKE (ISADORE'S LAKE)
Fort McKoy
Fort McKoy IR174
Saline Lake
Mildred Lake
Ruth Lake
Shipyard Lake
Fort McMurray
Clearwater River
Athabasca River
Horse River
Christina River
POSSIBLE LOBSTICK ALONG CLEARWATER RIVER
BURIALS FROM TRAIN CRASH
GORDON LAKE ALSO KNOWN AS SWAN LAKE
Gordon Lake
MULTIPLE BURIALS AT EACH LOCATION
Gregoire Lake
Anzac
Gregoire Lake IR176
MULTIPLE BURIALS
GIPSY LAKE ALSO KNOWN AS JACKFISH LAKE
Garson Lake
GRAVEYARD IN CHEECHAM
Cheecham
Georges Lake
GARSON LAKE ALSO KNOWN AS WHITEFISH LAKE
4 BURIALS ON S.E. SIDE OF GEORGES LAKE (POSSIBLY UNMARKED)
BURIALS IN CHRISTINA CROSSING AREA (16 + 1 SEPARATE BURIAL) POSSIBLY UNMARKED
Egg Lake
Winefred River
OLD GRAVEYARD IN OLD SETTLEMENT
TRAPPER BURIAL MILE 213
BURIALS EAST OF CHRISTINA LAKE LODGE
GRAVEYARD IN CONKLIN
BURIALS ON EAST END OF EDWARD'S LAKE
ARROWHEADS FOUND IN THIS AREA
Sandy Lake
Pelican Lake
Pelican Portage
Rock Island Lake
ALBERTA
SASKATCHEWAN
LEGEND
CABIN
REFERENCE
ALBERTA NIDB DIGITAL DATA OBTAINED FROM GEOMATICS CANADA, AUGUST 2001. SASKATCHEWAN NIDB DATA OBTAINED FROM ISC, AUGUST 2001. DATUM: NAD 83 PROJECTION: UTM ZONE 12
15 0 15
SCALE KILOMETRES
PROJECT
WOOD BUFFALO ELDER INTERVIEWS
TITLE
BURIAL AND OTHER CULTURAL SITES IN FORT McMURRAY REGION
Golder Associates
Calgary, Alberta
PROJECT 07.1333.0008.5300 FILE No. Burial Sites
DESIGN MG 26/02/08 SCALE AS SHOWN REV. 0
CADD CMF 01/04/08
CHECK MG 02/04/08
REVIEW MG 02/04/08
FIGURE: 7
L:\2007\1333 Cultural\07-1333-0008\5300\Wood Buffalo Elder Interviews\Fig 7 Burial and other Cultural Sites in Fort McMurray.dwg Apr 02, 2008 - 3:12pm



LEGEND

CABIN

15 0 15

SCALE KILOMETRES

REFERENCE

ALBERTA NTDB DIGITAL DATA OBTAINED FROM GEOMATICS CANADA, AUGUST 2001. SASKATCHEWAN NTDB DATA OBTAINED FROM ISC, AUGUST 2001. DATUM: NAD 83 PROJECTION: UTM ZONE 12

PROJECT

WOOD BUFFALO ELDER INTERVIEWS

TITLE

BURIAL AND OTHER CULTURAL SITES IN FORT CHIPEWYAN REGION

Golder Associates
Calgary, Alberta

PROJECT	07.1333.0008.5300		FILE No.		Burial Site
DESIGN	MG	26/02/08	SCALE	AS SHOWN	REV. 0
CADD	GMF	01/04/08			
CHECK	MG	02/04/08			
REVIEW	MG	02/04/08			

FIGURE: 8

L:\2007\1333 Cultural\07-1333-0008\5300\Wood Buffalo Elder Interviews\Fig 8 Burial and other cultural Sites in Fort Chipewyan Region.dwg Apr 02, 2008 - 3:15pm

Air Quality

Elders feel that the air quality has deteriorated over the years. One of the Elders stated that the general quality of the air in Fort McMurray is such that it bothers her sinuses. Others indicated that when the wind is in the right direction, they can smell the oil sands plant north of Fort McMurray. In addition to being directly affected by air, the Elders also noted that airborne contaminants also affect other aspects of the environment. For example, one Elder stated that the wind carries oil onto the water, which in turn is consumed by ducks. He further believes that the smoke stacks on the oil sands plants are not high enough resulting in too much sulphur and acid getting into the ground. The stacks themselves also frighten ducks. Another Elder has also observed "yellow puddles" when it rains in Fort McMurray.

Water Quality and Quantity

Elders indicated concern about the quality of ground water. One Elder indicated that he used to be able drink from any water body between Fort McMurray and Christina Lake, but is no longer able to do so because it "tastes different". Other Elders indicated they are no longer to able to drink river water, especially from the Athabasca River. One Elder believes that the old Suncor tailings pond near the Athabasca River had been used as a dump for old transformers. He believes that the chemicals from the transformers seeped into the Athabasca River and affected the fish.

One of the Elders explained that water levels in the Athabasca River started to decline about 1958. He added that the water level started to change after they put a pulp mill on the Athabasca River. He's noticed that the water seems dirtier and has milky colour. Another Elder indicated that she use to pick rat root on a small lake near the Clearwater Reserve, but the lake has dried up.

Vegetation

Elders believe that there have been changes in vegetation over the years. Elders noted that forestry operations in the Fort McMurray region have removed wildlife habitat,

which in turn has resulted in lower animal populations. Some Elders felt that there are fewer trees and berries than before, with the result that animals are leaving. Other Elders elaborated that air emissions from existing development have affected vegetation. For example, some stated that acid rain has affected plants and berries. One Elder noted that there are fewer cranberries at Fort McKay. Some Elders indicated that they no longer eat berries because of pollution from oil sands developments. Some Elders indicated that they need to travel farther from Fort McMurray in order to find berries. Outside of Fort McMurray, one Elder noted changes in spruce trees in the Conklin region. He explained that they are not as green as they used to be, and now appear more brownish. One of the Elders indicated her lack of belief that the land can be reclaimed to the way it was prior to development. Another Elder indicated that the regional government has barricaded many access roads which affects his access to berry picking areas.

Wildlife

During the interviews, Elders expressed concern that there are fewer animals than there used to be in the Fort McMurray region. Elders observed that there are fewer ducks, geese, rabbits and chickens. Others added that there are fewer bats, squirrels, and hummingbirds. One Elder noted that groundhog and rabbit tracks are no longer seen near the Clearwater Reserve. As indicated above, some believe that it is the result of loss of habitat through forestry operations or through the effects of oil sands emissions on vegetation. Other Elders indicated that there are changes in the health of wildlife. For example, one Elder stated that a moose he harvested had a large ball-like cyst inside of it, and another indicated that a moose harvested near Anzac was wormy. Another Elder explained that she no longer eats rabbits, as a result of one having white spot-like growths all over its stomach. One of the Elders in Conklin has observed ducks with "lumps inside of them".

Fish

Elders noted changes in fish quantity and quality. Some Elders noted that there are fewer pickerel in the Clearwater River, and others indicated that they no longer eat fish from the

Clearwater River. Some of the Elders believe that water pollution from oil sands operations is affecting fish. One Elder explained that the fish in Fort Chipewyan have an oily "gas-like" taste. Another Elder explained that there has been a slow accumulation of oil pollution collecting on the vegetation on the bottom of the Athabasca River. This in turn affects the health of suckers. In Conklin, Elders noted that there is no longer grayling in a polluted creek. One Elder indicated that he believes there is something wrong with the fish livers.

Economic and Social Changes

Many of the Elders reported changes in the economic and social conditions in Fort McMurray. Generally, they believe that increased development and the resulting population increase has resulted in homelessness and drug problems. Elders also indicated that the population increase has affected their personal security. For example, various Elders indicated that they now have to lock their doors when they go out. Other Elders believe that the increase in population has resulted in an increase in vandalism. Elders noted that they observe lots of garbage when they go into the bush, especially at Stony Mountain. Another Elder explained that the oil companies have increased wages, which in turn has increased the level of inflation in Fort McMurray. From a human health perspective, one of the Elders believes that there is an increase in cancer rates as a result of oil sands developments in the region. Elders also indicated that they miss social activities that used to occur in Fort McMurray years ago, such as the "Queen of the North" competition, and tea dances.

Weather

Elders reported changes in the weather over the years. One Elder in Conklin noted that there used to be cold, protracted winters, but now there are Chinooks. Another elder reported that there is now a drier cold than there used to be. Other Elders observed that there is less snow and less rain than there used to be. One Elder recalled that on her wedding day, many years ago, it was -84 °F.

4. THE ELDERS

This section contains profiles of the elders, as told in their own words. The profiles have been edited for confidential information.

4.1 Edward Adby



I was born in Conklin and spent most of my time in this area. I was raised by my granny and I used to go trapping with my grandparents near Pelican Rapids on the Athabasca. My grandfather also shipped freight from Athabasca down to Fort McMurray. I went to school in Fort McMurray until I was about 16 years old. To help out my family, I had to go to work. On pay day I earned about $10, but that could buy many things back then. I got a social insurance number that said I was one year younger. I really needed to go to work.

I met my wife in about 1970 and together we raised six kids. We moved around for a time. We lived in the city but I didn't like that – it was too much of a rat race. Finally, we ended up back in Conklin. In the 90's, I went to work for Syncrude and I stayed there for about 20 years.

Trapping

When I was a child, for the most part, we lived off the land. We lived in the Pelican Portage and the Whitford Lake areas. Very simply, we would find a nice place to camp and the spot usually changed every year. We trapped squirrel, beaver, mink, muskrats, and fur bearing animals like wolf and lynx. In those days, the fur bearing animals had a

good price on their skins. Today, it is not so profitable. Trapping was good then; there weren't any designated areas like there are now. I remember the traders that would come on the Athabasca in their boats.

Hunting

We also hunted for our food – moose and deer – both the white-tail and the mule deer. Many people hunted the bear for its hide but some people ate the meat. Personally, I find the bear meat too rich. But when you live off of the land, you are not fussy. You had to eat whatever you could get to survive. Some of those times were very hard. I hear that some people ate lots of squirrels. At that time, when a person went out hunting you were almost guaranteed to kill something. Now, the animals are not as abundant. I have also heard that some deer are sick with some sort of brain disease. Sure, today we buy food like everyone else; but it is important to keep the wildlife source. It is the Dene way. I think that many people are getting sick because they are not maintaining this traditional way of life. The other problem is that people abuse this way. You should only take from the land because you need it and not for sport.

Berries

Everybody picked berries and medicinal herbs. At that time, there was trading inside and outside of the community. People traded some herbs that grow in very specific places that are not known to others, or cannot be accessed.

Fishing

My favourite fishing spots include Winefred Lake, Kirby Lake and Christina Lake. We catch whitefish, pike, walleye, and perch; but whitefish is the delicacy for everyone. In the past, people used to dry whitefish to store it for the winter when it was more difficult to fish. However, people did do some ice fishing.

Tanning, Country Foods and Medicines

We grew up on the guts of the moose. We loved it and thought that it was the best part of the whole animal. Nothing was wasted when it came to a moose. An old tanning technique involved mixing moose brain with detergent and rubbing it into the hide. Moose bones were also filed and used as tools to scrape off the excess fat. Other animals were also used for more than just a food source. Women used bear oil to make their hair healthy and beautiful. Also, when bear grease hardened it was used like lard. It is funny to think that we had our own 'TenderFlake' back then. We also ate what was called 'popcorn chicken' from this lard.

Skunk was a really important medicinal source. It was used to prevent sickness in a big way and although it stunk, people consumed the dried scent glands to kill bacteria. Beaver glands were also used as bait to attract fur bearing animals like lynx. In the past and today, people store these goods for future use.

Cabins and Trails

There are many cabins around here. My family has a cabin in the Kirby Lake area, and there are some cabins on the west end of Winefred Lake. Some people also had cabins in what was called the North Bay area. Many people had cabins, but when the trains came in the 1900's people moved closer to the railroads so that transportation would be easier. Old cabin structures still remain in the area, and there is even a wooden tipi in the Kirby Lake area.

The old people had a good sense of direction, but we are starting to forget where the old trails are located. One of the old Elders, who has passed on, walked from Conklin to Wabasca; cutting right across the terrain. He was a really good bushman. He was short and very fast. In the past, people walked or used dog teams, and if you were lucky you had horses. A few people still have their dogs and it is fun to see them used now and then.

First Moose and the Old Ways

I have lived the old way and the new way. It is good to see my children hunt and when my child kills a moose, she is sure to give everyone a piece. That is the old way. These days many people don't have the opportunity to go hunting because there are gun rules, and you have to travel further into the bush to find the moose. Long ago the moose would walk right through the community. If that happens today then it is an event. I remember the first time that I shot a moose - it was a great moment in my life. I shot it in the fall on a rainy day. It was early morning and having been taught to be patient and quiet, I waited by the lake. I hollered when it fell and I felt so good. Since I had been out with other hunting parties, I knew how to prepare the animal. Boy, did I enjoy that meal!

It is sad to know that the old ways are fading. I know that they were hard times, but at least you knew that you would always survive. You had to get up early in the morning to get into the bush. If you were not aggressive, then you were not going to get enough to eat. It is important to preserve the old ways and to treat the wildlife and the environment right. I think that the younger generation needs to know how to live off of the land. Some people don't even know how to make fire. If they go into the bush they will be lost, and maybe if they stay in the cities they will still be lost. They need to hear the stories from their grandparents to pass it on. At least then if the power is turned off you can still make a cup of tea.

Changes in Animals and Weather

I think that acid rain is having an impact on this way of life. Even though it is situated miles away, it gets on plants and berries and then wildlife eats these chemicals. Many people say that there is a different taste in the moose now. Even the spruce trees are not as green as they were; they are sort of brown. I think that industry is wrecking the environment. It takes a bush person to notice these changes. The birds and the ducks are changing and disappearing. People are noticing that the ducks now have lumps and other unusual things inside them. We are very careful to investigate potential food and if we

find something, we get the message out to other people. I think that the rabbits are disappearing too. However, there are more rabbits this year so perhaps it was just a low cycle.

I do notice that there are changes in the weather patterns. It used to be very cold in the winter, but now we see Chinooks. For example, it gets really cold but not for a full month at a time. Also, there is hardly any snow these days. In the past we wore snowshoes because there was so much snow. I guess that the lack of snow makes it easier for the moose to run away from the wolves. Now snow comes in May or even June and there isn't nearly as much rain.

4.2 Ellen Bishop



My name is Ellen Bishop and my maiden name was Loutitt. I was born on MacDonald Island. We were one of about four families that lived on the Island. There was an old lady that lived next to us and she had fruit trees in her yard. She had cherries and apples, and she would give them to us all the time. She moved from there to here, down by the Snye. There was another family that only had three kids but I can't remember their names. My sister was also born there. My other brothers and sisters were born at Poplar Point and Athabasca. We had a big family. There were four boys and four girls and we lived mostly in Fort McMurray. We moved here when I was three years old. We went to school here, and my dad had a Hudson's Bay post in Poplar Point. We would go down there every fall and would come back in the spring. We did that for 13 years. We would go to school in the summertime, and in wintertime we didn't go to school.

Birch Syrup, Berries and Medicines

When we went out to Poplar Point and we lived off the land. My dad did lots of hunting and fishing while my mother picked a lot of berries, and made syrup from the birch trees. That was quite a chore. It took three days to make that syrup. You'd boil it outside, morning and night; but it was really good. We had lots of berries, cranberries and blueberries. We would pick some blueberries here, but at Poplar Point there were lots of them. My mother used to put cranberries in a big wood barrel. We would fill it up and the berries would last all winter. They would freeze, but you would chop it up and make sauce. There used to be lots of berries at the graveyard. In August my dad took the whole family down to Draper to pick raspberries. There were lots of raspberries there and we would fill great big pails. We used to all the way walk up there and back again. Talk about hot! My dad would carry all those great big pails of raspberries. I don't know how he did it because they were so heavy.

We also had to haul water from the river. We had to make a big hole in the ice, but it was good drinking water. We'd also melt snow for washing clothes. It was a lot of work, but I sure enjoyed it. The water from the river was good back then. It tasted good; better than it is now.

My mother had all kinds of Cree medicine - as they used to call it. She had all kinds, but I don't know what kind. I know she would take things off the birch trees. She would take the sap and I think she boiled it. She took cotton and put the sap in there, and she burnt it until it turned black. It would make a good salve that would cure everything. She would also make tea using roots.

Hudson's Bay Company Store in Poplar Point

My dad used to keep diaries from when he was running the Hudson's Bay store. The prices were recorded and everything was so cheap; not like now. My dad worked for Hudson's Bay until he died. My dad did a lot of hunting. He used to go out and kill

moose, fish, and shoot ducks until we had enough to last us for the winter. My dad didn't have much time and he would have to close the store to go hunting. He never had a holiday or took a vacation. He just worked all the time and he helped a lot of Indians in the area. He did everything for them including buying their fur and giving them groceries. He would pack the furs in big bundles and send them to the Hudson's Bay Company. He would travel by dog team from Athabasca and Fort McMurray to Edmonton. I think he travelled more by walking than dog team.

We cut a lot of wood, or cord wood which was to go across the river. We took the whole family up there and made a big bonfire. We took our lunch and would cut lots of wood for the steam boats. The only boat I remember was the Echo. My dad was sure a busy man - he never stopped. My mother too! My mother did a lot of sewing. They used to bring my mother a bunch of hide and furs, and she would make mukluks and parkas out of them. There were many Indian families that lived near us at Poplar Point.

Sickness and Death

When people got sick my mother would look after them. There was one family with about 12 kids, and one year one of them died every month until there was only one left. My dad made coffins for them, but towards the end he ran out of lumber; so he used apple boxes and nailed them together. My mother would wrap them up with black cotton and line them outside with satin to bury the kids. I think I was around eight or nine years old when those children died; so that would have been around 1930 or 1931. They had a graveyard out at Poplar Point. We were always glad when spring came to move out of there. My dad would go back on the boat and bring us up so we could go back to school again. My mother played the fiddle and the accordion, and my dad played the spoons. He called square dances and it was a lot of fun.

Heating Planes in Fort McMurray

I remember that when I was about three years old Fort McMurray was really nice. There were only about 500 people between Waterways and McMurray. When I was young in Fort McMurray, everybody knew each other. It was just like one big family. If something happened, everybody knew. There used to be a lot of airplanes coming down there that would stay at the airport overnight. In the morning the planes wouldn't start because it was too cold. They would put a tent over the plane, build a big fire inside to warm up the engine, and then the plane would start again. They did that quite a few times during the winter. There was a big salt plant over the hill, and they had great big wide rows that would go around the river. We used to go by on a horse team and I remember seeing so much salt in bags. When I was growing up, there was no such thing as homelessness. There was never any stealing and we trusted everybody. You could leave your doors wide open, go for a week, and nobody would touch anything. There was a great big tipi in Poplar Point. Other people would put up tents and tipis along the Snye during the summer.

Employment and the Steamship Echo

We worked hard during the days, but we enjoyed it. We would hang the clothes outside and in winter they would freeze. Then we would take them down and thaw them out. I was quite young when I started working. I babysat and ironed clothes for people. I got a job at the hospital when I was 14 years old where I worked for the nuns. My dad was captain on the Echo steamship and he got me a job as a stewardess. The boat would go down to Fitzgerald just after Waterways. We would only get wood for the ship from Poplar Point. The Athabasca used to be very wide in those days. The Echo used to go through the Snye because it was so wide and deep; not like now. I liked the way it was in the past.

We went to church every Sunday to pray, but now the church is gone. My dad used to go to the Anglican Church and my mother would go to the Catholic Church. My mother

was born in Lac La Biche and raised in Athabasca. Her dad had a big farm out there and they hired my dad to work on the farm. That's how he met my mother, they got married, and then they moved up here. My dad used to drive a great big steamboat down the Athabasca River, and brought it all the way to Fort McMurray. They had the steamboat, but they also had a barge that used paddles. When there was too much current they had to get off the boat and pull it with rope. He would haul mail to Edmonton. When we were travelling from Poplar Point to Fort McMurray, we stopped along the way to pick up cord wood; but that was the only time. It would take us a day to travel between these locations. We would leave in the morning and would arrive late in the evening. It seemed so far away in those days, but when I worked on the Echo it seemed close to us.

My dad was working on the boat when it caught fire. One of my cousins was a deckhand and he jumped into the river because he was going to get burnt. He was a good swimmer, and my dad saw him and yelled to him, but that was the last anybody saw of him. Then spring came and they found the body. My dad said there was hardly anything left of him. So my dad made a coffin and buried him there. His mother lived here in McMurray. She was my dad's relation. She wanted the body moved back here, so my dad dug it out to bring it back. I'll never forget that. It was so smelly. The deckhand was responsible for setting the boat on fire. When it turned dark, my dad had told him to fill up the gas lamp. The deckhand was filling it, but he didn't know if it was full. He lit a match to check and that's how the fire started and the whole boat burnt. It was really sad.

Fishing

My sister married a Norwegian, and I went with them to spend a couple winters up the Clearwater where there were big jackfish. We used to go out fishing with a net. Her husband had minks, and they would feed the minks the fish we caught. He didn't speak a word of English, but he taught himself how to read and write with a dictionary. He was a pretty clever man. Now he can talk better English than I can.

My dad would set nets to catch fish for us. He would smoke them, and then dry them. They would be used for the winter. When it was time to eat them, you would just put them in cold water and boil it. My mother used to make a lot of dry meat, and pemmican too. That was good. She would pound it, mix it with sugar and bear grease, and make it into balls.

Tanning Moose Hide

My mom tanned moose hide and she taught me how to do it. It is very hard work. They didn't have the equipment that we have now. They take the hide off the moose and then remove the meat. They get all the fur off the hide by soaking it in salt water. The hide was stretched out and dried until it was very hard. Then they would soak it again with something different in the water. That would make it very soft. I can't remember everything. After it was soft like a cloth, they would wrap it up and make a fire and smoke it because it smelled so much. It was very hard work.

Early Fort McMurray

When we lived in Fort McMurray we didn't have any dogs. But we would see dog teams with the Indians that came in from the bush. There were also two teams of horses. The owners used to give out rides, and use them to haul things and make deliveries for people. Everybody around here has gone. Today there is a great big island in front of where we lived. I couldn't believe it. The island is so big you can't see the house anymore.

The winter back then was a lot colder than it is now. It used to go down to 70 or 80 below zero. I remember when I got married, it was 84 below. Smoke would go straight up in the air, and if you dropped anything, you could hear it all over. There was lots of snow too. There would be so much you couldn't go anywhere.

4.3 Edward Boostrom

I was born in Fort Simpson and left at the age of 10 to go to Lac La Biche. I was raised there and stayed until 1969 when I moved to Fort McMurray.



My father's name was Charlie and he trapped at Birch Mountain before traplines were registered. In those days he paid $2 for a permit and trapped on the east side of the hill by the riverbank. Later when traplines were designated, my father owned a line on House River where he built a cabin. In 1930, I stayed at the cabin for four years. It was fairly isolated because there were no telegraphs at that time. The trapline encompassed a large area along House River and it continued south to Lac La Biche. Through the years, my dad and I travelled extensively in various areas and even made it as far as Fort Simpson.

Trapping, Hunting and Fishing

I shot my first moose at House River and also trapped fox, squirrel, weasel and lynx. I like the taste of squirrel; it tastes like rabbit. Ducks and rabbit were also hunted around Crow Lake. There were also many geese and ducks along Kearl Lake. Today, all the birds seem to be missing and it is even difficult to find a Whiskey Jack in the bush. Magpies entered the area for the first time five to six years ago and they seem to have taken over the whiskey jack population. We would buy and sell blueberries and cranberries and ship them with horses. I have never seen anyone pick medicinal plants, nor do I pick them myself.

There are not too many pickerel in the Clearwater anymore. I managed to catch two small ones this year but in previous years we would catch a lot in the spring. There is also oil that gets stuck on the vegetation at the bottom of the rivers and it kills the suckers. This is not the result of any one spill but the accumulation of pollution over time.

Employment

In 1942 the army passed through the area and I worked with them for one month building pipes. I was paid 50 cents an hour which was a very good wage in those days. The army was enroute to Alaska via the Mackenzie River to begin construction of the Alaska Highway.

