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ALBERTA  
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Work as trapper, farmer, builder, carpenter.
- Serious accident at High Prairie.
- Work as councillor on the Drift Pile River Reserve; developments on that reserve.
- Relinquishing of treaty status.

Inter: How old are you Pat?

Pat: I am 83.

Inter: You gave up your treaty rights when?

Pat: It was in 1958 when I gave up my treaty rights.

Inter: Will you speak of what you know of the past?

Pat: Well, there is many things I was told. Before the treaty there was much talk amongst the people. There were two interpreters as not many spoke English. Albert Detty and a Cunningham served as interpreters. They took the treaty and are relocated on the reserve. A young priest used to tell me these things. It was the people's choice if they wanted treaty or the scrip. The priest advised that all the people in the area should take treaty and make the reserve large enough to cover the whole lake.

The fish warden and his brother took over leadership of

the people but as it turned out the people did not like them for they didn't know anything. They didn't know what the woodlands people wanted. The two leaders did not know of hunting and fishing and many treaty changed their minds and took the scrip instead. The young priest told me this.

He also told me that the promises that were made in the treaty sounded good when the people were approached. Many took the treaty but the ones who took the scrip did so because of pride. They didn't want someone owning them but rather, wanted to own themselves and determine their own future.

Two years after the treaty was signed the boundaries were made. Moostoos took Sucker Creek and that area was given to him. Keenosiw (Fish) took the Driftpile area. There was another councillor named Weehiwechays who took an area. Alex Giroux took Kinuso and S. Twin took Slave Lake.

My father had built a house in Grouard before he died. We lived with many Metis and when the boundary markers came around they told us that there would be a small area marked off that would be ours. If we left it, that was up to us but it was ours if we chose to live on it. That little area was 73 acres in size.

Inter: Can I ask where that is?

Pat. From the Northlands school to the old road west to the lake. This was the land given to us. The woodlands by the Northlands school is part of the reserve.

The Freemans also lived on that land. My mother stayed there until she died. Alphonse Freeman is the only one left there. There was a woman of the Freeman family who had an illegitimate child. She is a year older than I was and she had a halfbreed child. He is Arson Freeman and all the land is in his name. The agents decreed that he owned the land and that we owned nothing. Why is that?

The Indian Act says that no halfbreed is supposed to own reserve land. It was the Indian agent's doing for they have also never read the Indian Act. All of the people around Grouard were given free grants and so was our family. The boundary maker at the time stated that the land wasn't good but promised that later, other land would be given for their children when they were grown up, that there would be other reserves available. If the people wanted to move to another reserve, they had only to ask the chief of that reserve.

I once went to the Indian agent, Doctor Donald, to find out which reserve I belonged to and he said he didn't know. He told me Laird would know as he took care of the papers of everyone concerned.

We ended up in Little Prairie, trapping, and I took a little land there. Before the boundaries were made, we had occupied it and built a small house there. I came to see Laird and I wanted to know if he could help me in any way. He told me that I couldn't live where I had built the house for myself. He told me he would try to make it so that the land remained mine; if not, a monetary restitution to me was forthcoming.

I had 3 children and as I thought about it and decided to

go into agriculture. I wasn't making anything by trapping and I had gone past Peace River to trap and went broke. So I came here. Someone loaned me a tent. I was given a plow. So I broke four acres and planted small crops of potatoes. I was initially assisted for my venture and I remained there forty years. That is the only help I've ever received. I left it in 1958.

I went into dairy farming for a while and I also went into haying after I salvaged a mower and borrowed horses. There was a halfbreed who helped me out and I gave him a share of 1/3 of the hay we produced.

There was a white man from Saskatchewan who brought horses, a mower, a rake, a wagon, harnesses and he wanted to trade for hay. So, two weeks later he came back and I paid off the equipment with my hay.

I fenced 60 acres. We were also given farm animals. In 1918 all these animals had been given out, but a flu epidemic had killed many people so there was an influx of animals left over. The agent asked me if I wanted any. I took cows and calves. I sold milk and planted crops and I got by all right. My cattle grew to 15 head.

The chief around here had been jealous of my livelihood. When the boundary markers came, my land that I had worked for four years disappeared under the boundaries in the lots they marked out.

There was a Freeman who wanted to move to Ricky Lake past High Prairie and wanted to sell his land so I bought his land. I had a breakdown from overwork so I gave up the land to one of my sons. It was in the Depression and it wasn't worth it to grow a crop for profit. No one grew anything. I was quite sick around that time. I moved near the river by the highway. I built a house. That wasn't much. I wondered around from job to job. The school division and land department hired me for a while for four years approximately.

In 1952, I left for Brownvale to fix some houses. The reserve people there had had houses built with their money and were complaining about the condition of the houses. They were small houses. There was an old lady Angela who was doing much complaining as she spoke English pretty good. I was to fix the leaks, make extensions and repairs to a number of other houses as well.

