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Hello, hello. This is Louis Bird from Peawanuck, Ontario. The date is June twenty-first, nineteen ninety-nine. Yesterday was the Father's Day, and today is the beginning of the summer, supposedly officially begin. The summer. Today I am going to talk about, I am calling this tape recording as "Recent Oral History of Omushkegowak in the James Bay Lowland". That will be the title for the both of these. Because it's just the stories that told us, what happened after the European came. But which in many cases we don't know the date. We, the people of the James Bay. Because we did not write our language.

Now the story I have to tell is about the man, a man called, in our language, Opaakitahwe. All it means is "a man who come to fish". That's what it means. Somewhere around in eighteen-hundred, it may be. We don't know this, but I am just guessing. Because the first, the first person that came long time ago to do fishing in the Winisk, at the mouth of the Winisk River, was called Opaakitahwe, fisherman. And he was doing this job for the Hudson Bay Company.

Therefore, each year in September he would arrive in Winisk, at the mouth of the Winisk River. There was nothing there yet. There was no buildings whatsoever. Simply he just lives out there, in the sheltered area. And he stay there from September sometimes right up to the October, somewhere around in the middle. Maybe perhaps fifteen to twenty. Just before the bay begin to form the slush again, before it freezes.

The reason why he come in September is because he come, he come to shoot the geese, the snow geese and also other waterfowl. What he did, he would come in with the York boat, with all his equipment and all his provision, and all the extra things that he would require. He would come in with the nets, and he would come in with the, with the gun powder, primers, shots and with his provision, like food items. Processed food,

flour, sugar, oats, and all that stuff. And nobody knows where was he from, where did he come from. Was it from Fort Severn or was it from York Factory?

So his job is to ask the local people to shoot the geese for him. What he did was, there was a measuring cup for the gun powder. I don't know exactly how much, how many ounces it is. It is not pound. I think it was an ounce of black powder. And that's what he gave to the men, and then a certain, a certain number of primers. Which, that time, already had the gun that has shells, you know that you can roll it from the shells. Something like a single barrel or double barrel. There was no automatic shotgun yet. There was no punt gun. Only the double barrel and the single shot. So in those you can, you could break it into -what do they call that? Cocking? So you could do that yes.

So that was the time. Somewhere around there, after they have a bit of modern gun. So the fisherman has these. And in September when the geese come, he ask the Native people to shoot geese, with one pound, rounds of gun powder and few primers and a shots. Just the, just the approximate ratio of everything. So he asks only five geese for this amount of shooting supply. So what the Native people would do is that there were plenty of geese that time, so then each person -maybe sometimes there were five people around, men- so they did the shooting for him.

Because the rest of the people would have been gone up the river for their wintering ground. And those who left, usually in that days, in that period, there were some who stayed around on a coastal region, because of the fox trapping. So these were the people who hang around at the mouth of the Winisk River in those days. So they shot, they would shoot the geese and then give five to this Opaakitahwe, I mean the fisher man. And then, whatever the, whatever the excess they kill, it's theirs.

So what they used to do is they, they have a system, they had away to do it. A person, each person sits his own chosen area, and he has such a ways to set the decoys the way they set up their goose line. They were able to shoot at least five geese at one shot. It has been said in those days -when I listen to my grandmother used to tell us that- there was such a man who was able to shot eleven geese in one, in one shot. And that was great, no other person can do that. So by doing that, if you shoot eleven geese with one shot, that means you can have, you can give five to the Opaakitahwe, the fisherman, and you can take six to yourself. So if you are that good, you are really having a bargain.

So those people who want to stay close by the coastal area, usually come to Winisk to shoot geese, and then they would preserve it as much as they can, and then when it started to get cold they would hang it in the scaffold. Two-legged scaffold. Put one, two logs maybe twenty feet apart, or fourteen, fifteen feet apart... and then put the cross piece across, maybe ten feet high, and that's what they hang their geese. And they stay there, they freeze. By the end, by the middle of October. They don't go bad. Not much. So they would have those for the winter supply, the food, for them. Those who want to do the fox trapping on the coastal area.

So it was that time in period, thereabouts, that this was happening. But nobody knows exactly how long did it happen. And the person who was called Opaakitahwe, he came almost every fall. Depends on what happens. In then when he finish gathering the food, sometimes in a certain weather, in the month of October... (phone rings) So I was disrupted by the phone call but I'm sorry. So where was I? Okay this man, the people who did that, they preserved the geese by freezing it. And the man who came that they call fisherman, after the last hunting has been over, after they shot all geese and then he goes out and fishing with the sea net.

Sea netting is something else. It's a one, it's a net about one-hundred and fifty feet to two hundred feet long. It has a, a pouch in the middle, more like bag. It's just wider in the back. And it tapers into the end, and then the weights at both ends. And then, what they do with this net is that, you put one person on the shore, and then three men will go out into the canoe and drop the net maybe one hundred feet off the shore. Drop it across until the end and then come back with the line into the, into the shore, and begin to pull it into the shores. As you pull the net into the shore, you scoop all those whitefish.

These whitefish I'm talking about they are, I think they are called in English - what are they called? I have seen them in the television, the Newfoundlanders caught them sometimes. They don't, they don't like them. Sometimes they just throw them in the shore, they have not much use to them. Herring I think, Herrings? I think that's what they're called. But we call them white fish. There are about three different kinds. There are small ones, and there are middle-size and there are large ones.

And besides that in the river there are there are also local fish. You know the river fish, like northern pike, suckers, and brook trout, and -what do you call the other ones? The other ones, the slimy fish, they are, they look like a cat fish. And those fish you know, they also come with a whole bundle of fish. And people would just drag the net in and scoop all these fish into the shore, and bring it in as much as they can, and then again they have a net to scoop them from that main net into their boat. Or sometimes they just drag them into the gunnysacks. These are the bags that usually hold flour, flour bags. And then they carry them over to the river bank, and pile them there.

Sometimes they make a box-like thing. You know just like a logs interlocking corners. It's just like a box, in the ground. And they pile those fish in there, right up to the, right to the top. Maybe three feet high, sometimes four feet high. And then they put another layers of logs on top, to keep them from eaten by fox or by red bear. So this is what they do.

