

PICTOGRAPHS IN NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN:

VISION QUEST AND PAWAKAN

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## ABSTRACT

Pictographs in northern Saskatchewan have been linked to the vision quest ritual by Rocky Cree informants. The intent of this thesis is to examine the Rocky Cree religious belief system, through ethno-historic documentation and contemporary ethnography, in order to attribute meanings to pictographs. Elderly native informants in communities close to pictograph sites were interviewed concerning their knowledge of traditional religious beliefs, the vision quest and the cultural function of pictographs. By formulating an understanding of traditional Rocky Cree religious beliefs it is possible to discover what 'dreamers' were experiencing during the vision quest and what they dreamt of. The physical characteristics and psychological profile of the spirits, which might have appeared to the dreamer as his guardian spirit, must be reconstructed, since pictographs were visual representations of what was witnessed in the vision quest. Informant knowledge has allowed for the analysis of pictographs and a greater understanding of individual meanings and their cultural context in traditional Rocky Cree religion.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO PICTOGRAPH RESEARCH

This study of pictographs was begun in 1983 as a means of responding to the more general question of why Man has a basic need to express himself visually. Aboriginal rock art is the oldest surviving form of visual expression, so it seemed that an in-depth study of pictographs would provide answers as to why Man would make non-functional visual representations when so much of his energy was required securing food.

As the study progressed in northern Saskatchewan, it was found that pictographs had vital function within Rocky Cree culture, integrally linked to subsistence behaviour and religious belief. The lack of dates for pictographic images had inhibited efforts to identify meanings of specific images. Further, the ritual connected with pictographs is no longer practiced and the people who performed it are long dead.

Rocky Cree informants, descendants of the people responsible for making pictographs in northern Saskatchewan, were interviewed about their traditional religion, the vision quest and pictographs. Due to the lack of recorded information about the vision quest ritual, it is difficult to determine precisely when and why it ceased. It is clear that the Fur Trade and the arrival of Christian missionaries affected aspects of the Rocky Cree religious belief system and hunting patterns, resulting in the end of the vision quest ritual and the subsequent making of pictographs.

For many reasons, the usual methods for collecting data about archaeological phenomena fail in the case of pictographs. The images are in isolation, without stratigraphy or other artifacts to provide clues as to their period or cultural significance. They cannot be dated and, unlike hieroglyphics, their Rosetta Stone has not been discovered. However, ethnographic fieldwork has provided a wealth of data concerning pictographs and the vision quest. The analysis of that data provides a greater understanding of their contextual significance in traditional Rocky Cree culture.

#### 1.1. CHARACTERISTICS OF CANADIAN SHIELD PICTOGRAPHS

Pictographs in northern Saskatchewan share common features with rock paintings in other parts of the Canadian Shield, despite the vast territorial range over which they are distributed. Colour of pictographs vary from the red end of the scale to brown. They are located on flat rock planes, the angle of which rarely exceeds 10 degrees from the vertical. All are directly accessible to or visible from the water and may be viewed to greatest advantage from the water. When the rock face extends vertically into the water the paintings must have been painted while seated or standing in a canoe. Water levels do fluctuate, but not to the extent that the pictographs were beyond reach (unless flooding due to hydroelectric dams has occurred). In many cases, waterlines are obvious above the pictographs, indicating that they may have been submerged at some point.

Several rock faces have rocks or ledges at water level and these would have been used by the pictograph artist.

Predicting where pictograph sites may be located is difficult and many seemingly ideal locations do not contain pictographs.

In Saskatchewan, the majority of pictograph sites are found along the Churchill River drainage, from Ile a la Crosse to the Manitoba border (Figure 1). The most northerly sites are located on Reindeer Lake, north of the Churchill River, while the largest site is on Smith Channel between Hickson and Maribelli Lakes. This site is north of the Churchill River and southwest of Reindeer Lake.

The images which form the pictographs are similar in character to those found across the Canadian Shield. The figures were drawn naturalistically but not realistically. It is possible to identify figures of humans or animals but they were not specific depictions. A drawing of a human was meant to represent a generalized human without identifying details. The images are minimalistic and show the figure without gender, clothing or other extraneous details (Figure 2), though there are exceptions to each generalization. A similar treatment was given to animals and they appear static and suspended in time (Figure 3). Bodies were drawn in proportion and were meant only to identify the kind of creature. Details were omitted when they were not necessary to indicate the type of animal.

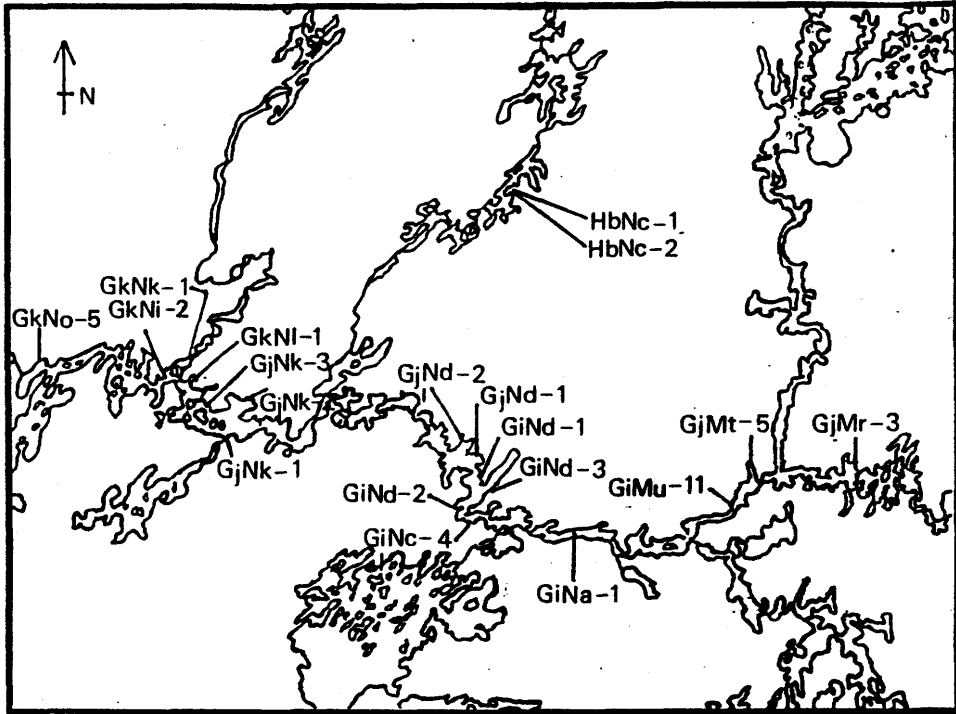


Figure 1. Map of Pictograph Sites Visited (Adapted from Jones)

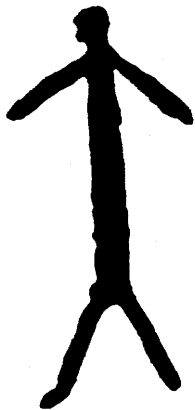


Figure 2. Human Figure  
Neyo Onikup Bay (GiNd-1)



Figure 3. Animal Figure  
Stanley Rapids (detail)  
Face III (GiNc-4)

The depiction of human figures and specific details will be discussed in more detail in Section 5.3.

Unusual creatures also appear in pictographs, some with a mixture of characteristics which makes them unidentifiable. At the Hickson-Maribelli site a great deal of variation occurs among the non-human figures. A creature with the head and torso of a human but the body of an animal is depicted (Figure 4), as are horned humans (Figure 5). Some human figures are shown to be larger than the others they seem to be interacting with. Such images indicate that pictograph artists were not attempting to depict the world around them. Chapter 5 will attempt to explain these cryptic images.

The stylistic characteristics of northern Saskatchewan pictographs are deceptively simplistic. The images initially appear to have been drawn by children, though the execution of line and the effectiveness in describing form and feature indicate a skilled hand with a definite intent. There was no hesitancy in making the image, and some artists were better than others. Two means of description were used in these pictographs. The first was the line drawing, in which the figure is outlined and some details provided. The human figures with pipes (Figure 6) at Hickson-Maribelli illustrate this style. The figure's head was drawn as a circle and the eyes and mouth were shown but hair, nose and ears were omitted.



Figure 4. Mixed Human/Animal Figures, Hickson-Maribelli  
(HbNc-1, Face XXXVII)



Figure 5. Horned Humans, Hickson-Maribelli  
(HbNc-1, Face XVIIIa)





Figure 6. Humans with Pipes, Hickson-Maribelli  
(HbNc-1, Face XXVI)

Only the details necessary to capture the humanness of the figure were shown. Animals and thunderbirds were also portrayed in this style (Figure 7), though their facial features were not generally supplied. Bodies were left unpainted, with infrequent exceptions.

The second style of depiction was the stick figure which was completely filled in. The head and body were solid areas of colour with only external body details provided (Figure 8). Occasionally a figure would be drawn in this style but the head would be filled in while the body was left as an outline (Figure 9). Or one figure would be drawn in the outline style while the figure interacting with it would be solid (Figure 10).

Abstract figures and unidentifiable marks were also present in northern Saskatchewan pictographs. In his analysis of symbol distribution along the Churchill River T.E.H. Jones suggested that abstract figures might symbolize concepts (1974: 140). Chapter 5 will deal with this possibility as well.

## 1.2. HISTORY OF PICTOGRAPH RESEARCH IN CANADA

Rock paintings in the Canadian Shield became of interest due to the efforts of two men -- Kenneth Kidd and Selwyn Dewdney. In 1955 Kenneth Kidd, Curator of Ethnology at the Royal Ontario Museum, approached artist Selwyn Dewdney with a request to record the pictograph sites in Quetico Provincial Park.



Figure 7. Thunderbird,  
Hickson-Maribelli  
(HbNc-1, Face XXV)



Figure 8. Solid Human Figure  
Hickson-Maribelli  
(HbNc-1, Face III)



Figure 9. Outline Style Figure  
Hickson-Maribelli  
(HbNc-1, Face XVI)



Figure 10. Figures Interacting  
Hickson-Maribelli  
(HbNc-1, Face XVIb)

Support was forthcoming from the Quetico Foundation and the Ontario Department of Lands and Forest. In 1957, 11 sites in the park area were recorded and, as local people became aware of the project, the number of site reports increased. By 1961 Dewdney had recorded over 100 sites in the Canadian Shield region of Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Indian Rock Paintings of the Great Lakes by Kenneth E. Kidd and Selwyn Dewdney (1973) documented the study of rock art and the problems involved but more than that it poses some interesting questions concerning rock paintings. The study of rock art in Canada has very recent origins and the difficulties involved in studying pictographic images have required the knowledge of individuals from a variety of fields. Unfortunately, answers to many of the questions first asked in this study, regarding dating images and their meanings, remain elusive.

Dewdney's credibility as a rock painting expert became widely recognized and in 1960 he was commissioned by the Glenbow Foundation to record petroglyphs and pictographs sites in Alberta. This endeavour, complemented by an article by Leechman, Hess and Fowler, entitled "Pictographs in Southwestern Alberta" formed the basis of subsequent research in Alberta. In 1963, Dewdney recorded two major sites on Smith Channel between Hickson and Maribelli lakes in northern Saskatchewan, approximately 100 air miles from Stanley Mission, on the Churchill River system. Dewdney's resulting article,

Dating Rock Art in the Canadian Shield Region, was published in 1970 and discussed the variety of dating techniques which could possibly be used to date pictographs. He made comparisons between the Agawa sites on Lake Superior and those at Hickson-Maribelli, based on the relative similarity of their environmental conditions. However, he ran through the possibilities of dating the images by conventional dating methods, such as radiocarbon, lichenometry, weathering or patination, without providing any degree of encouragement regarding their potential for success. Dewdney was more enthusiastic about the use of ethno-historical investigation of the indigenous culture.

The fact that aboriginal cultures could be observed in North America before they were seriously eroded by the invading ones is highly significant. For only here, and in Australia, has it been possible to explore in detail the relationship between the durable pictography and the fragile records of preliterate practises and beliefs that have been preserved in the oral tradition, or in perishable pictography, of the sort that vanished in Europe millennia ago. The study of the whole field of pictography in the areas of North America where hunting cultures predominated has therefore unique value

(Dewdney 1970: 25).

In the spring of 1970 the Canadian Rock Art Research Associates was formed to "...protect and preserve rock art sites in Canada, to promote research and to disseminate ideas and information, and to inform the public". Selwyn Dewdney was the Senior Associate and other members were Dennis Anderson, John Corner, Kenneth C.A. Dawson, Keith Denis, Olive Dickason, Douglas Elias, T.E.H. Jones, Kenneth Kidd, Z.S. Pohorecky, Edward Sawatzsky, Jack Steinbring, Gilles Tasse, Romas Vastokas, Joan Vastokas and James Patrick Whelan.

Jones and Pohorecky were active at this time in researching the pictographs of the Precambrian Shield areas of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and northwestern Ontario. Tim Jones was the principal investigator and in 1974 produced the first Master of Arts thesis on the rock art of Canada, titled The Aboriginal Rock Paintings of the Churchill River. The research topic was limited for the purpose of the thesis and dealt with only those sites found directly on or near the Churchill River, 19 in northern Saskatchewan and 3 in Manitoba (Jones 1974: 3). The focus of this work was to record all sites in the area. This was accomplished through the painstaking search of the river's shoreline by canoe.