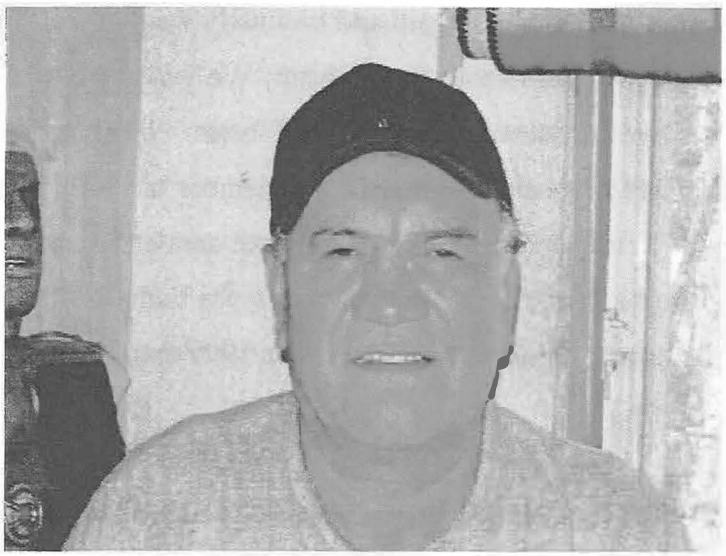
I worked on the railroad between the years 1946 and 1969 and the starting salary of 42 cents an hour was good for the time. I then left the railway and worked at Suncor for 17 years. In those days it was known as the Great Canadian Oil Sands. I have seen a lot of change at Fort McMurray over the years. There was an incident at Crow Lake in 1971 when a pipeline burst and the oil spilled into House River. At that time I worked as a welder and was called in to help repair the pipeline for two months. We had to use a helicopter because the oil was on fire all along the riverbank.

I worked for a short time at McInnes Fisheries, packing boxes of fish caught on Lake Athabasca and I also worked at a plant in Horse Creek where I made 20 cents an hour. The Crackingstone plant was located on Lake Athabasca, on this side of Radium city. We would catch lake trout, bring them by boat to Fort McMurray, and then transport the fish by railroad to various locations. We also shipped buckets of uranium on the boxcars. Life was a lot better back in those days because there was no theft or crime. There was nothing to be scared of. As more people entered the area the lifestyle changed.

Burial Sites near Edwards Lake and Conklin

I am aware of two cemeteries in the area. People were buried next to the railroad by Edwards Lake and I know that railroad crews used to look after a cemetery situated south of Conklin.

4.4 George Cardinal



I was born on a trapline at Algar Lake. There were 13 children in my family and I am the youngest of the boys. My sister died and was buried on the trapline. Three of my brothers were born at Pelican Portage and my other brothers were born in Wabasca.

The first time I saw Fort McMurray was in 1948. My grandparents lived just over the hill. There was a cabin there. The first time that I saw a bus I was afraid. I didn't know what a vehicle was since we only had dogs and horses for travelling and packing. I was only six years old.

Hunting and Trapping

We had very little when we were growing up at Algar Lake. Sometimes when dad went to town he would bring us back wind-up toys. Mainly we hunted rabbits with bows and arrows. I can make a good bow out of sinew, moose hide and birch. I also make a good arrow out of a small bone near the hoof of the moose. Once I shot a really big bear with a bow and arrow. We trapped squirrels and whatever else that we could get – mink, weasel and sometimes lynx. We had ducks hanging in the shed. The roof of the shed was made out of birch or spruce bark. I learned how to trap from my father and grandfather, but

even my mother would trap. She and I would go to the rivers and lakes and trap muskrats in the spring. I was probably four or five years old at the time.

My parents and grandparents taught me how to hunt moose and caribou. I can remember shooting my first moose. I was about 11 years old. My dad tracked him and made me shoot him. Dad and I sat across the way from a creek and we waited, not making a sound, until the moose was about 50 feet away. I shot him. He turned and started jumping. I shot him again and he finally went down. I was so happy! I was about nine years old when I shot my first bear. We were coming back with our horses after having shot two moose when we saw the bear. When I shot the bear it was standing up - probably to smell the horses. I remember him falling backwards and rolling down the hill. That happened in the Algar Lake area at Spruce Hill. Speaking of bears, a person had to be careful of bear traps that were buried in the deadfall. I haven't hunted for a long time. I think that it was back in 1999 that I killed my last moose. I called him and I shot him.

In the 1950's, there were limits on the number of beaver that a person could shoot. I guess that there must have been a shortage of beaver. I think that you were only allowed to take one beaver out of each beaver house. We would trap beaver in the winter through the ice. In the spring, a trapper probably brought back 20 or 30 beavers. At that time, the beaver pelt was worth between $20 and 40.

I finished grade nine and I left home at 14 to work on the railroad. My advice to the younger generation would be to leave the bush and go to town. Work on the railway or something like that, because life in the bush is hard. When we went to the trapline, we would leave in the fall – maybe September and walk all of the way to the trapline. Then we would return at Christmas with a bunch of furs on our backs, sell them and have a big celebration. Then we would go back out in January and come back in the spring again. My father loved the bush and just wanted to stay there. He would say that beaver feet or bear feet were his bacon.

Berries and Medicines

We always picked berries for the winter - especially cranberries. People used to make baskets out of birch bark for collecting. My mother and grandmother also collected medicinal plants. There is one plant that would stop the bleeding if you cut yourself. Then there is the black root that you collect from the lake that is used for a cold. You can make a salve out of spruce gum or black poplar buds. It is used to heal cuts and infections. There is also a large mushroom that people collect and put on their cuts. I think that it is called rabbit root.

Burial Sites

Before I was born, my uncle and dad were crossing the ice on Algar Lake with the dogs and fell through the ice. My dad survived but my uncle drowned. They buried him near Algar Lake, but then moved his body down to the House River where there's a graveyard [House River Indian Cemetery]. But on the northwest and other side of Algar Lake, there are a bunch of other people buried. They died when there was the flu in the 1930's.

4.5 Maureen Cardinal



My mother was born in either Poplar Point or MacKay. I'm not quite sure because she was raised by her grandmother. Her mother had died of the flu when she was just a baby in the big epidemic. Her grandmother also raised her sister and brother mainly on the trapline on Slave River. It was located about 35 miles from Fort Chip. I was born on the Slave River on my parent's trapline, and I lived there with my parents and thirteen siblings until I was 16. The trapline was where the Peace River and the

Slave River meet across the river from the Wood Buffalo Park. It was three miles wide and thirty miles long along the river.

Trapping and Fishing

Every spring we would pack all of our belongings on the dogs and we would go about thirty miles up the trapline into the bush. There were many lakes and creeks along the line. Fort Chip was close and dad would do some shopping for the family in the early spring or summer. He usually got our supply of staples for the next six months. These items included bags of sugar, flour, white beans, rice, baking powder, raisins, and margarine.

We snared and shot rabbits, squirrels, and ducks were hunted too. In the spring, we trapped muskrat and beaver. We would get a weasel only once in a while. Dad would snare some fox in the winter. We didn't buy any meat. We also hunted caribou and moose. The game was plentiful and the quality of meat was good. We set nets to catch fish from the Slave River like whitefish, pickerel, jackfish, and suckers. There were other fish although I don't know what other people call them. But they were big long fish. I think that some people call them 'catfish'. There were also some goldeye and small little fish that might have been called 'chumps.' The little fish had lots of bone, but they were tasty.

Plants and Medicines

My mother collected plants and my siblings and I did learn a bit from her. We peeled bark from the willow which we boiled into tea. The willow bark was also fried and could be used for tobacco. I think that it was the red willow or maybe the Saskatoon bush. For certain, there was lots of it that grew near the water. Mint was also plentiful and boiled as a tea for colds and other ailments. We also picked lots of berries; cranberries, blueberries, saskatoons, grass berries, and pine bush cranberries. This was our fruit.

Hunting Caribou

Me and my female friend took eight dogs and went out on the trapline. We saw some caribou. I was riding in the sleigh and my friend was running the dogs. I was seven or eight years old and she was about 11. I stayed with the dogs and she started running after the caribou with her rifle in the deep snow. She took a shot at the caribou and knocked him down but I saw him try to get up again. The wolves were waiting. The dogs smelled the blood and took me to where the caribou was. It was still alive. I was lying on top of this half dead caribou, and was screaming every time it tried to get up because I was so frightened. The caribou just kept looking at me. My friend finally caught up to me and the half dead caribou on the sleigh with tangled dogs. She wasn't as afraid as me and she shot the caribou dead.

Trapping a Bear

I remember when I was small that my dad set up a bear trap beside a big rock and blueberry patch situated behind our house. My mom did all of her picking there. A brown bear used to come there; probably to hunt duck or rats because there were sloughs there. One day, even though I was frightened, I went to check the bear trap with my dad and we saw that we had caught the brown bear. We just about walked on that little bear because he got caught and took the trap with him as he started to go away. He was caught under the brush. When the bear saw us, he jumped up and my dad shot him.

Trying to Snare a Moose

One time my dad was away and my mom tried to snare a moose. There was a dry long creek called a 'slime'. She set up a cable snare by a big tree. I guess she thought that the moose would follow the creek and get caught in the snare. She never did snare that moose and I have never heard of anyone snaring one either. However, my dad did snare deer.

Leaving the Trapline

I left the trapline when I was 16. I went back a few times but everyone in the family started to leave. My brother went to work and my parents moved to Fort Chip because the trapline wasn't that good anymore, and my dad wanted my younger siblings to go to school in Fort Chip. The rest of us were schooled through correspondence.

When I first left the trapline, I went to Fort McMurray where my sister was situated. We then we moved to Fort Smith. She was a nurse who worked at the hospital for three years, but then she went back to Fort McMurray after she married. I also returned and had four children. I have been around for a long time, but haven't hunted or fished much. However, my sister catches a few rabbits on a friend's trapline.

It is not like the 50's and the early 60's. At that time, most people had traplines because that was the work. I think the only other work was at the sawmill. At one time, they used to cut wood for the steam ships, but now the ships run on fuel. My dad used to cut wood for the boats for something like $3 a cord.

I don't like to go to the bush but I do get friends to collect rat root for me. I am afraid of the way the bears act these days. I hear about so many people who are attacked. The bears never used to attack; they just ran off when they saw you. Friends from Fort Chip also bring me moose meat and fish.

Stories of Big Foot and the White Mountain Bear

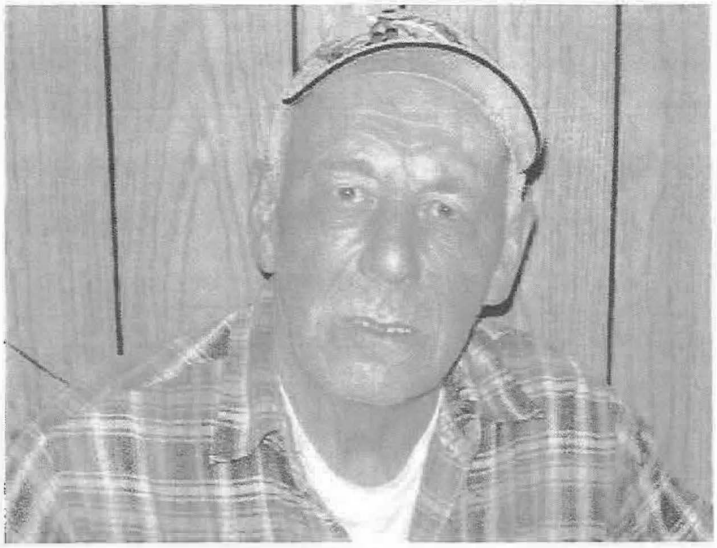
I don't know where any grave sites are, but I do know that there used to be sweatlodges in Fort Smith when I was younger. I think that the Church scared those cleansing places away. My mom didn't talk about religion much, but she did tell us about Big Foot and the White Mountain Bear. When we went snaring rabbits and squirrels, mom used to tell us that if we went across the river into Wood Buffalo Park, Big Foot would be there. I was scared of Big Foot and so I didn't go there. There are not any mountains around here, yet mom told us about the White Mountain Bear. When people were camping, they

would be frightened by noises like wolves or bears fighting. The women and children would stay in the tent and the men would go after the noise. All the men saw a shadow that was white and it was like a bear or a snowman. I think it was just the wolves or bears fighting.

Changing Times

When I was growing up, only my mom spoke Cree. My father was a white man and so she translated for him when visitors came. We would give them tea and something to eat. That is what you are supposed to do. It was a good life growing up. People along the river used to help each other. People never went hungry or homelessness like they do today. Now you see lots of it in Fort McMurray and many of those people are Aboriginal. There are also many drug problems. When we can't afford houses we buy tents, and then they chase you out of there. These are old people who have lived here for years. I know one man who was born and raised here who doesn't have a place to go. My brother froze to death. He lived his whole life on the trapline. Now, he set up camp and the by-law officers chased him away.

4.6 Walter Cardinal



When I was growing up my mother did not tell me too much about the old days. And we never did ask too much. My mom used to sing me a Cree song, but it is hard to understand those songs.

I grew up in Cheecham until I was about 16 years old. I started with the railroad company at that age, then I moved into McMurray to start up with the

NTCL tugboats and barges. This was before the highways came in. So I pretty well grew up in Cheecham. There were quite a few families there – some from Lac La Biche. In those days you were allowed to trap, and that is how we lived; trapping out of the country. Then the railroad came in, and there was quite a bit of work there. It was all hand-based, and very hard work; a lot of shovel work. Today it's all done by machines. I worked 10 years, and I was transported to different places with the section gangs on the railroad. I worked in the Slave Lake area for a few months too. We used to bid on the jobs, and get a transport into different places. I stayed in railroad bunkhouses. There was a bunk house for each of the section gangs. That was years ago, and that is how we got work – on the railroad. I also did a lot of trapping to get fur and make a living. There were not too many other jobs besides the railroad. It was an okay life. It was not big money, but it was enough to make a living.

Working on the Boats

I spent most of my life in McMurray and Cheecham. I also worked on boats and went to the arctic. NTCL used to have transportation right into Tuktayuktuk and Cameron's Bay. It's a short season up there. Back in the 1950's, they transported all the freight into the arctic by boat and barge. I worked hauling the stuff out there. When I worked on the boats, I worked on the Prospector, and the Crater. They ran on diesel at that time; not like the old steamboat that ran on wood. Those types of boats date way back to the 1920's. They used to go through a lot of wood. I heard they'd cut wood during the winter, stock pile it along the shore, and move it on barges in the summertime. I believe there's a place called Lobstick Point down river in Embarras. It's got to be somewhere in there. The last time I was in Fort Chip was a year ago last winter. I didn't notice changes to water levels because it was winter.

Hunting around Cheecham

We hunted caribou when we lived in Cheecham. They could be found to the west around Stony Mountain. We got a few up in the muskeg, but never too many because you

weren't allowed to kill caribou. We mainly hunted moose and deer. We also did quite a bit of trapping. We trapped squirrel, weasel, mink, coyote, fox, and a few wolves. The wolves are hard to get because they're smart animals. In the spring we'd also trap muskrat. We trapped around all the lakes. In those days you paid about $2 for a license to trap in Alberta. In the 1950's they started to register traplines. Then I started to work with the railroad and the NTC, and didn't trap too much after that. I was busy, working. I saw lots of traps and little cabins down the river - all the way to Fort Chip. Guys would stay and trap, and some would stay all summer too. They'd put some nets in the river to catch a few fish and ducks. There was a lot of trapping in those years. When we were kids we hunted and learned skills from the old guys. We learned the moose call; how to trap muskrats, squirrels and weasels out of the bush; and how to get a fox. We had two or three cabins on the same trapline, located straight west of Cheecham in the Stony Mountain area. Where Cheecham Creek comes out of Stony Mountain, there are two cabins. They have changed the names of the lakes now. The cabins are about 40 miles outside of Cheecham. That's where the trapline was. It's pretty high country, and although there was a lot of muskeg, we just walked along the edge. There used to be caribou there, but now they have thinned out. It could be the timber cutting or it could be that the wolves got them. You never know.

When I was growing up in Cheecham, there were only brown and black bears; but no grizzlies. Today, the area is pretty much clear of bears. There's a few, but the numbers get fewer every year. My mom and I would dry meat in the summertime to make it last. We had no refrigeration in those days. The meat wouldn't last long because it was eaten up quickly. There were no skidoos or quads in those days. Everything was done with dogs and horses. All the dried meat was fed to the dogs. They got a bit of dried meat all right. Some meat was canned in jars too. It takes a while, but it had to be done. I shot my first moose near Cheecham. We had good times in the bush. Bush life wasn't too bad. We had lots of food back then. Today, the price of food is very expensive and it goes up all the time. It was nice country at one time, but now it's all taken up with roads and hunters.

After I left Cheecham I didn't trap too much. I was too caught up in working in various locations and jobs. But I always did a bit of hunting. You can fly in by float plane to the lakes back west by Stony Mountain. That's the only way to hunt these days. Most of the game is chased out of McMurray, and ALPAC's removing all the timber. The area will be cleaned out of timber pretty soon. When you fly over in a helicopter, you can see all the clear cutting.

The last time I went hunting was about three or four years ago by Stony Mountain. We tried calling moose. Sometimes you get a moose, sometimes you don't. Sometimes you get them on the highway, too. There are a lot of hunters these days and it's pretty hard to find a place to hunt around here. You have to go way out of town. The only way to hunt now is if you have the money to charter a float plane and get out of town. If you stay away for three days you might get a moose. Around town here, you stand a good chance of getting shot out in the woods. It seems like every year a couple of guys get killed.

Fishing

We get fish from Lake Athabasca and some from Conklin. Others claim that the Athabasca fish are not as good as in the past. It's getting a bit on the polluted side back in there too. It's not like it used to be. Conklin is pretty good. There are some pretty good lakes back there; especially at Winefred Lake and Christina Lake. They're both still pretty clean yet and it is beautiful country there too. I never did live there, but I did work in the area. When the railroad had a large water tank there for the steam engines, we used to water up the trains there. The water was good there at one time and I guess it's still good in the Christina River. The Clearwater is not bad. It's just the Athabasca you have to watch. I'd set nets out in the rivers and lakes; small nets, just the right size to catch a few fish on the Clearwater and Athabasca here in McMurray. That was a long time ago. Probably in the 1950's, and we used small nets. We used to catch fish right in the river here. A good spot is past the wing dam, back around the bend. There are a few eddies and that's also a good spot to put the nets. But now, with the Fish and Wildlife in there; if we get caught doing it we'd be in trouble even though we're Native. There are

many boats that go up the Clearwater on weekends. The river is full of boats and that may be why there are no fish left.

Life around Cheecham

When we were young we had tipis and tents around Cheecham. People were out picking blueberries, and would sell them to the Hudson's Bay Company and the trading posts. After a while they were shipped by train. McInnes shipped fish from Uranium City on Lake Athabasca, and also brought fish over from Saskatchewan to Cheecham to ship by train. The railway would drop the freight into a lot, and take fish back on the return trip. The fish were brought on sleighs during the winter operations.

There were berry patches all around Cheecham, and I spent time picking berries. There were a lot in those years. It was like a trading post, really. There were Syrians at the trading post when I was a kid. There's currently quite a few Syrians around Lac La Biche. They must have come in around the 1920's to the Lac La Biche area. At Christina Crossing, there were about eight to ten families there. But these people were mainly Native trappers.

A lot of people came by railroad in those days. They called them hobos from the south and they had no where to stay. They made little huts in the woods and did a bit of trapping. That's how those guys started out years ago. The railroad was the main way to travel. There must have been a wagon road because you could see wagon trails through Conklin back then. You'd be surprised how those old guys would move from here to Conklin by wagon. I don't know how they did it, but they did. There must have been a lot of muskeg between here and Conklin, but they seemed to make it through. Maybe they picked the higher ground. There was the winter road too.

When we were kids we planted turnip, potatoes, carrots, cabbage, and whatever else you could plant in Cheecham garden. We had big cellars and the vegetables would last us throughout the winter. We had to keep everything in cellars. We had a log building and

a cellar to store the veggies. The food kept for a long time and it wouldn't freeze. Vegetables would keep from fall to spring. We had to dig the cellar six or seven feet deep. We would also keep our cans of moose meat, blueberries, and cranberries there too. You don't see many cellars now and it seems no one really cans anymore. Life in Cheecham was quite good back then. Today, there are break-ins from all the new people. People have to lock their cabins. Trappers are dealing with poachers and you cannot leave a cabin for any length of time. They break in, and if you put a lock on it they still break in. There is no respect at all.

Trails between Cheecham and Anzac

The old wagon trail from Anzac to Cheecham was on the left hand side of the railroad. You know the little yard they have there - the government yard - there is a road going to Cheecham on that side of the railroad. It used to be the wagon road, but the forestry put a caterpillar in there at one time and made it a bit bigger. It came out over on the east side of Willow Lake, and then it would come back towards Prairie Creek and by McMurray. That was a long time ago so it is probably grown over now.

Burial Sites

Cheecham was a busy place with quite a few families. Christina Crossing was also busy. I remember as a kid there were a few families there; so there must be a few graves there. There is a grave site by Anzac. It would be hard to find, but it is a pretty old graveyard. The one in Cheecham is pretty easy to spot. It's about 16 miles by the old winter road, from Cheecham to Christina Crossing. I don't know of any graves in Linton. That's where the trains would stop and check their brakes. From Linton down to the waterways it's quite the grade of hill. There was an accident there years ago, and they say there are two guys buried at the top of the hill. They were killed and buried right there. The track used to follow the Christina River, and that is where the train rolled over on the way to Linton.

Fort McMurray

I have lived by the Waterways pretty well all my life. I remember the salt plant that shut down in the 1950's. We had a hotel in Waterways at one time too. The hotel, drug store and the café all burnt down at the same time. The whole block pretty much burnt down that year. Then after a while, the salt plant shut down.

There were quite a few people who lived in Fort McMurray by the Snye. They would come in, stay for the summer, take off to work on the traplines and return the next year. There were mainly tipis and tents in the area. There were a few cabins, but not many. You don't see the tipis anymore. The people were basically chased out and now they have the place cleaned up out there.

Everything is a big rush. There are line-ups everywhere, traffic has increased, and the service in town has gone down. There's quite a bit of work, but you need an education these days. Without a ticket, there is not much work. There are not too many changes in the wildlife here; just less of everything. There used to be a lot of ducks, chickens, and rabbits; but now there are fewer. I remember when ducks and geese flew over for days. I saw a few fly by just last week on their way to Fort Chip. Rabbits are almost impossible to find, but they will be coming around again. The populations have changed for sure. There used to be a bunch of them. There is not too many moose now either. The populations of mosquitoes and flies are pretty much the same now as then. There are a few berry patches by the airport, and jack pine; but not too many blueberries. It was a bad year for picking berries though.

Sometimes you'd get a big fire and it would clear out the trees. There was a big fire here back in the 1950's out by the airport. There was jack pine that all got burnt up in that one day. The fire cleaned out all the trees and went straight west of here. There was another big fire in 1995. It started in the south and headed toward McMurray. It was July, it started to rain, and the fire slowed down. That was something to be concerned about when we were young and working in the bush.

4.7 Gertie Castor



I was born in Fort Chip. My mother was born at House River – that is the Indian Cemetery, and my dad was born in Fort McMurray. My parents were named George and Katie Sanderson. My grandparents on my father's side were called Charles and Mary. My father lived in Fort McMurray and had a house and cabin where "The Brick" once stood. He gave it to my Uncle Jimmy before moving to Horse Creek. We moved to Fort McMurray in 1937 when I was three years old. My mother was born in House River then moved here in 1922. She did not want to stay around town so we moved up there but I do not know what happened to the cabin. It was probably lost to development. When we moved back, my parents had a cabin by Peter Pond.

My work was to chop wood and feed the horses and dogs. My mother and father never spoke about their heritage or what it was like when they were growing up. My grandmother was the same - she never said anything about the past. However, I do know that my grandmother was part of the Frog Lake Massacre when she was a baby. She recalled crossing the river with loud shooting all around. That is all I remember her saying. It is too bad she is gone and cannot tell the story.

Family Trapline

We had a cabin near the mouth of Horse Creek and the Athabasca, right across from the water treatment plant. The neighbour was such a nice man with a beautiful garden up



there. I remember he stayed in touch with his sister who sent him candy from England every Christmas.

My family used to trap, and I have spent half of my life on the trapline by House River. We also had a trapline at 16 Mile Cabin and we had a cabin near the lumber mill that once stood at Jackpine. My father took me out of school in grade eight so I could work on the trapline. The teacher always gave us homework and my father was as strict as any teacher. He ensured our homework was completed and correct. We were always glad when my dad went to check the traps because then we could relax and not do anything.