And this fish is for the supply of dog food and also for the people who trade. They come over here in the fall, and then they would trade the fish from their own kinds of food. With their own people. Amongst the people themself. After this guy, the fisherman, after he finish getting all these pile of fish. And beside making a smoke fish and making powdered fish for pemmican, and then making many other different ways of cutting fish to preserve it. And then those smoked fish and the other kinds, and the powdered fish, he stored them into the basket, or any kind of container. In the last days of the, the last nice days in October, which we usually call Indian Days.

At those times we used to have very nice warm weather, and usually the south wind will be in constant for three days. And out there in the bay, even though the waves never stop from the north direction, it's smooth, and the York boat can sail overtop of those huge northern waves. But the south wind will just carry them in the coastal area.

So that's the time when they load all those geese, smoked geese, and the smoked fish and the powered fish, and also any other sort of preservated food... Oh yeah, he salted the geese. That's what he did. He salted them and put them in the keg, the wooden keg and then they... You know the wooden keg, they had those straps around them? Salt, salted pork, where they used to put salted pork? That kind of a wooden keg. That's

where they put all those geese, and then put salt on them, and then seal it. I don't think they put any water in it. So they just ship these things into the wherever it is they take.

At times it sounds as if they were shipping it to Fort Severn, or sometimes they say that they were taking it to the York Factory. And all these preserved food and all that stuff, it's stored in the warehouse. And the next summer, when the people start to work at the York Factory or maybe Fort Severn in those days, they would be fed by those preserved food, that has been done in the fall. For the workers.

So to make a story short, this was the man who came, in this period. The question is, when did he begin? When did he begin to do this? From where? And what was his name? All we know is he was called fisherman. Means the man who come to fish. Especially gill-net. Opaakitahwe mean, "fisherman with the gill-net". Opaakitahwe, "gill-netter". (laugh) It's the right, the right way to translate.

So anyway, and he was here many years, and he came to be very old, according to my grandmother's story. My grandmother told me this story, Maggie Pennishish. Maggie Bird. John Pennishish's wife. John Bird, he's my grandfather. His wife used to tell us that when I was younger. So they call him Opakitahwe, this guy. And he speaks in English, and he speaks also the Omeshkego language, very fluently. And he lives just like any other Omeshkego who is expert in living in the land. But he had, he didn't, he never brought his wife, he always come alone.

But eventually he had a servant, a woman servant. But we don't know the name of this lady. So she works for him, in Winisk, every time when he comes. And eventually they became partners. Not necessarily marriage, but I guess today you would call that shacking up. But it was not considered anything bad at all. People knew it well, they just, in those days there was no church or anything for one to go put on the lace and go get married, and all this extrordinary ceremonial act that is done today. No, there was no such thing. In those days people get married, there was no big deal. People just take each other and follow each other into, into the place, into their makeshift home. And they expand. And arranged marriages were popular. But this man did not, he was already an elder, I mean already adult, and became very old by doing this job.

And then when he had this man, he had this woman, they began to work as partners, and then he adopted the kid, apparently. And the kid that he adopted turned out

to be -was called- Pennishish, a bird. But according to my grandmother's story, why did this person was called Pennishish? So it was said that when he was a little boy, he used to tell his dream to his adopted father. And then I guess in his dream he has said, "I dream that I was a bird, and flew and everything." And all this fascinating thing. From that time on he was called Pennishish. Means the little bird, not the big bird. Just the little song-bird type of bird. So that's where the name first was heard. This guy was called Pennishish.

After that, this adopted boy always came with this old man. But nobody, the story doesn't, it's not very clear whether it was the same woman that he always bring, or whether the other woman was. Somehow, the old man was getting too old, and he was turn blind. He was brought in just the same by boat, and then left over here to do the job. Even though he was blind already. But he has this man that he adopted that was already a man.

And then one day he was getting so frail and so old, that he was just shrinking more-like. The way it used to be long time ago when somebody lives too long. So, one summer he was getting so sick. One fall when he came he just couldn't walk. He couldn't get up and he was blind. And when it's time to quite working, he didn't work anymore, he just sit and instructed the guy, -his, his adopted son or whatever it is he calls him- to do all the work he did. And the teaches him also to speak in English. So this guy begin to be helper for this Opaakitahwe, the fisherman.

And in that fall, when he wants to go home when he could not walk, and blind, the young man became a strong and powerful man. And then he just made a certain kind of a seat in his back so he could carry him. So what he did, was he made the chair by instruction from his adopted father. And then he made him sit there, back-to-back more-like. And he could carry him. Because the old man was only about, less that a hundred pounds by that time, and it was nothing for this young man to carry him at all. So he carry him from Winisk mouth river, the mouth of the Winisk river, carry him to Fort Severn. And that's where he was going by that time. He was retiring at Fort Severn.

So according to the young man's story, he says, "every time when I carry," -I don't know how many times he carry him there, at least once at the end when he retired, when he blind, when he couldn't walk. So he says, "As I walked that shore, because the

old man, who was blind now, has walked that shore between Winisk river and Fort Severn, and he know every little creek, every little muskeg area, every ridge." Any kind of ridge that he used to walk, as if he seen it, that's the way he directed the young man to go where it's easy walking.

So this guy –supposedly who was called Pennishish-, he told the story himself. He says, "The old man, as if he's looking ahead where I'm walking, he says 'Now, now turn to the left, and then follow that ridge over there and right up to the end, and then walk. There's a there's a little creek there and you can walk a little bit to your right, so you will not have to soak your knees.'" So this was the way he instructed him as he carried him the old man from the back. So according to this young man's story, he says he is fascinated by the old man, how vividly he sees in his mind the land he has traveled so many years.

But by this time we don't know what happened to the woman he was staying with. But the woman was more like his wife. Whether she was traveling beside him as he was carried to the Fork Severn, we don't know. So this story, to make the story short, when he was brought in, into the Fort Severn, on a, on the east side, as usual the signal was that you fire a shot three times. And then when the, when the people across the river hear your signal, they come to, to get you across. You wait on the shore. So that's what this young guy did. Just put the old man by the shore and sit there, and make the tea or whatever they have, and then eventually people will appear with their canoe.

