

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Googoo - Whycocomagh

---

Lil-- How did your father make a living?

-- Farming.

Lil-- We are saying that Indians didn't have material things like television, but they had pride because they were able to support themselves at one time.

-- They were able to grow their own food and they could get their own food by going out in the woods to hunt or to fish.

Lil-- Yes. Did they trap here around 40 years ago?

-- Yes.

Mrs. Googoo-- Tell her how your father made a living and also how you made a living.

-- I work the white man's way.

Mrs. Googoo-- But you have been trapping all of your life.

-- that's different.

Lil-- I heard that the Whycocomagh Indians used to trap in Grand Narrows one time.

-- Indians used to make their own traps for (dia-ka och). I could make one any time.

Lil-- Did you go away in the fall to trap and camp in the woods?

-- Yes, we used to live in wigwams.

Lil-- where?

-- Everywhere. It's still the same; you could trap anywhere.

Lil-- Indians here at one time used to go away to Mabou or Port Hood to work in order to make some money for the Indian Mission in Chapel Island.

-- They used to go to Port Hood and Mabou.

Lil-- What kind of work did they do?

-- They made baskets and pick handles.

Lil-- This was in preparation for the St. Ann's Mission.

-- Yes. One time ago when we went to Chapel Island, we didn't have motor boats; people went there by row boats. Yes, they took the boats across the shortcut to Malgawatch. We would stay overnight there. We would spear for eels here and salted them. The Indians carried containers for this purpose. Then we would cross over. It's 12 miles to the other side.

Lil-- The boats must have been heavy.

-- No they were small boats. Sometimes we took them across by horse and wagon. When we departed for Chapel Island, we headed straight for Marble Mountain then along the coast from there until you see the church, then you cut right across and head for the big cross on Chapel Island. Then you go along the shoreline to where the people are camped.

Mrs. Googoo - How long since the people went to Chapel Island by boat.

-- Old man Sam made the last trip. I don't recall anybody making another trip. Four of us made the trip with him. It doesn't take long when you have a good boat. We took a different route that time. We went to Orange-dale first thento *B o o m* Island.

Lil-- How long did it take you to make the trip.

-- It all depended on the wind. If it was calm, it didn't take long.

Mrs. G-- It used to take two days.

Lil-- After St. Ann's Mission, the Indians used to go away again to some camping area to work for awhile.

-- Yes, but we didn't go anywhere.

Lil-- Oh, your father was a farmer.

-- Yes, he had one or two horses and cows. He didn't do any other work.

Lil-- So he grew all his food.

-- Yes. He grew a whole lot of fruit like plums, apples. He would take this fruit to peddle it in Sydney. He transported this fruit by boat.

Lil-- Did he save some food for the winter?

--Oh yes, and seed potatoes. You had to store them in a green house. This is where you store your food. In the spring, your vegetables will still be fresh.

Lil-- You also saved seed potatoes.

-- Yes, the potatoes like green mountains wouldn't grow stalks and they wouldn't rot. I know the places where our green houses used to be located.

Lil-- Is there a special way to make that green house.

-- Yes, you dig ground and you line the walls and floor with logs, then

then birchbark and sawdust; then you cover it with sods so that water wouldn't seep through. Then you build on a small porch to this; you fill this up with straw so frost couldn't get through.

Lil-- Indians made these cellars for keeping meat fresh in the summer.

-- Yes, that is true. Ground is cold at a certain depth. You could keep mackeral there in the summer and they wouldn't get spoiled.

Lil-- How did you save fish like eels, etc. when you wanted to store them for the winter.

-- You salt them. Not all of them are salted. Some are dried. The eels you dry them and make up (qua pack.)\* *name for dried eels*

Lil-- Indians use the eel in many ways, too.

Mrs. G.-- Codfish is very easy to get in the winter. My father used to set his hook and pole in the water down the shore from our house. He had a black flag attached to the pole. When the codfish got caught, he pulled the fish line and the flag would fall down but the pole was secured to the ice. We would run down to get the codfish; sometimes we caught a great big codfish. We would take the fish off the hook and put new bait on the line and set it up again. We would have a fresh cod for our meal.

Lil-- I heard that Indians used to hunt for seals around here at one time.

-- Oh yes, we used to. There aren't as many now.

Lil-- Did you go everywhere or did you go to any special place?