Hunting

My father and I hunted bear, moose, deer and caribou every fall and spring; but not year round. During holidays like Christmas, New Years and Easter we would go back out on the trapline. I sometimes hunted with my mother, but I never went by myself. We hunted at Horse Creek and my mom had a line near the airport where we trapped beaver, fox, cougar, lynx and wolf. The Golden Eagle Campground is located there now. When I was young there were plenty of birds and geese. There used to be geese and ducks all over my mother's trapline, but there is nothing there now When I was on the trapline I would use snares and traps but I have never used a gun because I do not like them. I would trap beaver, and at Rat Lake we saw push ups all over. My dad did not trap muskrat because the pelts were not worth much at that time.

Berries and Medicines

My grandmother collected cranberries, saskatoons and chokecherries. She used to pound them chokecherries; smack them up and dry them. That was the way of keeping berries in the old days. The woman would put the cloth on the table and they would crush all the berries and dry them up. Once dried, they would just put them away, fold it up, and then in winter time they would just break them up and put them in a box and make berries -

jam like. That was the old style of keeping berries but I imagine it was only a certain type. You could not do that to raspberries, but I do not know about blueberries.

I never learned about traditional medicines but I sometimes picked berries with my mom and auntie. We collected blueberries and cranberries toward Prairie Creek from the jailhouse all the way up to Jackpine Ridge. There were blueberries and cranberries all over especially near the old wagon road going toward the airport. There were so many berries my mom said she would hide so she would not have to pick more. There were also strawberries and raspberries. We used to pick a lot of high bush cranberries on that island.

My mother and auntie would pick medicinal plants but I cannot tell you what kind. They never gave me traditional medicines. Mom would try to give me rat root and I would just spit it out. You are supposed to chew on it and swallow the saliva but it is too bitter for me. If I got sick I would go to the hospital. But my mother and auntie would take their own medicines. My dad also made a lot of it and once he made me drink a medicine he made out of mountain ash. He would cut, dry, scrape and boil it and then we would drink it. He also prepared medicine for colds. I am not sure how he made it because he did not show us. I am also unsure where my mother picked medicinal plants because she would collect them on the trapline while I was at the house. My mother never taught me anything about medicines but she and my auntie wrote a book about herbs and remedies used by all the Indians from up north.

Queen of the North

When I was growing up I was involved in many activities here in Fort McMurray. I attended school and won many races. The public and catholic schools would have competitive races and I took first prize in every event that I entered. My mom was a very good trapper. She won "Queen of the North" 10 years in a row and that would have been in the late 1960's and early 1970's. She had to make a fire, boil tea and make bannock as fast as possible and the first one who finished won. They also had to set traps at different

sites and had snow shoe and packing races. Yes, my father was still alive then and his dog won a trophy for pulling 1,500 pounds. That is the dog that bit my mom. His name was Rex and he pulled the weight alone, with my dad in the lead pulling him.

4.8 William Castor



When my father moved from the London area he got a trap line along the river about 60 miles north of here. That is where I was born and we stayed until we were old enough to go to school. I do not remember much about what we were doing in the north. My dad would trap, but we were too young to understand what he did. Then he brought us to Fort McMurray and this is where I grew up. I stayed in school until grade four. My father and other people in the old days did not recognize education. Instead of forcing us to go to school they pulled us out to go into the bush to trap. This was not very good. I still do not feel good about it.

Employment at Salt Plant and Hauling Freight

The Waterways Salt Plant was my first job and I made 48 cents an hour. I started when I was 15 years old, and every payday I would give my mother and dad $3 to pay the bills. An operator was paid $1.15 an hour, which is not a lot, but it was good compared to everyone else's pay. In those days you could buy a loaf of bread for five cents. A hundred pounds of flour would be about $2 or 3, and my mother did all her own baking. I worked for the Northern Transportation for 17 years. I was on a tug boat for five seasons, and then went to ride barges on the dock where I ran the fork lift. From the time

I started with the NT, everything was done by hand. Everything was hauled down to the barge by hand. We used to get 100 carloads of cement, 100 car loads of lime, 100 carloads of sulphur; and there was dynamite – 15 to 20 carloads that went into the Northwest Territories to the big uranium mine. Items were shipped from Saskatchewan, Uranium City and Colorado Mine, Gunnar's Mine, Loreto's mines and Rick's mines. McInnes Fisheries worked on Lake Athabasca. They had a plant right there where you dressed and stacked the fish to ship them south.

I used to work at Great Bear Lake on a tug boat hauling freight. It is the biggest fresh water lake in Canada and is very deep. Fish were not caught there because the water was too cold for fish to grow large. There were only a few small fish. The head office of Northern Transportation was here in Fort McMurray and I was sent to various places to work. One summer I was sent to Hay River and the next summer, to Great Bear Lake. After three summers I quit NT and went to work for Durcell Transport. The company was located in Uranium city. When I finished with NT in 1966, I went to work for the Great Canadian Oil Sands. They became Suncor five years later. I put in 20 years and then retired; or should I say semi-retired. I was off for one full year and couldn't stand it. I had worked all my life and wanted to continue, so I went to work at Fort McKay where I hauled water from town to McKay in a truck.

When my dad was working for the Hudson's Bay Company they would haul freight down the Athabasca River. One time they ended up falling in the river; and from wherever they froze, they all ended up going straight across the backcountry to get home. There was no road, but they knew where they were going. Some would go to Athabasca, some to Lac La Biche, and some to Conklin. They knew their directions. There were uranium mines at Uranium City, and Port Uranium on Great Bear Lake. Most of the refined pure uranium went out in barrels by air. They used to bring in a little bit of ore samples, in little bags.

Hunting and Animals

McClelland Lake is where my father purchased a trap line. He had a big area, a big garden and a big house on the riverbank; but the house is no longer there. I was only four or five years old and was too young to trap, but my two older brothers trapped with my father. I can barely remember travelling from the river to McClelland Lake with my mother and older sisters. My dad did all the hunting, and this was about 70 years ago. My dad took us out of school to go back out in the bush again. When we moved over here we gave up the trap line and moved to Muskeg Mountain. My job was driving dogs and my dad would go ahead in the morning, breaking trail for the dogs using snowshoes. There were a lot of moose in those years and my dad and brothers did a lot of hunting. I did not hunt big animals, but I hunted rabbits and chickens. After I got married I started hunting on my own. I would kill the odd moose, but not very many. The first moose I killed, I recall I had to shoot him three or four times before he went down. It happened across the Athabasca River here. There was no bridge at that time, but we went across in the winter when we travelled with Suncor. One day I was coming from work and saw the moose on the highway. I went home, got my gun and my car, and went back to look for him. I found the moose right away and killed him. I used to watch my dad skin a moose and in those days it was very cold. My dad did not wear gloves when he skinned a moose. He would skin and cut it when it was 30 below, and then he would wash his hands in the snow. I was freezing with mitts on. Those old people are tough.

There's no more trapping because there is no price to the fur. During the Second World War, fox fur was used for making army uniforms, mitts and hats. They would take red, white and silver fox pelts. Silver fox could run up to $700 or 800 a pelt. I skinned a lot of them because that is one thing I did learn to do. I can skin foxes, wolves and coyotes.

It was better for moose in the old days than it is now. Today there is too much pollution. The people in Fort Chip believe the problem is with the foxtail. It may be in the roots, but moose are eating it and it holds some sort of sickness. People believe the environment is contaminated because of too much acid and sulphur going into the

ground, and up into the air. Some oil companies blame each other saying some smoke stacks are not high enough. I also do not believe the smoke stacks are high enough, but the problem is the higher the smoke stack the larger the area that is polluted. It gets blown further away.

Smoke stacks scare ducks and geese away. There used to be oodles of birds every spring and fall. The skies were just covered when they moved south and came back up in the spring. Before the oil sands there were all kinds of geese and ducks along the river and people had a lot to eat. Today I think the problems are related to the smoke stacks. The oil is blowing onto the water and the ducks are eating and drinking in the water. You don't see clouds of ducks and geese anymore. They used to travel mainly at night. You could go outside in the fall and hear them going over, steady. This no longer happens. I guess they know their directions pretty well.

Fishing

In terms of fish, every fall down at Clearwater we would get ready for winter. We would stick 10 fish on a stick, hang them up, and smoke them. It was generally Cree fish types that included white fish, pickerel, jackfish, and suckers. White people go for pickerel. That is their good fish. Natives mostly enjoy white fish and generally cook the tail because there are no bones in it. The tail is the best part which is in contrast to suckers.

Berries

When I was young my mother used to take us in the woods to pick berries in the Athabasca and Clearwater area. My sister and mother would pick the berries, and my job was to pack the berries and haul them home. I made two trips a day out in the bush using boxes and the pack board. My mother used to put away about 200 or 300 quarts of berries in one season. These were mainly blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, cranberries and gooseberries. We picked berries mostly near that part of town where they have the campgrounds for holiday trailers.

Medicinal Plants

My mother would use rat root and mint. They used to grind some kind of root and boil it with water until it looked like tea and they would drink it up for heart medicine. Indian people, when they take medicine out of the ground, they put tobacco back in the place. When Indians cure each other with medicine, they do not want to be paid with money. You can give them tobacco or food but no money is involved.

We no longer use traditional medicines; and I don't know that much about it. Back in the old days, people used to hurt each other with bad medicine. They would cripple each other, and a lot of people have seen this happen. There was a fellow in McKay who wanted me to take him to Wabasca. He said if I took him there, his uncle could make me lucky at winning bingo and playing cards and provided medicine. I never did take him because I didn't know where to go in the first place.

Stories

I remember the day in 1936 when we had the biggest flood we ever had here. The water came halfway up the hill where the hospital is sitting. All the low lying areas were under water. I was only eight years old at the time and the water came from the north. My mother told me to go to the corner, where there was a team of horses, and get on the wagon. There was so much water my legs were hurting. I found out later the river was jammed up with ice for 80 miles and this caused the flood. My dad had built a log house and was upstairs at the time. The water came within four inches of the upstairs floor.

Ceremonial/Graves

There may have been some grave sites across from McKay. There used to be an old reserve there. There are graves at Poplar Point and Point Brule. There used to be trappers all along the river, right to Fort Chip; and in those days when you kicked the bucket, you were buried right there. They simply cannot bring you out. Trappers used to

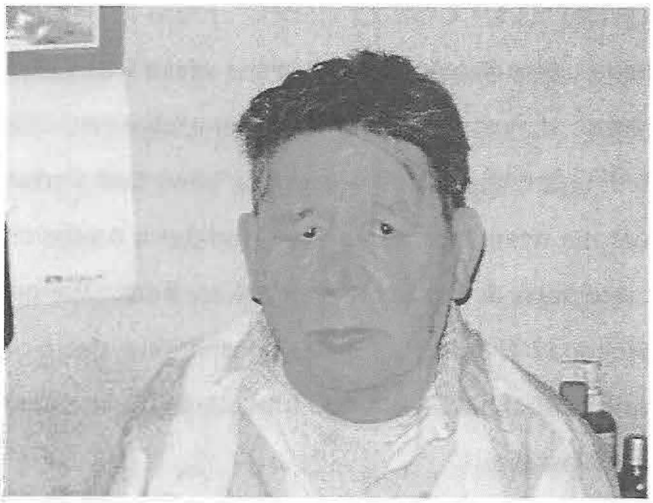
run into single graves of trappers along the river all the time. Poplar Point had at least 10 families in that area, and the same can be said of Point Brule.

In terms of gathering places, we would meet outside under a spruce tree and it did not matter that the weather was cold. We would sit in winter with snow falling all around us. When you are scared at night; that is when you pray. For example, you'd pray when trying to sleep in a tent on Muskeg Mountain with wolves all around the tent.

Changes Past/Present/Future

There are some changes to Fort McMurray since the Oil Sands development. There used to be two or three business people, a clothing and food store, and a few other kinds of stores. Farmers and trappers would sell to the stores. It was the way business was done for years and years, but the minute the business people found out the oil companies were coming in, the business relationship with the Indians changed. The town catered to outsiders, but people did not move away. They stayed where they had their own places, but there are not many of those people left. Suncor was one of the first plants and major oil companies in the area. Syncrude came in because Suncor had their own union. The people at Syncrude wanted a union and the company would not allow it. Every time they talked union the company would raise wages to keep people quiet. The stores would hear about people getting raises and the price of food and clothing went up too. There are a lot of pensioners like me around here, but the government does not raise our wages. The oil company wages go up, but we pensioners are still making little. I do appreciate very much that oil companies are looking after their employees and give them raises now and again, because I am a big family man. I raised nine kids in this town; six boys and three girls; and they're all working in the plants. I can appreciate they are making good money even though I am still down here on the pay scale. I am making a living the best way I can which is not very easy. Most of my family now have new homes, cars, trucks, and a new boat, but I am in this little hole here they call senior residence. Only two of my kids do not have homes, and it's because they do not work hard enough.

4.9 Joe Cree and Walter Cree





In 1940 we moved to Fort McMurray, and later we moved to Christina Lake. We had a trapline by Rainbow Creek, which went up north to Muskeg Lake and Muskeg Mountain. We would walk to the trapline and we'd pack our things by dog team. It could take up to a week and a half to get there if there was snow. Years ago there were lots of rats at the trapline. My dad, John Cree, hunted and picked berries all over the country right up to Rainbow Creek. When we were kids we ate lots of moose meat, but not too much bannock, because it was hard to get flour. In the 1930's, there weren't any jobs but everything was cheap. I think that a package of cigarettes was 10 cents.

Later in the 1940's, men as young as 14 worked on the steamers loading wood. They had big paddle wheels, and we often went down on the steamship Echo and came back on the steamship Athabasca. Many people worked for the Hudson's Bay Company. At that time, the people used the tar sands to patch their boats.

Stories of Ice Crossing and Cannibals

Dad told us all kinds of stories. There were the stories about long ago such as when people came from China when the ocean was frozen over. Then there were the cannibal stories – the people who used to eat each other. He said that this happened mostly in the NWT and China. Dad also made bows and arrows, spears and snowshoes. To make a spear, he would sharpen a stone and put it on the end of a stick. He talked about making these objects at a time before we were born. We never saw him make them. He said that they found the stone for the spear along the river. It was a brown to light yellow-coloured rock that had to be broken, and was called 'beaver sandstone'. It carves nicely like soapstone.

Medicines

There are still medicines out there. There is the medicine that grows by a little lake that is used for a sore back. It can be rubbed on the back or boiled into a tea. It is a bush with berries on it that is similar to high bush cranberries. They take the root and boil it with frog leaf; which I believe is mint. It grows in some places in Clearwater, Stony Mountains, and on Highway 63 north of the lake. There are medicines in the Stony Mountains that are good for most ailments except TB. There is not a medicine for that. Fireweed is used for burns. You tie fireweed and a mudpack on the burn and in a few days it is gone. You can get rat root there. The truth is that if you eat rats, you get fat; but if you eat rat root, you get thin. Rat root is a diet thing but it is good for colds and sore throats too. For a bee sting, then you chew big bog leaves and put it on the sting. The big bog leaves are in the same shape as the Canadian maple leaf. Rabbit root grows along the railroad tracks and is shaped like a skinny maple leaf. Snake root is good for anything. It grows on bushes that have red berry bunches on them. I don't think that these berries are good to eat.

Fishing

In Fort McMurray, there used to be lots of fish – mostly whitefish. In those days, the water was so clear on the way to Christina. You could drink out of any creek, or you could drink muskeg water. Now the water is destroyed. There are no fish and the water tastes different. I think that the water levels started to go down about 1958. When the pulp mill came to the Athabasca, it seemed like the water started to change. Since that time, it has been dirtier with a kind of a milky color. However, the water is still clean at House River.

Buffalo

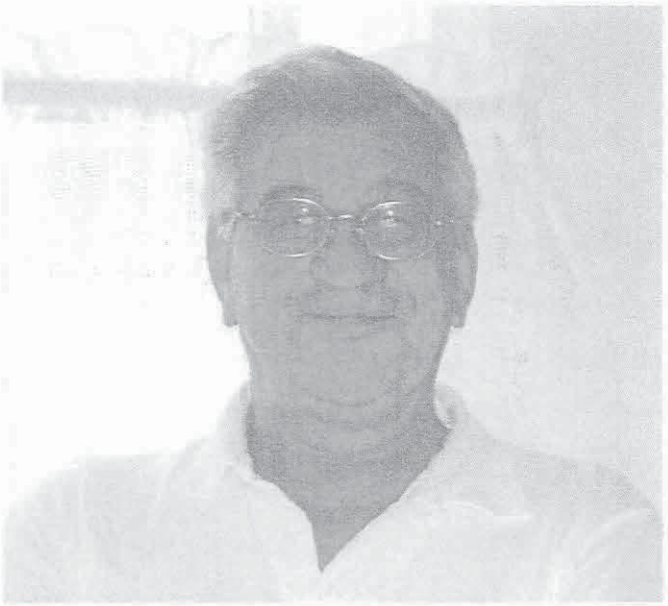
We all went to church in Fort McKay. There were herds of buffalo and woodland caribou in about 1945. The caribou would stand alongside the river. You could go up on the hill by the Fort McMurray fort site and look down the hill by Stone Creek, and you would see that the valley was full of buffalo. Apparently, our great-grandfathers killed the buffalo for food. They say that over a hundred years ago, there was a Native settlement along the river by the Athabasca and Clearwater. There was lots of bush and many tipis. They say that the settlement was located where the water treatment plant is now.

We were forced out of Waterways. We were free then and could trap anywhere. We sold berries and fish, or we gave them to our friends who lived in Waterways. I think that it started about 1960; the end of that way of life. Now the squirrels and rabbits are gone. You don't see rats along the river any more. There used to be all kinds of birds but they too have disappeared. Even the bats, flying squirrels and hummingbirds are gone.

Burials

My dad's brother choked on a fish bone and died. He was buried by Gordon Lake. My dad's mom is buried by Jackfish Lake.

4.10 Laurie Gallagher



My name is Laurie Gallagher. My mother's name was Ellen Loutitt and my dad was Don Gallagher. My grandparents lived at Poplar Point where there was a big settlement. They raised all their kids there, except for my mother who was born on McDonald Island in 1922. They had a house there, so actually, we kind of own that island. My mother spoke three languages; Chipewyan, Cree and English. My grandmother spoke four languages; Chipewyan, Cree, English and French. So, they were fairly well educated. My mother and my grandmother used to make us all our own mukluks and winter coats. They used to have all kinds of native people come over to their place, and they'd have tea and little dances on Saturday night. Most of them spoke Cree though. You go to McKay, and a lot of them are Chipewyan, but they just speak Cree.

My father was born in Fond du Lac. His dad was an RCMP officer up there. His mother died when he was just a baby and he was brought up in Stoney Rapids by my great-grandmother. When he was about eight or ten years old, he moved to McMurray and he stayed here for the rest of his life. My great-grandmother was native. She was a Mercredi. She was Father Mercredi's half-sister. She's buried beside Father Mercredi in St. Albert right now. She died in Edmonton, and Father Mercredi was looking after her when she died. That's where they were both buried. My mom's mother is buried in Athabasca, where she was born and raised. It used to be called Athabasca Landing. That's where she wanted to go back to, so we buried her in Athabasca up on a hill. There's a landing down below where the boats used to come in.

I remember going to school. There were a lot of children who couldn't afford to bring lunch, so they would bring hot chocolate, soup, and sandwiches from the hospital at dinnertime. I remember we used to have to walk across the field and pack it all over to the school at dinner time.

Grandfather had a Trading Post at Poplar Point

My grandmother was born in 1898 in Athabasca. She came to Fort McMurray when she was about 14 years old. She met my grandfather and he was quite a bit older than her. They got married and raised eight children in Poplar Point, four boys and four girls. He was a fur buyer for the Hudson's Bay Company and he had a trading post there. My grandfather's name was Billy Loutitt. My grandmother used to tell me all kinds of stories about how the trappers used to come to Poplar Point to sell their furs to him. She told me about one time just before Christmas when he had bought so much fur he had to take it by dog team from Poplar Point to Edmonton. It took him about six weeks to make the round trip.

The trappers used to trap a lot around Moose Lake and Chip Lake, right where there were some settlements. The trappers in those days would go out in the fall, and they wouldn't come back until Christmas time. Then they would go back and not come out until the spring. This one time, a native trapper brought this fur to my grandfather, and amongst the foxes there was a white fox. They had never heard of a white fox in this area. My grandfather didn't know what it was worth, so he couldn't pay him anything. But because he ran the Hudson's Bay store too, he just said "help yourself from the store. Whatever you need, take it". So I guess the trapper took a gun, some shells, and food. He was told to come back in a couple months. When grandfather took that fox by dog team to Edmonton, they gave him $1,000 for it. Now, that's what it was worth at that time; but that $1,000 was like $100,000 today. But he couldn't give the trapper $1,000, so he made it up in trade, like food and guns.

Family Employment

My dad didn't trap. He worked for Northern Transportation Company as a crane operator pretty well all the time he lived here. He joined the army in 1939 with some others who lived in the area. There were about ten of them that left here. I worked at the plants for most of my life. I just finished with Syncrude. I was there for 10 years. I also worked at Suncor for 12 years, and PetroCanada for 17 years, but I wasn't in McMurray all that time. I travelled around BC, Saskatchewan and Alberta, because I was moved around quite a bit. I came back here 10 years ago when I met Geraldine. She brought me back. We can't afford to stay here anymore though. It's getting to be too expensive.

Berries and Medicinal Plants

We used to pick a lot of berries on the hill going towards Horse Creek, up on that hog's back. We picked a lot of berries when we were kids because my mother and grandmother canned everything. We had 200 quarts of berries in the winter, so we would dry some of the berries and eat them. We also had dry meat. We would dry moose meat and use it to make pemmican. My mother used to can everything, including rabbits, caribou, moose, geese, and ducks in the fall. She used to make all her own lard too. My grandmother picked sap off the trees for chewing gum, and mint for tea. She also picked tree roots and medicinal plants like rat root. She lived to be 88 years old.

I think my mother has pictures of the Athabasca River, from where the bridge goes north towards McDonald Island. Years ago, that whole area used to be a very big garden. It was a beautiful garden with corn six feet high. We never had vegetables from the store, we had to grow them. There were eight boys in the family along with their mom and dad.

Fishing

We fished down by the bridge on the Snye and Clearwater River. I did a lot of fishing north of Embarras when I was up on the boats around this area. There was very good fishing up there. There was a little creek they call Keene Creek. That was the best

fishing I've ever had in my life. Every cast we pulled in a pickerel. We went up there about 15 years ago. Now there's too much pollution in the rivers. We used to fish in Jackfish Lake and Lake Athabasca, and we used to do a lot of fishing around Uranium City and Camsell. We got a lot of nice lake trout in there.

Joe Shot was the first one to shoot the rapids ever. That's why they named him that, because he shot the rapids. After that, his family changed their name to Shot, because they were so proud. There's lots of Shot's around.

Caribou in Fort McMurray

I remember in 1955 when the caribou came here; thousands and thousands of them. They got mixed up and they followed the Athabasca River down to McMurray; right from the barrenlands. There was a blizzard up north and they must have got mixed up, because they came south. Right now the caribou only come as far as the lakes; some of these lakes north of Fort Chip. They don't come any further than that. My dad used to go shoot them on a Sunday afternoon. He would bring them home, and my mom would be canning meat for a week.

There is no wildlife around like there used to be. We used to have all kinds of rabbits and chickens, but you don't see them around anymore. Everywhere you go, it doesn't matter. We went up to Stony Mountain last fall to cut some firewood. We took a back road, and there was garbage all over the place. It's just unreal.

Burial Sites and Trails

I don't know of any gravesites or burial sites. There probably is something around Poplar Point. There would have to be because that was a big settlement. I know my grandmother lost some children at Poplar Point too. There has to be a burial ground there somewhere. That would have happened between the 1920's and 1930's.

There used to be another trail; what they used to call the old telegraph line. That used to go straight west of Fort McMurray to Wabasca. There used to be natives that would leave Fort McMurray in the fall, and come back in the spring. They would walk all the way to Wabasca to hunt and fish in that area. They used to carry their dry moose meat with them. I remember they used to come to my place, and I'd trade them for dry meat. They'd give me a big shopping bag full, and it was good meat. They used everything and lived off the land. They didn't need anything from the store.