Once individual pictographs across the Canadian Shield areas of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario had been recorded, rock art researchers turned their attention to other aspects of pictograph study. Research was focused on the analysis of images.

Since the data on the ethnology of petroglyphs are as yet exceedingly frail, it seems likely that form will influence much of the initial work toward petroglyph typology. At least one might expect this among the refined divisions of such general categories as "animal figures", "mythological beings", "abstractions", "geometrics", and "man-made objects". Certainly the observations of creative artists will be of value in isolating instances of idiosyncratic phenomena" (Steinbring and Elias 1967: 5).

Symbols were isolated (Lambert 1982, 1985; Pelleck 1984; Rajnovich 1981; Steinbring 1976, 1978, 1980; Steinbring and Iwacha 1982; Whelan 1974, 1983) and attempts were made to form classification systems of images. Douglas Elias (1970-71: 8) focused on "applying the principles of semiology to the Shield

pictographs, against the broader context of Saulteaux-Ojibwa ethnography" while Jack Steinbring (1978: 21-31) investigated the application of the 'banding principle' to pictographs. Steinbring's theory was that pictographs could be identified as to time and authorship when they occurred in horizontal bands at sites such as Hickson-Maribelli. Efforts to classify pictographs will be discussed in 5.4.-5.5.

Since the 1970s, the research of rock art in Canada has increased significantly, with a wealth of articles and books being published on the subject. In addition to the work of T.E.H. Jones, two Master of Art theses on this subject have been written in Canada: Doris Lundy's "The Rock Art of the Northwest Coast" (1974); and "Formalism and Contextualism: An Historiography of Rock Art Research in the New World" (1977) by Brian Molyneaux. Molyneaux then did considerable petroglyph research in Nova Scotia (1982a, 1982b, 1983a, 1983b) in addition to his pictograph studies in Ontario (1980, 1981, 1983c). In Sacred Art of the Algonkians: A Study of the Peterborough Petroglyphs (1973) Joan and Romas Vastokas published their analysis of the only petroglyph site in Ontario. Writing-On-Stone, Alberta was examined in depth (Brink 1979; Keyser 1977, 1978, 1979), expanding on Dewdney's earlier work (1964). Indian Petroglyphs of the Pacific Northwest by Beth and Ray Hill (1974) also contributed to a greater understanding of Northwest Coast petroglyphs.

### 1.3. TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE WESTERN WOODS CREE

The dating of pictographs has been an ongoing challenge to those interested in rock art and as yet no solution to this problem has been presented. When trying to determine the cultural significance of pictographs in pre-contact culture, an archaeological time frame is necessary so researchers will know which cultural groups were in fact responsible. The cultural attribution of this type of ritual behaviour in the Canadian Shield region has some unique difficulties because of the controversy surrounding the location and movement of various native groups during the immediate precontact, contact and post-contact periods. The group currently inhabiting this region are the Rocky Cree. Similarities of pictograph imagery, subsistence gathering practices and linguistic tradition, support the assumption that the Cree are the group responsible for pictographs in the fieldwork area, as they are in other regions of the Canadian Shield.

The archaeological record for the field work area has not definitively established the presence of this subgroup of the Western Woods Cree and their link to pictographs found in this area. One of the most extensive archaeological investigations has been that conducted in the course of the Churchill River study in 1973 and 1974 (Meyer and Smailes 1975). This involved survey along the whole of the Reindeer River, and on a 105 km. stretch of the Churchill River from Drinking Falls to Wintego Rapids. Meyer and Smailes' findings determined that during the precontact period the prevailing archaeological tradition



was the Clearwater Lake Phase. The Clearwater Lake materials have been assigned to the Selkirk composite which is found throughout a huge area, occupying the boreal forests of northern Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan (Meyer and Russell 1987: 5). In Saskatchewan, Selkirk materials are considered to date ca. A.D. 1300-1700 (ibid: 12). A number of archaeologists (for example, MacNeish 1958: 47-49, Wright 1968, 1971) have argued that Selkirk materials relate to pre-contact Crees (see Meyer (1987) for an extended discussion).

Having established that the Cree were the indigenous people in the region for approximately 900 years before contact, they are undoubtedly the group of persons responsible for the pictographs found there. Meyers and Smailes note that the locations of the rock paintings coincide with the distribution of the Clearwater Lake Phase and "may be attributed to the prehistoric and historic Cree" (1975: 51 - 52). In a later analysis of the Clearwater Lake Phase, Meyer discusses the northern Saskatchewan pictographs and reaffirms his previous attribution (1983: 165). He expands the probable regional limit of Clearwater Lake complex distribution to include one of the principal pictograph sites in western Canada, Hickson-Maribelli Narrows on Smith Channel (ibid.: 165).

As the archaeological evidence links pictographs in the research area to the Cree it is necessary to establish if the Cree who lived in this area at the time of contact are the direct ancestors of the present occupants. As the principal

method of investigation for this research has been to interview native people in settlement areas in close proximity to pictograph sites, the period of habitation and ancestral ties must be determined. Further, a general understanding is required of the territorial distribution of the Algonquian groups and their neighbours during the period around 1700 so that the similarity of religious beliefs and practices may be dealt with in terms of geographic proximity. The contact and exchange between the Rocky Cree and their near neighbours, the Swampy Cree, might be of greater importance than the similarities noted between the Rocky Cree and the Ojibwa of Ontario.

James G.E. Smith (1976: 415) has determined that the territory occupied by the Rocky Cree subgroup of the Western Woods Cree at the time of first European contact was that of the lower Churchill River drainage and west of the Nelson River, in the northern parts of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. To the southeast of the Rocky Cree were the Swampy Cree, who extended territorially from the Hudson Bay lowlands to the head of Lake Winnipeg and west to the area of Cumberland House, Saskatchewan. The Athapuscow Cree were located near Lake Athabasca while the Strongwoods, Thickwoods (or Bois Fort Cree) were found in northern Alberta (Smith 1976: 415-416). The Plains Cree were located on the parkland from lower Lake Winnipeg west to Alberta, while the Ojibwa (or Saulteaux) territory, east of the Plain Cree lands, swept down through the Lake of the Woods region into Ontario (Ray 1974: 101). Smith

has stated:

An examination of the archaeological, linguistic, and historical literature indicates that Cree occupied before contact the lands in general that they occupied during the full historic period  
(1976: 418)

The Cree people of the Canadian Shield share a linguistic heritage with the other Algonquian speaking peoples of the region, the Ojibwa. Their religious traditions are strongly aligned and their religious beliefs markedly similar. These similarities will be discussed later in this chapter but it is significant to identify the basis of continuity amongst these people despite other cultural differences.

Christopher Wolfart (1983) has determined that five dialects of Western Cree can be identified:

- y dialect - Plains Cree Plains parkland and Saskatchewan; northern Alberta; some speakers at Montreal Lake, Stanley Mission and Pelican Narrows
- r dialect - Athabasca Cree Isle a la Crosse; Tete-de-Boule Cree, Quebec
- th dialect - Woods Cree La Ronge; the Churchill River drainage
- n dialect - Swampy Cree ringing the southwesterly shores of James and Hudson's Bay; along the Nelson River drainage to the Saskatchewan River delta
- l dialect - Moose Cree lower Moose River, Ontario

(Wolfart 1983:7-11)

Dale Reid (1984: 24) has provided the following summary of communities in Saskatchewan where the th dialect is spoken: Pinehouse, La Ronge, Sucker River, Stanley Mission, Otter Lake, Brabant Lake, Sandy Bay, Pelican Narrows, Deschambault Lake,

Kinoosao and Southend (Figure 11). Robert Brightman (1989:1) has also examined the historic literature with a view towards differentiating the various linguistics groups. His study of the traditional narratives of the Rock Cree Indians of Manitoba has lead him to conclude that "the Rock Cree/Swampy Cree distinction coinsides precisely with the distribution of the th and n dialects defined by different reflexes of Proto-Algonquian \*1." Brightman has identified the users of the th dialect as the Rocky Cree:

The members of these communities [Pukatawagan, Granville Lake and Brochet, Manitoba] identify themselves as "people of the country of abundant rock" (Rossignol 1939, Smith 1975). When speaking English, Crees use the phrases "Rocky Cree", "Rock Cree", or "Rock People" as glosses (ibid.:1).

Reid (1984:25) refers to the Cree at Southend as the "Southend Cree", although he recognizes the term Rocky Cree. He points out that the Cree at Southend, La Ronge, Stanley Mission and Pelican Narrows refer to themselves as "Nihithiwak" or "the people". "Assiniskwawidiniwok" (Cree of the Rocks) was the term identified by Smith (Brightman 1989:1) to differentiate between Rocky Cree and other groups of Cree speakers. Brightman (ibid.: 1) indicates that the Rocky Cree also refer to themselves as "nihthawak", "a noun which includes Crees of other divisions but excludes Saulteaux, Chipewyans, Assiniboines, and non-Indians."

T.E.H. Jones (1974) utilized the Rocky Cree boundaries established by Smith in his research of pictographs on the

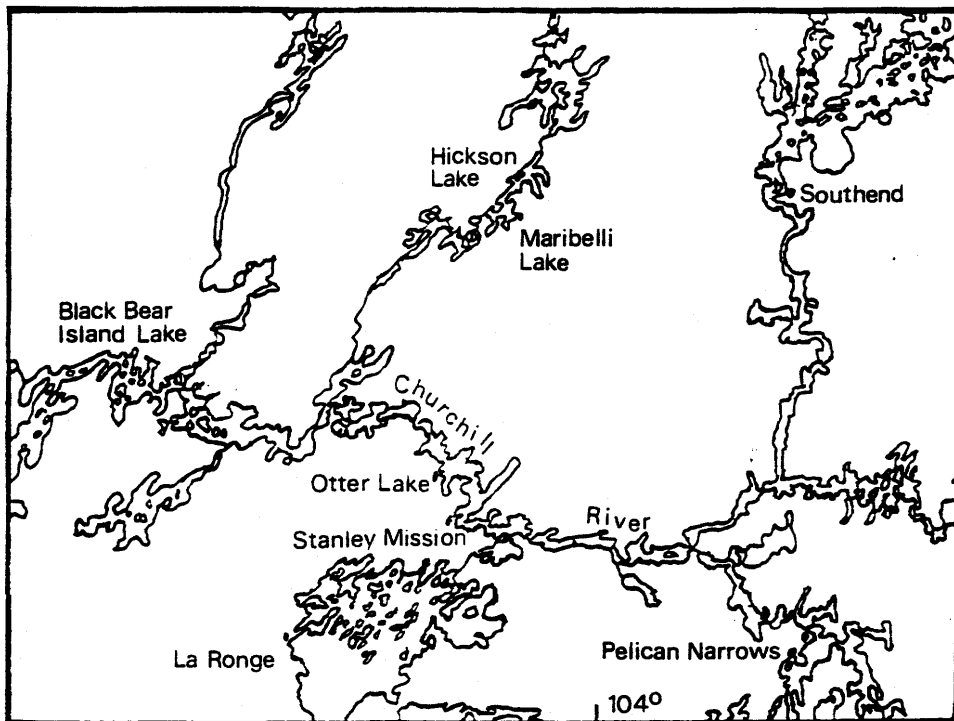


Figure 11. Map of Fieldwork Area and Communities (adapted from Jones (1981:)).

Churchill River, since the river was a frequently utilized travel route for the Rocky and Swampy Cree. Jones noted, "The Churchill River is a major travel route today, as it was the water highway from Hudson Bay to the Northwest. No systematic study of the rock art of such a watercourse in the Canadian Shield has been undertaken previous to this one" (Jones 1974: 1-2). Jones' investigation established the locations of pictograph sites in this area, including sites north and south of the Churchill River.

#### 1.4. PIGMENT AND PICTOGRAPH COMPOSITION

The paint used to make the pictographs was a mixture of ochre and organic binding agent (Jones 1981: 46). The ochre, known also as hematite or anhydrous iron oxide ( $Fe_3O_2$ ), was found locally and was collected by the native people for its traditionally understood sacred properties. In its natural form, ochre is a reddish-coloured sand and provided the reddish hue in pictographs. The binding medium used has not been identified and could have been any one of a number of common substances. The popular favorite among native informants was an oil produced by boiling the inedible remains of whitefish and skimming the oil from the surface of the water (Noah Ratt A.1.1.2.). This oil would then be mixed with the oxidized powder to make the paint (Jones 1974: 133-36). Other possible mediums might have been fat from animals or even water, although this is unlikely as the binding potential for water is limited. Jones (1981a: 47) suggests that the binder used was isinglass. This substance comes from the bladder of the

sturgeon and he provides a number of historic references to "fish glue" mixed with paint.

When attempting to determine absolute dates for pictographs, the issue of the binding medium is critical. It is the only portion of the pictograph with potential for absolute dating. Dating of individual images becomes important when considering sites such as Hickson-Maribelli, where over 100 individual figures or groups of figures appear along one long cliff face. The various drawing styles and range of hue in the ochre-based paint suggests a number of hands, however the lack of effective dating techniques denies researchers the opportunity to determine whether this sacred site was utilized over a period of generations or was chosen consistently by one band or several over a relatively short time span.