And usually it is by this time, the Hudson Bay manager would know that that's his servant who come back. And according to this man who carried the old guy, he said, "The old man would speak to me as we walk. Always entertain me in my language, in the Omushkego language. Perfectly. And then when we reach the Fort Severn when the manager or the Hudson Bay manager came in, as soon as he is "Hello, hello" and all that. And the old man just switch into English. Perfect English. And there he was taken across." And the person who carried him over there, he says, "You know, that's it." He just saw the old man carried across, and him, he was left behind. And walked back to Winisk.

So the story, that's as far as the story went, about this part of the story. We, I am not sure myself and my grandmother did not understand, whether it was the same guy

who came in to take his place, this old guy. It sound as if it was. And there the story ends, we don't know exactly how it ends. It was, some of the, some of the time the story picks up, and we have this person again who was called the Opaakitahwe. But this time it was Pennishish. That's where the Pennishish again name emerge.

And that is the first Pennishish that was known, who had a son by the name of Joseph. And Joseph have son by the name of John, and that was my grandfather. John Pennishish. And apparently nobody has a record when he was born. And those people, they didn't have no record. There was a record by the, by the Catholic priest, but somehow they have lost it. Whatever the reason, because the priest didn't stay here in those days, he just come and visit in summer. So my grandfather's record, birth, birth certificate was not quite well-known.

But it was later years that we, somebody calculated he must have been born eighteen-seventy-five, or seventy, eighteen-seventy. If we backtrack the time. So that was John Pennishish. Think about backwards. What about his father, Joseph Pennishish? He was Christian-named. And then Joseph got his last name from his father, Pennishish. How far back can we go? So there is a gap there. This Pennishish that begot Joseph Pennishish, is it the same Bird that was mentioned there in, who carried the old man back to Fort Severn? That is the mystery.

So, it, the work is there. It might be recorded in the Hudson Bay archives or provincial archives, whatever. A name of Opaakitahwe, the fisherman which our Omeshkego only call him. He may have name. He might have, he might have a name in that time, and where was he operating from? Was he operating from Fort Severn? And then was he operating from York Factory? That is... my grandmother didn't understand that. And so my grandfather didn't tell those kind of stories. But my grandmother used to tell us story about that, but there was never any date. But it sounds fascinating. So that's about Opaakitahwe, the fisherman. That's the end of the story about him.

And now we are going talk abut something else. We have got about a few more minutes of this side of the tape. Okay, here we go. The next, the next story. It may involve a little bit about, about the archival investigation. For the same reason: when and what year, 'cause I don't have that. The story was told to me by my mother. She was told this story from her grandmother. Her grandmother... hold on. My mother's name

was... Scholastic Okimaaw, Okimaawininiiw, before she was married. And her mother was Christian Okimaawininiiw. And her grandmother was... I don't know her first, I don't know her last name, but her name was Sophia. What I mean to say is her maiden name, before she was married.

Sophia married twice. Her first husband, I don't know his last name. But her second husband... No. The first husband is which I don't know. What was her maiden name is what I don't know. But her second husband was John Anishinaabe. That's all I know. I have forgotten who was her father, and who was, where did she come from. Now we will begin talking about her.

She lives in the Area of James Bay and Hudson Bay. There was no, no village or anything for them. The only thing that existed in her time was a settlement of the white men. In Fort Severn, in York Factory, in Kashechewan, in Moose factory. In her time there was no Winisk settlement, there was no Attawapiskat settlement. But there were people there. People who live in those major rivers like Winisk river, and also the Attawapiskat river. It was that time -as much as I understand myself- Winisk River, at the mouth of the Winisk River, in the days of this fisherman that we were talking about. What year was it? We don't know.

From that time on, the Winisk river has been off and on, off and on settlement for the European. And then finally, somewhere around nineteen-twenty, the Hudson Bay company actually built some kind of a structure, which belongs to the Hudson Bay company. Whether if that was a shack, or log shack whatever is, or a store, that I don't know myself. But I must ask someone.

[Break in Tape]

Now, I did ask a living elder in Peawanuck. His name is Toby Hunter. Toby was born in nineteen twelve, apparently. So he would be, he would be eighty-seven years old. So he doesn't remember when exactly did, Hudson Bay store was built first time. But according to his father, his father said it was around nineteen-hundred, thereabouts. I know, he knows about the date when the first missionary was built. And that was in nineteen-hundred. The first structure that was built by missionaries in Winisk was nineteen-hundred. Which was a little, a small church, and the living... the parish, they

call it. It's behind the same, the same structure. Just behind it, that's where the priest used to stay when he comes.

Whatever the year after that, the Hudson Bay company also built a small structure. According to Toby Hunter, it was only just a log, a square log. Log house, which was used as a store. Before that -a long time before that- there was no house or anything. It's just one of those, one of those things they call... cache. C-A-C-H-E. Cache. Where they put gun powder, primers, shots, and well-insulated matches, match box, and maybe a few items, we don't know for sure what, what it was. So there was a box which was built in, on the stilt, you call them, like a leg, legs, to prevent from mice whatever goes in, up to the building into this structure, into this box. So that's the only thing that existed from the beginning.

As I was saying before, Opaakihtawe, a person by the name of Opaakitahwe, for a fisherman, did exist one time. And there was nothing, he just lives in the tent and tipi just like the rest of the people. And he was the half-breed, and worked for Hudson Bay company. Somehow, in time period he disappeared, according to the stories that are very conflicting. As I was told by my grandmother, she says, "it was the same name Opaakitahwe, who adopted the child and became the bird, or Pennishish. And then it's expanded after that.

But the first one, the first fisherman, it was not the same guy that existed in somewhere around seventeen... no eighteen-seventy. It was a different one. Not the same one. There was one who existed before that, before eighteen-seventy. Whatever happened in between? That is... no one seems to know. So apparently, the Hudson Bay store was built around nineteen-hundred there-after, not before, the first store. So that's where the Opaakitahwe was existed, before the Hudson Bay structure was built, in period in time, whenever that was. Then it ceased. Then again it emerges again, Opaakitahwe. Another person. Not the same, not the same guy. And from that time on, that's when he became old and carried back... whether that one, whether that was the one or whether it could have been the other one. So there's no... there's a conflict in story about that.