-- We went all over. We went to river mouths that were emptying out. This is where the seals made their shelters. Their shelters would keep all winter; they wouldn't freeze. They knew how to take care of themselves.

Lil-- What did you use to kill them? The same things the Eskimo's use? You set these traps on the ice.

-- I know what the Eskimos use but we didn't use them for seals. We used eel spears.

Lil-- What were seals used for? Did they eat them or what?

-- Oil, you wouldn't eat that today. Doughnuts were cooked in seal oil. They are very delicious.

Lil-- Did you also sell the oil.

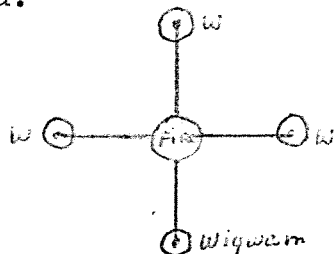
-- I don't know.

Mrs. G-- Did you sell the skin?

-- Oh they saved the skin to make their sleds. Seal skin is very slippery; you used it for sliding. A whole bunch of people on a seal skin sled goes very fast.

Lil--One time ago Indians didn't take any camping equipment when they went out camping in the woods, e.g. gas stove, Pots and pans.

-- Oh no, they made their own fire and utensils, etc. We were arguing the other day on who invented the furnace. The others told me it was the white man. I said, oh no, Indians did. Indians invented the furnace. I'll draw this for you.



Okay, there are four wigwams and you could also make 5 wigwams. The fire/ place is out doors in the centre. Ditches would be dug starting from the fire-place to the centre of each wigwam. These tunnels were later covered over with stone. They would keep the fire going outside in the winter time. The heat would travel to all the wigwams and the smoke that travelled with it. There wasn't too much smoke; it would go out and go up the opening at the top of the wigwam. All the men would take turns on keeping the fire going. A man who woke up in the night would throw some wood in the fire then another, etc. The fire is kept going all the time.

Lil-- Where did they do this?

-- Not here; but Indians used to do this. This is what my father used to tell us.

Lil-- Where was your father from.

-- Cape Breton.(Whycocomagh). Indians here say that they have lived here in Whycocomagh, that their fathers were from here but none of them have proof. I have proof and it shows how much land we own. My father was Peter (Sally) Googoo. There were two Peter Googoo's here.

Lil-- I've seen a Will of your father's.

-- I have it.

Mrs. G-- There were five wigwams that were set up all around the fire and tunnesl led through to the wigwams.

-- These tunnels were made of stone.

Mrs. G--these wigwams were not smoky.

-- Oh no.

Lil-- I read a lot of old books. One time ago Indians used to have big long wigwams with four fireplaces inside. Indians called these "Big Business Wigwams". This is where the meetings were held. I started thinking, these wigwams couldn't have been made the usual way - the peaked wigwam. If they were rectangular shaped, the top must have been domed, how else would the smoke escape. It could be that these fireplaces were just where the heat escaped from and were heated from a fire outside. What do you think? Do you think they had holes at the top?

--Yes, there were openings. Even if it rained or snowed, the heat wouldn't go out, it would spread on the ground.

Lil-- Do you think they were smokey.

--No, if you wanted to cook, you could build a fire in the centre where the furnace heat is coming from. You had to use special kind of wood which doesn't give off any smoke.

Lil-- What kind of wood did they use, hard wood?

-- Yes, hardwood. The kind of wood that is dry with the bark off. It's rotten and dry like bone. This is the kind of wood that they use. Just like the kind of wood that you use in fireplaces today, the kind the white people use. White people take great trouble in acquiring that kind of wood. A man came here from New Glasgow last summer to fetch that kind of wood around here- the fireplace wood. That kind of wood doesn't smoke.

Lil-- This is what interests me, how the Indian lived at one time and how skillful he was in providing whatever he needed, using whatever was at hand. In other words, they were adept, e.g. what amazes me is that they could cook a meal in a birchbark container, the birchbark doesn't burn.

--Yes, it's true.

-- Did your father ever tell you how you barbecue an eel. (Pesi-ga-bus-it).

Lil-- No, I am not sure. Tell me how you cook it.

-- You whittle short sticks then you split them. You then thread these through the length of eel. The eels are split and dried first. (Up-ka-sock) or you could do this to an eel that hasn't been dried first. After you have threaded the sticks into the eel, you then stick these sticks in the ground and slant them towards the fire. You watch them so they won't burn. You turn them from time to time.