Ultimately, the organic material used as a binding medium in the formation of the paint becomes unnecessary to the continued existence of the image and is usually completely absent due to natural erosion, such as rain, wind, and freezing. Little of the binding agent was needed to produce the painting, therefore a reasonable sample necessary for radiocarbon dating would not be available. In addition, radiocarbon dating is not very useful when isolating dates within the last five hundred years. There is no reason to assume that all images at a site were executed simultaneously so each image has to be treated as a separate unit of study, despite its proximity to other images. This requires the testing of each pictograph in

order to ensure accuracy. On an ethical front, the scraping of the pictograph for this sample would result in the destruction of the image. If an instance presented itself where it were possible to collect an adequate sample of the organic binding medium from a pictograph, it is likely that the pictograph is of such recent execution that the date itself would be suspect.

Unfortunately, pictographs continue to be undatable by either relative or absolute dating procedures. For some time archaeologists were puzzled by the composition of the pigment and the interaction of pigment and rock. Taylor, Myers and Wainwright (1974, 1975) of the Canadian Conservation Institute have tried a variety of techniques, including scanning electron microscopy and X-ray microanalysis. These techniques require a small sample of the actual pictograph for experimentation. Exfoliation provides some samples for testing. However, sites which were at this stage of deterioration were immediately of concern since this type of damage is irreversible.

The spalling of surface rock is another common and very serious form of deterioration. Spalling is caused by the combined effects of moisture movement within the rock and temperature changes. When moisture passes through rock and evaporates from the surface, subflorescence and efflorescence salts form just below and on the surface. These salts gradually clog the surface capillaries, progressively retarding further moisture movement; with changing temperatures they expand and contract at different rates than the rock. As a result, flat planes of the surface become detached and fall away. It is very important to note that this condition can be greatly accelerated by intense heat from grass, bush or camp fires very close to the rock surface

(Taylor 1978: 23).

The deterioration of pictographs allowed for the study of their internal composition. The seepage of groundwater causes a



movement of elements such as K, Ca, Na, Si, and Al (Taylor, Myers and Wainwright 1975: 88).

As the groundwater seeps down the rock face some evaporation occurs and the less soluble ions, Si, Al and to some extent Ca, precipitate to form an insoluble mineral deposit 'skin' on the surface of the rock. At sites which receive considerable seepage, a white deposit is evident. However, normally the deposit layer is thin, transparent and often invisible on the rock surface.

This has an important effect on the structure of paintings exposed to seepage. Long before the paintings were made, a thin deposit layer had formed on the rock surfaces. When an artist arrived at such a site, the pigment was applied to the deposit, rather than directly to the rock surface. Subsequently, due to seepage, a deposit has continued to form over the pigment layer. As a result, a four layer cross-section structure is formed

(Taylor, Myers and Wainwright 1975: 88).

Though the continued development of the deposit layer will eventually obscure the pictograph from view, it also acts as a protective layer from other forms of erosion, such as wind, and rain (Wainwright and Taylor 1977: 29). In addition, it holds the pigment in place. Scanning electron microscope analysis showed a minute crack between the rock base and the intermediate deposit layer of two independent samples (Taylor, Myers and Wainwright 1974: 34). Over time, particles of pictograph pigment will fall away as the deposit layer flakes from the surface. This is different from exfoliation, and the deterioration is more obvious (*ibid.*: 40). Taylor, Myers and Wainwright (*ibid.*: 41) suggested that the rate of deposition could be viewed as a possible dating technique, if it could be demonstrated that the deposit layer develops consistently. As yet, this method has not proven successful.

### 1.5. OTHER DATING METHODS

Other dating methods are no more effective in providing results. The paintings share rock faces with organic life forms in the environment and lichens growing on the rocks in this environment occasionally encroach on the area occupied by the images. It is highly unlikely that an artist would choose to make his painting on a bit of rock containing lichen so it was thought that measuring the growth of the lichens might provide a date before which the painting was made.

Unfortunately the growth rate of lichens proved to be an unreliable means of age determination, as lichen can undergo rapid growth spurts, alternating with long periods of dormancy, depending on such factors as the amount of moisture available. If the water level were to rise above the area where lichens were growing, the excess moisture would kill the lichen altogether while having no apparent effect on the painting. For an in-depth discussion of lichenometry and pictographs, see Jones (1974: 157-62).

In some cases, water marks on the rock face indicate changing water levels over time. On occasion the pictograph will be located below a waterline but above the water's surface. This area is generally free of lichen while the rock face above the water line is covered in lichen (as at HbNc-2 Face XIX). The lichen, being unable to survive while immersed in water, has been eliminated or began to grow during the period when water levels were increased. The question regarding the pictographs in such cases is whether the paintings were made before the

water rose or after it had receded.

Northern Saskatchewan pictograph sites exhibit very little lichen encroachment which, when present, would obstruct visibility of pictographs and would hasten erosion and exfoliation. One notable exception is the Medicine Rapids site (GhMs-10) near Pelican Narrows. Comparative examination of other sites, using photographs and drawings from the original recordings by Tim Jones (1974), indicated no visible change in the condition of the pictographs over a fifteen year period. This would suggest that, despite the harsh environmental conditions of the Canadian Shield and damage caused by accessibility to water, erosion is an unreliable dating indicator.

Failure to produce absolute dates has forced researchers to approach this problem from such relative dating strategies as noting how the Cree oral traditions indicate that offerings were left at sacred sites as a means of showing respect to the spirits. To date, sites have not been discovered where other artifacts were present. This is due in part to the physical features of the sites and to the organic composition of the objects which would have been offered.

#### 1.6. DATING PICTOGRAPHS ETHNOGRAPHICALLY

Despite the inapplicability of absolute or relative dating methods, there are some time indicators about the period in which some pictographs were made, though there are no earliest

dates from which to start dating pictographs. However, the inclusion of syllabics and European trade goods in pictographs indicate that images were being made during the period immediately before contact or after. Examples of these non-indigenous elements are be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5. At this juncture, their significance lies in the fact that they appeared very infrequently and that they exist at all in northern Saskatchewan pictographs.

Ongoing research by archaeologists, anthropologists and other interested parties in the Canadian Shield has indicated that the making of pictographs was linked to the vision quest ritual. This connection was proposed by Dewdney (1970) and has also been touched upon by research done by Tim Jones (1974) in northern Saskatchewan. Other mentions of informant data linking the two were Elias and Steinbring (1967) in Manitoba and Thor and Julie Conway (1989) in Ontario. The contemporary native people, the descendants of those responsible for making the paintings, have provided valuable information regarding both pictographs and the vision quest ritual.

Prior to contact with Europeans, native children were taught legends and stories which explained the origins of the people, land and other creatures. They were instilled with a deep respect for the land they occupied, for the animals they would hunt in the future, and the supernatural being who had created all - the Manito. Through legends, these children were shown that additional supernatural beings and spirits existed around

them; spirits who could affect or control events in the known physical world or who could interact with men and could cause change in the lives of men. Supernatural beings could reside in elements of the landscape, such as trees and rocks, or could be assume the form of animals. The legends and myths were handed down through generations from that time when the spirits in animal and other forms could speak and be understood by humans and during which many unusual events occurred resulting from contact between the natural and supernatural worlds. During this mythical period, a human who did not properly conduct himself or did not honour the spirits might find himself being acted upon by the offended spirit in ways which could seriously endanger both himself and those around him. As it was not always known what actions might displease supernatural beings, humans determined that it was best to attempt to appease them before any damage might occur. Behaviours were developed which would indicate the deep respect humans held for all aspects of the world in which they lived.

One of the strategies by which a young man could decrease the potential for disaster was to enlist the support of a protective and sympathetic spirit. The ritual process which would put the human in contact with the spirit was known as the vision quest and was part of the rite of passage to adulthood. Although the vision quest experience was open to both males and females it is thought that males pursued spirit guardians more frequently than females because of their roles as hunters and leaders. When a young man had achieved the age at which he was to become

a hunter and had been instructed on the ways of men and of the supernatural, he was sent out to his first personal contact with the supernatural.

By seeking out and developing a respectful relationship with the supernatural being, the hunter assured himself of guidance and protection in a world of potential crises. The guardian spirit could indicate to the hunter the most potentially successful approach to a hunt or could warn him in advance of the dangers to be encountered with other less sympathetic spirits. This relationship was maintained because it was deemed to be mutually beneficial.

When the vision had been concluded and the dreamer had 'returned' to the natural world he might chose to make a visual representation of what was encountered, viewed, or experienced during the period of the vision. It is not known if pictographs were made as an integral part of the vision quest or whether the individual dreamer made the decision to record his dream permanent in this way, or not.

Culture is not static. The world view of a group of people undergoes an evolutionary process and the ideas and behaviours they hold in common change and adapt as required for their survival. The vision quest ritual suffered greatly under the pressure of conversion to Christianity. Although knowledge of traditional religious beliefs continues to be part of the memories of native elders, researchers can only rely on second-

hand information for their descriptions and analysis. Until such time as pictographic images may be accurately placed in the archaeological time frame, current knowledge and analysis of pictographs must be based on the memories of the native elders. It is their contribution to this area of research which has allowed for the expansion of contemporary understanding of the mysterious symbols from the past.

## 2. THEORETICAL APPROACH

The study of pictographs would appear to be an easy task - identify the images and ask informants what they mean and why they were made. An examination of symbols and their associated meanings in isolation yield substantive results. However, the real challenge to a study of pictographs is to identify the cultural context of pictographs and place them analytically within the larger culture. Another challenge in pictograph research is that living informants, intimate in the knowledge of the symbol and ritual, are not available and the ritual itself is no longer practised. Clues as to the meaning of a pictograph and the vision quest ritual with which it was associated must be collected from documented, historical sources, descendants of pictograph makers and the existing oral history. Once such data were collected the analysis of the symbols could begin.

Elements of the traditional religion were identified and examined, and the symbols used by the Rocky Cree were analyzed. Symbols, found in the pictographs and the myths and legends, had to be contextualized if further meaning was to be attributed to them. Symbolic Anthropological theory was the appropriate theoretical approach for this endeavour.

The field of Symbolic Anthropology has had a relatively recent development in comparison with other lines of anthropological investigation. Although anthropologists have encountered the existence and uses of symbols within cultural systems since the



introduction of ethnographic fieldwork as an anthropological methodology, they had previously viewed the symbol as being mystical in quality -- a sign of highly condensed meaning (Firth 1973: 29). Symbols were principally associated with religion and other secret beliefs and practices (for example, witchcraft, sorcery and magic) and anthropologists felt that the understanding of symbols might reveal a wide range of knowledge and, perhaps, the "real" nature of man. At this early stage, however, they did not feel capable of pursuing this line of inquiry and, in general, anthropology was preoccupied with other aspects of theoretical development, such as the incorporation of the theory of human evolution and the analysis of social institutions and systems.

When endeavouring to understand the essential foci of a theoretical orientation it is often useful to examine the stated objectives of the inquiry. Raymond Firth (1973) has identified those of Symbolic Anthropology as being:

to provide systematic description and analysis of such a symbolic act in its verbal and non-verbal aspects; to distinguish those parts of the action which are held to be significant from those which are incidental; to mark the routine or standard elements (key) as against those which are personal and idiosyncratic; to get illumination from the actor, participants and non-participants of the meanings they attach to the act; and to set all this in its conceptual and institutional framework and in the more specific framework of statuses and group relations of the people concerned

(Firth 1973: 27).

Fundamental to the study of Symbolic Anthropology is the concern with how the people involved formulate their reality. Some followers of this orientation feel it is necessary to study the

system of symbols and what these symbols actually do within the culture if the symbolic sections are to be related back to the people's cosmological perception. Since religious beliefs serve to justify a group's existence, and many of their actions and practices are symbolic, the study of religion and ritual has traditionally been the starting point for Symbolic Anthropologists.

As we are to deal with meaning, let us begin with a paradigm: viz, that sacred symbols function to synthesize a people's ethos -- the quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic mood -- and their world view -- the picture they have of the way things in sheer reality are, their most comprehensive ideas of order. In religious belief and practice a group's ethos is rendered intellectually reasonable by being shown to represent a way of life ideally adapted to the actual state of affairs the world-view describes, while the world-view is rendered emotionally convincing by being presented as an image of an actual state of affairs peculiarly arranged to accommodate such a way of life  
(Geertz 1979: 79).

In order to be able to identify the images in pictographs, it is vital to examine the way in which members of the culture perceive themselves and their place in the cosmos. The development of belief and belief systems is a cultural universal. The religion developed by a group of people over a period of time reflects a set of attitudes, acceptable behaviours, practices and beliefs. Each is integrally linked to a belief in the supernatural. The religion of the Rocky Cree is laden with supernatural beings, capable of extraordinary actions. Informant data has linked the making of pictographs to the vision quest of the traditional Rocky Cree religion (in Tables 1 - 4, informant data concerning the vision quest and pictographs have been isolated by unit). If supernatural beings appear in the pictographs then it is essential that their

personalities and associations be known in order to attribute meaning to the image. The qualities and characteristics of the supernatural beings would have been recounted to member of the group through myths and legends, therefore, an analysis of the oral history would provide connotations for the pictograph images.