Anyway, this happened somewhere around there. We might say seventeen-hundred. And then again it existed again, Opaakitahwe in eighteen-hundred. So, that's the story about Opaakitahwe. So that's as far as I am going to talk about this. The rest of

it, from nineteen-thirty, nineteen-twenty, I think from nineteen-twenty there is a records that shows that there was a, some kind of a structure after that. Officially recorded.

So that's as far as I'm going for that, and that's the end of the Opaakitahwe story. Somehow, Opaakitahwe is just a name, a person who did the job. And we don't know his real name. And it existed in somewhere around at the beginning of the fur trade, and then it vanished for a little while, there's a gap there, there's no date. And then again it existed again in eighteen-seventy, thereabouts. Or before that. And, it comes to emerge where we find Pennishish name, the Bird name. And finally, from that time on that's where this Joseph Pennishish came. And then Joseph Pennishish has a son, which is John Pennishish, who is my grandfather. So these Pennishish families have lived in that, the mouth of the Winisk River ever since that time. So, it's not important. It's just the person of Opaakitahwe would seem to have existed twice, at the beginning, seventeen hundred thereabouts and again in eighteen hundred. What happened in between? So that's the end of the story. I will now stop for a while for lunch

[Break in Tape]

Hello, hello, we begin again. Now it is ten minutes after one, June 21, 1999. Today is supposed to be Indian Day or Aboriginal Day, whatever that means. Now I want to talk about the person by the name Grand Sophia (laugh). In our language he is called Ketchi Swaapi. Ketchi Swaapi. It mean Grand Sophia. I'm talking about this, about this person because she is an extraordinary woman, in our language, in our history, our oral history. It all happened, it actually happened, it's an actual story. But the thing, the thing is, again, we don't have no, no date, no year when, same as usual.

All the stories that I have heard which has been told to me by my mother and my grandmother, all these has been straight stories without worrying about what year was it. What date, what season, what month. So that is the problem. And now we will begin talking about an old lady, a lady who have lived... she died around nineteen-twenty-four, thereabouts. And she may have been born somewhere around eighteen-sixty? About that time. It's just my guess. But the story that's involved will be involve again with the white people, and mostly it involved the story about extraordinary women. We, we may not involve the Hudson Bay activities, but it is that time.

It's very strange story. But to, to make it a little bit short, there's two things here that's got to be important. Two things. One thing, that will involve about the woman, her life story, her experience. It would involve the impact of Christianity, and it would also involve the courage of a person who wants to survive. So this, this extraordinary woman, her name was Sophia. But I don't know her father's name, her mother's side of the ancestors. I don't quite get it. It may be somewhere there, but as we tell the story it might reveal a little bit where.

But as much I know about quick introduction of Grand Sophia, that she married a man from Big Trout Lake Ontario area, thereabouts. He was Oji-Cree person. He was not the Omushkego. And he was a very good hunter. He was a very expert caribou hunter, always have plenty. And that term is just like saying the 'rich man.' Because once you begin, once you have the status of a great hunter in the big game hunting, you are a rich man. Because you can get the clothes, the coverage for the tipi, and also all the things that you need to make your tools – snowshoes and strings and everything. And you can clothe your children. And also if you can kill the big game animal, you can have sufficient food for time being, if you are by yourself with you wife or only a few family members. But if you have, if you live amongst the relatives your father, your brothers and sisters and this, the big game doesn't last very long, if they all have to be fed. But usually this type of person is always considered very dependable person.

So his, her first husband, Sophia had married such a man. But the unfortunate thing is that he came from that area within-land. And her husband, Sophia, we shall speak about her. And all the happening that will be around her. So what happened in that she married such a man, and she was blessed by his skills and good hunting. And also, to be a good caribou hunter one must travel all the time. You don't have section to hunt. You move where you expect to find the animals that you hunted, that you are good in hunting. And that's what happened to this man, I don't know yet his name. I may not know it in this story. But we concentrate on Sophia.

So by that time it could have been somewhere around eighteen-hundred and sixty, thereabouts. She may have been born that day. But going back to the history, some information that we have in the white man's society, the Christianity only spread in eighteen-eighty, eight-four, thereabouts, to some. But according to other stories, that are

information that I have received, it says that in eighteen-twenty-four it begin. And eighteen thirty –two it begin to spread and to convert the, the Omushkego people. Sorry my tape is running out, running off on me so I will have turn this tape and continue of the other side.

[Break in Tape]

Hello, hello, this is Louis Bird. And today is the same day. It's Monday June 21, 1999, and in Peawanuck Ontario. We ended up on the other side by saying that Grand Sophia was the main subject. So she married the great hunter. And a great hunter, caribou hunter has to move and find the caribou herds anywhere at all, if he want retain his, his hunting style. So this happens. I don't know exactly where Grand Sophia married to this man, but it sounded like somewhere between Fort Severn and York Factory. It seems like they have moved back and forth between Fort Severn and Attawapiskat region and district, and also inland.

So one day, there was a poor years. Very poor, and it was very... caribous were not around. Moose was very poor. So they, Mr. Hunter, Mr. Caribou-hunter was forced to move and to seek the caribou herd in the region, in the district. So he move from one place to another place during that years. And he had, already has three kids. No... Yes, three kids I think. One small baby at this time. Three altogether. And then they move between, between Fort Severn and Winisk area looking for a caribou herd, but they couldn't find it. It was this in the fall, more like before December that they followed the migrating caribous that were moving towards west, more to the south-west from between Fort Severn and Winisk area.

So Mr. Caribou-hunter followed these old tracks, old trails that he followed, hoping that would finally found the wintering caribous. But it didn't happen. He moved further inland, way inland where the Oji-Cree people have their territory. And he move into this area. But it didn't bother him because he speaks the language and he knows the area a little bit. So he moved on towards west, more west, until he hit the point where clans were living. They were clans. They call them Rabbit-Skin-Coat Clans or Rabbit, a Rabbit clan.