4.11 Violet Hansen

Family Background

I was born in Fort Chip, and I came to Fort McMurray in 1958. My parents were both from Fort Chip. That is where our family history lies, but my parents never spoke of the old days. I have not been to Fort Chip in years. My brother lives there but my mother and sister now live in Fort McMurray. We settled here, raised the boys, we got jobs and put them through school. We were fairly successful here.

Trapping

When I was young and lived in Fort Chip, my family and I would go trapping in the spring. My dad worked for the Park with Indian Affairs. My dad would just trap in the general area because there were no traplines back then; you could trap wherever you wanted. We trapped in the [Wood Buffalo] Park with my brother Sonny. His trapline was located toward Fort Smith and north of Rochers River. It was by the dog camp which is now part of the reserve. Back then, there was quite a bit of water. In the spring there were lots of musk ox, and we would catch the odd one. We would not hunt buffalo because it was illegal, but we would chase them with our bombardiers when we were taking our stuff out. I spent most of my childhood in Fort Chip and when I moved to Waterways it was permanent. Since moving to Fort McMurray, I have stopped hunting and trapping. I have not even been out with my boys.

Hunting and Berry Picking

We used to keep the dogs at the dog camp, situated close to Fort Smith where the Rochers and Peace rivers meet. That is where my mom grew up and they used to keep sled dogs out there all winter. We hunted and picked berries at Old Fort Bay and at Big Point Channel. The boys and men used to hunt where Baril Lake and Lake Mamawi enter Lake Clair. We have cabins there, but I have not been there for years. Water was good back then and the fish were edible. In August we would hunt geese before they could fly. There were once a lot of geese and ducks, but they do not fly this way anymore.

We would also pick berries on the south shore of Lake Athabasca. We would set up a tent, light a fire, and camp. People did not live on the south shore at that time, but they lived on Big Island. There were less people and more berries on the south shore, and when the wind blew, it was easy to access and leave the area. There are many large boats that pass through the area. So, if you go to Big Island and get a big wind, you have to stay put because of the large waves.

My parents never gave me traditional medicines when I was young. I would always get store bought medicines. We never picked traditional plants for medicines but we did pick blueberries and cranberries in the burned area by the tower. It is difficult for me to get out there now. I still make jams, but I buy the berries at the store.

My dad and I would hunt caribou together when they came to the area. We had guns and my dad would always let me take the first shot. Once I managed to get two – I was a good shot. When I was about 15 or 16 years old, the caribou would come right into Fort Chip. One time, a caribou got stuck in a barb wire fence and could not escape. I used my butcher knife to slit his throat, let him bleed out, and then got him later. You could not let him stay there and suffer. I was a Tom-boy – always out in the bush, cutting wood, bringing it in with dogs and sawing it. That was my chore.

I also used to make pemmican by pounding the meat, adding a bit of sugar and grease (or lard) and mixing it up into a ball. I would make it when I was younger because it was good energy out on the trapline. If it was still too dry, I would pound it with a hammer or axe and add more sugar and grease. We were brought up not to waste food and I am still like that today. In the past we were always busy hunting and trapping food. Today in Fort Chip there are no rabbits, and few animals. I have spoken to several people and they say that there are no chickens or ptarmigans either. My sons sometimes kill a few prairie chickens and ptarmigans for me, and they are very good eating.

Fishing

My dad and I would set nets out in the lake by Big Island near Bear Tooth Island. We would fish for a week and hang fish for the dogs to eat during the fall and winter. We mainly caught whitefish and jackfish. There was no special way to cut the fish. We would put a stick through their backs, and with ten on the pole, we would hang them up to dry. Although the fish were mainly for the dogs, we would keep the odd white fish for ourselves. I never did dry fish in the fall because there was too much work to do. We had to finish the fish and get home before the freeze. My dad and I each had our own dog team and that is how we travelled. Dad had six dogs on his team, and I had five dogs on mine. We were able to travel long distances rather quickly, but we always took our time. We did not push the dogs because there was no hurry to get back.

River Boats

We used to swim and dive off the police dock with our bathing suits on. Today that area is filled in for speed boats that enter the harbour. In the old days you would see the smoke from the paddleboats come down by Jackfish Lake and they would cut across the mouth of the river. They did not have to dredge the Athabasca River back then because there was plenty of water. The ship would dock, the plank would be pulled out, and we would all go grab an orange or an apple. They usually had a case open there for us to help ourselves. My husband worked for the boats right up until he died. We made a few

trips up and down the lake, and used to go for a month long trip every year down to Uranium City. It was a nice trip with beautiful country and my husband would get someone else to pilot for a few days.

Changes in Fort McMurray and Athabasca Delta

There have been a lot of changes to Fort McMurray. When I first moved here, it was just bush and prairie with a few houses. There were many rabbits back then where the IGA is now located. By 1966 we had a hotel, drugstore, barber shop, café, and a theatre in town. I wish the place was the way it used to be. There is too much of everything and you cannot go anywhere because it is too dangerous to leave your house to walk down the street. In the old days we would go out without locking out doors. We could go have a picnic with a little fire and return without ever thinking of locking the doors. I suppose there are good things too. All the kids went to school and had jobs so they had some spending money. At that time they would get a large bag of candy for five cents and they seemed pretty happy.

When the Bennett Dam in British Columbia was made, it changed the delta. When they open the dam, the river floods. Last year they had to close the winter road when the Bennett Dam was opened. The road flooded and they had to stop people from driving on it so it would freeze again. It is very disruptive. If they are going to open it, it should be in the spring of the year.

4.12 Eva Huppie

We travelled on trails before roads were constructed in the area. The old trails ran from Lac La Biche, across the lake and into Peavine. We also travelled with horses on wagon roads between these two locations.

Prior to trapline ownership, my father trapped on Birch Mountain. I cannot provide the specific names of lakes and creeks where we trapped because they had no names at that time. My older sister Emma was born on the mountain and then the family moved by

steamboat to Fort Simpson. In the 1940's a small steamboat named the Echo was the only means of travel. Later, when the traplines were designated, we trapped in the House River area.



Life on the Trapline

I have held my trapline since 1972 and my cabin is located by Hangingstone near Horse Creek. My son is also registered there and owns a nice log cabin. I signed the line over to him, but I am also registered and still own my cabin. My son will get the trapline after me. It is mainly leased up by oil companies, and there have been changes over the years. Since JACO started up, there are fewer birds, and more people and cutlines.

At one time we trapped a lot of lynx because they were worth a lot of money. We could get over $2,000 a pelt. At one time I believe they went up to $3,000 for an adult skin, and $1,100 for a small baby pelt. There were also many rabbits, fishers and timberwolves that we snared. Those timberwolves are smart and crazy. I also trapped mink, weasel and squirrel. I never could eat squirrel, but I snared and ate a few rabbits on the trapline. I would travel over hills and put a tarp on the snow by the creek in order to pull the sled across. Unfortunately the lifestyle has changed and monetary gains from trapping no longer cover the cost of the activity. At one time I could have lived on the trapline, but now there are fewer animals and it is very expensive.

We would frequently live off the land. We had another trapline by Mile 68, just south of Conklin. My husband would hunt moose and I would make a lot of dry meat. There are a few caribou by Old Chard road on this side of Algar Tower. I even had a bear steal my quad. I don't know how. He dug a hole into the cabin. I think there must have been lots

of garbage around. He took all my coffee and all the food he could eat. Twice he did that to us.

At one time there were many chickens including ruffed grouse and sharp tailed grouse. Today, the birds are dying out. This year I killed only two partridges on the trapline, and there are absolutely no ducks. This past year I wanted to eat duck so bad that my brother went as far as Heart Lake to find one. That is a long drive.

Fishing

We would go to Twin Lakes and two little muskeg lakes on my trapline that may not show up on the map. We would fish with a hook and put up lines. We lost a lot of fish in the nets and managed to get only a few suckers. We always caught jackfish with a line. There is a winter road to access the Athabasca River cross country from House River.

We do not eat fish from the river because they do not taste good. These days too, the fish from the Fort Chip area tastes like poison or gas. Maybe it is just me, but I think down there they are used to the taste and do not realize there is a problem. The fish taste oily - something is off. I do not care for the whitefish from that area. There is pollution in the rivers. I went into Hangingstone Creek one day and had to get oil to take the tar sand off my feet.

Berries and Medicines

I have picked berries all my life. I used to pick at Mile 168 just south of Conklin, but now I pick mainly on my trapline. I take the quad and cruise. I used to sell high bush cranberries to Mennonites at Anzac, and I broke the market with the number of berries I collected. My husband's uncle also used to buy blueberries at Mile 37 by Imperial Mills. He used to pay about 20 cents a pound back then.

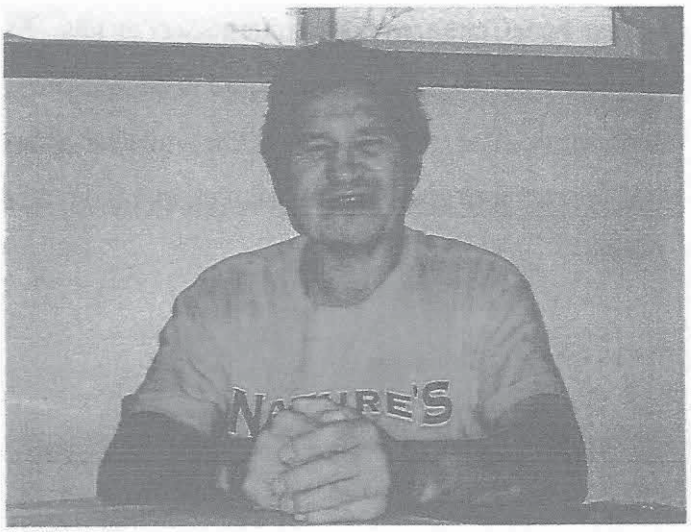
My mother picked medicines and knew remedies for diarrhea and nose bleeds. She also made a medicine to help with colds, but she never did teach me because I was young and

not interested in learning about it. She would gather the plants around Lac La Biche. I have seen other people make medicines. They take white flowers that come in bunches and horse radish that grows close to the ground; then they mix it up with rabbit livers. These days they use beef liver instead because there are no rabbits.

Burial Sites

My mom was very religious and would attend Big Bay – an old church in Lac La Biche. My father was not as interested in religion. There is a burial site located by Mile 184 on the east side of Gregoire Lake. There is a little cross and they look after the grave which is also situated close to the railroad. Also, there are several graves on an island in Lac La Biche. Several people were out there picking saskatoons and a big lightening storm killed them. They were buried there – two or three of them.

4.13 Hermas Janvier



In 1958 we stayed about 10 miles from Chard. We stayed there for the summer. In the fall, just before Christmas, we came over to Chard and my dad would trap. I lived on the reserve for about 25 years and then I built a house for my wife and kids in 1980. We moved into it in 1981. I raised my kids over there. I hunted along the river in the summer-time and in wintertime I used to go all over the cutlines. I hunted moose and sometimes deer, but not caribou.

School

I went to school in 1959. I left school in 1963. I only went to school for one full year. In March of 1959 I started school, hard at it. There was no school lunch; nothing. That first year, and the year after, I spent a total of six months in school. There was one teacher there that cared. I guess he figured I was a smart kid. He started teaching me after school and made me do homework. But my dad needed me at home to haul water. The teacher used to help me out. On Saturday and Sunday, I used to work. In one year I went up to grade five. So I went back that year next summer and that teacher went back too; so he started treating me good. My dad needed help to take the fish out of the nets, so I went out with him and I never went back to school. At least I know how to survive. I have two boys, and I made sure that they knew how to survive in the bush as well.

Hunting, Fishing and Trapping

People used to live all over. Some lived in Janvier. Back in 1930, nobody was living around here. They used to live at Cowper Lake and Winefred Lake. On the west side of Cowper Lake there is a cemetery near where the settlement was. People used to live there. My father-in-law used to tell me stories. They lived there for the summer and would catch whitefish. In the fall, they used to go hunting all the way from Cowper Lake to Winefred Lake. They would usually stay there for a week and kill moose. They'd build a little shack and put the meat in there to freeze it for the winter. That's what they'd do. So once they got back to Winefred Lake, they'd go trapping there. They would trap mink all winter, and come back in the springtime. Christina Lake would be the main place.

I had two grandpas; one was from Saskatchewan, and the other one, Michel Janvier, was French. They hauled fish from Buffalo Narrows and mail by horse pack in the summertime and dog team in the winter. They'd go from Cheecham to La Loche. My grandpa used to paddle into Meadow Lake.

In 1965, the first time I went out on the trapline with my dad, we used a dog team. That was the first time going out, and I was 15 years old. Going by dog team wasn't very fast. Going to Christina Lake was OK because the road was in then. But from Christina on to Garson Lake, there was no road. I had to use snow shoes all the way to break a trail for the dogs. I was raised in the bush and it was a tough life.

Medicines

Our dad didn't teach us much about bush medicine but I know there was some rat root on the lake. There's a heart medicine that uses some kind of weeds and thistle, it has blue flowers. I don't remember what it was called, but it had a very strong smell. To take the medicine you just chewed it. He used to mix it up and I would pick some roots from the white one – I don't know what you call it, and dandelion.

Stories of the Old People

The *Witago* is hard to kill. He can't go close to the fire they said, because his heart is frozen, and it will melt if he gets too close. They say when you cut his head off he will reach for it and put it back on. That's what they say, the old people. *Witago* eats people. *Tsatsag* eats people too, but that one just eats mothers and sisters. That's what the old people used to tell me. One time *Tsatsag* wanted to go out with someone's sister-in-law. So he pretended he couldn't kill a moose. He knew where the moose was but he didn't want to kill him. He wanted the sister-in-law to go into the bush with him. I say, "sister-in-law, come with me". There was an old blanket, and the sister-in-law took the blanket. So, they went over to where the moose was. He didn't want to shoot the moose right away. He wanted to sleep with the sister-in-law first. He said, "sister-in-law, it's cold", so they lit a fire. He wanted the sister-in-law. When the daylight came he went back to the moose and he killed the moose. That one, he killed everyone. Every time I tell the story he kills everybody. Well, he travelled all over and people ran away from him to hide.

Old people used to tell me a story about a lake creature with a long neck. Now the creature they tell me the story about, I saw in a dream, and I don't know how to describe it. I used to see the old people all the time when I was young and they would tell me stories.

Old Man with Power

There was an old man that lived here that passed away in 1963. He fought in the Indian War a long time ago with Big Bear. What I heard from him was that they were fighting. The war happened in Saskatchewan. I know the way on a road, but I don't know where they stopped because I have never been there. The old man was only 12 years old at that time; just a kid. He knew he wouldn't be anything without dreams. The way the old people tell me the story is that I guess his brother didn't want him to come because he was too young and figured he didn't know anything. But he had the power. He was sitting at home and his brother told him to count up to ten and he wouldn't get shot. The army started shooting, but they never hit him. He was just like a shadow. He could hear the gunshots but they never hit him. That was some kind of medicine that his grandpa gave him. It came from some place in the bush.

They told a story about the old man. There's one big hill there that nobody goes close to. The way that old man tells the story, I think there was a dinosaur that he dreamed about. Whenever people go towards that hill, they hear something loud and become scared and run away. One day that old man took John over to the hill and he told John not to be scared. They got there and went up the hill where they found a big hole filled with water "something in it has got long legs", he said, "so it's got to be a dinosaur; it's got long legs". The old man was talking to that animal. After a long time they went back down and discovered they had been gone for a long time. As they came out, they found he had all kinds of weeds in his mouth. He said to the old man, "grab all the weeds and give them to John". That's how they knew he had power. Just like a doctor. He's got all kinds of power, that old man. He's very wise.

By springtime he used to sit by the little slope in the water and make me pick up a little frog for him. I guess he dreamed about a frog. I don't know what he used them for, but he had me pick up frogs for him, and he didn't kill them. Instead, he would talk to the little frogs in Cree; but I didn't know what he was saying. Every spring he used to have me get him frogs to talk to. I think he liked me, that old man.

Changes in Weather and Animal Health

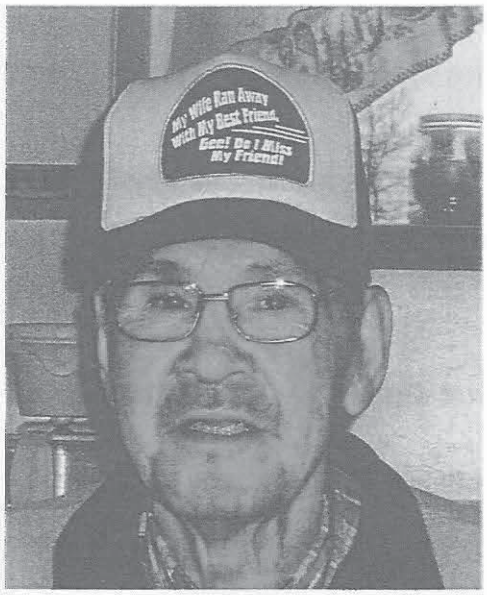
The weather has changed a lot since that time. Everything changed since that time. I know why, because the oil companies came here. Now the animals are not healthy, not even the fish or berries. We are scared to eat berries now with all this pollution all over. Lots of fish are no good anymore and I don't know why. Something's wrong with their livers and they don't taste good anymore. There is the same problem with the moose too. Last year I shot a moose. There was a bubble about that big. There was a ball inside, like a cyst. I've never seen that before. When I was young, people would die due to sickness, not cancer. People didn't die every day like now. People die just about every day now. We eat different food than we used to.

Back about eight years ago there were lots of rabbits; but now they have all disappeared. I remember in one night I killed 90, but you don't see them anymore. I remember we used to catch fish in the river, and now there's hardly any left. There used to be lots of fish by this time; usually pickerel and jackfish. You can't drink the water from the river now. There are too many pipes crossing the river and the creeks. You can't make a tea in the bush now. Even with fresh snow, it isn't safe.

4.14 Jeremy (Jimmy) Janvier

We are all from Christina Crossing. Some people moved to Saskatchewan, and some moved to Janvier for school. But mom was in the hospital in 1956. She went to Edmonton for a little over a year - 13 months. The kids were small. I was 13, so I raised them while my dad was hunting. I was looking after three sisters and two brothers. We

used to go fishing, go pick berries, go rabbit snaring - that's all we did all that summer. It used to be nice.



Fishing, Hunting and Trapping

We used to go to the school they had in Cheecham, in 1952 or 1953. Now, there used to be a place where you could get ducks or whitefish, if you wanted to feed them to the dogs. We would catch 5,000 or 6,000 whitefish, and we could use them all winter for the dogs. I used to get them when it was hot. I used to hang them outside in order to let them dry. If it was cold, I'd hang them in a shack to freeze them right away, and just kind of layer them for the dogs. If I used five dogs, I would feed them all the time. That would still last you up until March.

My dad was a hunter, and we used to have meat all the time because he was hunting, fishing, and trapping. The last time I went fishing was 1967. One winter I went twenty-eight times. I went to hunt, and fish, and trap at the same time - each time staying for a couple of days. If you killed a moose and used the hide to make some moccasins, you could sell them to the store. There was no other way to get income.

Berries, Plants, and the Medicine Man

Used to be, everybody would come here for blueberries in the fall time - after they had been frozen by the frost. We would sell them to a vendor who used to have a store. He'd buy anything - cranberries, anything.

Our dad didn't pick any bush medicine, but he used to give us some of that rat root. He used to get some foot medicine or some skin medicine from the medicine man. We

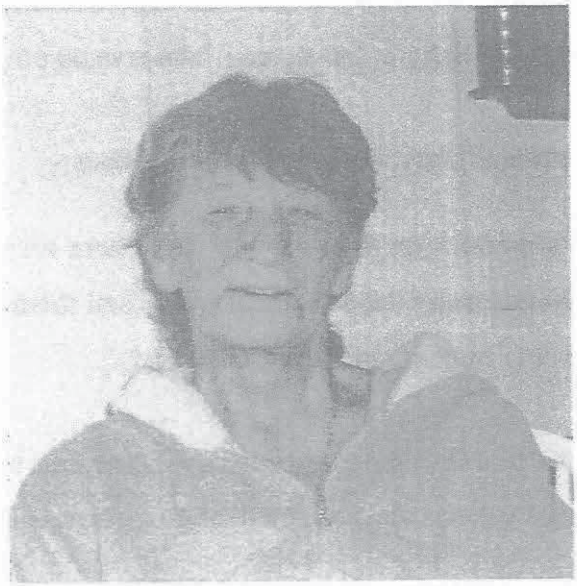
learned a few things from the medicine man too. He'd get some tobacco and put a match on it and give thanks. He knew what to do, and what kind to pick.

So he was a real medicine man. Animals, people - they were the same thing. In 1963 he passed away. He used to be from Saskatchewan. He lived a long time. He lived to be in his 90's. I think 95 or 96. He fought in the Indian War a long time ago.

Burial Sites

At Cheecham Lake, they have a grave there that nobody knows about. I went to it a couple years ago. It's all bush. Right down there, from Christina Crossing, where the old road goes down to Cheecham Lake. That's the place where four people are buried on the lakeshore, but on the southeast side of the lake. Christina Crossing, same thing. This is the part where they're making a bridge going to Saskatchewan. About a quarter of a mile, not even 1,000 yards, one old man was buried there by the river. You got 16 year old people there buried in that graveyard at Christina Crossing and eight kids. I have one brother and four sisters there. And grandpa and grandma are there. There is no fence to mark it. It's wide open.

4.15 Geraldine Jensen



My name is Geraldine (Auger) Jensen and I was born in Point Brule up by Embarras Portage. It's between Embarras and Poplar Point, about 100 miles north of Fort McMurray. We lived off the land and didn't need much from the store except flour. I remember my mom used to make mukluks for us when we were small. She had a cup of tea, and she would drink a little bit and chew on the hide to soften it

up so she could sew it. My mom always had the bannock ready when visitors came.

Most of the people spoke Cree. I have three older sisters and I remember my mom telling me that when we first came here, none of them could speak English. They only spoke Cree. Now, none of them can speak Cree. My mom used to make me mad because when we first got a phone, she'd be talking on it in English and then all of a sudden she'd switch to Cree, and I couldn't understand her.

Berries and Medicines

We used to go picking berries around here. It was an important part of our food source. There was an old wagon trail that went right through our yard, and all the way out to Anzac. That's where we used to pick them. We also used to get chokecherries down by the Snye. There's not much growing now, but we did pick some fiddleheads recently. It seems like they're not growing around anymore. Going towards Horse Creek, there used to be saskatoons; but not anymore. I think basically everybody up here had a garden.

I never have picked medicines, but I have a friend that gives me rat root, and he won't tell me where he gets it from. It's just the roots you use, and there are only certain places where you can find it. It's good for headaches and colds, but it's mainly for your throat. We never got sick in those days. When you think about it, people weren't very old in those days, but they lived a good life.

Fishing

I went fishing with the boys and my brothers at the Snye, and the river by the bridges there. The boys liked to do chub fishing because we'd sell them to make some money. We would use a little dough bag for bait. We wouldn't use them for much but feeding the dogs. I didn't like the fish soup that they used to make from sucker heads. They couldn't get me to eat it.

Family Burial Sites

I know part of the cabin that I was born in at Point Brule is still there because my sister Nina took a trip up there and took pictures of it. That's the only old cabin that I know of.

My mother-in-law's three children died prior to us moving to Fort McMurray. They're obviously buried somewhere on the trapline. I would think they would be buried somewhere around Point Brule. There were two boys for sure. They would have been buried some time before 1944 because they were older than I was. My mother wasn't born here, but my parents moved here when I was a baby. We've stayed here ever since.

Changes in Fort McMurray

When I was growing up my mom worked at the old hospital. The lettering on the side was misspelled, and it said "St. Gabriel Hospital." That building isn't there anymore. It was replaced by the provincial building that is there today. My old school used to be where Superstore is; in that area. Kids that went there came from three main areas: Waterways, the Prairie, and Fort McMurray.

We lived here when there was no highway. We never had pollution before, but I've noticed it now because it bothers my sinuses a lot. It's not the vehicles or anything in particular, just the air itself. Sometimes you can see the yellow puddles when it rains. I won't eat the fish out of the rivers or creeks because there is too much pollution, and I haven't seen a rabbit for eight or ten years. We went out in the bush a while back to cut some wood, and it was really bad with all the cutlines and garbage everywhere. We won't be staying in Fort McMurray much longer. We can't afford to stay here anymore. It hasn't been all bad though, because Fort McMurray's done a lot of good for a lot of people. I don't remember the time the caribou came to town but I remember people talking about it.