In the absence of living informants able to definitively state the meanings of pictographic images, the meanings attributed to pictographs through this strategy are subject to criticism. However, the analysis of the oral culture provides as clearly as possible the understood meanings of symbols in legends and stories. There is little to suggest that the connotations and meaning of a symbol such as the pipe symbol would change significantly when contribute to an understanding of the symbols.

In a similar fashion to the analysis of vision quest material, the legends and stories collected during the fieldwork process (B.1.-4.) were examined and individual symbols identified. There are generally three categories of stories within a culture's oral history and these are myths, legends and folk tales. The Rocky Cree informants were not forthcoming with myths and the reasons for this will be dealt with in Chapter 4. Many definitions of myth and legend exist but for the purposes of this study the following have been utilized.

Myth is not simply a piece of attractive fiction which is kept alive by the literary interest in the story. It is a statement of primeval reality which lives in the institutions of the community (Malinowski 1979:45).

The distinction between a myth and a legend is quite clear, with the myth providing the people of the group with an explanation for some aspect of the world in which they live. For example, all cultures have an origin myth(s) which explain the creation of the land, sky, animals and other natural phenomenon. Myths are never changed or elaborated upon, as they are perceived as being truths. Legends, on the other hand, can undergo considerable variation as the story of Wisahkichak (B.2.). Legends may seem to recall a period far distant in time from the present and contain supernatural characters with unusual abilities. They are different from myths by the nature of the story being told, and very often they present explanations for the characteristics of animals or provide morals and patterns of behaviour which set the standard for members of the group. These qualities of legends will be dealt with further in Chapters 4 and 5.

Folk tales, or stories as they are referred to here, are of a more general nature and may recount events for entertainment reasons. The Rocky Cree are great story tellers and the stories range in length from the very brief to the epic tale. The value of these stories is in the qualities and connotations they provide for various symbols. Within the epic tales, a portion of the story, such as the 'rolling head' might be considered a symbol before it was examined further for individual symbols. On completion of this examination, it was found that the stories fell into four categories, which will be discussed in 5.2. and the identification of major classifications of stories, such as wihtikow, allowed for

a greater understanding of the concerns of the Rocky Cree.

The distinction between the symbol and sign has been clarified by Firth (1973: 64) through consideration of what each is to represent. Symbols are referents of concepts, while signs direct attention to an object or situation. An example from informant descriptions of pictographs distinguishes the two. When the pictograph image is identified as being a travel marker to indicate that a group had passed by this spot and how many animals they killed at this location, the pictograph is acting as a sign. If, however, the image of an animal is meant to represent the pawakan, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, the pictograph is a symbol. The examination of symbols in the oral culture provided insight as to the connotation of the symbol in the visual representation. The symbol of the pipe (5.3.1.) has particular meaning, as derived from the legends and stories, and when applied to the pictographs, allows for meaning to be clarified in the image. As the identity and meaning of one image was determined, other symbols gained meaning.

One of the leaders in the development of this approach has been Victor Turner, who has studied ritual, since ritual is composed of symbols. The symbol is regarded as being the smallest unit of the ritual which remains constant with regard to the specific properties of the ritual (Turner 1969: 14-15). He has identified the properties of the ritual symbol as being "condensation, unification of disparate referents, and polarization of meaning" (ibid.: 52). He suggested that if all the different types of

rituals within the particular group's ritual cycle were examined then all aspects of the symbols involved would be revealed for analysis. He identified two classes of symbols which appear within the ritual context:

1. dominant, with central position in rituals and being extremely multivocal.
2. other enclitic or dependent symbols, which may be univocal or function to keep the ritual in action.

There are specific objects which might have different symbolic roles depending on the specific ritual, for example, the mukula tree in the Ndembu culture. Turner found that there were three dimensions of meaning attached to a specific symbol, and the use of each would be of value to the complete analysis in the ritual context:

1. exegetic - the explanation inferred by the investigator as to the member's view of ritual.
2. operational - the equating of the symbol's meaning to its use, including verbal as well as non-verbal symbols, for example, ritualized speech.  
- also considerations of formal exclusion and of social structure and organization.
3. positional - the relationship identified between one symbol and another, as this might be important to its meaning, for example, binary opposite symbols.  
- this dimension includes considerations of the culture's basic structures of thought, ethics, aesthetics, laws, etc., rather than specific actions or circumstances. (for example, myth).

The difficulty in analysing the vision quest as a ritual of the Rocky Cree religion is that very little is known about the actions of the dreamer during the period of isolation. Information is known concerning the means by which the dreamer distanced himself

from the other members of his group but the ceremonies or activities which he might have engaged in while on the vision quest have not been discussed. Since the vision quest is not being practised at this time, only the symbols which resulted from the vision quest are available for study.

Firth (1973: 76-77) views symbols as having instrumental value as "a device for enabling us to make abstractions." The symbol may be used as a unifier, with the value being the power to invoke strong emotions of identification within the group and may be used to precipitate positive or negative action depending on the circumstances and the purpose of its use (ibid.: 77). There are several forms of instrumental value towards which the symbol may be directed, such as communication and knowledge (ibid.: 79-83), however the form most easily recognizable in the observation of external human behaviour was the symbol's instrumental value as a mechanism of social control or as an instrument of power (ibid.: 83-91). Firth noted that the use of symbols, such as the Bible, for the purposes of justification of social action could be a very powerful means of affecting the actions of others within the group. Symbols used in this pursuit of control could be directed towards gaining or maintaining authority over others and then manipulating behaviour. He also noted Nancy Munn's statement that symbols may be utilized as instruments of control for the purpose of "transforming subjective experience" by transforming or conditioning the "intellectual or emotional framework or basis from which behaviour proceeds" (Firth 1973: 85). Each of these means of

gaining and maintaining control were most prominent in such public domains, as the political realm. A criticism of Firth's approach was that it was reductionist and neglected the problems related to man's perception of his social order in moral and aesthetic terms.

Firth also distinguishes between public and private symbols. He suggested that private or personal symbols were less significant than the public symbols because they were free-floating (ibid.: 212). Public symbols were those shared by members of the group and were such that there was no observable link between the symbol and its complex set of associations. In this regard the designation of the relationship between the object and the symbol may seem arbitrary or obscure but must be examined.

Although there is some question as to whether Clifford Geertz is to be considered a Symbolic Interactionist or a Symbolic Anthropologist, his work is of interest within both orientations. He, along with all the symbolic anthropologists, adopted the view from Talcott Parsons that culture should be perceived as a system of shared symbols and meanings. However, Geertz (1977: 486-492) approached these systems through the symbolic forms by which individuals represent themselves to one another. The meanings he was searching for are shared by the social actors and he claimed that it was through the flow of behaviour (social action) that cultural forms would be articulated. To operationalize this theory, Geertz isolated the symbolic elements and then identified the internal relations between and among the elements so as to



characterize the system in a general way.

Recent developments in Linguistics have focussed on the creative aspect of language generation and useage. Since language is representational of objects, actions and concepts, etc., it is natural that studies of words as symbols would be of interest to symbolic anthropologists. Chomsky (1968) introduced the view of language as a creative process and isolated two major criterion of its use. The 'competance' criteria involved the ideal grammatical knowledge of the speaker, while the 'performance' criteria considers the actual use of the language in the active sense. He felt that the circumstances under which new sentences, metaphors, symbols, etc. were created should be examined, or in other words, the study of the events surrounding the creative process.

David Schneider suggested that social structures or systems were inappropriate sets of relations to examine in the study of symbols and meanings, as the units and rules of each of these organizational principles were distinct and exclusively applicable. He endeavoured to identify the "core" symbols and sub-symbols within three "planes" of observable events in American society and he began by examining the relations and features distinct to American kinship. During this investigation he found that the symbols contained within were concerned with unifying the relations of the members and he claimed that the core symbols, although diffused, encouraged enduring solidarity of the relations. Schneider then applied the concept of core symbols to other areas

where diffuse, enduring solidarity was in evidence - nationality and religion. He concluded that the core symbol is only effective in domains, or areas, where the domain is pure and can be defined in terms of a single symbol or set of closely interlocking symbols, such as membership by birth.

In an article entitled Symbolic Studies , Turner (1975) examined the essential characteristics of the symbol, which he had found in the ritual context, and made comparisons with symbols in other social processes -- those of the therapeutic arts and of politics. Turner agreed with many of the ideas and conclusions presented by others, and he extended Firth's premise that symbols may be instruments, particularly of control. Having agreed with Firth, Turner then went further by saying that if symbols are instruments then they are manipulable and may be used for a number of purposes. The need for social action can be demonstrated in each of the forms of social process presented by Turner. He examined the symbols involved in each and found the symbols were principal aspects of social mobilization, interaction and styling behaviour. transferred to pictographs.

Other aspects of traditional Rocky Cree religion are contained within the legends and stories. Power, or medicine, is an essential element of traditional Rocky Cree belief, and had many forms (5.1.3.). The study of sorcery (Mair 1969) in Rocky Cree mythology reveals a number of established characteristics (B.4). Generally the sorcerer was a woman and in the Cree culture women

did not gain power through the vision quest ritual. Their power was acquired through other, unstated means. They used their power in malicious ways to harm others but were usually killed in the process. There was generally a dispute or perceived wrong to be settled and supernatural powers were used. However, witchcraft is not a typical practice among the Rocky Cree.

In the Rocky Cree culture, animate qualities were attributed to inanimate objects in the landscape (as reflected linguistically). Rocks and trees were deemed capable of supernatural abilities, as were animals and other living creatures. The individual could enter a second dimension of reality when in transcendental states, such as dreams, hallucinations, trances, and ultimately, death. If man could enter a dual reality, it followed that the other living beings could also. Any observable phenomena which were unusual or mysterious, could be explained in supernatural terms. From the belief in a second dimension, or the soul, developed ancestor worship, since the soul was believed to live on past the death of the physical body. Aspects of ancestor worship will be discussed in Section 5.6. Belief in the supernatural also provided social control and a rigorous set of behaviours. Deviation from the moral and value code would result in the anger of the spirits. Examples of breaking behavioural rules and the consequences will be explored in 5.1.2.

In the Rocky Cree religion, intermediaries were not required to intercede between supernatural beings and humans. The Creator,

Manito, was described as being a disinterested spirit while the spirit guardians, or pawakan, interacted with humans (4.3.1.). The dreamer was able to contact the supernatural being through the vision quest ritual without the aid of other humans (4.4. and 5.1.). Paul Radin (1927: 20-30) identified the function of the shaman as being the means by which events or actions are explained. Sanction would come from the supernatural beings for particular actions, as in the case of prediction. The vision quest ritual was the means by which the Rocky Cree shaman gained power over the supernatural beings. It provided a mechanism for prediction of future events (Table 3 and 4) and information which could not be gained through other means. Once a guardian spirit had made itself known to the dreamer, it would assist him throughout his life. Radin (ibid.: 29) stated that deities were only illicit in times of crisis or when successful actions had been completed. This is indicated by Rocky Cree informants, though the legends and stories imply the dreamer was free to call upon the spirit when needed. Other spirits would also assist the dreamer when called upon. In the case of pictographs, the ritual through which contact was made must be examined carefully.

Symbolic Anthropology has not yet developed as fully as its proponents had hoped. However, the orientation does demonstrate a great deal of potential and the capacity to extend the study of symbols into areas far beyond systems of belief and its associated practices. The study of pictographs can benefit from the use of Symbolic Anthropology in the analysis of symbols in both the oral

culture and the visual. The analysis of the pictographs in northern Saskatchewan must be placed into a broader cross cultural context. The examination of pictographs must continue at the level on the individual symbol and its associated meanings but must then move to a more generalized understanding of pictographic imagery. The study of northern Saskatchewan pictographs has revealed more than simply the identification and meaning of symbols. It has provided a key to some of the core beliefs in the Rocky Cree traditional religious system.

### CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There are few documented historical references to northern Saskatchewan pictographs, so an intense ethnographic fieldwork investigation was perceived to be both appropriate and necessary in order to learn more about these pictographs. The fieldwork investigation was begun in the summer of 1983 and concluded in the fall of 1986. Both method and approach changed slightly from the beginning of the study to the end, as the focus of the study was adjusted. Since it was not known in 1983 what the contemporary native people knew about pictographs or the extent of their knowledge about traditional Rocky Cree religion, the scope of the research was initially very broad. When it was determined that their knowledge included specific details about traditional religion, the vision quest ritual and making pictographs, these areas were focused on more directly.

#### 3.1. INTERVIEW METHODOLOGY

Interviews were conducted in the communities in which people resided, usually in the informant's home. Only one interview (Elie Custer A.1.4.2.) took place at a pictograph site, though this had been a strategy which was initially considered. It was found that informants were uncomfortable with the proposed travel to sites so this was not pursued. Since interviews took place in people's homes there were frequent interruptions but there were also interjections from other family members. This contributed to the data base and was constructive. Interviews were generally conducted during the day so children and other younger family

members were absent. Contributions were made by spouses or older children.