At that time they were not known, and yet appears to be called that time, because this clan, it means there was a centre in there. There was an old man. And, who has three

sons, and have about three daughters, and all grown up. His sons were married but his daughters were also married. So they had about six families in the group. So he was, the old man was the big boss. And he was, he was a total shaman. Total mitew. Kitchi-mitew, they call him, the grand mitew. So his words were law, and his territory is his, and his clans is the boss, he is the boss.

Therefore, this is what they run into, Mr. Caribou-hunter and his family and his friend. His friend's name was Kapakesot. It means in translation "he who explode" (laugh). I'm going to explain a little bit, why do they say that. This man was totally black in his face. Black. Maybe like the coloured people down, down in Africa. But it's just the condition of the skin, somehow. Or maybe something happen. So he had extraordinary black skin. So it appears like as if when the gun powder explode in your face. It just turn black. So that's why they call him "he who explode".

So anyway Kapakesot was his partner, Mr. Hunter, Caribou-hunter. So, I don't even know Mr. Caribou-hunter's name. I forgot now, but he did has a name. So in order to avoid delay, I am going to just to call him in the story Mr. Hunter, Caribou-hunter. Expert caribou hunter. Okay. So he was forced to move way inland, and finally reached to the place where this, the Rabbit, the Rabbit clan. And he speaks the language well, and so does "he who explode". He also speaks the language. So no problem there, communication was fine. And also Grand Sophia understood quite a bit too, and so is Kapakesot's wife also.

But Kapakesot does not have a children, but he has a very young wife. I mean they were, they were still just a couple. And Mr. Caribou-hunter had three children. So they could move very lightly. And the distance that I'm talking about, from the point between Winisk and Fort Severn area would be around... [Break in Tape]. Okay. It is about three hundred and twenty miles due south-west, from between Fort Severn and Winisk. So that's as far as they went inland and that's where they found these, the Rabbit clan.

I'm just calling it the Rabbit clan myself. I just assigned that name to them. But the reason I say that, is in that place there were plenty of rabbits. And these people wear only the rabbit-skin blanket. The rabbit-skin mean, the rabbit-skin blankets are made with the strip of rabbit, being wound by hand. And that, after you finish that, it makes

like a cotton line. A line of cotton, soft cotton line. And that's what usually made to make a rabbit-skin. And you could also make a jacket, a pants or leggings, and even a thin layer of inside, inside jacket.

So this is very warm. It's the best of its kind. But the thing is, it's not wind proof. The wind can go through. But when it's the wind, when there's no wind, this kind of a garment is very beautiful. And this is what these people have, because there's plenty of rabbits. And then they also have the clothing from it, and at least the clothing was enough. And they also have plenty of blankets that is very warm. So these are the people that he run into. And because he can speak, this hunter, Sophia's husband, they can, they can speak to him. They can communicate very nicely.

And then they stay for a while, until they get... The man, the caribou-hunter had followed the old trail to this area. And so the usual thing was that, you know, you must speak to person of know the area. And also get his permission that you can hunt there. That's what he was doing. So he just stayed close to the man's house and to his camp. And before long, the man was only hunting beavers and he also hunt fish and everything. And what the main economic value thing is, it's rabbit. Food and also clothes. That was great, but for a different diet, eat the fish.

So they were very well off, because those kind of clans, they usually very well off. But the big game hunter like Mr. Caribou-hunter was not very good on having one place to stay. He had to find a fish wherever he goes. So he stayed a while, you know to rest for a while with his family. And it so happened later that the old man, the clan, the chief of the clan, he had told the hunter that he knows where-about he can find the caribou. Usually there is a place there where the caribous would winter. So he told them about it, but it was too early to go. It was only the end of the September, and the snow is not yet deep enough. So he has a good reason, and he says, "Stay a while. Then I'll show you where that is." So they stayed and they stayed.

But the man, the leader of the clan of Rabbit-skin people was a shaman, and he used to have a ritual shaking tent operation. Ritualized, maybe once a week or every other, every other day. And he wanted some audience. So he asked this friend, the new friend who come in, the great caribou hunter, to come and join him at his ceremonies.

And it was not like a church, it just requires some audience, when he does that. And it was at this time that he begin to do that.

But the thing is, we forgot to centre Sophia here, and that's where the story comes. Sophia was already Christianized. You had Christianity, a Catholic church. Obtained from Kashechewan in the years past. And all his children were baptized, and her husband was not. Her husband was a shaman, not necessarily the very high degree, but enough. So when they moved with these clans, Rabbit-skin clans, his husband just blend with this Mr. Rabbit-skin man, clan. And willingly just associate himself with them.

So, they went on doing this every evening. And then she wouldn't go, because she was a Catholic. And then soon, she begin to pray, sing and everything. And then, the bible and prayer book. And then one evening, when the old man want to set up his, his shaking tent, not far from the camp, Sophia begin to pray. And sing. And the rosaries. And she sing, and then she could be heard from that shaking tent. And the shaking tent wouldn't operate. It just wouldn't go.

So the old man begin to suspect, "This is the problem". The shaking-tent operator, the clan leader, an old man. So he got mad. So he told his caribou hunter friend "Your wife should not do that when I am trying to do this." So, Mr. Hunter says, "No, I can't just force her to stop." So he says, "Let me see." So one evening, when he could not operate his tent because she was praying, he went in and to Mr. Caribou-hunter's tent. And there she was. Sophia was singing and reading, reciting the rosaries.

So Mr. Shaman walked in and grabbed the books and the rosaries, and just walk out. And then Sophia just continued and prayed, because she knows the prayers by heart. But the shaman was so mad. He threw away the bible into the fire, and the prayer book he took. And the rosaries he, he also took. I think that's what he did. Anyway. Then Grand Sophia just didn't pray in open anymore. She went and prayed by herself. And she didn't stop, it didn't stop her.

And then the shaman went back and set up the shaking tent. And it works this time, because Grand Sophia has not sing openly, has not pray openly. And so he, although he was a powerful shaman and practicing his belief and activities, so somehow there was something wrong. Maybe he hated her because of the way she did. Maybe she

was, he was insulted her because she wouldn't attend his, his ceremonies or whatever it is.