Before I left I told the Indian agent that I would have to hire another man to help me and also money would have to be advanced. The Indian agent agreed. He gave me time sheets to send in. The money for our wages did not come in so my helpers and I came to the agent and he said that although he'd sent for the money it wasn't in yet. So we went to Driftpile where I borrowed some to pay off my man. As we had to go back we waited late at night for the train. There was no light around to stop the train and a freight parked alongside the station blanketed everything in view and the passenger train came and didn't stop. I was waving for the train to stop when a piece of it that stuck out hit me and broke my arm and a few ribs. The brakeman for the freight waved his light to the train and it stopped and backed up. I was taken to High Prairie. I almost died from my injuries. I was in the hospital

for a while.

I was warned not to work for a while. The reserve and Indian agent never gave me any assistance. Although I tried to sue it was to no avail. It took two years before I was able to move my arm. After exercising it, it started to function a little.

Leaving Driftpile for a number of reasons I worked a little. There was elections and I was chosen councillor. At a meeting we were told that the request for a hall had been granted. Alfred Chalifoux and Ernie Bellerose and I were the leaders at the time. I was also asked for my opinion. I told them I didn't like it for I felt it was a useless expenditure. If we spent all the money we had, we wouldn't have anything left. But if we left it, the interest would be bigger until finally, all we had to do was to spend the interest and the

rest could be used for the benefit of the whole reserve. It would be better if we were stingiest in our spending for we would benefit later.

I said that of the \$3,000.00 interest that was available we should take a portable saw to cut the trees into lumber. They were going for \$28.00 a 1000 besides, there was a bit burning down every year. Pay for the cutting from the \$3,000.00 and put away \$10.00 of the \$28.00 when we sold the lumber. When we reached \$10,000.00, then, build a hall.

The Indian agent was there so I asked him why we had to wait two months, sometimes longer when we asked to spend some of the band fund. It it was ours, why all the holdup in answer?

I told the agent that if we built the hall, we would make money with it. The agent agreed. He told me whatever I said was true.

He said he couldn't move against me. The chief and others were behind me so we built the hall. I was paid \$3,000.00 to build it. There was some dispute but I finally won out as tender. When I left there was \$500.00 in the hall fund. So I left and bought another house and some land here. I made a living as a carpenter until I had money in the bank.

I started to draw a pension and I sent a message to say that I had left the reserve. The chief and agent would not find any reason to keep me on the reserve as I had always made my own way. The reserve had never helped me in any way.

That land I had marked out and has been taken away from me, I wonder if I shouldn't have some restitution made to me for it. I am the only one left in our family. About 1/2 section should belong to me. That land in Grouard, half of it should be mine also. I sent a message to the agent who sent it to Ottawa and the reply was, it was Freeman's.

Inter: When you left Driftpile, did you get anything?

Pat: My share of the Band fund and a \$100.00 for my treaty rights. It came to \$600.00 with my wife. The land was never mentioned. That is what happened until now.

Inter: When the agent was here where did he live? On the reserve?

Pat: Yes, on Indian land near the railroad. He just picked out a spot and lived there. At one time I got into an argument with him and he told me he'd throw me out. I told him I would. He was just a hireling, I belonged here. I told him to think about it. He never said anything.

Inter: (illegible)... for the right of way of the railroad?

Pat: I would think so, the highway too. I found out where we should have benefitted; near the bridge. When the powerline came through, the benefits were \$25.00 a hole for crop land and \$15.00 elsewhere. 60 yards on either side of the highway, no one had to pay. The hall does not have to be paid for wiring. Also, the Nursing Home did not have to pay.

Inter: What about mineral rights?

Pat: The mineral rights belonged to the people from a long time ago. They were on Indian land so it was the Indian's.

Inter: When the mineral rights question came up, it was stated that they had not been given up nor any natural rights for that matter.

Pat: One thing I wrote for to Baldwin in Ottawa was the papers for the Metis people. They refer that the conversations at the time of the treaty signing sounded good as to the promises made then but it is not seen today.

As I understand the article of the treaty the government people could come here with no harassment from us. They understand also that we were not entirely the wards of the government. The agent ruled strictly that is why I got into arguments with him. I had to get a paper saying I could sell what I grew. The people were easily ruled as they were ignorant of many things.

Instead of helping me get ahead, they hindered me. Even when I was sick, I never got any assistance.

When the treaty for the Blackfoot was made the chief asked that the logs the police used should be paid for. The commissioner stated that the presence of the police was enough. They shouldn't have to pay anything, for the service they gave was worth more. That chief had already had full sight as to the value of certain things such as trees. The chiefs were given copies of the maps and treaty articles in a steel box (or a plaque?) and these were lost. When I wrote to Baldwin for a copy, I saw they were the same.

Inter: There is some difference. I have copies of Treaty 8.

Pat: Those are reports, Ottawa reports. The boundary makers, the chiefs and leaders of the time are all written down. The captain of Grouard had been also paid and he (illegible)... Sturgeon.

Inter: Laird paid the people at Sturgeon the year after?

Pat: Yes.

Inter: Nee soo ka may ka twaw was the chief and his grandfather a councillor, also Papostis was another. Would you have the first Indian Act before it was rewritten in 1952?

Pat: When it was rewritten, it was in the government's favor, not the Indian's. All along they were changed. Today, they are not much use. I used to send for copies as the agent wouldn't give any to me.

Inter: Before 1952, the membership was different. That is what I want to see.

Pat: Someone can get it. Gilbert ( or Robert ) Walker has it, you can ask him for it. There have been many things broken in favor of the government.

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