The development of a questionnaire about knowledge of pictographs and traditional Rocky Cree religion was considered problematic from the outset. Most of the informants preferred to speak in their own language even when they were able to understand English. It was not known what percentage could write, and if they preferred English, Cree or syllabics. The difficulties in preparing such a questionnaire and having the responses translated at a later date were far greater than the presumed benefits. The Rocky Cree are very polite and will agree with what they perceive to be the correct response. A questionnaire, no matter how carefully structured, would have led responses in a specific direction. They are also social people and enjoy visiting. The prospect of presenting a written questionnaire to a person who enjoys conversational interaction would have had inhibiting effects on answers. This assumption was based on the response to tape recorders by some informants. Their reluctance to discuss traditional religion in a formal situation, where their answers were being recorded and could be used for some unknown purpose, was apparent.

The interviewing procedure, which evolved quickly and was extremely successful, was to arrange for a visit and arrive prepared to listen. Very specific questions were asked in a generalized fashion but the order was not predetermined. It was

different for every informant based on their responses and what they chose to discuss. The interview would begin with a general question about pictographs and, depending on the answer, the topic was expanded upon. If the informant began with information about how pictographs were made and the materials used, the questions would follow the process of making wathaman. If the informant spoke of 'dreaming' and spirit guardians, elaboration would be asked for. Once the initial topic had been exhausted, questions would be asked about pictographs and other aspects of traditional religion. By not appearing to structure the questions, a conversational tone was established and the informant felt free to share whatever information he or she had and without feeling tested in their knowledge. A key strategy with Rocky Cree elders was not to ask another question too quickly and some of the most valuable information collected was produced after long silences.

The use of translators produced its own difficulties early in the fieldwork as the only person understanding both sides of the conversation was the translator. This was obviously an undesirable situation as it could lead to missed opportunities and misinformation. The quality of the translation varied and, unfortunately, could only be established in an interview situation. This was due in part to the length of the answer and the time given by the informant for the translation. Interrupting a train of thought during the story-telling was difficult to do, especially with a group of people as polite as the Rocky Cree. As a counter-measure, when permitted, interviews were recorded and



translations done later. This was not problematic with stories, during which it most frequently occurred, since specific questions about myths and legends were generally unnecessary. Toward the end of the fieldwork period, sufficient understanding of the Rocky Cree language was gained so that few opportunities were missed. This did not, however, replace the need for a translator.

Translators were useful in establishing credibility, for they served as a link between the two parties involved. All the translators were women from the community. By agreeing to act as translators, they legitimized the study. It was a means of having a person from the community participate in the research and indicate to others that this was research that would ultimately benefit them. Most became very interested in the intent of the research and would probe the informant without specific instruction. Rosie McKenzie of Stanley Mission was particularly proficient at this.

It was assumed that men should be the focus of interviews as myths and legends were passed on by males to male children rather than to females. The vision quest ritual was restricted to males as part of hunting behaviour and the guardian spirits assisted men in locating game, predicting future events and protecting other members of the group (See Chapter 4 and 5). Men were responsible for making pictographs so information concerning the vision quest ritual and pictographs would have been passed on exclusively to men. It was not known if the Rocky Cree had traditionally kept

such information available only to male members, as the secret societies of other cultures do. In reality, female informants were very knowledgeable about all aspects of traditional Rocky Cree religion. In particular, their participation in the Band Council's collection of legends has broadened the data base of traditional stories.

It was initially a concern that the researcher was female, the translators were female and the informants usually male but this did not appear to inhibit the flow of data from informants. It may have been contributory since the involvement of so many women may have made male informants feel that they had knowledge that women did not. Regardless, any apprehensions about the reluctance of male informants to deal with a female researcher were, in the majority of cases, groundless.

Most persons contacted were 60 years of age or older. Memory loss was anticipated but did not prove to be a concern. Details were sketchy in some cases but the substance of the data was consistent and sound. The death of informants was inevitable when considering the ages of native elders. One unfortunate aspect of dealing with informants of this age was that several died during the research period. Planned visits to informants for elaboration and verification often resulted in disappointment, so substantiation had to be achieved from other sources - accounts provided by other Rocky Cree informants, ethno-historic sources, myth and legend material published by the Lac La Ronge Indian Band Council, and

cross-cultural comparisons.

### 3.2. FIELDWORK AREA

The boundaries of the research area were determined by the territory in which the Rocky Cree lived. A consideration of the fieldwork was to interview informants of the Rocky Cree dialect as they were considered to be the descendants of the group who made the pictographs in this region (1.4.). The Rocky Cree's nearest neighbours, both culturally and geographically, are the Swampy Cree to the southeast. The cultural similarities between these two Cree groups are strong. However, the differences extend beyond the linguistic and include regional variation in myths, legends and the images found in pictographs. Regional variation is discussed in Chapter 5. Benefits of comparative analysis of pictographs and other related Cree religious material was a consideration, but examination of Rocky Cree pictographs was more immediate. It was reasonable to limit the boundaries of the fieldwork on regional and cultural bases.

The criteria used by T.E.H. Jones (1974) to determine the boundaries of his rock painting research were based on the principle that the Churchill River was the major travel route for the Cree. For his purposes, following a waterway used regularly by the people making pictographs was extremely practical. As his research focused on systematically recording pictographs along the Churchill River, it was not necessary to consider which group of Cree were responsible for the pictographs he recorded. The

determination of boundaries in both the present case and Jones' were based on the type of pictograph information being sought.

### 3.3. DIVISION OF THE FIELDWORK AREA

The initial fieldwork proposal, submitted for the summer of 1984, indicated a schedule and field method which divided the Churchill River drainage into four areas (Figure 11). Each area was established by the concentration of communities and their populations, and by the amount of time estimated to be necessary to conduct interviews in each. Due to the limited time available, each area was allocated approximately 25 days, allowing for time to visit informants living outside established communities as well.

In fact, it was found that the fieldwork region was more appropriately divided into two areas, as there were two major access routes into this portion of north central and northeastern Saskatchewan. In north central Saskatchewan, Highway 2 continues beyond La Ronge, to Missinipe and Southend, with a side road to Stanley Mission. Grandmother's Bay Reserve is located across the river from Missinipe. Between Prince Albert and Pelican Narrows, on Highway 106, is a side road leading to the community of Deschambault Lake and beyond Pelican Narrows on Highway 135 to Sandy Bay.

The division of the fieldwork region into two areas coincided with the territories of the two Band Councils administering this region

of Saskatchewan. The Lac La Ronge Indian Band Council is situated in La Ronge and has members in Stanley Mission and Grandmother's Bay. The Peter Ballantyne Band Council offices are in Pelican Narrows and are responsible for band members in Deschambeault Lake and Sandy Bay.

The only community in the fieldwork region which does not fall into alignment with the highway/Band Council division of the province is Southend, which is reached by travelling north of La Ronge but is part of the Peter Ballantyne Band. This was not a problem to the research process, once permission had been gained to conduct interviews in Southend. It did, however, suggest a degree of isolation for informants in this community which might be reflected in the data. The family connections between Southend and Pelican Narrows were strong since both are located on the Churchill River, which was the major travel route for the native people before the roads were built.

The first fieldwork area began at Stanley Mission and included the reserve communities of Stanley Mission and Grandmother's Bay. It also included the relatively unpopulated stretch of the Churchill River west of Missinipe to Needle Falls. The second area included the Churchill River east of Stanley Mission and the communities of Pelican Narrows and Sandy Bay.

It was found that by visiting communities in the two areas the greatest number of informants could be contacted and interviewed.

The communities varied between being reserve communities and mixed treaty/non-treaty populations, with some portion of reserve land being completely non-reserve townsites. The governing body in all but one community was the Band Council and none had a non-native population which exceeded the native population. As some residents depended on hunting, trapping and fishing for a portion of their subsistence, there were continually fluctuating populations. One interview was conducted at a trapline residence within access of Pelican Narrows, but most traplines were considered too distant to warrant the expense of travelling for a single interview. Most informants who lived on traplines were interviewed while they were in town visiting.

#### 3.4. FIELDWORK ACTIVITIES

The fieldwork of August and September 1983 concentrated on becoming familiarized with the Rocky Cree people in La Ronge and Stanley Mission and gaining permission from Chief Tom McKenzie of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band to conduct fieldwork. A brief trip to Pelican Narrows determined that future fieldwork in this community, and this region of the province, would be profitable.

Stanley Mission was the initial point of contact in the summer of 1984. It is located on the Churchill River system at the southeast tip of Mountain Lake. It is within one hour's boat trip of four pictograph sites and contained a disproportionate population of elders in comparison with the other communities visited. The time period spent there was adjusted accordingly.

Unfortunately, there were difficulties in finding an available and reliable translator, a problem not confined to this community or this part of the research. For the reasons stated in 3.1., the necessity of a translator affected the amount of time effectively spent in Stanley Mission, while it did establish a degree of credibility and commitment in the community. A profitable trip to Grandmother's Bay Reserve was made in June and the elders there were interviewed as to their knowledge of pictographs. A number of traditional stories were also collected.

One week in June was spent visiting Black Bear Island Lake, west of Missinipe on the Churchill River, where a number of older trappers were said to reside during the summer months. This is also an area where there are six pictograph sites, so the trip was made to check and photograph the sites while interviewing the residents. Unfortunately, not as many informants as anticipated were living at Black Bear Island Lake during that summer but those who were located were interviewed.

On July 4, 1984 permission was granted by Chief Joe Custer of the Peter Ballantyne Band to conduct interviews with Band members, and fieldwork began in the second area of the fieldwork region. Pelican Narrows is the central point in the area, as well as being the largest community, so residency was set up in a campground operated by the Band. Trips were made from this location to view pictographs in the area and to interview informants in Pelican Narrows, Sandy Bay and one trapline residence. A three-day trip

was made to Sandy Bay, a non-reserve community, and three elders were interviewed and two sites examined and photographed. Several attempts were made to conduct interviews in Deschambeault Lake. Unfortunately the contact people who had agreed to facilitate interviews could not be located and interviews were not conducted.

The final fieldwork activity of this period was a five-day trip to Southend at Reindeer Lake. Several unrecorded sites had been reported in this area, and in the course of establishing contact with Band councillors, a translator and a guide, 11 more possible sites were reported. Interviews were completed with available informants and a trip made to attempt site confirmation.

Due to other commitments, fieldwork was not resumed until the winter of 1985-86 when a preliminary analysis of collected data was begun. It was noted that on more than one occasion informants stated that the spirits did not approve of myth-telling during the summer months and that elders would not do so out of respect and the belief that the spirits would make it snow if this request was not adhered to. The collection of myth and legend material from all sources was the focus of research during a series of trips to Stanley Mission and Pelican Narrows during the winter months. These trips were frequent but generally did not exceed two weeks in length.

### 3.5. ANALYSIS OF DATA

The last trip made to northern Saskatchewan occurred in November



1986. Since that time the translation and transcription and analysis of interview and Rocky Cree religious material has been completed. Categorization of published myths and legends has resulted in two subdivisions - the short story and the epic tale. The short stories have been further subdivided based on the percentage of stories featuring one character. Witikow and Wisahkicahk stories form the majority and the explanation for this are provided in Chapter Five. Other stories tell of the 'little people', people with supernatural power and the ability to transform themselves at will, inanimate objects with power or the ability to speak to humans, unusual animals and fish, and dreaming. None of these subjects were recounted frequently enough to develop a separate category, but as a body of stories they provide a fairly well rounded sample of traditional Rocky Cree myths and legends.

The second subdivision of stories are the epic tales which follow a pattern of story-telling. The principal character is involved in a lengthy series of events in which his supernatural powers are revealed and tested. These stories fall into four groups: Ayas/Iyas' journey; the rolling head; the victim(s) of an evil trader; and the victim(s) of another person's supernatural powers. There is some mixing of elements from one group to another but the essential form of each story remains the same. As with the short stories, aspects of traditional Rocky Cree religious belief are revealed. This is elaborated on in Chapter 5.

Analysis of the interview material verified the hypothesis that the vision quest ritual was integrally linked to pictographs. Specific data were identified and interviews were examined to determine the frequency of each detail (Tables 1 to 8). Reasons were provided as to why the vision quest was significant in the Rocky Cree culture and of why the pictographs were importance as a record of what was seen while 'dreaming' (5.1.- 5.1.1.). The process of making a pictograph was verified, as were the materials used. A fuller understanding of the vision quest ritual and pawakan is now available based on these interviews (5.1.1.- 5.1.2.). The forms of power an individual might utilize, derived from the strength of his pawakan (5.1.4.) and the unusual abilities of animals have been identified.

Images were compared with the interview material and the stories as a means of identifying specific meanings for pictographs (5.2.). The efforts of other pictograph researchers were useful as a basis for comparison. Based on the comprehensive nature of the data collected, the fieldwork and research methodology were successful. The data is consistent with the limited documented sources. The ethnographic approach to the study of pictographs in northern Saskatchewan has provided previously unknown information and has confirmed some of what had been suspected. The application of this approach to pictograph research in other areas of the Canadian Shield would allow for systematic cross-cultural comparison of pictographs and increase the meaningfulness of Rocky Cree pictographs.