And then again one evening, they went hunting time and on and off, and then he came back again and hunt... I mean, after he hunt, the Grand Sophia's husband also went out with them. So when they, one day he came back, and he couldn't find the caribous where he thought they were. He says, "I'm going to ask my communiqué here. My shaking tent will tell me where the caribou is." So he went, set up a shaking tent. It was set up there, he just have to go in and invite people to sit around. And when he tries that, Grand Sophia was praying. And she was praying for him, because according to what he did was the devils stuff. Because that's what Grand Sophia's been told to believe: that activity is the devil's work. So she prayed for him, that he would somehow be blessed and stop doing that.

And just because she prayed for him, the mitew shaking tent didn't work again. And this time he was furiously mad. And this time he went run up to her house, to her tent, and seeing her sitting there in the position where she pray. He didn't seeing any object which she was, but he knows that she has a cross, a steel cross, in her, in her chest. A steel one. You know with the steel, with the brass steel and a bit of figure. And the string was made out of the caribou hide, and very strong.

So he just walk up to her and lift the chin up, and grab inside there, and grab the cross and pull as hard as he could. And he could hear the twang of this caribou skin, and Grand Sophia almost lost conscious because he was so powerful. Not because his mitewiwin, no. Because his arm was strong to pull that thing. But he went out. Took the cross with him, and then Grand Sophia was left without anything. So she fought. She prayed again. She prayed without even anything.

And the mitew went back to his, to his shaking tent. He still couldn't operate. So he gave up that night. He didn't, he didn't try to operate the shaking tent, and Grand Sophia had won. So everybody came home because the shaking tent couldn't work. And the man came to his wife, "Don't you see what you have done? You have made my friend mad. And he has the power to kill you. And I think he's so mad now that he will kill you." And Grand Sophia said, "According to my religion, according to Catholic religion I can lay down my life. If he kills me, he will make me a saint. It will be

assurance to obtain the life after in heaven, with the Lord Jesus". So this is what she says. She believe so much having faith, that she is, she didn't care to die.

So that day, that next day, it was very cold. You can feel the hate between those, those two people. And then there was a plan, and the old man says, "I am going to go a little ways from here, and then I will set up my shaking tent. And then we will see from there if we can find the caribous. And when we do find them, we will go hunt them. And then that will be it. Then you can go home after that."

But, what he planned to do is that... He was so mad at Grand Sophia, this shaman. He had said to Mr. Caribou-hunter, he says, "If you hunt the caribous, I will give you one of my daughter." He has three, unmarried. "I'll give you one of my daughter, and you can have your own wife if you want, or you, she can go home." But Mr. Caribou-hunter didn't want to disappoint the mitew, and didn't want to make him hurt, because he just sort of fear him. And so he didn't say anything, he just says "Okay." Deep inside he didn't want to do that.

So anyway, what happens is that they went out hunting. And one night out there the first night, the mitew put up his shaking tent and ask where the caribous are located. So he did get his answer this time, and they were told where to find caribous. And the next day they went there, but not the next day, maybe a few days later. But his plan has been revealed by his wife. What he wanted to do exactly, was that he was going to go hunt and and consult the shaking tent what to do. No, no, he had decided to do this: he had decided to kill a lady, Grand Sophia, to kill her.

After they hunt and kill caribou, he will be back, and then he will kill her, and give his daughter to his new-found friend, the great caribou hunter. Because he had, the caribou hunter had shot a few caribous and which was really, very admired by the great man. So for that reason he wanted him as his son-in-law. So Grand Sophia was a different religion, so she was supposed to die. That was the law for the grand mitew. Scheme.

Anyway, what happened is that -the mitew, the grand leader- his wife was kind person. She was very kind person and she loved those people who come to visit, actually love them, Grand Sophia, because she had a very beautiful baby. And she loved them. And she didn't want them to be killed or anything, she knows that. So as soon as this, her

husband left that morning and the sons and all that stuff, she went right up to the Grand Sophia's tipi. And she says, "I am sorry to come and tell you this. But I am asking you right now, -I am not asking you-," she says. "I want you to take your stuff, and tear down your tipi and flee for your life. Because my husband intend to kill you when he return. And he might return just one night after, or he might return three nights later. But for your own sake, I want you to leave."

They may have lived there maybe three months, the way it sound, because by this time the sun was melting the snow into a crush. So the old lady says, "Take this opportunity, because last night it has been frozen solid, and your tracks should be concealed. And go as far as you can. Don't stop, because my husband can kill you." So Grand Sophia said, "I am not afraid of him, but I am willing to die, and I want my husband too."

"Because," she says, "my husband have decided to give one of our daughters to... my daughters to your husband. And that is something I don't want to see happen in front of me. Because I don't want to see you get killed. I don't want my husband to give his daughters to your husband, because he loves you." So she decided to fight her husband. So that's what happened. That morning she came and tell the story very quickly and very powerfully, and so convincingly, and so willingly to help. And she says "He can kill me. It doesn't matter if he gets mad. He can get mad at me, but I don't care. But I want to save your life. And the three children also, they will have their parents."

So, right away. But Kapakesot, "he who explode" didn't go with the other group, because Mitew didn't like him very much. So, Kapakesot was also Christian, his wife. But Kapakesot, we don't know whether he was, had, Christianity. So anyway, he was taking charge for these three, two women and three children, and he took off right away. Took some of the tipi covering, and left some for her husband, Mr Grand Sophia. And she took off. Pulling their own sleighs, toboggan I mean. "He who explode" has a few items and she has her children.

The family, the Kapakesot, "he who explodes", his wife carried the two children, and Grand Sophia carries only the baby, and her little utensils, and tipi covering. And they took off. That very morning. And fast as they could. And in those days the women, the women were just as great as men, in terms of walking. So the story goes that she,

they run. They really travel fast and all day. They didn't stop for lunch, they just kept on going, because in those days, people were durable. A man can walk three days without eating. A woman can do almost the same thing. Only the children needed the drink, so they just stopped only once in the concealed places. Just to make a quick water and give some drink to drink for the two little kids. And the baby can eat from, drink from her mother's breast. And they kept on going.