4.16 Myrna Loutitt

I was born in my home in Fort McMurray On July 15, 1934 to a family that was made up of my parents and two brothers. A Scottish midwife delivered me. My mom and dad were young – 19 and 17. Those were hard times … the dirty 30's. My parents told me that they were poor and had one pink blanket and one blue blanket. My mother said that the midwife bundled me in one of those blankets and put me in the woodstove. As the midwife was doing this, my mother yelled from the bedroom: 'don't burn the blanket'. That story makes me laugh. It seems that names have meaning in my family. Sanderson Avenue is named for my family. My dad and George Sanderson were half brothers.



I was supposed to go to school, but I didn't because tuberculosis invaded my ankle and back. I basically grew up in the hospital. I stopped walking when I was about eight and I never walked again until I was 17, but I do have memories of my childhood on the land. I got married when I was 19.

Family Trapline

My dad did some hunting and trapping around Fort McMurray when he was a young boy. It was wide open then – there weren't any marked traplines or boundaries. My dad bought a trapline in the Portage area. He built a frame house down by the riverbank. In those days, there were lots of muskrats and beaver. Big rats sold for seven to ten dollars. At that time, the movie stars were buying big fur coats. They especially liked the fox.

We would go up and down the river by boat. When the water was swift, it could take us up to four days to come up the river. We came up every spring and then down, until the War. We rationed butter, sugar and other goods during the War. Dad would sometimes work in Fort McMurray. There were two saw mills and a salt plant. My brother took over my dad's trapline after he passed on. My mom used to work on the boat with the big wheels that turned – something like the 'Love Boat'. The boats went from here to Fort Chip and back. She was a waitress. Some people went to dance, and others just wanted a tour of the river.

Sometimes the trapline was lonely. Our nearest neighbours were nine or ten miles down the river. There were often times when we couldn't visit one another during freeze-up. Dad used to hitch the dog team up and mom had a few dogs of her own. Mom used to make moccasins for the dogs out of canvas, so that on long trips along the ice, they wouldn't cut up their feet. My dad would take six dogs and one extra (in case one played out) when he went shopping in Fort Chip. It would take him about three days to get to the Fort. I loved to watch him come home in the moonlight with fox tails all dolled with bells. The poor dogs – they were so tired and so was my dad.

My parents traded furs if the price was good. I think that the furs were shipped to Edmonton to be put to auction. My dad trapped in the area between the lake and the Athabasca. It might be called the sand hills or the sand dunes. He would travel a long way to hunt squirrels and other animals. I don't think that he liked the journey that much when the snow was deep. In the spring, dad hunted rabbits but not squirrels or foxes, because they lose their guard hair. Mostly we hunted for water animals like the beaver and the muskrat. One time I remember that we sold a little weasel fur for nine dollars.

I was telling my kids the other day that there was this mother duck that was carrying seven little ducks on her back. She was taking them all down to the river to show them how to swim. All of a sudden she stood up and shook her wings and the ducks went flying all over the place looking for something to eat. The mother duck just flew off. I told my kids that I was going to do that to them and stop tucking them under my wings

all of the time. Speaking of ducks, one time we had a duck in the house all winter. We found it when a hawk had a hold on it. I asked my dad to stop the hawk from hurting that duck. My dad was able to get that duck but in the process he tore its wing. My mom taped the wing back together again. I made dad fill a big round tub and the duck would swim in there. I am not sure why my parents allowed me to bring the duck in the house and let it splash water all over.

I guess that now we only have our memories of the trapline days with our parents. It's too bad that trappers are selling their rights to oil companies. After the cheque is spent, there is really nothing left.

Berries and Medicines

Berries were a treat too. At one time, Langdon Avenue was red with raspberries and blue with blueberries. I remember my mother picking from a certain balsam tree. She would melt it down with lard and put it on a sore and wrap it. A person would need to change that every two to four days. That sore would heal up and wouldn't even leave a scar. For other medicinals, we drank castor oil and cod liver oil until I couldn't stand it anymore. I think that when mom cooked the liver for my dad and grandfather to eat, it was just like drinking the cod liver oil. But as far as medicine goes, Mr. Hill was the best doctor. Mom would write to him and he would send us whatever we needed. When my legs started to get bad, my dad made me a pair of crutches out of a tree. I remember that people used to rub mustard plaster on the chest for a cold or the flu. Even today, if I smell mustard, I feel like I am going to throw-up.

Traditional Livelihood

Our family also lived at Moccasin Flats. It was the Queen's land, and people would pitch tents and build shacks there, until they moved us out. My mom used to tan moose hides. One time I ruined one of them. When she went to have a cup of tea, I took her steel scraper and I cut a big hole right in the middle of it. Mom would make moccasins and

mukluks. If dad brought back a caribou, she would skin the legs and make fur mukluks. They were brown and very pretty. We used them to slide down the hills in the winter and it was lots of fun.

My parents were also born in this area and they went through many hard times. My father and my grandfather went out in 50 or 60 below weather. They would chop wood and keep the fire going all night. Berries, chickens, and moose were plentiful. If you had spruce trees, you would have spruce hens and partridges. Now it is not the same. Before, if you were able to get a moose, it was shared. People were poor in those days, but there was always someone who was poorer who needed it more. The meat was dried and preserved because there weren't any fridges. I remember my dad setting a net to help the neighbours.

A person never had to lock the doors, but now you need a shotgun. The problem is the oil companies, and all of the money and outside people that they bring. No one helps you anymore, and money doesn't go very far. If you go into a store with $100, you come home with half a bar of margarine, five pounds of sugar, and maybe a little tuck of meat. Years ago a loaf of bread was five cents. But a person didn't usually buy bread, because the women baked bread or bannock. If we did have bread, it was a real treat.

I don't speak Cree, but I do understand a lot of it. I used to crawl underneath the table when mom was speaking Cree with visitors and listen. Mom and dad encouraged the use of English as opposed to Cree, even though they spoke Cree to each other. But I sure can curse in Cree!

Yes, when you think back to the old times, it was rough. There would be people now who would never have survived. There are so many 'push-a-button' people. Speaking of survival, do you know about the little Inuit boy and the pilot who survived after their plane crashed in the Inuvik area? I think that it happened in the early 60's. The pilot flew the plane and the boy and the nurse were passengers when it crashed. The nurse passed

on, and the pilot and the boy were lost in the snow. The boy was the only survivor because he ate the flesh of the nurse.

Burial Sites

I know that there is a graveyard by Reeds … Portage. Some of the graves are marked by crosses made out of wood. It is likely that there would be fur traders buried there too, or at least my parents used to say that. They would come on boats all along the Athabasca River, and they would bring apples and oranges with them. Oh my God, it was like Christmas day!

Family Stories

My grandfather was Scottish. His name was Robert F.C. Charles and my dad was named after him. I loved him to death. I still think of him often, even today. One time he came to stay with us and would read one or two big, thick books every day. He lived with us until he had a heart attack. Grandfather married a girl from here, and so did my dad - that was my mom, Alice, but my dad called her Tutsy; so everyone started to call her Tutsy. As a small girl, I liked to put on nail polish and lipstick. One day I had real red lipstick on and my dad said to my mom that she didn't cook my meat long enough, because my lips were all red. My dad was born on the island across the lake from the highway.

Sometimes my dad would tell stories about a bird – the whiskey jack. My dad despised this bird because it was a thief – this bird and the magpie. He said that they would watch you set a trap and bait it. Then, as soon as you left, they would spring the trap and take the bait. Yes, they were sneaky stinkers for the trappers. They say that one whiskey jack was so bad that it pecked out somebody's eyes. But, being a whiskey jack, he was sneaky. After he pecked the eyes out, he went to a spruce tree and chewed up the spruce gum and put it in the man's eye sockets.

Speaking of birds, I will never forget when I was with mom, and she asked me to shoot a chicken that was up in a tree. I aimed for the chest but I hit him right in the head. Well,

it was a good thing that I hit him. Those were hard times. There was a time when it was about 40 below and everything was frozen. We were all sick. I think that I was about seven years old. The poor dogs were very hungry. I felt so bad for them, that I went and got a load of wood, and cooked some fish and fed it to the dogs. It was a really harsh year. Many people died that winter in Chip and beyond. Even the doctor from Fort Chip died that year.

Changes

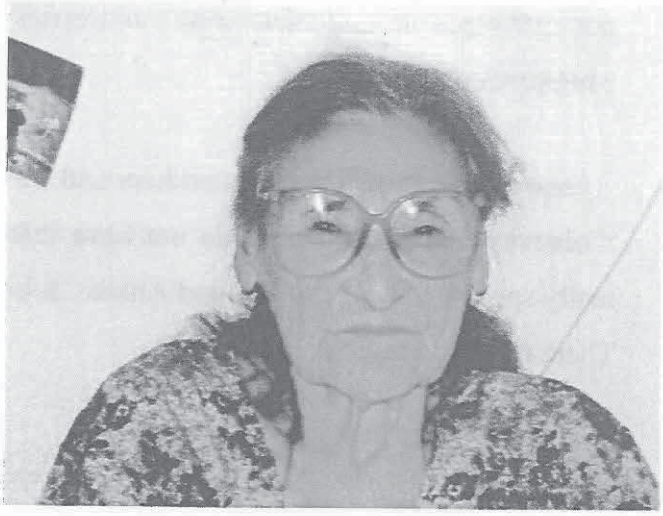
In a way, it is like it is flu season now. Everything is dying. We used to drive into the bush just to look at the chickens, but it isn't the same anymore. I remember this bear that I used to visit, that lived near Uncle Bill. That bear always wanted to follow me. One day my uncle and I hid so that we could watch the little bear. While we were hiding, a trike came along and – bang – that person shot my bear.

There is not much to see anymore. The trees are gone. The animals have left. The berries are gone. Even in a billion years, the environment will never grow back to the way it was. There are too many chemicals in the ground, and even the water is polluted. The fish are going belly up. The people are getting cancer. And if the wind blows a certain way, the smell is worse than a sewer. I am afraid that my great-great grandchildren are not going to see all of the lovely trees and berries that I did. And I am not talking about blueberries and raspberries. I am talking about high bush cranberries and chokecherries.

4.17 Eva Mckenzie

My dad's parents came from Egg Lake on the other side of Lac La Biche. I grew up in Lac La Biche in a house across from the graveyard. My dad was a station man on the railroad. I came to Anzac in 1940 and have been here for about 67 years. In 1940, I married Robert James (Bob) Mackenzie and lived across Gregoire Lake at the homestead. I was married in Fort McMurray and lived there for one year, then moved across the lake

where Bob's parents lived at the time. We then moved to Anzac. At first, there were just a few people living there, including a tower man.



We used to live close to town, across the road from the graveyard and railroad tracks. They have cleaned the area up now. I would cut and pack wood with my axe down on Mile 14. My dad, the railroad man, would always ask where I was going. I went with my axe, got my long wood and I just packed the wood - I did not care. I had two brothers who were there, but they did not help. I think that is why my back is sore now - packing too much wood with the wind blowing around. My mother used to laugh because when I stacked the wood she would ask if I was making a house for myself. I said "No mom it is cold in here." Back then we did not have much. There were 12 of us in the family and we had few clothes, but we made it. When I was 14, I worked at the café and went to school at the same time. I would go to school until 3 pm, and work until 9 pm.

Neighbours and Celebrations

When the army came up by Stony Mountain there were not that many people here at the time. The people included Leo, Mary, Rose, and little Mary Cheecham, Johnny Milton, Harry Cardinal, Mrs. Coucher and Johnny Gregoire. Georgina and Tommy Milton used to live down where the houses are on the other side of the lake. On this side of the lake, was an old man who lived alone. There were not many people, but we would socialize and we used to dance when Paul came back from the army. My brother-in-law used to live here. He would also come with his family and we would all dance. We had a lot of fun. We also had lunch with bannock and jam and whatever was available. It used to be nice, because families were close back then. On Saturday nights we would have a dance. There would be a fiddle and a guitar - it was a lot of fun. It was good because there were

not many people and there were no worries about swinging your dance partner and banging into someone.

At one time we had a tipi around here and we would sit down with friends and have tea whenever they visited – we do not have that anymore. Today, Sand Hills is the only really special place for me around Anzac. It is the only place I used to go to all the time. There is no other place.

Hunting and Trapping

Few people trap here these days. It requires too much work for too little money. When I was 10 years old I would grab my gun and go hunting just over there [points at window]. I was never scared about wolves or bears. I would grab my gun and just kept going. It is funny now that I think about it, but I never saw anything but chickens and rabbits.

In Anzac during the 1940's and 1950's there were all kinds of ducks and geese. No one lived around here. It was all bush, right up to the farm here where my father-in-law used to live. We used to walk down the road there to meet the train in the summer, and in the winter we went by the lake to walk. There were plenty of ducks and we would get chickens. These days you can hear pelicans in the summer. They nest along that little lake. There used to be a lodge there and I would go down to the lake and listen to them. They are only heard once in a while these days.

There used to be caribou. I eat deer meat and moose meat, but I never eat caribou. Although, I tasted it once and it was good. Right at the end of the trapline there are nice willows and when you go up the hill there is jackpine. I used to go there for a week at a time and shoot chickens and snare rabbits. I was asked how I knew to snare rabbits. I said that, years ago, back home in Lac La Biche, rabbit blood could be seen everywhere in the deep snow. At that time there were rabbits all over and mom used to send us out to snare them. They make a noise when they are snared, they sound like a little baby in the bush. It sounds like waah, waah, waah. We also used to get little ones on the trapline

and I told the kids to put them away until they grew up. The kids did this – it reminds me of my grandson.

We would all hunt at the farm. I would take my .22 and 14 down to the lake to get ducks. I would also set snares out in the bush. I always took my gun in case I saw a chicken or rabbit that I could take home. There was lots of food back then. I am not sure what it is like now, because I no longer trap. I am scared to go out anywhere in the bush because someone might shoot me. There are too many people from out of town. It has been a long time since someone brought me a rabbit because they are hard to come by. I asked my grandkids at the reserve whether they have rabbits over there. They said that they are along the trails. I asked why they do not set snares; they said that they do not have time.

Traditional Activities

When I make my bannock I put it in a big bowl. I put in the flour, a bit of salt, sugar and baking powder, and I mix it all up. I mix my bannock and add lard. Sometimes I do not want to melt the lard, so I just use my hands. Then I add water, but not a lot. A hole is made in the middle of the batter and some flour is placed on the side. Luke warm water is placed in there – the water must never be hot. After you melt and grease, you put in the lard and mix it slowly. You have to stir it up, but not with large heavy strokes because it will go all lumpy. There is a technique to it. I used to make bannock all the time. I would make my kids rolled bannock and they would hold it on a stick over the fire. We would go to the trap line all the time and I used to make bannock right there by the road. There used to be a cabin there before it burnt down in a fire. We had guns and equipment over there, but they were all gone. It is likely they were stolen.

I used to make Pemmican but I can no longer hunt and no one will kill a moose for me. I was given a canvas bag that I could put dry meat in, tie with a rope, and hit with a hammer to make it soft. I would then mix it with berries and it tasted very good. You can mix it with butter or lard or anything you want, because everything is in little pieces.

You cannot eat it exactly like that because it is too dry in the mouth. You need to add a bit of grease and it tastes better.

When we dried, we would also pound it like dry meat. When pounded, it would become nice and soft and then we would add grease or lard and mix it. We would add a bit of salt and eat it. I sometimes sit and think about all these old people and how we used to live. Now I am all alone and no one brings me anything. I have a grandson who is a trapper, but he does not hunt much due to work.

Berries and Medicine Plants

My mother and I would collect peppermint by the lake on the other side of the tracks. You can smell peppermint right away and it makes a very good tea. It is very good medicine for colds. It cleans out your chest and insides. I do not know much about native medicines, but there is one plant that has a long root. It is washed and dried for a tea that was used when your insides do not feel good. It was collected on the trapline and I gave it to the boys.

We would pick a plant for muskeg tea. We would pick it in the spring when it blooms with white flowers and it is very good when made as a tea. We also made another type of medicine in the spring. It was a peppermint tonic made from plants with pink or dark coloured flowers that we used to call wine violets. We would boil and smell it. It smelled just like peppermint, and was good for colds and clearing out the chest. I also used to drink Labrador tea. This is probably what made me healthy and strong over the years.

We also dried Kinnickinick, mixed it with tobacco, and smoked it from a pipe. Kinnickinick is a plant found close to the ground with green leaves. As far as I know it is not medicinal – my mother would have told me. My mom used to know a lot about medicines, and she told us bit by bit. She told us of a heart medicine situated under the ground. You dig out the long root that looks like a rope. I would pick a lot of this when I

was in Jackpine. People would come all the way from Saddle Lake for some of it. I would always give it to them and state that I did not grow it, but God did.

One native man from Saddle Lake was really sick and came here looking for medication. When he arrived I was in town and by the time I returned, he looked pale and said it was his heart. It was a good thing I had some dried root. I gave him the medicine. I told him he should swallow it and it will not hurt him. He returned the next day and told me I am a good doctor and that he was feeling better. I told him that he now had to take it all the time even if he feels better. He continued to chew it from then on.

Cranberries can be good medicinal berries. Before my time, when the flu or influenza went through the area, my dad lived in Conklin. At that time they went out into the snow to pick frozen cranberries. They would feed people a couple of berries each and it seemed to clear the people right out and chased the fever away. My father had to dig and dig in the snow because it was very high. There were a few people who would get better from the cranberries. The Sand hills and Jackpine were good places to pick cranberries and blueberries. I used to pick blueberries at the Cross, at Graham's gas station. The kids pick them now that I am older.

4.18 Louise Martin



I was born Louise McCall, and I have lived these 68 years of my life in and around Conklin. My parents also lived their entire lives in this territory. My paternal grandfather walked a long way through the bush to come here from La Crosse. He married my grandmother when she was only 13 years old.

My father hunted around the lakes; Kirby and Winefred. One time my father got hurt

hunting a deer. He lost his hand. He was taken to the Lac La Biche hospital, but he ran away. We were living in a log house when someone knocked at the door. It was my father wearing hospital clothes. My mom screamed when she saw him. I think that if he hadn't left the hospital they might have been able to fix his hand.

Trapping, Hunting and Berry Picking

My husband and I have traplines just east of Grist Lake. We built a cabin there. We had a dog team for hunting and fishing. One time we were hunting caribou and the dogs got away from me. My toboggan smashed into a tree and I started to laugh. No more toboggan. Those fibreglass toboggans were worth $80.

We trapped squirrels, weasels, lynx, rabbits, and chickens. I used to trap 56 squirrels at a time. We would sell the hides. There aren't that many rabbits anymore, although the chickens seem to be coming back.

We would can moose meat and make dry meat in the bush. My husband knew how to call the moose and sometimes it would be frightening when we would hear them stomping through the bush towards us. One time, we did try to make some deer hides. My husband and I kept greasing the hide and putting it on to the fire. It was quite funny and my mother-in-law always teases us about how we burned, not tanned, two deer hides.

There was duck hunting then. Not too long ago my grandson brought me a duck and I cooked it. My grandson told me not to eat it because he thought that it would make me sick. For the most part, it seems that the ducks have disappeared. There used to be lots in the puddles and lakes around Lac La Biche. One time, this guy from Cold Lake told me that he ate a seagull. I told him that it must have tasted horrible seeing that it eats garbage. I can't be sure though because I have never eaten one and likely never will.

The berries were not very good last year; only a few cranberries and not very many blueberries. Sometimes when we are picking berries, the bears bother us. My mother

used to tell me never to run away from a bear. But when I am about a mile away, I do start to run.

We would fish at Winefred Lake for whitefish, jackfish, pickerel, and grayling. But there isn't any grayling anymore, because the creek is so polluted. My son loved to fish grayling when he was young. He was always missing school or sneaking out early. He would forget his glasses by the creek. I can't recall how many pairs he lost. When I would ask after them, he always told me that he left them on the desk at school and I believed him.

Stories from Grandparents

They used to tell us stories about *Witago*, and how it eats people or tries to eat people. They say that Witago stinks. There is also the story about the guy who got that big sore on his bum and the scabs kept falling off. This same guy almost got shot. He was going to go to a dance and he put a moose head full of flies on his own head. This moose head got stuck and he didn't know what to do. So he went down to the lake and started to swim. Some people thought that he was a moose and started to shoot at him. I think that these are just tales, but I think that this next one is true.

There was a lady who had a husband who was an active hunter. When he would leave, she would cut moose meat, cook it really fast, and then eat it all by herself before he returned. It was so hot when she ate it that she burned her stomach. I guess that she was hungry or maybe just greedy.

Growing Up in Conklin

I have some true life stories of my own. My father-in-law built the first school in Conklin. We went to school three months out of the year in the big log building. My mother would buy us nice shiny rubber boots and we would try very hard to keep them clean and shiny. I finished grade four.

Before the train came, my mom would walk all the way to Lac La Biche with a pack on her back. It could take her up to four days to get there. My aunt and her daughters used to walk here to pick berries and then they would sell them for 10 cents a pound. But I was lazy back then and would hide in the bush so I didn't have to pick berries. I wouldn't even respond when I was called. That memory makes me laugh.

Surviving a Plane Crash

My niece, who was nine years old at the time, and I caught a plane to Lac La Biche where she was attending school. It was a four-seater plane and we had 400 pounds of fish. All of a sudden we couldn't hear the plane anymore and we crashed right into the muskeg. We never even got hurt. Good thing that there were lots of blueberries where we crashed. I also cooked fish on a stick. On the fourth day at the crash site, we were getting tired of waiting, so we started to walk. We heard a plane circling, and then it spotted us. The people on the plane fed us delicious food and gave us blankets that had arms and legs. My mother and grandmother were very worried about us, because they had a feeling that something had happened to us.

4.19 Lenora Mulawka



My name is Lenora Mulawka. I was born in La Loche, Saskatchewan. We moved to Cheecham, Alberta when I was five years old. I remember bits and pieces of the journey. My father, who was Lebanese, went ahead to tend to a convenience store. We walked from La Loche to Cheecham and it took about one week. There was an old half-blind man with us and he tried to carry me, but I wouldn't let him. The whole family walked; my mom, me, and my two

brothers and two sisters. My brother Simon was the youngest. We camped along the way – my mom snared rabbits for our food. We were very poor. When we got to Cheecham, the only place for us to stay was at an old blacksmith's shop. We fixed it up and moved in. All that we had was one horse and four dogs with packs on their backs. In 1935, my uncle and his family built a log house for us in Cheecham.

Raised on the Trapline

I never went to school. I'm telling you, my mom was a smart person. My mother wouldn't send us to Fort Chip because she wanted to raise us on her own. My mother was our provider. My father didn't care for the bush; he preferred to garden. One fall we came to Anzac to make some dried fish for the winter and my father left us there. He went back to Lac La Biche and we didn't see him again until I was 15 years old. My mother raised us on the trapline, and when I was 14 years old, and my brother was about eleven, we took over. We let mom stay home in the little cabin that mom and I had built. It was just a flat roof with a spruce bough floor. There was a stove made out of an old gas barrel and lard pails for a chimney.

We didn't believe in stuff like the Louis Riel Rebellion. My mom didn't believe in treaty ways, or Métis ways, or non-native ways. People were people. That was it. There was no discrimination. And people helped one another. If they had some meat or whatever, they would share. People were closer then, and we used to get together and socialize.

Bush Craft

In those days, there were no beavers or lynx; there was mink, squirrels, muskrats and rabbits. But we ate rabbits, we didn't sell their furs. They go in seven year cycles, but I haven't seen any for a long, long time now. My husband and I used to catch rabbits to feed the minks that a local rancher raised. He paid us five cents a rabbit. We traveled to different areas and stayed in our tipi or tent. At one point we raised our price up to 10 cents per rabbit but that was too much for him so he quit buying rabbits from us.

In those days you could get a $2 trapline and you could trap anywhere. One time I remember this old man who tried to steal a mink out of one of our traps. My mom wasn't very happy about that because we were very, very poor. We used to pick a lot of berries and sell them to the store keeper. The berry patches were in Cheecham. My mom sewed and we would sell her beaded slippers, gloves, and moccasins at the train for about $3 each. We would buy a few groceries with that money. She used to buy one hundred pounds of flour, some lard, tea and tobacco that she would smoke in her pipe.