#### CHAPTER 4. ETHNO-HISTORIC RECONSTRUCTION OF CREE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Any study of a people should include an examination of their history and the events which have contributed to that history and the subsequent developments within the culture. The investigations surrounding the contemporary Cree people in the Churchill River region and their traditional beliefs and practices must include an examination of the events of the fur trade period and the effects this unique sequence of events in Canadian history had on the native people.

The initial survey of the historic fur trade and missionary records was to search out references to:

1. pictograph locations;
2. pictographs and their cultural context in the traditional lifeways, as recounted by native informant during the contact period;
3. any other art forms made during the contact period, with the possibility of relating specific images to pictographic images;
4. the traditional system of religious belief and practises in the hopes of verifying data collected during the fieldwork process. In particular, attention was focused on references to the vision quest and the ideological and cosmological beliefs expressed by members of the group contacted in this geographical region.

The review was restricted to such primary sources as the journals

and other documents of the adventurers, missionaries and others who entered the lands of the Rocky Cree, in the areas along and north of the Churchill River system. Few data were found pertaining to this area so the review was expanded to include peoples of the Algonquian linguistic family in the region west of Hudson Bay. Then a review of the historic literature revealed that the religious beliefs of the Algonquian peoples, particularly the Western Woods Cree, are quite consistent, so material from their region verifies ethnographic and historic data collected about the Rocky Cree people located on the Churchill River system.

This investigation was undertaken to become familiar with the data listed above but it became clear that further examination might also answer questions as to why certain traditional religious practices, deeply entrenched in the Cree psyche (specifically the vision quest and the making of pictographs) declined. Recent scholarly analysis of the fur trade period revised past views about the negative effects of Cree and European interaction. A positivistic view has been offered by Thistle (1986), Grant (1984) and others, making it possible to propose hypotheses for the decline of such traditional practices as the vision quest and the making of pictographs while explaining the strong retention of traditional mythological and memory knowledge of traditional ritual practises.

#### 4.1. EUROPEAN FUR TRADERS

Past assumptions have viewed the fur trade as imposing a new set of

economic practices on the Cree, while in fact Thistle (1986: 4) indicates that the trading behaviours were already well known to the natives. In addition, Thistle (ibid.:58) contends that the fur trade did not motivate the Indians to increase their trapping activities to any significant degree and that they employed a philosophy based on the 'principle of least effort' in their trading activities. This antagonized the traders, who were relying on Indian trapping productivity to increase the company's profits (1986: 57). The fur traders were also dependent on the Indians to supply them with food and other goods which the traders could not provide for themselves. Journal entries reveal that the native people were generous in their supply of "country produce" or the meat and other supplies needed as subsistence for the traders (Van Kirk 1980: 55-56). For example,

The Cumberland House journals have also revealed that, in the two decades following the establishment of the post, the HBC depended increasingly on the Western Woods Cree furnishing them with 'country produce'. Their near monopoly on the supply of game animals for food was a significant means by which the Cree extended their control over the trade relationship. For the European traders, the early years at Cumberland House were often characterized by serious food shortages which were alleviated only by the Cree's hunting skills. In 1775 Cocking reported that two tents full of Indians led by hunters Neeshue-wap-pay-a-thin and Patt-e-cow-win had been provisioning the post all winter and that this pattern continued for the next six decades (Thistle 1986: 57).

When the natives were not available the traders were somewhat helpless. In the case of Basquiau in 1778, the traders died of starvation.

"In 1775 Hearne wrote of Canadian traders starving to death and also engaging in cannibalism. The Cree demonstrated their complete control over this situation too, by imposing their own traditional sanctions on this

deviant behaviour: they killed the Canadian involved"  
(Thistle 1986: 58).

Native technology was utilized by the Europeans and they depended upon the Indians to supply them with such essentials of the fur trade, such as canoes, in the case of Hearne at Cumberland House in 1775 (ibid.: 56). Van Kirk (1980) explores the relationship of native women to the fur trade and the means by which they adapted to the new social situation provided by the fur trade. Women provided the posts with "Indian shoes" (moccasins and snowshoes), pemmican, maple sugar, dried and fresh berries and other food products (ibid.: 54-59). Their dependency on native women contravened the official policy of the Hudson Bay Company, but "Without women to provide them with moccasins and snowshoes... officers stressed, the Company would be seriously restricted in its efforts to compete with its rivals" (ibid.: 55). The giving of food and other gifts was an inherent part of the Cree social system of reciprocal gift giving, which provided a safeguard against times when the individual encountered periods of difficulty. This sharing helped to formulate and maintain alliances but also made European fur traders dependent on the Cree, without having much impact on the Cree economic patterns or social system. According to Thistle (1986: 57), the Cree manipulated the fur trade to their advantage by playing trading companies against one another. This demonstrates an excellent understanding of the economic situation in which they were involved, and as the competition between the Hudson Bay Company and the North West Company increased, the native people benefited.

#### 4.2. HISTORIC DOCUMENTS AND THEIR LIMITATIONS

The first Europeans to establish contact with the native people during the fur trade period were the traders and adventurers. Contact in the Hudson Bay region was restricted to trading until the missionaries arrived. The traders were an interesting lot. There were two classes of traders involved in the Hudson Bay organization and that of the North West Company: the officers and the servants or engages (Van Kirk 1980: 9). The European standards of class and rank were carried to the New World through the structures of these companies. The officers of the Hudson Bay displayed an attitude towards the Indians best described as benevolent paternalism (ibid.: 14).

The servants of the Hudson Bay Company in the early years were obtained in the poorer sections of London, where economic conditions forced the unfortunate to enlist as fur traders in the unknown land across the sea. Often the apprentices were young orphaned boys or hard-drinking men. During the eighteenth century Scots became the dominant group in the Hudson Bay Company. They excelled as they were used to difficult climatic conditions. They were also hard-working, usually sober, and thrifty (ibid.: 11). However, post records reveal that many servants were less than satisfactory and were subject to drunkenness and insubordination. There are also references to illicit trade and overcharging for personal gain. Jean Lindokken speaks of the traders at Caribou Lake selling inferior goods and underrating the furs while extorting money from the company by overcharging for goods and then

pocketing the balance (Fidler and Stevens 1985: 161-163). Later in this account, references are made to the disappearance of postmaster Bill Hendry and his clerk Alfred Sterling in the winter of 1933. Other examples of native retaliation against unscrupulous traders exist (Thistle 1986: 67). It is surprising that more traders did not die under suspicious circumstances.

Few had serious formal education (Fidler and Stevens 1985: 161). These men were not chosen for their social skills. They did not have to show compassion or curiosity about the new culture they were encountering. The servants of the companies perpetuated the same class standards to which they themselves had been subjected in their treatment of the Indians and their attitudes toward them. They were sent to "Rupert's Land" to do a job and it took much of their effort in the early years just to stay alive long enough to do it. The harsh winters of the Canadian Shield were difficult and natives helped the Europeans survive.

Much of the information recorded about the Cree was about the Home Guard Cree rather than the Western Woods Cree. The Home Guard were a unique outcome of the fur trade and were those Indians who participated most fully in the fur trade. The Home Guard Cree developed as an identifiable group in the mid-1600s at Hudson Bay and acted as middlemen between the Indians and the traders. Thistle (1986: 17) points out that historians must be careful to distinguish between the Home Guard Cree and the Western Woods Cree when analyzing culture change and making assumptions concerning



native dependency on fur traders. For example, he suggests that the Western Woods Cree did not take advantage of such newly provided technology as guns to the degree previously assumed and that it was the Home Guard Cree who were most willing to utilize European equipment. Similarly, Thistle disputes the view that a "cultural amnesia" resulted from the use of new subsistence-gaining technology, because natives did use traditional methods when ammunition was unavailable. Further he suggests that the Western Woods Cree continued to hunt in traditional fashion without using guns regardless of their availability (ibid.: 36).

Re-examining such misinterpretations in the literature allows for a revised view of fur trade documents and their treatment by scholars. Allowing for an overemphasis of the native dependency on Europeans, and looking at the fur trade system from a new perspective, provision must be made for inaccuracy. The group being reported on by the fur traders was not representative of the Indians who were not in contact with the trading posts. Therefore, the assumptions concerning rapid technological and social change within the native system must be questioned.

Missionaries were in a position comparable to the fur traders and their activities in Canada have been re-examined by Grant (1984), who has studied the documents they left. The mission records and the diaries of these men focused on the conversion of natives rather than on economic transactions or social behaviour patterns. The consistency with the post journal entries about the state of

native souls does not take into consideration a number of factors which had an impact on the Indians from the time of contact. Disease and starvation, due to declining animal populations, had ravaged the native people so the arrival of missionaries with promises of salvation could not have come at a more significant moment in native history. The claims of rapid and complete conversion made by missionaries in their diaries are misleading without consideration of other factors. The missionaries became involved with more previously uncontacted Indians than did the fur traders. Unfortunately, for purposes of this study, they did not record much of ethnographic significance concerning traditional religious belief and practice. One's initial response to their journals is that their zealous pursuit of conversion blinded them to the importance of indigenous religious beliefs. Recent re-evaluation (Grant 1984: 246) suggests that conversion might have been as easily achieved as reported, but not as completely as assumed by the missionaries. The depletion of animal resources and the smallpox and other epidemics of this period left the natives in confusion since the old methods of contacting the spirit guardians were not working as they should. Europeans were persuasive with their arguments for the Christian faith, and perceived similarities with the Cree religion prompted some cultural adaptation. Memories of living native people in the Churchill River area concerning their traditional religion and its ritual practices associated with that religion (see Chapter 5) suggest that Christianity augmented rather than replaced traditional beliefs.

#### 4.3. ROCKY CREE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS: The Historic Period

A review of the historic documents pertaining to the area inhabited by the Rocky Cree, written during and just after the contact period, reveals little about the traditional religious belief system. Some of its aspects are mentioned in journals kept by passing European fur traders or by missionaries but few recorded this type of information. The following reconstruction of the Rocky Cree religious system has had to be based on the limited data available but is supplemented with references from the Algonquian-speaking people encountered by the fur traders and missionaries between Hudson Bay and the research area. The names of spirits in the following section will be referred to using the th dialect of the Cree orthography, unless otherwise indicated (Manito, Maci Manito, Wihtikow, Wisahkecahk, Pawakan, Memekwesiw, Misi Pisew). When original sources are cited, names will appear in the spellings used by the authores

##### 4.3.1. THE SUPREME BEING

Fundamental to the Cree religious belief system was the belief in the Supreme Being or Great Spirit. The earliest mention of the Supreme Being is found in Oldmixon (1931) who drew upon the material of Thomas Gorst 1670-75 (Cooper 1933: 42). Gorst had said that the Indians of the southeastern end of James Bay believed in "two Manetoes or spirits, the one sends all the good things they have, and the other all the bad" (Oldmixon 1931: 382).

The Supreme Being or manitou (the generic name used in place of all spellings) was frequently mentioned in the historic literature: for example, Oldmixon (1931: 382); Isham (1949: 65); Clerk of the California (1746: 235); Ellis (1748: 90); La Potherie (1931: 226); Graham (1949: 149); Houston (1974: 78); Cameron (1804); Harmon (1922: 315); MacKenzie (1970: 136); King (1936: Vol. 1. 39); Richardson (1852: 268); Young (n.d.: 81); Brown and Brightman (1988: 35-36). Still the descriptions of the Supreme Being are not extensive.

David Thompson (1916: 82) discussed the religious views of the Nahathaway people (which was the name used by the Cree of the boreal forest for themselves). Their territory extended south to the Saskatchewan River and west to the Rocky Mountains (Smith 1976: 425). However, despite the wide area the Nahathaway occupied, Thompson (ibid.: 82) noted that they had a consistent understanding of and commitment to their religion. He felt the Nahathaway were "...the only Natives that have some remains of ancient time from tradition" despite European influence for over one hundred years.

They believe in the self existence of the Keeche Keeche Manito (The Great, Great Spirit) they appear to derive their belief from tradition, and believe that the visible world, with all its inhabitants must have been made by some powerful being: but have not the same idea of his constant omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence that we have, but think that he is so when he pleases, he is the master of life, and all things are at his disposal; he is always kind to the human race, and hates to see the blood of mankind on the ground, and sends heavy rain to wash it away. He leaves the human race to their own conduct, but has placed all other creatures under the care of Manitos... (Thompson 1916: 83).

Smith (1976: 426) has investigated the location of the Nahathaway people during this period and has determined that they are the people known as the Rocky Cree. They lived in the vicinity of what is now Isle a la Crosse and the upper waters of the Churchill River, in eastern Saskatchewan and western Manitoba.

Alexander Mackenzie (1970: 97-98) also travelled through the territory of the Rocky Cree and although he ascribed the Cree a wider distribution than the field work area, he did quote the natives as saying the Great Master of Life was "the sacred object of their devotion" and the giver of past mercies (ibid.: 136-137).