So they didn't stop that night. They just walk and walk and walk. They just stop to change the babies and also to have quick bite. Three of them. And so, it so happened that Grand Sophia was willing to survive, because she was asked to do it. And, they said, they didn't do anything. They just travelled. When it gets slushy they just, they just sit for a while and then hide their tracks, and when it gets a bit crushy again, crushed snow, and then they start to move again, and always hide their trail. It's hard to see. And the first night they didn't sleep. And the third night they they stopped for a little while, but the third night, they stopped. Nobody catch up to them the first two nights. But the third night...

Every time when they want to spend somewhere, "He who explode", to conceal his track, would go way out into the open where there's open lake and no ice. No snow, but just clear ice, where it's drift. He walks there and turn right back. And then make a fire back into his tracks where he can see people walking, so he may be able to kill if he has to. So back, back, turning to, to conceal his fireplace, was the reason. Always downwind so he won't be smelled. So he does that and, two nights he done that, and this is the third night.

And then, the third night, they take turn. Him and Grand Sophia and his wife take turn to watch, to hear the noise coming, people walking. So they, they try to defend themselves. So the third night, Grand Sophia had first watch, and then after that Kapakesot's wife after, and then towards the morning it was Kapakesot himself. "He who explode", was his turn to watch, towards the morning. And then Grand Sophia said they just sleep like a stone because they have been, haven't sleep for two nights. So they fall into a stone sleep.

"And then," she says, Grand Sophia, "All of a sudden, I hear people. A man talking, laughing loud and everything. When I come to awake, when I got up," she says,

"There stood my husband and Kapakesot laughing at each other, slapping at each other's back and everything. Then I get up, and he says, 'What happened? What happened?' And then the Kapakesot explain. So he said, 'I was sitting there half asleep' he said. 'Right there beside the trail. And all of a sudden, I hear this fast-approaching snow shoes. And I already aimed my gun to shoot right in the open face, where I could have killed any person that walks. And right across from my pointing direction, here walks across my, my brother-in-law' he says."

He calls him 'my brother-in-law'. It's just a, it's a term that is used: "my friend". He says Niishtaawtaweschipimotek. That means "my brother-in-law walks in front of me". So he just lowered his gun and says 'Hi'. And they all stared at each other. And he also was startled, the caribou hunter, and then he just stopped. So that's what when he was laughing at each other by this, near dead situation. So they, they all got up. And the kids and children also get up towards the morning before dawn, and they all celebrate. And of course Grand Sophia wants to know what happened.

So they, the caribou hunter says "Well, when we came home, when we find out you're gone, the old man actually was relieved. And the old lady told us that she had sent you people away to go home. So the old man said, 'Well, there's not much we can do'. And then the old lady says, 'Go.' She says to me, 'Great hunter, take whatever you want to take. Just go and catch up with your wife.'" So that's what he did. He just took off. Take a few items he need, and then walk back along without stopping to catch up with him. And he was very careless when he walks that time, because he was tired also. He could have been shot right there.

So that's the episode. Grand Sophia had won grand mitew. And also have won her husband back, and saved her family. And in that point on, they return happily back to the homeland. During the first part, part one. Let's, let us now relax.

[Break in tape]

Now, the second part. This story is told by also Grand Sophia to my mother, Scholastic Bird. And I listened to my mother tell us this story. So we will, we will not, say, "he said, and my mother said..." I am not going to say that. I am just going to tell the story, how she told the story about her life, and a little bit of what I know.

When they returned from the episode, (laugh) from the first episode, when they return home, Grand Sophia live happily for a time being at least. But unfortunately, her husband died. He died in one of those days that they went to York Factory to work for summer, summer work. At unloading and and shipping for Hudson Bay. He contacted a disease that was there, that was the epidemic they had there, and he died there also. Amongst others. So Grand Sophia was a widow. And years after that, you know, she remarried to the man by the name of John Annishenowby. You spell that A-N-N-I-S-H-E-N-O-W-B-Y. Annishenowby.

So she married to this man after having three children. And then after that, she had, she had at least five more children after that, from John Annishenowby. The rest of her time was not, was not very exciting of her own life. She married and she raised children and… She married again a person from within the land territory. The Oji-Cree type of person. And they moved back and forth between Attawapiskat and Fort Severn, bypassing Winisk because Winisk, that time there was nothing there. There was just the mouth of the river, and people hunt there once in a while, that's it. There was no Hudson Bay store.

So they usually go bypass the mouth of the Winisk River, and go to Fort Severn to trade. Or sometimes to live around past the Fort Severn, in her first area, territory before she lost her first husband. And then moved back into the Attawapiskat area with-in land, where Mr. John Anishinaabe understood the land much better. So the life went on very peacefully that way. And they finished raising their children and they live -I have seen the place where they live- between Fort Severn and Winisk. Today there is a place, the river, it's called Shegami River. One of her, one of her son, had died there as a little boy. And that cemetery is still marked today. So it, it's not very long ago that she had left, this lady, but she had a story about her.

So the next story that I am going to tell, it's happened I don't know when. I can not say when, what year. And she told the story herself. Sophia, Grand Sophia. She told the story to her granddaughter, my mother. And she says, "Once upon a time in Winisk area, people live in the river, Winisk River system. So they were know to be as Winisk people. Winisk River people. Though sometimes they were known as northern tribes from Kashechewan. A northern tribes from Kashechewan. The centre place at that time

was Kashechewan. And also Fort Severn. But if you, if they were, if they were involved in Kashechewan as they used to do in time, they were know as a northerners, a northern tribes. And the Winisk people are this.

They were isolated. They didn't belong to the, to Fort Severn and York Factory, because of the difference of religion. Because most of the Winisk area people were converted to Christianity, I mean to RC church, Roman Catholic church. And Fort Severn, being the English Factory, the English establishment, they were immediately converted to Anglican church. And so is the York Factory. So the dividing line is being there in the centre, between Fort Severn and Winisk River, and then down to the south to Attawapiskat, to Kapiskau. It was all that Roman Catholic, and then finally in Kashechewan it was split again.