The tipi was warm because you would make a fire in the middle and then you have bedding around it. There was a rack on top where you would dry your fish. The covering of the tipi was made out of canvas. Setting up a tipi and taking it down was a fairly easy process. You would have to cut a bunch of small poplars, but not too small; about three inches around. Then, you stand them all and tie three or four together at the top. You leave an opening for a door which you cover with canvas. You then need a stick for the middle of the canvas so that you can go in and out. We had spruce boughs for the floor. We didn't stay in the tipi all winter; we just stayed long enough to get enough fish for the winter months. We went ice fishing in the winter and in the summer we had a canoe so we could set out nets.

One of my brothers who lived at Christina Crossing used to come down in the fall, and we would go into the bush and get a moose. My sister-in-law and my mom would prepare the moose hide - flesh it and take the hair off. We had nothing in those days. There was no fridge or furnace. We had an old wood stove, an old cookstove, a couple of old beds, and an old table. We had nothing, but we had love.

The floor in the main house was just a piece of board here and there, all put together. But on Saturday, mom would always say "wash the floor", because the next day was the Lords day. That was a resting day. She didn't believe in hunting on Sunday, but we could cut wood and stuff. My mom taught me how to do beadwork, but I gave it up and gave all my sewing away. I lost my husband a year ago and since then I've lost interest

in everything. My husband and I did everything together. He'd do the driving and I'd be the shooter. We still had the same trapline that my mom had.

Queen of the North

For nine consecutive years I was Queen of the North, but I don't want to sound like I'm bragging. I could cut a big log faster than a man, but I wasn't competing with them. I competed against a woman, as men and women competed separately in the King and Queen of the North Contest. It was a contest that was done in the wintertime. That was after my husband and I moved to Anzac. In one of the events you make bannock. Then there was snowshoe racing, the best-dressed contest, jigging, square-wrestling and tea boiling. You also had to set traps, cut logs and see who could make a fire fastest. There were 12 different events. That was $1,000 in three days, and I won nine times in a row until I hurt my arm out on the trapline. I took my arm out of the socket, and I still came in second! One particular woman was my toughest competition. She was the Queen for a couple of years I think, but oh, she didn't like me at all. Didn't like me one bit, so I said to her, "I got a broken arm, you take it this year". So she had it once or twice; and I came in second anyways, with only one arm.

Medicine

My mom showed me some medicine from the bush. I don't know the name of it, but you see it out on the muskeg - it has blue flowers on it. You'd see oodles of them. The root of that is heart medicine. Then miniature birch, if you chew it, it makes your mouth numb. That's good for canker sores, or if you have some other sores, it's good for that. Yarrow was good for nosebleeds, and if you cut yourself. You'd just cut it up and make a paste to put on the wound, and that would heal the person. I got my hand cut when I was five years old, and my mom was out looking for muskrat. I guess I reached under my sister when she was cutting some wood for my other aunt. So, she chopped my hand with an axe. But she fixed it. There were no doctors, but I didn't bleed to death. We never used to get sick when we were young. We never had immunizations, or anything.

Trading and Employment

There was a store in Garson Lake and the owner used to buy hindquarters from us, and we used to trade there. We used to get all our credit for the winter in the spring when we came with our rats. We used to bring in hindquarters of meat. Three dollars for a hindquarter, and that's good meat! Three dollars was a lot in those days.

For 15 years we cooked for forestry and trained cooks. We'd hire somebody to look after the café. If they had overhead, they'd call us both. We cooked for firefighters and holding camps for 15 summers. We opened up the first café in Anzac. That was in 1980. We had an old restaurant before that. But in a small town, business was slow. So in the wintertime, we used to trap and close the café early in the fall; then open again in March. We did good trapping. That's how we built our restaurant. We never borrowed a dollar. We never borrowed anything. We did just as we could afford.

I don't know for how many years, but I instructed sewing in McMurray in different schools. We made northern parkas, mukluks and gloves. Before, I'd mix different projects together. Then I got myself away from that. It was too much work running from one person to another, so I stuck with a coat, or mukluks, or whatever. It was easier. I didn't overlap my work. One week, one evening. I was busy a long time.

I translated hymns from Chipewyan to English for the Northern Anglican mission for I don't know how many years. They even have a dictionary with my name on it in the school; the Catholic school. But I've never seen it. I was also a translator for the courts too. People were on trial because they'd gotten into trouble, and I would translate for them. Yep, I've done it all. Only thing I never did was work on a railroad. I lived by the railroad tracks all my life, but I never worked there.

Mother's Story

One story my mother told me was about *Wasagichak*, they called it. It was about a man who met up with a skunk and the skunk sprayed him in the eye. As he was trying to get

to the water to wash his eyes, he would touch a tree and say "what's your name? My name is Birch" ... "What is your name? My name is Poplar". He kept doing this, but he didn't know where the river was. Since he couldn't see, he fell in once he reached it and *Wasagichak* was following him. When he saw the guy fall into the river he just laughed. It's a short, little, funny story.

Burial Sites

I've seen them bury people in Cheecham, because we lived there for years. There's a little graveyard on top of the hill, on the left-hand side as you go across the railroad tracks. One guy was from Cheecham and the other was from Garson Lake. And there was a little Navaho girl buried there. She was five years old. My brother had a boy who died of pneumonia buried there. The storekeeper from Garson and his family lived there. They lost a little girl, she was buried there too.

I know my brother's wife is buried at Christina Crossing. I used to go and visit my brother in Christina Crossing. Oh it was a nice place! They named him after my grandfather. There were about 10 families that lived there. Up on the hill, there was an old lady. She and her husband, and all the kids lived up on top of the hill there. And, there was my uncle; his family lived there too. From Mile 213, there was a trapper. I don't remember his name. Anyway, he was buying fur and going back to Lac La Biche. Some boys killed that guy and burnt him. I guess they found bones, because they found him pretty quick. I'm not too sure what happened, but I think there were witnesses. I don't know if those boys are still alive or not. They were from Conklin, but they used to live out at Chard. I think this happened in the 1950's.

4.20 Madeline Patterson

I was born an only child in a little shack by the cemetery in Fort McMurray. My grandmother, my mother's mother, was a mid-wife. Many children were born in houses and cabins at that time. The St. Gabriel's hospital opened about two years later, so I

guess that I was born too early for that. Many people had large families at that time with nine or ten kids. Perhaps my mom was tired, seeing that she had a big part in raising her own siblings.



Later I lived in the Anzac area with my mother and stepfather. My grandparents and other Elderly people also lived there. We were trappers. The population in the area was under 100 so everybody knew one another, and often got together. My stepfather used dog teams; there weren't any cars back then. We didn't have many things even at Christmas; but it was still nice. I remember opening a cardboard box to use as my sled. We took 'jumbo' whitefish from the lake and 'rocky mountain' whitefish from the rivers. Not far from Anzac was Rat Lake, where my grandfather would trap – killing, skinning and stretching. In the summer we collected blueberries and cranberries. My stepfather worked to buy staples – flour and dried goods for our time in the bush.

Life on the Trapline

Sometime in late September we would travel by foot and dog team to our trapline near Swan Lake. This is near Saskatchewan and is known by others as 'Gordon Lake' or 'Whitefish Lake' or 'Jackfish Lake'. We usually stayed until Christmas, so the walk home in the snow was difficult. The dogs carried all of our gear and goods. The sleigh would come in handy at this time. We were very isolated here, so I was also glad to see other people at Christmas. We had a cabin but not glass windows. Instead, we used flour sacks. Candles were often the source of our light, but when they ran out we used 'bush

light'. Grease or lard was put in a can, then we would braid some cloth, and finally we would light it. I remember that even the wind couldn't blow that out. One time, my boys had a sleigh with a light like that.

Speaking Cree

When I was about ten or eleven, we started to spend most of our time in Waterways where my stepfather worked. It was here that I started going to school. My mother thought that it was time. I only spoke Cree. The only word in English that I knew was 'NO'. Yet, I haven't taught Cree to my own children, although I am trying harder with my grandchildren. I know that they even have Cree symbols to write with now, where one symbol may mean a word or a phrase. I have no idea how that got started. Actually, I didn't stay at school that long. Nobody thought that it was all that necessary. As long as I could make moccasins and skin rats, they knew that I would make a life. Today, a person can't get away with that. My kids work at Syncrude and have good jobs, but they did need a high school education.

Medicines

There was a good medicine woman. She had the 'gift' so she knew what to pick, when to pick, the preparation, and the doses. Really, she was our doctor in Anzac. People who were poor couldn't see a medical doctor. When I was seven or eight, a dog bit me and she made a salve out of the spruce tree. I know that spruce is also good for diaper rash. My grandmother used to use moss for diapers and she swore that the babies hardly ever got a rash. It was better than 'pampers' and definitely better for the environment. The only medicine I know is the rat root. My mother used to pick it and it is actually pretty common. Anyway, as I remember it, life in the bush was beautiful and I don't recall that many people being sick. Not like today; we need lots of medical people in Fort McMurray. There are many sick and homeless people in town. I even think that they found a dead person in the dumpster about 15 years ago.

Stories of the Elders

When I was a child, my grandfather used to tell my cousin and me stories right before we fell asleep on the floor. It was so soothing and relaxing that it always put me to sleep. He would talk about characters. There was the one about the guy who had the scab fall of his bum, and the bird thought that it was drymeat, or was it some people who thought that it was drymeat. Either way, it is very funny. He would tell tales of his travels and camps. Some people travelled on the river to Fort McKay. There have been sailboats on the river.

Speaking of stories, I remember a true story that the people used to tell about a white man way up North. Apparently, they were hunting for him because he had killed one or two Mounties. I remember being with mom and grandmother in the tent in the wintertime. We would go to bed early and were told not to make any noise because the 'bad guy' was out there, and that our men were looking for him. They eventually did capture him. In fact, I think that a song was made about this. I know that we were very frightened at the time, because our men were on the search.

Changes

I never did go back to the bush, although I would like to. I'm not certain that things would be the same anymore. Berry picking is different now. You have to travel far because of the stacks. I used to pick along what is now called 'Syncrude Way'. There were lots of blueberries there. Now, I don't think that they are safe to eat. I think that there still might be some blueberries across the lake where no one lives. I also think that there used to be more ducks, geese, rabbits and chickens. It seems like these little animals are disappearing, but I have to say that I do live in town now, and don't go to the bush very much at all. Come to think of it, I haven't had moose meat for a long time. I think that it might be safer to just pick something up at Safeway. For certain, it is less work – shooting, skinning, cutting, packing and making dry meat. But I sure did enjoy going to the tea dances in Fort McMurray where these foods were always plentiful.

Things are so expensive today. A person used to be able to take a train from Fort McMurray to Anzac for $1.60. Even that seemed expensive then. A quarter would buy you coffee and a piece of pie, or popcorn and a movie.

Many of the old people are gone now. I know that a few people are buried before the cemetery at Anzac on the reserve by the lake. Others are in the graveyard found on the top of the hill on Amoco Road. I think that a long time ago we use to put those who had passed on into the trees. I certainly have never seen that.

There are still floods in Fort McMurray every spring, and there is still good water at Willow Lake.

4.21 Emil Powder

Family Background

I was born here in McMurray. I grew up in Fort McMurray for my first 14 years. We moved out to Horse River when the city knocked down the cabin we had in town. We went away for a holiday, came back, and the house was knocked down. My mother was from Conklin and my dad was from here.

My dad was born by Twasino Lake, up by Algar Lake. 'Twasino' in Cree means "fell through the ice". A team of horses fell through the Lake, so they called it Twasino Lake ever since. Dad was raised at the mouth of Algar River where it becomes the Athabasca River. He worked 15 years on boats on the Athabasca River. There is a picture and story about him at the museum. Like many other people in the area, he trapped in the winter and worked on the boats in the summer. Sometimes, if he didn't trap, he would go work for forestry. He worked on the bridge they built over the Firebag River.

My dad's mom lived in Fort McMurray most of her life. She grew up out in the bush near Twasino Lake at a place that's called 'Spruce Tent' in Cree. It's just on the other side of the 16 mile cabin. I worked at KMC Mining for the last 27 years. I was there

when Syncrude started the first test pit back in 1970. I was only seventeen then, and I've been doing it ever since. We found a fossil there one time. I don't know what it was, but it looked like it lived in water because it had fins and a long neck. It was maybe twelve feet long. It's in the Tyrrell Museum in Drumheller. I was standing right on the skeleton and didn't even know what it was.

Trapping

I used to help my dad with the trapping. We would catch foxes, lynx, beaver and squirrels. There were no martens back then, but there are a lot now. I remember in those days there was the odd fisher. We would see a lot of flying squirrels too, but I haven't seen any in a long time. Those were the good old days. In the summertime, they are clearly visible. We lived out near Horse Creek for about 10 years. That Abasand plant near Horse Creek had already burnt down by the time we moved out there. There were just some old tanks there and a big water hole.

Berries and Medicines

My granny used to know some medicine. She cured me from tuberculosis, which the doctors couldn't do. She gave me some kind of root medicine before I would go to school, and before I would go to bed. I would get X-rays every month and it was slowly disappearing. I took the medicine for maybe two months. She made the medicine using roots from the bush that she boiled up. It tasted horrible, like prune juice; but I had to do it and it really worked. I never kept the recipe for how she made that.

My auntie knew all kinds of medicine, like heart medicine, and kinds of medicine for headaches. We used to pick some kind of white flowers for heart medicine. It grew along the creeks where she used to live. They almost looked like daisies, and they were pretty hard to find. She would just use the roots and would keep a bag of those handy. When she needed some, she would grind it up and then boil it to make tea. I remember she would use rat root ground up into powder for toothaches.

Hunting and Fishing

I shot my first moose up the hill just by the pipeline. Two of us were there. I was about fourteen and I shot him with a .303. That was a heavy gun. I got him with one shot right in the ribs. Through the heart I guess. That was a lucky shot - maybe 100 yards away. We were out hunting on our way to the Jackpines, about 12 miles away. I always carried the rifle because we figured we would see a moose. We were actually going to go out there to shoot chickens and spruce hens. I noticed they started disappearing back in the early 1980's. I wish the rabbits would come back. I miss that rabbit stew.

My dad used to see cougars on the trapline. He actually tracked one down there, and nobody believed him. This was back in the 1970's. Everybody told him it was a big lynx, but he insisted it was a cougar. My dad trapped by the airport in his last days. He was partners with my auntie. He saw a grizzly bear there once, crossing the rail, but nobody believed him.

My uncle used to set nets right at the mouth of the Horse River to catch goldeye, walleye, and a few jacks. He used to live there because he owned the trapline before my dad. My auntie and uncle raised us. I used to go to school from there. My sons still go fishing in the Clearwater River by Waterways. They caught a big walleye last fall.

I miss those days growing up in the bush. I shot a moose right from the door one spring. I went outside and saw a moose coming right towards me so I went back in the house and got my rifle and shot him. That was the closest I ever packed meat. There used to be a lot of rabbits in those days, no matter where you went. Today there's nothing. I don't think I've seen a flying squirrel in about 20 years. I try to teach my grandson some of the bush skills that I learned. I take him with me every time I go out and try to teach him how to speak Cree and how to understand it.

Tanning and Beadwork

Tanning hides was hard work. We used to help the old ladies all the time. After you scrape the hair off using a matahikan, you soak the hide for about a week. You used to have to sharpen that blade a certain way so that it wouldn't go through the hide. You only sharpen one side. You would tie the hide onto a square frame to scrape it. Then you would take it off, soak it, and wring it. Wringing it was the hardest part because the hide was so big and heavy. They used to wrap the hide around a log with a pole, and then you would just twist the pole around and it would wring the water out and stretch it at the same time. It worked pretty good. Then you dry it and smoke it. I don't know how they ever got it soft though, but it used to get soft after. They would smoke it to give it the colour. We used to go find red wood - spruce I think - that would give it the smell and colour.

My granny and my auntie both did nice beadwork and leather. My auntie also used to use porcupine quills, but I never actually watched her. She used to make some nice warm parkas - one a week, every week.

Grandmother's Stories

My granny was always telling stories about when she grew up. She used to tell me about the red coats when she was living in Saskatchewan. I don't know what they meant by red coats, maybe RCMP. That was when the Louis Riel Rebellion was going on. She was there at the time in Saskatchewan. They didn't find her dad, and that's when her family moved up here. They came by dog team. I think her mother came from near Onion Lake.

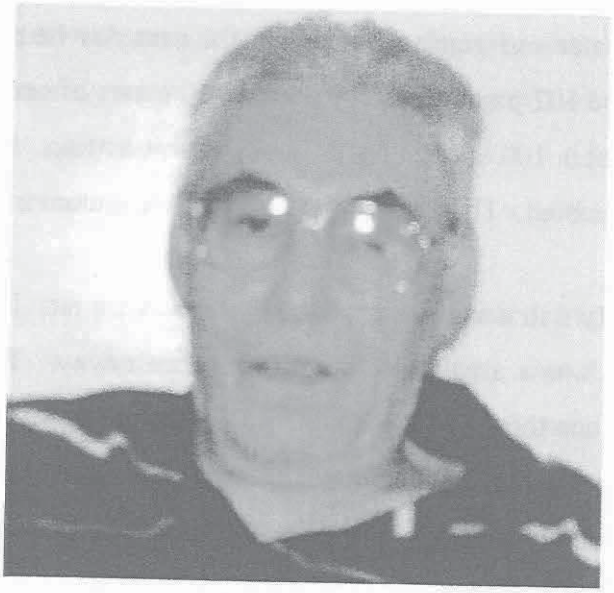
Early Fort McMurray

I remember there were winter carnivals back then. There was dog team racing, snow shoe racing and bannock making. They don't have anything like that anymore. It was called the King and Queen of the North Contest and it was a big deal back then.

Burial Sites on the Algar River

There was a reserve over there with maybe 100 people. There was a big grave yard at the Algar River, right at the mouth. My uncle told me there was a big graveyard there because a lot of people died from some kind of sickness.

4.22 George Powder



My name is George Powder and I was born in Fort Chipewyan in 1930. My mom's name was Julie Tuccaro. My dad's name was Zachary Powder. He was born in Lac La Biche, and moved up to Camsell Portage. My dad and my cousin took a scow from Athabasca Landing to Fort McMurray. From there, they followed the river all the way to Athabasca Lake around 1920. I don't know how long it took, but they made it to Camsell Portage on the north shore of Lake Athabasca. They built a house in 1923 and lived there with a lot of other people; trappers mostly. Some people worked at the fish cannery there too.

Guided and Trapped North of Tazin Lake

I had a good dog team, there were six dogs. Of all the pups that were born - there were seven or eight of them - I took the best six of the litter. They were all one family. Tip was my leader and I had him for quite a while. The next one from the leader, was a leader in training. I fed them fish mostly, and caribou as long as I didn't get caught, I would feed them caribou meat.

My brother, used to travel to Fort Chipewyan a lot. When a person was sick, he would take them there. They would travel all day long. That was quite a ways. They wouldn't stop for anything. They would just go. He would run behind his dogs.

Fishing

I remember when we were just pulling nets out at the end of the season and this guy was at the north end of the lake by St. Joseph Point. He started putting the nets in the deep water and going home. Then the next day he pulled the nets out, that's when he caught the 102 pounder. He was using 10 gangs of nets. There are three nets to a gang and each net is 100 yards. That's 300 yards of netting. I remember that. I was there. He put it in his boat. That fish is mounted at the museum in Regina.

My fish wasn't very long but it was very fat. I had a hell of a time getting it in the boat. It was a small boat but I got it in anyway. There was someone watching and he saw when the fish hit the line hard. He came down as soon as I waved at him. He came down and he knew I caught something. They were taking pictures and my brother wanted it. I was just going to freeze it. There were Americans who told me any big fish I get, I could just call them and they would pick it up. I could have done that, but it was too fat. I remember someone telling me he once saw four big sturgeons together in the lake. He said they must have been twenty feet long. Another trapper used to live at the lake, and he had something tear a great big hole in his net, it just swam right through.

We used to set nets under the ice in winter. We'd use a jigger. We would take a board about eight feet long and two sharpened 2 X 6's. There'd be a piece of metal, like a hook, and it would pull it under the ice. It just shoots it under the ice. It doesn't take long. After it goes 100 yards, you have to dig it out at the other end. The ice would sometimes get up to 3.5 feet thick. It was lots of work.

Early fall is the best time to fish. Up north we found them spawning in the early fall before freezing. We saw them, and we knew there were lots of fish there. Because there

were so many fish spawning, the ice wouldn't freeze. That was on my trapline at Whitefish Lake. We would make a little warehouse and put them in there to freeze. Then we would chop them up to feed the dogs.

Trapping

My family went with me to the trapline. We would stay in a tent in the fall and then move to a cabin for the winter. One year in the 1970's, I was King of the North when I caught 24 or 25 mink. They were worth a lot of money back then too. One year the price of martens went up and my brother taught me how to catch them. He caught 90 and they were about $2.50 a marten. We made a lot of money that year. We would use a piece of fish or beaver castors for bait. We would catch them with a trap rather than a snare. I would catch a mink with a snare using secret bait. I learned how to be a trapper from my dad, and made my bait in the winter.

Hunting Caribou

Every year the caribou come down across Camsell Lake. It was really handy. We have to get permits that say how many we can kill. You can't just kill a bunch of them. Some people kill a lot because they are so easy to kill. Then they take the best pieces and throw the rest of the meat away, and the ravens start eating it. Now the caribou just turn around and don't come back. They're smart. I see them a lot on my trapline. It makes it hard to control the dogs because they can smell them. I had good dogs.

Medicines

My dad taught me how to make medicines too. For a cut you take poplar, and scrape the bark to get a powder that you put on a cut, which makes it heal fast. Spruce gum is the same way. You take it and boil it until it looks just like water. Then you add some grease or lard and mix it. One time my brother got cut with an axe just above the knee. We used spruce to fix it for him. If you take the roots of dandelions and dry them, you can eat it as heart medicine. You just have to take a single dose to help. For ear aches,

he would use something he called pineapple root. You soak it, and squeeze it in your ear. I've never seen anything like that around here though. But out in the bush, there's lots. Just about every lake you go to with beaver, you can see it. I think I picked some on the shores of Willow Lake. Beavers feed on it. There's another thing for toothache. I don't know the name, but it's hot and there are about six brown flowers on it. I used to pick it outside my trailer. Also, I would sometimes see it when I was out walking. For sore kidneys I would make muskeg tea. I would make tea and throw the roots in there.

Burial Sites and Oil Deposit

In the fall if you go by canoe up north along that river that goes from Tazin Lake down to Helen Lake, there are some graves along that river. That's how they travelled back then. You can see the crosses on top of the hill by the river. I don't know who is buried there; I think treaty Indians. I found an arrowhead by Charlotte River once.

There was a moose was walking along and I followed him. He started digging. There was black oily sand. I know exactly where. You can just see it floating on the water on the north shore. I didn't go to the south shore. There's nothing to see there; mostly sand. Wouldn't go there anyway, the beach is protected. You can't go along cutting trees or anything.

Travel from Fort McMurray to Camsell Portage

I lived in Fort McMurray in 1949. That's when they started to build up the church. The Father stayed there four months. They were just starting to build. There were a lot of old buildings. Mostly it was tear-down and rebuild. I worked for the church then and it was all bush. Anzac at that time had no road. In 1949 I was there, but I didn't stay too long. I went back to the trapline by boat along the river to Lake Athabasca. The trip took me about a day and a half. One time I started off at eleven in the morning and I travelled until dark. There was a good place to camp so I put my tent up and the next morning I left early. I had to cross the lake. You have to know the weather. You know how much

it's blowing by looking at the lake. You start seeing those whitecaps. It takes about 20 minutes to cross from the river to the lake shore. Then you go along the north shore. One whole day, I only had a 15 horsepower motor and a 22 foot skiff. But it doesn't make a difference. You still have the same speed because it just goes fast. The Father asked if I needed a place to stay there; houses were where the church was back then. He told me I could fix up the place and stay there. I stayed there and was working for him. I built the church in Camsell. All we did was haul in logs.

There used to be 3,400 people in Uranium City. Now there's about 50 - it's a ghost town. In Camsell there are six people left. That's what happened to Camsell. There used to be quite a few people there, and when Uranium City opened, they started moving there. Hardly anybody was left, but my dad and another person stayed year around.

4.23 Jean Powder



I was born in Fort McMurray and grew up on the Paul Cree Reserve, where we stayed until we were teenagers. My mother's name was Louise and my father's name was Raphael Cree. My father was born in a tipi in Muskeg Lake on the reserve by the Steep Bank River. He used to tell me stories about when he grew up. They lived around Muskeg Lake all year in a tipi, and later they moved to the Paul Cree Reserve. That is where my dad grew up. They would go to my uncle's place, and they would go to church there on the reserve. My dad said that, years ago, people were always travelling. They would travel all the time to find animals.