The journals of George Nelson were written during his employment at Fort Lac La Ronge, Saskatchewan in 1823. This is a very valuable source of material concerning the traditional religious beliefs of the natives in this area as Nelson was one of the few fur traders who took more than a passing interest in the people he traded with. Nelson acknowledges the Cree belief in the Supreme Being but his overall understanding and explanation of this particular aspect of their religion is problematic. Nelson initially identified the Supreme Being as being "Wee-suck-a-jaak" and then provided the proper name of "Key-shay-mani-to", meaning the "greatly charitable Spirit" in this Cree dialect (Brown and Brightman 1988: 81). "Wee-suck-a-jaak" is in fact the character who continually plays tricks on his fellows. Nelson compounds his misunderstanding by recounting the traditional tale of "Wee-suck-a-jaak" making the land after a flood. The flood myth presents "Wee-suck-a-jaak" in

the role of creator but it was not until later that Nelson realized his error (Brown and Brightman, 1988: 36). Unfortunately, Nelson did not add to his description of Manitou once he had identified its cosmological position.

The territorially marginal historic sources provide further data concerning the Supreme Being. Data provided by Oldmixon (1931: 382) are substantiated by Isham (1949: 65) who stated that the natives believed in a deity and although this spirit was good, it did not concern itself with the matters of men. The natives, in turn, did not worship this spirit but they did "pay him adoration".

A third report from Hudson Bay during this same period was made by the Clerk of the California (1749: 183) who said that the Krick or Kilistinons (Cree) at Fort Churchill had a sense of a deity and they believed in a great spirit called "manatou", to which they "attributed all perfections of the deity" (ibid: 235). He elaborated on this information in the second volume of his journal by saying that the Indians made no likenesses of the manatou as they did not have an understanding of its appearance (ibid: 42) nor did they utilize any specific areas of worship for manitou as they did not actively worship (ibid: 40).

Ellis (1748: 90) was also at Hudson Bay during the late 1740s but wrote only that the inhabitants near Port Nelson believed in a great chief, "Ukkewma", who was responsible for all the benefits enjoyed by the people and was infinitely good. They spoke of this

deity with reverence and Ellis suggested they sang a kind of hymn to praise it. Andrew Graham (1949: 149) commented also on the Cree singing to "Kelchemanitow", but not out of fear or reverence.

Several early sources refer to the Supreme Being, however, in areas too large or distant to be of real significance to this discussion (for example, Hearne 1911; Harmon 1820; Cameron 1804; Young n.d.). In summary, the Supreme Being was a good spirit whom the Cree valued and respected but to whom they did not show much devotion. This attitude reflected that of the Spirit, since the Cree did not believe the "manitou" was concerned with or involved in the affairs of man. John Cooper (1933: 105) has pointed out that the Supreme Being had the connotations of being master, not maker or creator. As mentioned, George Nelson assumed a creator-role for "manitou", so he mistook "Wee-suck-a-jaak" for the "manitou" (Brown and Brightman 1988: 43). The impression that this Great Spirit was also a creator was derived from his own Christian beliefs: "They acknowledge a Superior Power, not Wee-suck-a-jaak, as I erroneously informed, 'but the same one you (Nelson's father) adore in the Christma[s] holidays'" (ibid.: 81). Christian influences may thus be manifest in the historic literature; however, such sentiments are recognizable and may be dismissed as such. In regard to the Great Spirit or Supreme Being, the literature is consistent.

As for the traders, throughout most of the north country they were concerned exclusively or almost exclusively with one thing, the business of trading a limited range of the white man's products for the Indian's furs. They did not go in much for mixing religion with business. They were after skins, not souls. An occasional trader, like David Thompson,

did a little amateur Christian indoctrination at odd moments, but he and the few of his type of whom we have record were decided exceptions. In fact, as a rule, so far at least as the men of the Hudson's Bay Company were concerned, the average employee had little opportunity to teach the native of Christian religion, even had he wished to do so. In the olden days, as contrasting with more recent ones, "they [the Company's 'servants'] were shut up in the forts, as sailors are shut up in a ship, scarcely ever venturing out in winter, and hardly ever holding converse with a savage in his wild state....

This choice and habit of seclusion grew into a rule with the Company's employees....It was the discipline of the quarter-deck". "The whole of the actual trading of the Factory was in the hands of two officials known as traders. None other of the Company's servants at any fort were permitted to have direct intercourse with the Indians, save in exceptional circumstances." "There was neither clergyman nor divine worship". Such is the general story of the north country in the early days. There is no evidence that James Bay was an exceptional area (Cooper 1933:108-109).

Cultural information collected during the early historic period were not concerned with aspects of native religion. A more comprehensive understanding of Cree life was not available until ethnographies were written early in this century. Nelson (Brown and Brightman 1988) provided information peripheral to his activities as a Hudson Bay employee and might loosely be considered an early ethnographer (See also King 1936: 356-360).

#### 4.3.2. MACI MANITO

A second major spirit in the Cree religious belief system is discussed in the journals and documents of the post-contact period, mainly in reference to the Supreme Being. This spirit has been described by most of the authors cited; however, the names attributed to it has generated some confusion, since the name of its evil counterpart could be Maci-Manito (with spelling



variations) or Wihtikow (also with spelling variations).

The Evil Being or "Metchee-Manitou" was described by David Thompson:

The "Metchee Manitou, or Evil Spirit they believe to be evil, delighting in making men miserable and (bring) misfortune and sickness on them, and if he had the (power) would wholly destroy them; he is not the tempter, (as his) power for mischief to, and harassing of, them, to \_\_\_\_\_ which they use many ceremonies, and other sacrifices which consist of such things as they can spare... (1916: 84-85).

The Metchee Manitou was believed to bring misfortune to the Cree (La Potherie 1931: 226; Young n.d.: 81). The Indians worshipped him more out of fear than from love (Isham 1949: 65). Offerings were made to this evil manitou in an attempt to appease him and save the people from the effects of his anger (Cocking 1908: 107; Graham 1949: 149; Oldmixon 1931: 382; Young n.d.: 81-82).

The descriptions of the evil wihtikow (Whittico: Graham; Wittika: Ellis; Witako: Richardson; Vitco: Clerk of the California) were very similar to those of maci manito. It is not until the discussion of northern Indian religion by Egerton Ryerson Young (n.d.) that the first differentiation between Wihtikow and Maci Manito was made. Young provided the following account of "Windagoos" in his report on Cree, Sauteaux and Ojibway beliefs:

Among the many errors and superstitions into which they have fallen is the belief in the existence of windagoos, or gigantic creatures half satanic and half human, whom they represent as being of great size and dwelling in the dark, dreary forests. They describe them as being so powerful that when they march along they can brush aside

the great pine trees as an ordinary man does the grass  
of the prairies as he strides along through it  
(Young n.d.: 84).

The journals of George Nelson at Fort Lac La Ronge, Saskatchewan also describe the Windigo as a cannibalistic giant (Brown and Brightman 1988: 86). In contrast to other descriptions of this period, Nelson provided a very comprehensive and enlightened breakdown of the various types of wihtikow, the stories about them and possible means of curing human wihtikow. Yet Nelson did not mention the evil Manito or Spirit which appeared in the other historical references, occasionally under the term Windigo.

The linking of the wihtikow and maci manito may be explained when considering the individuals making the reports. The fur-traders had other concerns during their journeys so what information they recorded was probably only a partial account of what they were told. These men may have had little or no command of the native language and translations were probably provided by the native guides they had brought with them. These guides may have spoken a dialect different from the Cree they encountered. As for journals written at the posts on Hudson Bay, similar language barriers probably existed. Length of contact with the native population also had an effect on how much detail was given about religion. Post employees would not have developed the same type of relationships with native informants that exploratory journeys and the long hours of shared toil followed by evenings at the campfire would provide. As David Thompson stated of the Nahathaways:

...I have always found it (is) difficult to learn their real opinion on what may be (termed) religious subjects. Asking them questions on the head, (is) of no purpose, they will give the answer best adapted to any other questions, and please the enquirer. My knowledge has been gained when living and travelling with them and \_\_\_\_\_ times of distress and danger in the prayers to invisible powers, and their view of a future state of themselves and others...

(Thompson 1916: 82).

Ever since traditional Cree stories identified wihtikow as a cannibalistic character, ethnographers have interested in this antihero. The term 'windigo' has been used by natives and anthropologists to describe both a cannibalistic or psychological aberration or a mythological character of the Algonquian-speaking peoples. Descriptions already provided are characteristic of the supernatural being which was greatly feared within the traditional culture. However, anthropological interest in the 'windigo' has been focused on the psychosis, which is manifested as periods of melancholy alternating with periods of rage and cannibalistic inclinations (for example, Brown 1971; Cooper 1933; Fogelson 1965; Landes 1933, 1982; Marano 1982; McGee 1972, 1975; Paredes 1972; Parker 1960; Preston 1978; Rohrl 1970, 1972; Saidon 1933; Smith 1975; Teicher 1982; Waisberg 1975). The mythical 'windigo' is viewed as the cultural prototype for this psychosis, so anthropologists have confined their analysis to psychologically oriented attempts to explain this disorder.

#### 4.3.4. OTHER SUPERNATURAL BEINGS

Two mythic characters possessing extraordinary powers have already been described briefly: Wisahkecahk the trickster; and wihtikow.

Other such characters were the Memekwesiw, or little men with no noses (Downes 1943: 55-57), Misi pisew, or Great Lynx (Brown and Brightman 1988: 45-47) and Nehanimis, Wisahkecahk's son (ibid: 75-76). Except for memekwesiw, all of these may also be pawakan or guardian spirits though each is associated with a body of traditional stories. These might have been told to encourage moral behaviour. This code was then taught through example and repetition. The reasons for the development of these characters and the function of each in Cree culture will be discussed in Chapter 5, using data collected from informants and others.

There has also been more interest in the Cree tradition of dreaming to obtain a spirit guardian. Early historic literature shows little was recorded by inland explorers, with the notable exception of Nelson. Ethnographic accounts provide more data about this private and individual experience.

The importance of examining the concept of the Supreme Being and the evil metchee manitou was to begin building the framework of the belief system so it may be demonstrated how the vision quest or dreaming process was integrated into the overall religion of the Rocky Cree. The Supreme Being was accepted and believed in by the Rocky Cree; however, the sources for religion do not mention the evil spirit in any depth, the exceptions being David Thompson and George Nelson (although Nelson refers to it by its Ojibwa name, "Kee-jick-oh-kay", probably as a result of his posting in Lake Winnipeg prior to arriving at Fort Lac La Ronge, Brown and

Brightman: 107-115).

#### 4.4. DREAMING AND PAWAKAN

To the Cree mind, all the world was spirit bearing and animistic - every tree, every animal, every insect, and even the rocks and sand and water. His life was spent in placating and observing a host of spirits. He and the world about him were a completely dual world of the physical and its spiritual counterpart. To help him in his struggle in this world of spirits, each individual possessed a very secret, personal guiding and helping spirit which he could call upon in time of stress, which often visited him in dreams, which was his and his alone. It might be the spirit half of anything - a certain animal, a sunbeam, the rainbow, a grain of sand, an unknown human, in fact anything in the world. This was the man's 'puagan'. On the strength of a man's puagan rested his success in the physical world about him and his survival against evil which the spirits of enemies might direct against him  
(Downes 1988: 67-68).

The earliest known historical mention of dreaming appeared in David Thompson's narrative (1916: 90, 97-98). Thompson stated that the Cree pursued their dreams as a means of learning about their future and about preferred locations for winter hunting. Thompson described an instance of conjuring where the 'conjurer' contacted the "Great Spirit and the Spirits of the forests, for health to all of them and success in hunting, and to give his Poowoggin where to find Deer, and to be always kind to them, and to give them straight Dreams, that they may live straight" (ibid. 1916: 90).

This early account described some elements which will reappear in more recent accounts. George Nelson obtained additional data concerning the dreaming process during his stay at La Ronge in 1823. Nelson noted that the vision quest was an initiation ceremony which had to be undertaken if the prospective dreamer

wished to become a conjurer (Brown and Brightman 1988: 34-35) and able to predict the future. King also related an account from a female informant indicating that dreaming was a means of determining where successful hunting could be pursued.

They dreamed of none but good and excellent things, of hero deeds and the chase, of bears, and stags, and caribos, and other great and grand hunting animals, and when he dreamed, the Indian knew exactly where these animals could be found. He made no mistake  
(King 1936: Vol. 2: 369).

The age at which the dream experience was embarked upon has been provided in detail by Nelson and may be supported by other more recent descriptions. Nelson stated that the young initiates were between the ages of 18 and 25 while Rossignol (1938: 69) placed the age of Rocky Cree participants at 15-16 years. Honigmann noted that the young people preparing for this experience among the Attawapiskat Swampy Cree began at the age of 10 years (Honigmann 1956: 71). Duncan Cameron (1960: 260) suggested that the age of initiates among the Saulteaux/Cree of the Nipigon Country was between 14 and 15 years and Mandelbaum (1940: 159) stated that the vision quest practised by the Plains Cree was undertaken when the boy was approaching puberty. Age then is a factor in determining when the practise of dreaming might begin and Nelson mentioned that the candidates had to be "chaste and unpolluted" (Brown and Brightman 1988: 34), meaning they could not previously, or at any rate recently, have engaged in sexual intercourse. Mandelbaum 1940: 159; Cameron 1960: 261; Downes 1988: 68; Rossignol 1938a: 69; Nelson (Brown and Brightman 1988: 34) and Cockburn 1983a: 41, indicate that only males could participate in the dream experience.