So let's leave the religion this time, and we will talk about only what she tells the story. When did it happen? She says there was a time when the poor years existed in those days. That in her life time, also the Hudson Bay and James Bay was felt a very poor years. And it was that time many people were in need of food and clothing and everything, because it's a poor, a poor season. And the first shock of the European culture. Because by then, people were used to having shotgun and shells and things. When they couldn't find enough fur to kill, to trade, some people just didn't have no shells, no shots, no gun was there. The gun was so sparsely used. Only when a person has to be certain to get the animal would he shoot maybe one shot or two shots. Same thing with the caribou hunting. If a person have to follow the caribou, he has to have at least one or two shots. If he misses one it's not too bad, but if he misses two he is starving. But he has to eat.

So it was that situation, that time when she called the poor years. And it was felt right through the Hudson Bay and James Bay. It was that time that in Winisk, at the mouth of the Winisk River, there were about three families staying there, right where the Radar station has been built. That place was a camping ground for a family maybe to a long time ago. One family could survive there in the winter if they fish before freeze-up. And they could have fish to last them most of the winter. And then they usually, when there's a good year, there's usually lots of ptarmigans. And people can have that diet:

fish and ptarmigan during the winter. And also there're big berries in August, and they have enough berries to last them through the winter. And it was that condition.

But the most poor things at that time was no ptarmigan, no Canada geese, no snow geese. But there were ptarmigans that live, but not much. But the fish yes, there was fish in summer. But the people who live there at that time, there was three families who had fish, who had many fish, who had also gathered the berries. And then, then rest of the food was not. The beavers are not there, not too many otter, minks were not too many. But the ptarmigans were there, come and go. There were some rabbit. Not much, but enough barely for them to survive. Those three families, during the winter.

And at that time also, my grandfather was living, John Pennishish. He was living that time, perhaps five or eight years old. But they were living north side of the Winisk River, not south. Maybe ten miles north. There's a river there, and that's where they used to do some hunting. Like there is a place there where they can catch rabbit, when there, even though there's no fish. Even though there is no, no ptarmigan, there is always survival thing there.

So that's where they are staying that time, that winter. And, they were very poor also. That was Pennishish's family. And these families that were there in that south, south-east side of the Winisk river, at the mouth of the river, I don't know their names. But there was another old man who lived up river from Winisk river, from the mouth of Winisk River, about eight miles or ten miles up, at the place called Mishimattawa. That's, that was another famous place. People could live there in the winter time. They could catch a fish there. Because they would, they would make a fish trap in the fall and they would accumulate enough fish to live there all winter and then have a, have a rabbit as a different diet.

So anyway, that's what happened. In that winter it was so poor and everybody was dead. And also the weather was crazy. Something like that happened this year in nineteen-ninety-nine, it happens that time too. So many animals were caught somewhere, and they were not travelling, and the fish were not too many, and the rabbits were the only one that save the life of some people. So anyway. So they starve.

And it start to break up -the ice and everything. Those who were living in the east side of the Winisk River, and the old man who stays ten miles up the river -there were

two families there also- because they were short of food, they wanted to go across the river at that time then the ice start to break. They never make it across. Nobody knows. They never make it across the river where they wanted to go. And the old man left in the Mishimattawa with his grandson. And he died, starved there. So he has a nickname, he had the nickname by saying, a bad head. (laugh) Bad head, Matootawan. But actually he was a Christian, he was a Roman Catholic relatives, and he had the rosaries and all that. He died like that. And, apparently that's the way they found his body. And his grandson died in his arm . Anyway, that's a good part of the story, but the other part is very bad.

And what happened is that, you know, those two families who want to move across the river, east side, they didn't make it. Somehow they get caught there. And then, at that time, at the same time, the weather was crazy. And, Grand Sophia's mother was living out there between York Factory and Fort Severn. And she had her husband. She moved away from her husband, -not the husband, her sister-husband. They were twins. Grand Sophia's mother was a twin. She had a sister. But the sister was married to a man named Thomas. Thomas, I don't know his last time. Anyway, he married the twins, and he both had them as his wife.

So one time, one of the youngest, one of the wife wanted to move away. She had three boys, three kids. And, she always move away from the main camp, and just take her own sons and everything, to get away from the kids you know, the, the kind of problem. So she moved away. And then she was told if she had to start again, if the kids die, that she would be killed, by her husband. Because her husband, because she was going against the law of her husband. Because in those days women is supposed to submit to her husband and man is, is the law (laugh). The word of the man is the law in the family.

Anyway, that was what she was promised: if one of the kids die in the way, when she was away, that she would be killed, by her husband. Anyways she was afraid. But she went at that time, and it was very poor year. She went to fish some other place, not far from her husband, in one of those creeks that we know today. And she stay there, and stay there and stay there, and there was no, nothing to eat. And there was hardly any fish. They get hungry, and they're...

Yeah, she had two little boys, and then there was a baby. But the baby got sick, and it died, in that camp. And then she don't want to go home. She didn't even want to bury the baby. She just put it beside the tent. And then she didn't eat. She was starving. And soon she go crazy. And then one day, by crazy of starvation, she apparently cooked the baby, and was ready to feed the children, who were also hungry. And the children, the boys, two boys know that -I think there was a boy and a girl- and they know that he was, she was crazy already. She had cooked the baby. And they didn't want to eat the human. So they decided to run away.

So they run away that afternoon. And run away all night. And then they go, they found other people, and they tell them the story. As soon as the finish telling the story, the fierce storm, white-out hit. For three days, there was snow and snow and snow. And then nobody can move. After the storm was over, the kids tell the story of what happen. No one can go there. When it got clearer weather, they went there, but they find only the small tipi and nobody in it. Not even a baby, a body of a baby. Gone. The lady was missing. That was Grand Sophia's mother.

And then, it so happened some of the places, that other person died along the way somewhere, because of a sudden storm. And it was what those other people tell them. People in Mishimattawa and Winisk river who went across during the ice, ice break. They also get caught in that storm. Apparently they never make it across. So it was years later that the person… When there were people around, not many. There were other people living down east from the Winisk River at the Kinoshe River, and they came in the spring to try to get across and to go to Fort Severn. And this man came in there to Winisk, and found there was nobody around. So he found the signs of living people who actually didn't starve, but there were none. And it so happened he went to check. He came in, he travelled on the ground. He travelled on the trails on the shores of Hudson Bay with his wife and with his three, three kids I think.