Mrs. G-- The sticks don't burn?

-- No, they are not that close to the fire.

Lil-- Isn't this what the white people call barbecuing?

--Yes. I've seen this done one time. I went fishing for eels one time with an old man. He said, we are going to have (a pesi ga bas ik). I looked at him, I didn't understand what he meant. He told me to go get some wood. I picked wood that was along the shore with no bark on them and I cut them up with my little axe. When I got back he had eels on split sticks in a circle. He told me to start a fire in the middle. After a while the eels starting cooking. The eels are very delicious when they are cooked this way.

Lil-- Do you know any Indian dyes.

Mrs.G-- I only know how to make brown dye; you boil alder bark and add soda to the water.

-- No, you don't use soda. We used to use hemlock bark to dye bows.

Lil-- What colour is the dye?

-- It's light brown and it doesn't fade.

Lil-- Oh yes, they used snake roots.

-- Those are poisonous.

Lil-- They used to make medicine from them.

-- You don't drink the liquid.

Lil-- Many Indians have told me that they used them to cure kidney trouble, diabetes and yellow jaundice.

Mrs. G-- My sister, Mrs. Jeddore is taking medicine that was made by Steven Steven to treat her diabetes. He cured his wife of diabetes.

Lil-- You mean Julie Steven?

-- Yes.

Lil-- I interviewed her and she was telling me that her husband cured her of diabetes but I didn't want to ask her what kind of Indian medicine she used.

Mrs. G-- My sister stopped taking her pills and has been using Steven's medicine.

-- What about the El-nopse-cook?

Lil-- What about them?

-- I don't know. Your father knows more about them than I.

Lil-- Yes, he told me something about them.

-- There is a bead or shell that represents what they call Wabi-got. It represents a spy. He spreads bad stories about us and he couldn't be trusted. As you know, this is the Peace Treaty between us and the Mohawks. I was wondering what nation or race represented the Wabi-got. First I thought it was the English as they used to be our enemies at one time when we fought with the French against them. Well, I finally found out it represents the Maliseets.

-- They were the instigators.

Lil-- Oh yeah. They wanted us to stay enemies with the Mohawks.

Lil-- Indians used big shells, conch I think they were called in English to use as distress signals, etc.

Mrs. G-- Yes.

(They showed me a big conch and a rock that they called Book-tok-tak-en) (Stone).

Lil-- How do they make fire with that book-tok-tak-en on?

-- You take a piece of steel and strike the stone. It gives off the sparks which start your fire.

-- Glooscap came here. Where is his ?

Lil-- I don't know. I thought he left this part of the country.

-- He didn't go anywhere.

Mrs. G-- Where did he go?

Lil-- I don't know but anyway when he left he told the Indians that if they were in some kind of trouble that he would be back.

-- He didn't go anywhere. He's not too far from here. The southside is where the beavers used to live. Glooscap and the beaver didn't agree with each other. There is a rock on the Wisek mountain on the outside. Glooscap split that rock. This is when the beaver ran away and they have never been there until they were brought here by the ecologists, but they have never been back here.

Mrs. G-- The beavers don't come to Southside.

-- No.

Mrs. G-- The mountain across there is called Wisek or Salt mountain. They say there was a trace of Glooscap's door on that mountain.

Lil--They say he also lived in Cape North.

Mrs. G-- Is there really Wisek in that mountain?

Lil--What is Wisek?

-- Salt. This is whi it's called salt mountain. This is the highest mountain in this area.

-- No, it isn't. This one on the reserve is higher.

Lil-- Did Indians use salt from there.

-- Yes, this is where they got it.

Mrs. G-- When an Indian wanted to cook codfish, he would go and get his water from the salt spring in Wisek mountain.

-- There was a man here who used to run a hotel. He got his water from the mountain spring for cooking; he didn't need to buy salt as the water was salty enough. (fresh salt).

Lil-- One time ago the people from Barra Head used to go to Canso for fishing. What about here?

-- No, it must have been just the Barra Head Indians. There's a write up in the Cape Breton Magazine about Simon Cremo and the time he used to go sword fishing in Canso. They also have pictures of the harpoons, etc. that they used. The Indians made their own moccasins which they called Ko-nesk. How were they made?