We moved up the river, nine miles from the reserve. I spent most of my life up the Clearwater River, on the reserve and on the trapline. I also spent 27 years up north in Camsell, Uranium City. I saw a lot up there. That was about 70 miles north of Camsell Portage. We would go up by plane and come back by plane or dog team. When the kids were small we went in the bush trapping and would stay in a tent or a cabin. We spent a lot of time there. People would not fight for a trapline over there. They could trap anywhere and be happy, but you can't do that anymore.

My dad trapped on the reserve and in Fort Chip - from Embarras right to the Peace River. We didn't trap with my father back then because we were too young. When I got older I would trap with my dad along the Peace River during the winter, and in the summer, we would travel down to Fort Chip in the boat with lots of furs to sell. We used to hunt moose too, but we weren't allowed to hunt buffalo; even though there were a lot around Peace River and Fort Chip.

Traditional Activities

My mother tanned a lot of hides, and I used to help her. I would help tie the moose hide, or square it, and we would poke holes around the edge of the hide to pull the skin tight. That was really hard work. We would then use the hides to make beaded moccasins and mitts. My mother would also make lots of pemmican. She would get a rag and put dry meat in it, and pound it with a hammer or axe to break it up.

My dad didn't make birch bark canoes, he made them out of little strips of spruce instead. They would put the strips in water, then bend and tie them for about a month. Then, he would place the bent strips and cover them with canvas. My dad would build boats all by himself because there was nobody else around to help him. He used to have an old musket rifle that he would hunt with. It came from Red River Manitoba with my grandfather. Then, when my grandfather got old, he gave it to my dad. My father didn't really have main trails to follow. He made his own trapline road to Gordon Lake. He also

used to have a garden on the reserve. We would go check on the garden over the summer and I would go with him, taking water for the plants.

Burial Sites and Lobsticks

I remember hearing about some graves by the train tracks near Linton, from when the train derailed and crashed in 1924. My dad said that a young man that died there had only been married for a year. There is a lobstick on the river, that was left by people years ago and there is another one on Clearwater River. My dad used to point out one that was close to his trapline, but I guess it is gone now. There were some markers along the river that my dad would use, but not many. It was a long way and we canoed there and back. We would canoe all the way from Fort Chip up to Clearwater. It was very hard paddling. We got as far as Cascades, but I never made it to Saskatchewan. Sometimes my dad would tie a string and pull us up in the canoe because we didn't want to walk. The water was fast back then, but it isn't anymore.

Tea Dance at Fort McKay

The only celebration I remember around here was a tea dance where they played good music. There was another tea dance in Fort McKay when I was about ten or twelve years old, that was happening when we passed through there. It was on this side of the river, where Fort McKay is located now; but I do not know who was there. We just stopped in, made a camp and went to the party. My dad said to my mom, "we'll go see". So they went with all us kids. They had lots of other dances up at Peace River Lake. At Christmas, people would come in from all over to dance and make a big party. My auntie and uncle would have us up just to be with people, family and friends.

Medicines

When my dad had a bad cold he would take muskeg tea and peppermint that we'd picked by the pond. You could also mix the peppermint with Labrador tea. My dad also used to pick plants around where he was trapping, for heart medicine. He knew where plants

were located, and where to dig for plants for himself, for his heart. I do not know what plant or what it looks like because we never went with him. It was his secret. He would only use the root and he wouldn't prepare it, just chew it. He would chew it anytime and he did not wait until he started getting sick. I guess that is why the people from long ago lived a long time. They knew about traditional medicines and roots, but we do not know it anymore.

When we were sick he would give us traditional medication but we did not know what it was. He would just boil it and drain it, but he never told us what he was preparing. The medicine he made was good for everything. I do not pick medicines now. Instead, I have to buy my medicines from the store. If you go to a medicine man to get traditional medicine, you have to believe in it for it to work.

Changing Times

Back then no one ever got sick and to this day I have never seen the inside of a hospital. Years ago the water in the rivers was so clean you could drink it when you travelled in the bush. There were lots of fish and rabbits to eat, but now there is nothing. I suppose things changed back in the 1960's, but I wasn't here at the time because I was living in Uranium city.

When I was younger, there were peregrine falcons in Peace River on the cut hills. We went there one time and my auntie told me not to go too close, because they were coming down to where their eggs were. That was the first time I saw a bird like that. It was kind of hawk-like. They had a white chest and their backs were a light blue, but I couldn't see the color of the beaks because they moved so fast.

When I was a girl, there were also all kinds of wolves, bears, moose and deer; as well as ducks and geese in the summer. Now there aren't many animals. There are no moose, few rabbits, and hardly any chickens. I have seen lots of change in animals between then and now. There used to be tracks everywhere from groundhogs and rabbits. There were

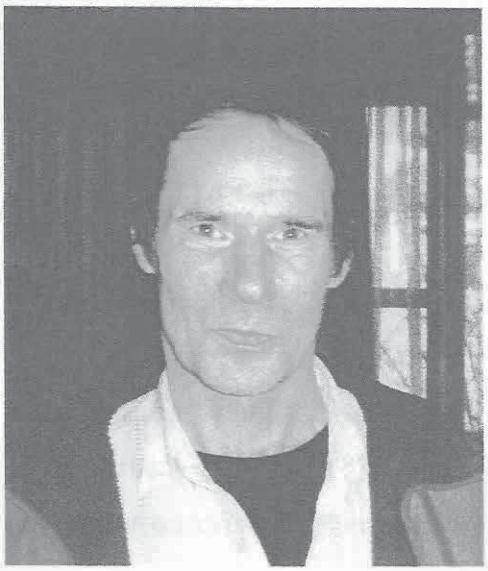
a lot of them by the reserve, but you never see them anymore. We haven't had them on the reserve for many years.

Around the reserve we used to pick raspberries and blueberries. We would pick blueberries about eight miles up the Clearwater from here, and there were lots of them in the jackpine area. Things are a lot different now; people, plants, lots of planes and boats, everything. There's stuff all over the bush. You cannot go anywhere without seeing stuff like that. One time a group of people walked all the way from Christina to Swan Lake because they were promised jobs; but when they arrived there were no jobs. We were starving and had to turn around and go back. There wasn't much food, but I remember that my dad killed two moose. I remember that because the moose scared us by making a lot of noise, and we were so scared because we thought they were coming after us. We ran up the hill and into the bush.

My dad did not talk of the past or his parents very much. They did not tell kids about the past when we were young. When visitors came, we were told to go outside. We were not even allowed to pass a place where old people were sitting. We would get chased out right away.

4.24 Harvey Sykes

I was born at the Gabriel Hospital in Fort McMurray. My mom brought me home right away because in those days they didn't keep the mother and the baby in the hospital. All together, my parents had eight children. My mother was born at the old mission at Lac La Biche Lake, and was raised on the trapline by her mother, and her father. My dad met her there.



Trapping and Fishing

My parents and all of us spent a great deal of time at our trapline near Cheecham. The trapline is about fifteen miles south of Anzac along the railroad tracks. The tracks were the boundary and the trapline went west from there. It used to cover a big area and went way up into Stony Mountain. In my school days, I used to go to the trapline whenever I had a chance.

Everybody moved around in those days and hunted, fished and trapped. They also worked for the railroad and made gardens in town. I was born with a gun in my hands. I made my first shot at nine years old. I used to shoot chickens and rabbits, up in the Beacon Hills area. I used to set rabbit snares there too.

My dad used to sell furs to the Hudson's Bay Company. The furs went to auction in Edmonton and were delivered by train. My mother tanned moose hides and made moccasins at the trapline. After my dad died in 1978, they made his trapline into two. I didn't take the trapline over, because the memories were too painful for me. After my dad died, we didn't go to the bush anymore. We gave up the trapline in 1978.

Medicines

My mother knew about the natural medicines. I remember that she used to put red willow under the lip for a toothache. You could also use it for a bleeding nose. I don't know all the remedies, but I wish I did.

Working on the Boats

I went to work on the boats because we needed a place for my mother to live. She had to have an apartment with running water. I worked there for 26 years. There were tugboats, but the Hudson Bay Company owned two sternwheelers that were used to transport freight. The loading facilities were in Waterways. The railway ended right at Waterways. I worked on various steamships. There's the one that's now at Heritage

Park - my dad was the engineer on that one. Then I also worked on the paddle-wheeler. It had a diesel engine.

Burial Site at Cheecham

There is a graveyard in Cheecham, but I don't know who is buried there. I think that someone's put a fence around that graveyard and straightened out the crosses. It was a settlement once and there was a road that went from Cheecham to La Loche. They used to fish at La Loche and haul fish from there to the railroad. There were a lot of natives bringing fish to the railroad, and also trapping, hunting and berry picking. There used to be lots of good blueberry picking around Cheecham.

The only other burial sites I know about are just below Bitumount. They found a whole bunch of arrowheads there, because there was a war one time between the Cree and the Chipewyan people. The Crees came with the fur trade and had stronger medicine with the muskets. It was probably about that time.

Changes in Fort McMurray

There have been big changes in Fort McMurray. When I was a kid, around five or six years old, there were 1,200 people there. And that number includes Waterways, which was a town at the time. It even had its own school house and post office. The half-breeds travelled around in those days because they had no where to go. They weren't white, and they weren't status Indian. They didn't have a reserve to call home and they couldn't live in town. My dad warned me that this would happen when we were living on the trapline.

My whole family was raised on the water that comes from the creek that runs by our house. My family has lived on this property for 60 years. We drank it, cooked with it, bathed in it, and now I won't even touch it because it is too polluted. My dad told me that this would happen and it did.

This is a song that I know:

Well the forest it might be warm and free,
But tomorrow it's empty, just wait and see.
They're stripping the forest year after year,
Destroying the homes of the muskrat and deer.

So daddy won't you take me down to McMurray country,
A place where the birds and the beaver they play.
But I'm sorry my son, you're too late in asking,
Oil sands companies, they've stripped it away.

The banks of this river were part of this great land,
Now there's nothing but piles of white sand.
The smoke stacks out yonder are polluting the fine air
And making a dollar is all that they care.

So daddy won't you take me down to McMurray country,
A place where the birds and the beaver they play.
But I'm sorry my son, you're too late in asking,
Oil sands companies, they've stripped it away.

A plant every few years is there inn the making,
Another oil project is well underway.
But man is greedy, keeps taking and taking,
And gives back nothing just lives for today.

So daddy won't you take me down to McMurray country,
A place where the birds and the beaver they play.
But I'm sorry my son, you're too late in asking,
Oil sands companies, they've stripped it away.
Yes, oil sands companies they've stripped it to clay.

4.25 Flora Tremblay



My name is Flora Tremblay and I was born on the reserve where we lived until I was about eight or nine. There were a lot of us in the family, including all of my sisters and brothers. We had to have a big table so there was enough room for everybody to sit at to eat. When my mom cooked, she would use a big pot so she could feed so many people. One time I got too close when she was chopping a rabbit with a butcher knife and she accidentally chopped my arm. My dad stopped the blood, and I don't know what they put on it; some sort of Indian medicine.

I have a large family, with all of my nephews, nieces and their kids. It is a lot of people. I can't even count them. I don't know how many there are. My grandfather was quite young when he passed away. Then my granny passed away shortly after that in Fort Chip. Four years after I think.

My grandmother would sometimes mention a story about the *Witago*. But we weren't supposed to talk about him. He used to have a big pot and boil people in it. It used to scare us and we weren't to talk about it.

When my mom came into town, the only thing I wanted was comic books. They were small comics and I used to order them all the time because I wanted to see the pictures of Gene Autry, Roy Rogers and Hop-a-long Cassidy. I used to buy them all, and I had lots, because they bought me one whenever they'd come to town.

When I was about 15 or 16, we moved to Waterways and lived there in the summer. My dad worked at McInnes Fisheries and my brothers eventually worked there too. My brothers were hunting by then, and they killed a lot of beaver. One time I saw a coat in a catalogue that I wanted very badly. I just had to have it. So my brothers said I could order it. They'd pay for it and I'd have to pay them back. It was a nice Hudson's Bay coat.

We used to have a tea dance when we were here a long time ago - right where the grass was. We had a tea dance there. My dad and my mom wanted to go, so they took us kids too. They would make tea, build a fire and dance around there. That's what they called a tea dance. They put up a tipi.

I have two daughters. I used to live in Lac La Biche during the summer, and we would work stooking the wheat. You'd set the wheat up like they were in bushels. My older brothers used go there. They would come across the river in a boat. One of them used to work on the boats a long time ago. He was an electrician and he would climb the posts along railroad tracks to fix the wires. He used to work a long time. I remember there were lots of boats around here. I remember one that was called the Pelican, and there was the Echo, and the Athabasca. I remember that.

Quilting

I used to love to make quilts by hand. I would make many coloured blankets, shirts and dresses. I just loved doing that. It was a lot of work to make blankets, but that's what we did because there was no radio.

Medicine

I used to smell my dad's medicine pouch. It had a string to tie around his neck. That was where he had all his medicines. We used to tie it up on a pole in a tent. He said that nobody could touch it or look in it - nobody at all, because it was his medicine. A long time ago, we used beaver castors too. Dad used to dry them and use them to make medicine.

To treat boils you use spruce tree gum and mix it with heated yellow lye soap. You put the mixture on top of the boil like a poultice, and then you just pull it out and it takes all the poison stuff with it.

Trapping, Hunting, and Fishing

When we lived at Waterways we trapped back and forth on both sides of the river. I used to go with my dad to trap when he didn't have to work. He would bring along some bologna, bread and butter for us. I really liked the way bologna tasted back then. It tastes different now and I don't like it anymore.

My husband passed away in 1998. He used to trap with a friend. We used to go to the trapline, me and my husband, and we would kill a lot of beavers. I would stretch all the beaver skins after he killed them and brought them to me. I was so afraid watching him on the ice because in the springtime you can fall through. I told him to tie a rope around his waist and I would hold it on the shore but he said "no", he would be OK. One time my brother, my husband and I went up river in a canoe and we decided to stop to camp. While we were unloading everything, my husband fell down in the water and it went over his head. He just about drowned. After that we made a big fire so that he could warm up and dry his clothes. Every time we talk about it, I just laugh and laugh.

There were lots of rabbits back then. The skinny ones I thought were sick, and I would throw them away. I don't eat them because sometimes you find something growing on the stomach. It looks like white spots all over.

We would have moose meat, deer, chickens and rabbits. My dad used to hunt and go on the trapline. He would trap lots of beavers and squirrels. When he had caught enough, he would come into downtown with the dog team and come get supplies and groceries. I used to help my dad when he came to town with the dog team. He would feed the dogs and I would walk them. One time his dog ran away while I was holding the line. He was so fast and strong that he dragged me behind him. My dad called out and said to let go, so I did. The dog stopped on its own, and I was OK. In order to tell time, my dad used to look at the sun and he would know if it was 12 or 1 o'clock.

I remember my dad used to kill lots of moose and my mom made dry meat. That was how we kept meat; by drying it, because there was no other way to store it. You could also dig a hole in the summer and put the meat far into the cellar. That was the only way you could keep it cold. The dried meat we made would not last long, because people would come to buy it from us. So many people would come here to buy meat from my dad. Sometimes he would be gone to town and I would have to sell it myself.

That's how it used to be a long time ago. My dad would put nets on side the river and he would catch lots of pike and pickerel that way. Now there's water pollution and the animals all get sick. There are no more rabbits, chickens or foxes around here. One time on the reserve, over here at Anzac, they killed a moose and when they skinned it and they had to leave it because it had worms. There are not many berries around here anymore, I only see raspberries now. I still see lots of geese in the spring and in the summer. In the fall they fly back north again. My dad used to talk to the geese. "We'll see you next fall", he told them, "this time next fall, we'll see you again".

Travel

It was a very tough life, we used to travel in a boat in the summertime and in the wintertime we used dogs. My dad found a big canoe that he pulled onto shore. He patched it with tar. First he cut pieces of wood and he soaked them. He used round tubs of water to soak birch boughs that he would bend to make the ribs of the boat. That's

how he would make them soft so we could begin to bend them for the ribs. He would dry them like that, and he would use birch ribs for the sides and all along the bottom. Then he used to make the canvas for the bottom.

Another time when my brothers, my dad, and my mom went to town to get food, I was left to look after the others. They were gone for so long that we got hungry. So I set up a snare. I caught a rabbit the next morning and I skinned it, and cooked it over a fire. We ate that rabbit without salt. I told my brothers we had better look for mom and dad. So we walked on the trail. I was about nine or ten years old and I don't know how old my brother was. We were walking the trail and all of a sudden we saw my dad and my mom coming. They asked "why are you coming over here?" We said we were hungry but they did not bring any food with them, so we had to turn back. We had to turn around. We were just sleeping in our jackets because there were no blankets except for one. That's all we brought camping. But then the next morning there was snow and it got into our blanket. We had to get up from the snow. My dad was making a fire to warm up all of us, and when he got it going, he made tea. We used to make tea from birch and spruce trees. That was our tea leaves.

Early Fort McMurray

The Hudson's Bay store in Waterways was where we used to bring our furs, me and my dad. That's where we sold foxes, wolf and fishers. I remember the salt mine that used to be here. I used to go look at where the salt came from, because the guy that works there asked me if I wanted to come and watch. It came out of pipes from under the ground.

Another time when I was six or eight years old, soldiers came on the train. They came and set up tents over where Keyano College used to be. There were lots of tents because there was nothing there but prairie. I could hear their bugle at 5 o'clock in the morning.

A long time ago bread cost 10 cents for a loaf. My mom used to send me out with 50 cents to go to the store for the bread. Waterways also used to have a picture show and

I had to work lots to earn the money to go. I had to fill two clotheslines with washing. I got my water from the lake behind our house. Sometimes, when we would get water, it would have tadpoles in it. You would scoop them up with the water but you want nothing in there - the water has to be clean to wash clothes. So we'd have to scoop the tadpoles out and clean the water. We warmed water by making a fire under the big pots for washing clothes. It used to be a lot of work, because I had to use a washboard. All that work just to get that money; 50 cents, or maybe $1 from my mom so I could go see the picture show.

4.26 Marie Ann Betty "Betsy" Tremblay



I was born in Fort McMurray. My brother and his wife drowned in the Athabasca River. They found them together but nobody really knows what happened. It is important to respect the spirit of the water. If you play with water, it does something to you. Either you lose someone or something that you love. When it comes to the Athabasca River, I am convinced that there is something in that river. When I was a young teen, the river tried to take me, but my dad saved me.

My dad was a captain of a boat at one time. Later, dad gave his captain's papers to my uncle. We had a scow – a really big boat. We took it out on the ice in the winter. There were two wooden beds in that scow and two old time cook stoves. I remember that mom used to bake bread in there. Oh….it was a beautiful boat. Sometimes, on a fall evening, we would see the water on the Peace River approaching very quickly. Whatever was in that river, it would make the scow tip on its side. I was 10 years old when I realized that there was something strange in the water. Some people say that there is nothing in the

water, but I know for a fact that there is a monster. Others say that there are giant sturgeon fish in the water but I don't think so. There is a fisherman from Portage. He says that he caught something that ripped his net. He doesn't know what was in that net, but it sure scared him. In fact, it frightened him so much that he will not go back into the water to set the net anymore. One year, the water came up so fast that we had to take a helicopter out and stay in a hotel for about a week. Dad stayed behind to let the dogs loose and put the boat beside the big stage. One night, when we were in the hotel, we saw something on the river. Dad thought that it looked like an otter. It had a very long neck and a big body. Bobby says that he saw the very same thing. There is something in the Lake…yes…there is something in Lake Athabasca. Some people say that they have tried to shoot it but the bullets never penetrate. It seems as if we can't kill this monster. I believe that it is still in the lake. When I think of the water, I think of danger.

Trapping

Dad trapped all winter long. We would leave for the trapline in the fall and return in the spring. Our trapline was near Portage. We used to stay in a cabin near the airport, but the cabin isn't there anymore. There is nothing there because the flood destroyed everything. The Athabasca River splits and goes two ways. One way goes to Fort Chip. To get to Fort Chip, you need to go through Richardson Lake and Lake Athabasca. We would cross the frozen Lake Athabasca in the winter with a team of dogs. We had a team with six dogs. I trained the dogs. You need to let the dogs know that you love them and they will work with you. There used to be herds of buffalo on that lake. If one buffalo took a scare, then the whole herd would run and it wouldn't stop. It could be really frightening. A person certainly didn't want to be in the way. But I would calm down and remember that my dad knew how to handle a gun.

We spent much of our time at the trapline, so mom taught us through correspondence. I finished grade 10 this way. We mailed our finished lessons every week at the trading post. Every Thursday was mail day. Of course, we couldn't watch TV or listen to the radio at the trapline. We did have a wind up record player.

Dad was able to make good money trapping. In fact, one year some people were jealous that dad was doing so well, and reported to the ranger that dad was trapping too many animals. Dad told the ranger that he couldn't help it that he was such a good trapper. I think that one winter he caught one hundred lynx. That was the winter that a beautiful parka was made. One season, I don't know if it was the same one, he made $1,000. I remember that he bought new things for the house that year and a new speed boat – 240 horsepower.

Trapping was a good life. When I was a child, I used to trap squirrels. One year, I caught 300 squirrels myself. There were lots of squirrels in the bush at that time. We hunted chickens, rabbits, grouse, ptarmigans and lynx. We had all sorts of meat in the bush. My mom used to can her bush meat – duck, chicken, and moose. Mom also made dry meat. We had gunny sacks full of dry meat. Nobody ever went hungry in those days.

We ate lynx once. Dad killed a lynx, skinned it and cleaned it very well. I used the grinder to make hamburger out of the lynx. I fried a patty for my brother, who had never ate a lynx before. When he started to eat it, he asked me if it was turkey. I started to laugh and told him that now he was going to be a cat because he had just eaten the flesh of the lynx. Talking about lynx, when I was working at a restaurant, I went to the dugout basement to get something. When I was down there, I had the feeling that there was someone hiding downstairs. I went to get help and when we investigated further, we discovered that there was a lynx in the dugout.

Fishing

There were big jacks in the creek by Richardson River. My dad and I would set nets. We would catch suckers. I didn't even know that suckers were good to eat because we never ate them. When I came to Lac La Biche, I was surprised to meet people who ate suckers. I am sure that we used to catch about 100 of those fish in any given fall. We would hang all of these fish so that they would dry and we would feed them to the dogs in the winter. We also used to put away the squirrels for the dogs. This dog food was

boiled in a 45 gallon pot, and then we would freeze the contents of the pot and cut it into blocks. When we were travelling with the dogs in the winter, we would use this food to keep them warm. It was good and healthy food.

Sometimes life in the bush was harsh and prayer was needed. Ice fishing could be dangerous. We would use a chisel and fish at night. We would put a flashlight in the water and they would come to the light. You could see them bobbing their head up to the light. Dad caught whitefish, which we didn't smoke but dried. There was also the jackfish, which mom said were too bony and not so good for eating. The dangerous part about ice fishing was the wolves. I was almost killed by a wolf one time. It was about ten o'clock at night in the bush. I started flashing my flashlight and all of a sudden I saw a number of eyes. I bet that there were 20 wolves. I remember that the dogs were going crazy. The wolves had been tracking me and the dogs, and we didn't know it. Imagine that – I could have been eaten. Dad wouldn't let me carry a gun because mom wouldn't allow it. I think that there may have been too many wolves at that time. The amount of squirrels and foxes was diminishing. The wolves killed five of our dogs one night and dad killed 10 wolves. I remember that the wolves were lying all over the place and I clearly remember their dead eyes.

Rabies in Wolves and Coyotes

The wolves and coyotes were not always so healthy. Sometimes they would have rabies. When they had this disease, they would walk around just like they were in a daze. They would slobber and drool, and foam would come out of their mouths. In the later stages of the disease, they became very vicious. If an infected coyote or wolf bites a dog or a person, then the disease is passed on. If the disease infects your camp, then you cleanse the area … even your clothes. You have to burn all of your clothes. I remember dad doing that. He also went to the area where the wolves were drooling and burned the ground. We would lock down our dogs in those times so that they wouldn't get rabies. Those were scary times. There was no way of telling the extent of the infection so dad wasn't able to trap or hunt. Too many animals were getting rabies. The ranger came and

gave our dogs needles so that they wouldn't get the disease. The ranger thought that the ravens might be spreading the disease. But no one really ever knew how it started. That happened a long time ago and it was a frightening time.

Medicines and Scents

When we stayed at the trapline all winter with dad, we would never get sick. I remember some of the bush medicines that we used as well. We had rat root for colds, and strawberry roots for an upset stomach or diarrhea. When I was a very small child, there was a baby that had diarrhea and it wouldn't stop. Mom boiled the medicine and prayed. The baby lived.

One night, not too long ago, I was sitting in bed. All of a sudden, it occurred to me that I needed to go to my mother's grave. I took my youngest son with me to my mother's grave and a big gust of wind blew right through us. I know that was a sign from my mother. Some people don't agree with me. My dad used to say that a person has to believe in Indian medicine for it to work and he was right.

I know a man that would shoot 40 to 50 beavers, dry the castors and sell the perfume. He would mix the castors with some other roots and boil it. Animals and birds really liked the smell. Animals would come from all over to rub themselves on the trees where we had applied the mixture.

Other Employment and Changing Times

We did other jobs. My dad worked at the lumber camp at Sweet Grass Landing – it is located down the Peace River. Mom taught me how to sew and do beadwork. I know how to make patterns for gloves and jackets. We had a hide needle with three prongs. I haven't seen one of those for a long time.

Now it is not the same. We used to respect the Elders. Today, it is not the same. My children called all of the older people their grandparents. Today people are disrespectful

and rude. There are so many changes. We used to pick berries in the sand pit. There are not any berries there anymore. The blueberries and the cranberries are dried out. The berries around here are not worth picking anymore. There is too much pollution. I won't eat the berries because there is too much pollution. There used to be an abundance of cranberries in Fort McKay. They aren't there anymore. When I was young, we would drink the river water and it was good fishing. Now you can't even eat fish from the Clearwater River. I always talk to a friend about these changes and especially the changes in the weather. There is a drier cold in the air than there used to be. We were also taught to open the windows to get fresh air. Now, if you open the windows, all that you smell is pollution.

When we travelled along the river, we would visit other trappers. Now, there are no people living on that river. There are many people that we would visit in Fort McKay. The Father from Fort Chip used to come to see us once a year. Our log cabin was the church and we would have communion. The Father would spend the night, mom would cook and we would have a prayer in the morning. Everyone along the river would come and pray.

Trading and Ties with the Apache

We used to cut wood and make music with the crosscut saw. I remember cutting down big trees. We would haul these big logs out of the bush and then cut and split it. Dad would stop by the Alberta Trading Post and order flour and all sorts of dried goods like sugar and salt. These supplies lasted all winter. In the spring, we hunted geese. There were hundreds of geese in the sky then; now you hardly see them. The ponds also were full of ducks, but not so anymore.

A long time ago, the buffalo were abundant. The native people of Montana would come here to trade. They followed the buffalo – the northern herd. Even today, there are many ties between the native people of Montana and the native people here. The Chipewyan

people understand the language of the Apache. They say that it is very, very similar. We have connections everywhere.

4.27 Maggie White

Family Background

I was born in a tent by the river where the Riviera Hotel is now. People used to live all over there with tents. When I was young, my family lived, hunted and trapped by the Clearwater Reserve, about 18 miles from here. My mom and dad originally came from Fort McMurray. Our trapline was along the Steepbank River, across the Clearwater and up the hill. I am pretty much an only child. I have a half-sister in Anzac, but we have never been close.

When I was eight or nine years old, my mother died. My grandma, raised me. My dad died over 40 years ago in Anzac. I had five children, but two of them died when my house burned down. They are buried in the graveyard at the reserve.

Growing up on the reserve wasn't too bad. There wasn't a school, a store or anything. My dad was Leo Cheecham. My granny lived alone for a long time. She is from Chip but she lived on the reserve for a long time. I haven't been back to the reserve for about 15 years. I had to leave after I got married to my husband. Half-breeds were not allowed to live on the reserve. My husband now lives in Conklin. My grandma lived to be about 94 years old. There are not too many old people around these days.

I don't speak English very well. I didn't go to school. I'd rather talk Cree than English. I talk Cree everyday with people. That's my language.

I wasn't told many stories; we were too busy surviving. My dad was too tired from working all day and usually went to bed. We lived without power, running water or gas. I live that way still, and I love it.

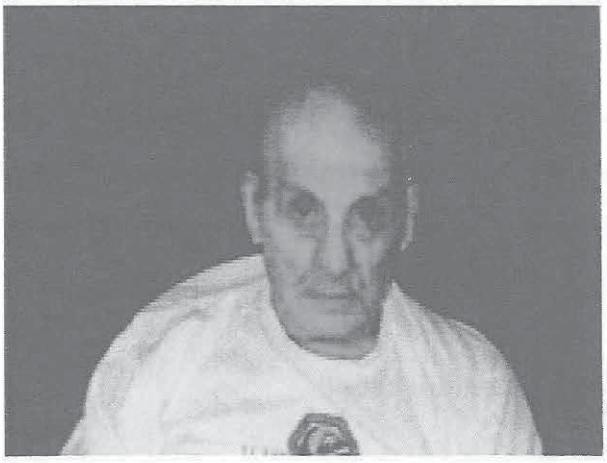
Trapping, Hunting, Fishing and Plant Harvesting

I grew up in the bush and it was a good life. It is too crowded now, and much of the bush is gone. My parents trapped beaver, rats, squirrels, weasels, mink and martens. My dad hunted moose, deer and bear. He also fished for whitefish and jackfish in the Clearwater River with nets. He caught lots of mosquitoes! I helped by skinning the beaver.

We picked blueberries, saskatoons and cranberries close to the reserve. The only plant that we collected for medicine was rat root. I used to get rat root from the reserve, but not anymore; because the area where it grew has dried up. About four miles past the reserve, there is a big lake where the rat root would grow. There are a few hazelnut bushes around here, but the squirrels eat all the nuts. At one time, I made moccasins, but I don't do that anymore.

4.28 Bill Woodward

Moving from Buffalo Narrows to Cheecham



When we moved from Buffalo Narrows to Cheecham in 1928, it took us five days to get here, with four head of horses pulling 20 fish boxes, each weighing approximately one tonne. In those days horses weighed 1,200 pounds and it took two or three horses to match this weight. Although they are capable of travelling 50 to 60 miles a day, 20 miles was considered a good day for a team of horses depending on the number of creeks that had to be crossed. We would put small horses in the front and each time we encountered a hill the horse collars were hit as hard as possible. The horses knew every hill between here and Buffalo. They transported every kind of frozen fish in those boxes, and we five kids all rode on top of the fish boxes. The Cheecham railroad was the end of

the road at that time and from there, fish were transported everywhere as far as Lake Winnipeg. That is what they called the end of steel.

When I first moved to Cheecham there was a population of twenty people. The population of Fort McMurray between the Waterways and McMurray, was comprised of approximately 360 people. Lots of people came from Ontario - doctors, lawyers, and lots of labourers. Horse and dog teams were used to deliver mail to Fort Chipewyan and Fort Smith. It took a long time but it got there just the same. After we moved here, I lived three years in the bush near Algar Tower. I had my first heart attack in 1980. I had seven altogether. Jesus Christ didn't want me and the devil didn't have any room. So, I'm still here.

Pre-Contact Artefacts

I find arrowheads and rocks around here. There is a place to hold it along the edge and a stick is swirled in the centre cavity. A bow is used with a little bit of wood on the top to start a fire. I also found a broken tomahawk and several arrow heads. I seem to find this stuff everywhere. I've got a rock that looks like a petrified beavertail. The guy who cut it out was left handed. You can tell by the way that little spot was cut out. That rock that looks like a broken tomahawk is used for crushing corn. I also found a rock that is used to make fire. Although I have never seen wood buffalo because they left in the 1800's, I found this buffalo horn, or bison tusk up in the willows. The buffalo are keeping their numbers. Currently the population stands at approximately 1,935.

Hunting and Fishing

I have hunted since I could carry a .22 calibre rifle. I hunted all the time at Half Way Lake, which is now called Algar Lake. It was called Half Way because that was where the telegraph line was half way. I mainly went after moose, caribou, and deer; but not too many deer. The populations were higher than they are now and you could spot an animal every day. These days you see nothing because there are more hunters than animals.

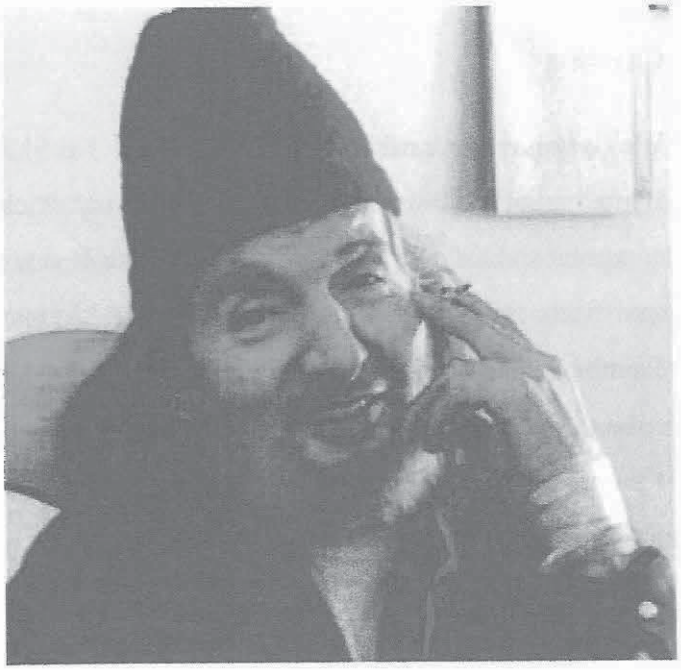
I fished for a very long time and had a licence to catch trout, whitefish, suckers, jackfish and pickerel. We used various methods to catch different types of fish and the stocks were very good before the commercial fishery opened for five years between 1933 and 1937. The second time they opened the industry in 1954, the fish were completely cleaned out of Lac La Biche. They used six nets per person and placed them all over the lake.

Burial Sites

People lived at House River and used to move around the area between House River and Algar Lake. People from Saddle Lake settled in the area. There's three little lakes in that area. One of them was where some horses fell through the ice. There'd likely be graves in that area. There are also some graves at Willow Creek, from when they put the railway through. There's maybe a couple of Indians there, from when the flu went through.

4.29 Roland Woodward

Albert Lake, Twasino Lake and House River are the areas where people lived at one time. Generally, people settled near lakes and moved around due to economic reasons. In those days it was not possible to settle in one place, even if you wanted to. We finally settled at House River, and all supplies were shipped down the Athabasca on flat boats to the area.



When the railroad to Fort McMurray was built in 1915 or 1916, everyone moved closer to town, and it killed House River and Athabasca.

History of the Region

Archaeological studies were conducted [near a lot of the lakes] and they found traces of old settlements. It makes sense, because we were not just hunters and gatherers, we were fisher people too. Some of the settlements date back thousands of years. I remember we were in the oil sands lease and they called me down to a cutline near Cree Burn Lake and asked if I could see signs of prior use in the area. I said there are rock chips, or 'flakes', which is the scientific term, around the rocks. I was then asked how this could occur. I said it would require heat, cold or force. An animal can bang a rock and break it, but only man arranges rocks in a circle. They flagged off that area and one other spot. These areas were not allowed to be cleared. The following summer, around 1979, the government tested the area by digging holes, and they found a whole settlement that dates 10,000 to 14,000 years old. The site was in this whole area around Fort MacKay and it would have been a settlement.

Caribou

We only have one caribou herd in the area. I'd like to see the area they use for calving grounds enlarged another 100,000 acres and kick everyone out of there. The oil companies should stay out of the area. A few years ago, the authorities chased caribou away from the roads and cutlines with helicopters and skidoos, in the months of December and January. That is their feeding and calving grounds. Pregnant caribou are chased all over the bush, and these guys are supposed to be protecting our wildlife. They are supposed to be managing it. No wonder we are having kill and birth rates that are astronomical.

Trapping and Hunting

In the 1940's, the government defined traplines with square blocks; and you were only allowed to trap in that one area. We were only able to trap 1/3 of the trap line because the rest of the area was un-trappable. Our trapline was right in Anzac. When I was a kid, there were two times of the year when trappers made their mark; in the spring and fall. We would sell furs at Christmas time following the fall hunt. One fall, a fur buyer came down, and I sold more fur than any other trapper. And I was just a kid! That shows you what kind of kid I was.

My different hunting areas depended on what I wanted to hunt. One year, I hunted north of Prince George, up near Pink Mountain. Because I am sort of handicapped I generally stick with the roads. Most of my hunting for the past 30 years has been south, along Highway 63. However, I have hunted all along Clearwater River, Christina River, and Gordon Lake. Generally, I follow the lakes and highways.

We generally do not hunt caribou. We would kill a caribou if it was right in front of you, or if we were hungry; but generally we leave them alone. We mainly hunted moose, because it has a stronger meat that gives you more energy. You need to know what meats give you more energy. If you want a lot of energy, you eat beaver, which has a high fat content and provides the most energy. Moose has some fat content, but it is leaner. This is one of the reasons why they used it to make pemmican. They would dry the meat and mix it with berries and fat, because fat is what gives you energy. Pemmican would be bundled to last a long time. Some hundred-year old pemmican was dug up in Saskatchewan, and it was still edible. One moose would provide about 45 pounds of pounded meat, and 50 pounds of pemmican. Basically, there is a 4:1 ratio in what you get from the animal; from wet meat to processed meat. We still do this. My dad travelled in this big circle. They travelled to House River and back every year, and they were drying meat all the time. They would fill four or five big saddlebags, and when they had enough, it was a means of trade. Everything was a means of trade.

Berries

Traditional berry picking areas have gone by the wayside. To keep a healthy berry patch, we would allow a certain type of bark campfire to get away, and then put it out. Every year you would have part of the area burned off to keep high growth down and allow the berries to get sunlight. We would return every year to pick berries in the same area. With the new regulations, we have to wait for a burn to occur. We would pick berries in that location for a few years, and then move on to a different site. We now pull over and pick berries beside the road.

Medicinal Plants

There are basically four medicines you need, and you can find these almost anywhere. However, there are some areas that are more meaningful for picking medicines than others. It seems that every time I point them out, someone destroys them. I pointed out where I pick sweetgrass, and they put a waterline right through it. It ripped up every bit of sweetgrass in the area. I also told other people about a calving ground where I had seen a cow and calf. The next day I went by, and all I could see were ravens. They had shot the pair.

You have to know the different names of medications, because different people call it by different names. Rat root is found around most of the land lakes, but not in muskeg lakes. Willow Lake, near the reserve, is the best place for rat root.

The problem with describing plants is that you should also describe how much to give each person. I could pick a plant from the bush to cure someone, and it could kill them quickly. Although I might provide good stuff to cure them, it can react with medication they may be taking. Some of that stuff is powerful.

Also, two people can go pick the same plant and get different results. One person will make a poor tea, and the other will cure people with it. I have seen it happen. You are given the plant in many forms, and you learn various bits of information from a lot of

different people. You become like a pharmacist, because you have to know what you are giving people.

My dad was treating a woman who had a sun-burn. He put stuff on her arms and all of a sudden her face and everything started to puff out. You could tell right away she was allergic. You have to be careful, because more people are more allergic these days then ever before. You can see little babies running around with cortisone sniffers. You can find most of your medicinal plants around here. There are some good books on medicinal plants too; but books do not state how to prepare plants, or how to spot them in the wild. When you know a plant, you can spot it because it sticks out amongst all the other plants.

Willow bark is a good source of aspirin, but a stronger source is obtained from beaver castorium. The Hudson's Bay Company was interested in castorium, not only to make the best perfumes in the world, but also because it is a very high source of aspirin.

The dandelion is comprised of many different parts that include the root, the stem and the top. Different parts of the plant are used at different times. Some parts are used to make wine. Some parts are used to cure different things, and some of it can be eaten in a salad.

It is important to know the time of year to tap sap from birch. The sap is used as a spring tonic. It cleans you out by cleaning your blood, and it strengthens you. You drink it three or four times, but you cannot keep it year round. Different parts of the plant are used at different times of the year, and it depends on where the life is in the plant. Sometimes buds of the tree are used, and at other times you use roots. In the summer, all the life is in the top, and in the winter, all the life goes back to the waterline. That is why you start picking roots in the fall and spring. You cannot pick plants whenever you want. Plants are picked when they are ready. Another example is rabbit root, because at different times of the year, it is stronger. The spring is noted for ear aches, colds and sore throats, and most plants are used with ailments that come at that time of year. We did not

test or experiment to discover this information. It is what we have known for thousands of years – the different ailments that occur at different times of the year. We just know.

Water and Floods

In the 1970's, water tests were conducted to build the cabins they called Gregoire Lake Estates. We stated that the sewage would create problems for the lake, and to remedy the problem, they built a lagoon near Johnny Mountain Creek. They call it Morris' Creek now. It started to flood into the creek, so they moved it across the road. They put it near the creek that comes out by Albert's. When it overflows, it goes there too. There was a similar problem in McMurray. Every spring when Beacon Hill flooded, the lagoon overflowed, went into Hangingstone Creek, and straight down to half the town. It's not there anymore.

Ceremonial and Burial Sites

There are a lot of grave sites. Along the railroad, there are a number of graveyards. In 1918, a big flu took over this park area, which killed 30 to 40% of the population. At that time, people in the area were Aboriginals. My grandparents died of the flu over on the Cheecham side. In some cases, houses were burnt down with people left inside. They did not try to bury them. In a few places there are trees that mark the boundaries.

There is a gravesite here by Gregoire Lake, with a number of burials in one spot. Further down, there is another grave and there is also a graveyard on the prairie. There is another one by Indian Beach where the creek comes in.

Changes: Past, Present, and Future

The Wood Buffalo region has put barricades on all our turn-offs. We can no longer get in to these areas to pick berries. You cannot do what you want. For example, you cannot make a fire by the creek and cook a fish.

There is also a difference in the types of weapons we can use. There are regulation differences between the use of a rifle, or a shotgun. I like to use an old 100. However, I am not allowed to shoot a rifle within a half-mile of an occupied dwelling. How do you know it is occupied? It could be some pumping station way out in the bush.

Some of the creeks have stopped running and our weather has changed. I remember we had Chinooks when I was a kid, and I have not seen one again. Since the Bennett Dam was built, the winds blow from a different direction. It has also affected the delta way of life. The people used to experience a flood every year, and that is how they survived. In the 1960's there was a muskrat flu that was the result of the raised water levels near the Bennett Dam. It killed all the muskrats in the Athabasca Delta, but it did not affect the water levels here. Our best muskrat hunting places were at Swan Lake, Gordon Lake.

I'd like to see the oil industry shut down until they take a good look, and say: this is what happened, this is the way to fix it, and this is what we are going to do about it. We need to shut this down, take a good look at what has happened, and discuss ways to fix the problems. I would like to take a big chunk of land that goes from Grand Rapids to Gipsy and Gordon Lakes and turn it into a park. There are no tar sands underneath it, so it is worthless to the oil companies. I want the land back, but I also want the caribou herd protected better than the way it is protected now. At one time, caribou crossed here all the time, but now they have different travel routes.

At one time, people moved in and took away all the local jobs. People then had to rely on welfare, and became dependent. It changed their way of life. They no longer had the life of a free trapper that could walk into the Hudson's Bay Company, throw down their fur, get a price and walk out proud. Instead, they either had to go to the welfare agent, Indian agent, or move somewhere else.

5. CLOSURE

We trust the above meets your present requirements. If you have any questions or require additional details, please contact the undersigned.

GOLDER ASSOCIATES LTD.

Report prepared by:

<Original signed by>

Mitchell Goodjohn
Traditional Studies Specialist

Report reviewed by:

<Original signed by>

Susan Ross
Associate, Development Specialist

6. REFERENCES

Alberta Government. 2007. Oil sands discovery centre fact sheet: The basics of bitumen. Retrieved November 2, 2007 from http://www.oilsandsdiscovery.com/oil_sands_story/pdfs/projects.pdf

Berry, S. and Brink, J. 2004. Aboriginal Cultures in Alberta: Five Hundred Generations. Edmonton: The Provincial Museum of Alberta.

Chalmers, J.W. 1974. The Land of Peter Pond. Boreal Institute for Northern Studies. University of Alberta, Edmonton.

Clarke, G.M. and B. Ronaghan. 2004. Historical Resources Impact Assessment and Mitigation Program: Muskeg River Mine Project. Permit Number 2000-087. On file, Archaeological Survey, Alberta Community Development. Edmonton, AB.

Coutu, Philip R., and Lorraine Hoffman-Mercredi. 1999. Inkonze: The Stones of Traditional Knowledge, a History of Northeastern Alberta. Edmonton: Thunderwoman Ethnographics.

Davis, L.B. and B.O.K. Reeves. 1990 Hunters of the Recent Past. London: Unwin Hyman.

Dempsey, Hugh A. 1997. Indian Tribes of Alberta. Calgary: Glenbow Museum.

Downing, D.J., and W.W. Pettapiece. 2006. Natural Regions and Subregions of Alberta.

Energy and Utilities Board. 2005. Earth Sciences Report 2000-05. Historical Overview of the Fort McMurray Area and the Oil Sands Industry in Northeast Alberta. Retrieved October 29, 2007 from http://www.ags.gov.ab.ca/publications/ESR/PDF/ESR_2000_05.pdf.

Fumoleau, R. 2004. As Long as This Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939. Calgary: University of Calgary Press.

The Heritage Community Foundation. 2005. Cree Burn Lake. Retrieved March 7, 2008 from www.abheritage.ca/Eldersvoices/index.html.

History of Fort McMurray. 2007. Retrieved October 29, 2007 from http://collections.ic.gc.ca/fortmc/home.htm#return.

Hudson's Bay Company Archives. 2007. Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism. Retrieved October 29, 2007 from http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/index.html.

Ives, J.W. 1993. The Ten Thousand Years Before the Fur Trade in Northeastern Alberta. In, P.A. McCormack and R. Geoffrey (Eds.) 1993.

Library and Archives Canada. 2007. Peter Pond's Search for Fortune. In, Pathfinders and Passageways: The Exploration of Canada. Retrieved November 3, 2007 from http://www.collectionscanada.ca/2/24/h24-1620-e.html.

Marles, Robin J., Christina Clavelle, Leslie Monteleone, Natalie Tays, and Donna Burns. 2000. Aboriginal Plant Use in Canada's Northwest Boreal Forest. Co-published by Natural Resources Canada and Canadian Forest Service. Vancouver: UBC Press.

McCormack, P.A and R. Geoffrey (Eds.). 1993. The Uncovered Past: Roots of Northern Alberta Societies. Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute, University of Alberta.

MacGregor. J.G. 1981. A History of Alberta. Revised Edition. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers.

McMillan, Alan D. 1995. Native Peoples and Cultures of Canada. 2nd Edition. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre.

NRC (Natural Regions Committee). 2006. Natural Regions and Subregions of Alberta. Compiled by D.J. Downing and W.W. Pettapiece. Government of Alberta. Publication No. T/852.

Palmer, H. 1990. Alberta: A New History. Hurtig Publishers. Edmonton, Alberta.

Petitot, Emile. 1976. The Book of Dene. Government Publications; in Coutu, Philip R. and Lorraine Hoffman-Mercredi, 1999.

Reeves, B.O.K. 1990. Communal Bison Hunters of the Northern Plains. In, Davis, L.B. and B. Reeves. Hunters of the Recent Past. Edited by L.B. Davis and B. Reeves, pp.168-195. London.

Russell, D. 1991. Eighteenth-century Western Cree and Their Neighbours. Archeological Survey of Canada Mercury Series Paper 143. Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization.

Spalding, David A.E. (ed). 1980. A Nature Guide to Alberta. Provincial Museum of Alberta Publication No. 5. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers and Alberta Culture.

Turney, M. 2007. Historical Resources Impact Assessment for Canadian Natural Resources Limited Kirby In-Situ Oil Sands Project. Permit Number 2007-112. On file, Archaeological Survey, Alberta Community Development. Edmonton, AB.

Wetherell, D.G., B. Schwartz, I. Kmet, and R.A. Kmet. 2000. Alberta's North: A History, 1890-1950. Northern Alberta Research Series. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press.

Wood Buffalo National Park. 2007. Wood Buffalo National Park, Canada: Background Information. Case Study Number 4. Retrieved October 29, 2007 from http://www.iucn.org/bookstore/HTML-books/BP4%20-%20Indigenous_and_Traditional_Peoples_and_Protected_%20Areas/casestudy4.html.