-- I used to wear them myself. They are made of cowhide. You know when you skin the hide off a cow, you leave the hoofs on them. After the moccasin is finished, the hoof is in the front. This is why the Indians from the mainland called Cape Bretoners - Gu-nesk. The Indians from Pictou used to call us Gu nesk. I never used to like those people.

Lil--The Indians from Restigouche and New Brunswick also called us Gu-nesk. I wonder what they used before the cow. The French brought the cow with them. I wonder if the Indian made those moccasins out of deer hide?

-- No, deer is too small. They must have used moose.

-- We used the leg part of the hide to make moccasins.

Lil--You made two pairs of moccasins from each cow?

-- Yes.

Lil-- Do they get wet?

-- Yes. You can't wear them when it's too wet. They are made with the fur on the outside.

- LEGEND - BY MRS. G00900

Mrs. G-- One time ago Indians lived in a Malik-tek. However, at certain times of the year they would move into the forest where it was easy to get hardwood sticks. This certain band of Indians had just settled in the woods one of the unmarried girls got pregnant. When this happened, all the Indians moved away to another encampment because this was the custom at the time. She was left behind as an outcast as she had gone against the moral code of the Indians (some kind of a superstitious belief of the Indians). The girl was left behind but two of her brothers went back and killed her. They hit her on the head with a stick and threw her over a cliff. One day the boys' grandmother told them to go back to the old encampment to check up on their sister to see how she was getting along. The boys didn't let on anything, and went back to the old encampment. When they got there, they found a little boy sitting by his dead mother's body. The little boy told them "Don't harm me. God has put me into this world to cure people. If anyone is sick I will show them the medicine to use that will cure them." Furthermore, he told them "Take me to a (net quit). The two boys obeyed the little boy and took him to a big net quit in the woods. When they got there, the little boy named all the medicine plants such as mugmig go way, pugosi, que gives os kel, eptek away. The boy named all the different kinds of plants and roots, etc. for the Indians to use when one was sick. For pagosi, he told them "If there's a sickness going around your camp, boil pagosi in your wigwams continuously so that you won't spread the disease to each other. The little boy stayed in the net quit for seven



years to instruct the Indians on the names of plants and roots and the diseases that each could cure. So today, when you go to pick Indian medicine in the net quit you are supposed to think about that boy before you start picking the medicine. Mel ga mook a way is good when you are spitting blood. There is que qgives os kel, eptek a way, etc. The Indians are still using these medicines that were shown to them by that boy. -----End of Legend.

Lil--Indians used to gather Indian medicine in the fall. Is that true?

-- Yes. They would dig up the roots, washed them and then they would put them on a strong. Pagosi is very important; disease won't spread because it kills germs.

Lil-- Do you remember any more old stories of the past?

-- I don't recall any more at the present time; however, my grandmother used to tell me that she used to make moccasins. There was a store in Mabou that bought her moccasins. She didn't get too much money for them but she was able to buy some flour, baking powder, and lard. She would walk back home with this load. Sometimes the children that she left behind that morning hadn't had their breakfast yet. Besides her children, she adopted some orphans. One of them was John Campbell. At that time, you didn't get paid for taking care of orphans. When both parents died, children would be adopted by the neighbours. So grandmother adopted John Campbell when his parents died.

Lil-- Was he half Indian?

--Yes. My father used to kill one of our calfs in the fall to put away for the winter supply of food. If he didn't have a calf, he would buy one. If any of the neighbours ran out of food, my parents would give them food. I remember an old lady who used to come to our house when she was hard up and my parents would help her out.

Lil--Did your father have pigs?

--Yes.

Lil-- Did you and your husband move to Eskasoni during centralization?

-- Yes. We moved to Eskasoni and stayed there for three years. Michael my hunband tried it out for three years. When we decided to move, he told the Indian Agent "mark me down for a three year stay. When the three years is up and I'm better off than I was in Whycocomagh, I will stay on and if I am not I will move back home." When the three years were up, we almost lost all of our animals. We only had one cow and one horse left. Hay was scarce. There were no hay fields. Finally we couldn't get any hay at all. So this is when we decided to move back home.

Lil-- Did you take a lot of animals to Eskasoni?

-- Yes, three milk cows. One was sold and the other slaughtered for our winter food. We sold one cow and it enabled us to buy flour.

Lil-- How long have you been making baskets?

-- All my life.

Lil-- Who taught you?

-- My mother.

-----