Honigmann (1956: 71) and Mason (1967: 61) claimed that young people of both sexes could attempt to secure a dream. Mandelbaum (1940: 145) stated that for the female of the Plains Cree there were other puberty rites and that during "this four-day period was viewed as the most auspicious time in a woman's life to receive a vision. Women did not otherwise engage in a vision quest and might experience visions at any time."

Seclusion was an essential ingredient of the dreaming ritual and the young dreamer would distance himself sufficiently from the camp or village so as not to be discovered or disturbed (Brown and Brightman 1988: 34; Downes 1988: 68; Mandelbaum 1940: 159). The young man would then wrap himself in a bed of grass (Brown and Brightman 1988: 34) or caribou skin (Honigmann 1956: 71) and lie upon the ground. An alternative strategy was to build oneself a nest in the side of a cliff (Cockburn 1983a: 41) or at some distance from the ground (Brown and Brightman 1988: 34) such as in a tree (Rossignol 1938a: 69; Downes 1988: 68), the most elevated place the dreamer could find (Cameron 1804: 261), or he might build a scaffold and sleep upon this (Cameron 1804: 261; Honigmann 1956: 71; Mason 1967: 61). Explanations proposed for such elevations of the type listed were related to the types of spirits the boy wished to contact. Nelson suggested that if the candidate wished to contact the Spirits from "above" then their resting place would be made some distance from the ground and if they wished to dream of those inhabiting the earth or water, they would sleep upon the ground (Brown and Brightman 1988: 34). Honigmann (1956: 71)

commented that the higher the dreamer located himself, the more powerful the dream he would experience.

Fasting was essential while dreaming (Brown and Brightman 1988: 34; Downes 1988: 68; Mason 1967: 61; Honigmann 1956: 71; Cameron 1804: 260; Mandelbaum 1940: 159). The length of time spent in this pursuit varied with the particular account. The period may have been as short as three days or as long as three months. However, the fasting would have to be continuous or the dreamer would not be successful.

High in the boughs, in the evening after sundown, when the wind had died, the dreamer might feel the tree shake. This constituted evidence that the quest was finished. To remain too long might turn the seeker into an animal  
(Skinner 1911: 61).

During such isolated fasting the young man would dream. Mason (1967: 61) suggested that each night the spirits of air, trees, plants, water and earth would frequent his dreams and would gradually teach the dreamer about such things as plants and medicine. This would enable the boy to be a powerful medicine man throughout his life (Brown and Brightman, 1988: 34). Eventually one dominant dream or figure would emerge from the rest and would 'speak' to the dreamer (Cockburn 1983a: 41). Once a rapport had been established with this spirit, it would become the sought or desired pawakan (Downes 1988: 68). Nelson provided a narrative of how this relationship was established:

Every thing in nature appears unto them, but in the Shape of a human-being. They dream they meet a man who asks them (after some preliminary conversation of course), "Dost thou know me? (who or what I am)?"  
"No."



"Follow me then," replies this stranger. The Indian follows - the other leads him to his abode and again makes the inquiry - the answer is perhaps as before. Then the Stranger assumes his proper form, which is perhaps that of a Tree, a Stone, a fish, &c,&c. and after rechanging several times in this manner, till such times as the 2nd becomes perfectly to know him, then this stranger gives him to smoke, learns him his Song, &c, thus addressing him: "Now don't you remember my Song?..... Whenever you will wish to call upon me, Sing this Song, and I shall not be far-- I will come and do for you what you require (Brown and Brightman 1988: 35).

This story coincides with one from the Plains Cree (Mandelbaum, 1940: 159-162) where the young boy would be introduced to his spirit helper in the vision. He would then be taken to a painted tipi and invited inside where he would be greeted by an assemblage of spiritual powers. These beings would give him the abilities and the rights, teaching him the songs he would need throughout his life.

A dangerous spirit to be avoided as a pawakan was the wihtikow. If the dreamer was approached by the spirits of the North or of the Ice, or both, he must reject them, as they were thought to be malignant spirits (Brown and Brightman 1988: 90; Cockburn 1983a: 41). Nelson stated that those persons who became cannibals in their later years had dreamt of these spirits. On this point King stated:

The people's fancy is so busy with them (Windigo), as well as with the isolated cases of real cannibalism, that they begin to dream of them, and these dreams, here and there, degenerate to such a point that a man is gained over to the idea that he is fated to be a windigo.

Such dreams vary widely. At times a man will merely dream that he must kill so many persons during his life; another dream adds that he must also devour them; and as these strange beings believe in their

dreams as they do in the stars, they act in accordance with their gloomy suggestions (King 1836: Vol. 2, 358).

If the man's pawakan was an animal then there might be taboos against killing or eating the particular animal. The man always obeyed the pawakan so if it told him not to kill the pawakan animal or eat it then he could not (Honigmann 1956: 72; Cockburn 1983a: 41).

#### 4.5. PAWAKAN AND PICTOGRAPHS

The relationship between pictographs and the vision quest ritual is first discussed among the northern Saulteaux around 1910:

Paintings were made on blazed trees, on birchbark, and on canvas. The latter were generally animal heads, such as caribou. The heads of clan animals and personal totems were especial favorites. There were formerly a number of rock paintings in the regions of the northern Saulteaux. One painting may still be found at Fairy Point on Missanabie Lake. It is supposed by some to represent a man's winter hunt but is more likely to represent some of the animals which appeared to the painter during his dream, of the animals which appeared to the painter during his dream, probably when he was fasting and dreaming for his spirit guardian. It is claimed that these drawings were made by the ancestors of some of the Saulteaux living near by (Skinner 1911: 130).

A later but more significant reference to pictographs and pawakan appears in the writings of Prentice Downes, as told to him by one of his principal informants:

I asked Adam about the red ochre figures (pictographs) upon the rock at Medicine Rapids, and he told me that long ago, before there was any church or Christ, a man had gone there to gain his puagan and had stayed there for three months without food or drink until he gained a great dream power, and that the figures represented what he had dreamed about (Cockburn 1983a: 38).

After the pawakan had been secured, the young dreamer would return to the camp and would make a bag to contain his 'medicines'

(Cameron 1804: 261; Honigmann 1956: 72; Mason 1967: 62). The ordinary dreamer would have the guidance of his pawakan throughout his life but there were some persons whose power was to conjure, cure illness and to perform sorcery (Honigmann 1956: 72). Sorcery was a contest of power within the Rocky Cree tradition. To avenge oneself or another by inflicting pain on the enemy one used supernatural means like sorcery (Honigmann 1956: 77-79). This could be accomplished in many ways but the person who had the power to do such things was one whose dreams had provided him with the ability. George Nelson (Brown and Brightman 1988) provides examples of sorcery among the Rocky Cree.

If men choose to pit their pawakans against each other in supernatural battles, the results could be fatal. Downes' informant, Adam Ballantyne, described a means of testing the strength of the individual's pawakan by thrusting a short poisoned arrow into one's chest just under the armpit (Cockburn 1983a: 42). The first individual would remove it and pass the arrow on to the next person, who could then demonstrate the strength of his pawakan. A man with a powerful pawakan might extract the arrow from his other side (meaning through his body) but these persons were few. Once a man had been challenged to prove the strength of his pawakan, he was obligated to do so. Refusing would place him in danger of allowing the challenger's pawakan to overcome him.

Dreaming has been described as a means of predicting future events but it was not the only option available toward this end. The

shaking tent ceremony was popular among the Cree as attested by frequent historic and ethnographic references to this event (Oldmixon 1931: 389; La Potherie 1931: 228; Houston 1974: 78-79; Cameron 1960: 261; Brown and Brightman 1988: 39-44; Mandelbaum 1940: 162-175; Cooper 1933: 52, 104; Flannery 1938: 11-20; Honigmann 1956: 73-75; Mason 1967: 60-64; Cockburn 1983a: 42). An example from Downes indicates the essential character of the shaking tent ceremony:

Norman Lathlin: This is what sometimes happened. A tipi was built of strong logs driven into the earth close together in a circle and tied around with young birches to make it very firm. Now he was all tied up like this (crouching), so that even his head could not move. Then everyone left him and hastened back across the river, but each time he would be ahead of them, right inside the tipi, singing and drumming and calling out in every direction to those that he knew at a great distance. (Though first I should have mentioned that they would see him throwing up through the opening at the top of the tipi the thongs with which they had tied him.) Soon, rattles and bells would begin to jingle at the top of the tipi and the voices of those he had called would begin to answer him, telling him the news and many things that he wished to know. This is called the coosap-atshigan, the conjuring tent (Cockburn 1983a: 42).

Nelson identified the voices of those called by the conjurer in order of their appearance: the Thunder, the flying squirrel, the wolverine, Strong Neck, the Ancients or Hairy Breasts, the sun, the pike or jackfish, the bull or buffalo, the turtle, the bear, and "Wee-suck-a-jaak" (Brown and Brightman 1988: 38-43). There has also been the suggestion that Manitou visited the shaking tent and that the ritual's purpose was to question him about the future (Oldmixon 1931: 389; La Potherie 1931: 228). However, this contradicts the notion of the Great Spirit as a disinterested master. Honigmann quotes an informant as stating that:

Peoples outside (the shaking tent) watched and they heard the voices. The voices were animal sounds, all kinds of animals. The people heard voices. I did not stay around because I was too young. The people watching heard both animal sounds and human words. Not every man could do this. Their dreams were talking...Their voices were high up, where the poles were bent across, that's where the voices were sitting and the shaman faced the ground in all this (Honigmann 1956: 74).

This quotation and the list from George Nelson indicate that the shaking tent ritual of the Cree was very much related to the pawakan and dreaming. It provided a different access to the same spirits. The same concerns, such as interest in the future and success of hunting, were expressed during this ritual as during the dreaming experience. However, the conjurer involved in the shaking tent had to possess sufficient power to bring the spirits together at one place and one time. This power could be available to him only from his personal pawakan or guardian spirit and had to be obtained through the dream or vision quest experience.

The final duty of the conjurer was to cure or heal the sick by using curative herbs. An interesting aspect of curing is the use of sorcery. The Cree believed that through sorcery an enemy with a powerful pawakan could send illness through the air (Mandelbaum 1940: 164) or could take a man's soul from him (Brown and Brightman 1988: 63) in hopes of destroying the man. The conjurer would examine the patient and if he found sorcery to be the cause of the illness then he would suck on the affected part of the patient's body and remove the object causing the illness (Mandelbaum 1940: 162). If the cure was successful then this indicated that the conjurer's power, as ascribed by his pawakan, was stronger than

that of the sorcerer. Few details are available concerning this aspect of the conjurer's duties in the historic or ethnographic literature of the Rocky Cree. However, sorcery has been often cited as a cause for unexplained illness or death among the Cree.

Despite the dearth of extensive historic or ethnographic literature about the traditional religious belief system of the Rocky Cree, the consistency of the available evidence indicates that the pre-contact religious beliefs of these people were both strong and complex. Many religious beliefs and practises of the Rocky Cree were shared by other groups within the Algonquian linguistic family. The dream experience to procure a guardian spirit or puagan was an essential aspect of traditional Cree religion generally. Its importance is not diminished by the lack of quantitative references. Without the vision quest experience and belief in the personal guardian spirit, the traditional Cree religious belief system could not have developed.

#### 4.6. THE CHRISTIANIZING PERIOD: 1850 to present

Questions arising from this review of the historic literature are why the Cree were so easily converted to Christianity in the mid-1850s and why traditional ritual beliefs and practices, such as the vision quest and the making of pictographs, were then abandoned. Paul Thistle argues that during the early stages of the fur trade the Europeans were more dependent on their native trading partners than the Indians were on the traders. A series of circumstances occurred which changed the balance of power

within the relationship so that when the missionaries arrived, the native people were already demoralized by the confusion that starvation and death from illness had caused. Indians across the west had been hit by a series of smallpox and influenza epidemics. Grant (1984: 97) calls the smallpox epidemic of 1781 devastating for the Cree, Assiniboine and Ojibiwa. Later epidemics in 1824 and 1838 were somewhat less murderous as the Europeans were able to provide some measure of control through inoculations (Thistle 1986: 62). Up to the 1780's, Edward Ellis has determined that the in-land Indians had few health problems and suffered no contagious diseases (ibid.: 62), so the emotional impact of such indiscriminate death must have been devastating.

{1871 February} Wednesday 8th - Dr. Mackay a medical officer in the Company's service arrived yesterday with the express. He has been on a professional tour from Mackenzie River through parts of the Athabasca, English River, and Saskatchewan (sic) Districts to introduce vaccination at the different forts as the small pox has been raging in the Saskatchewan (sic) District last year and there is a danger of its spreading to other parts of the country next summer. I was glad to obtain from him the means of introducing vaccination among my people at Stanley

(Mackay 1963: 98).

Mackay indicates that the Chipweyans in particular were dying at an increased rate during his visit to {Rein}Deer Lake on March 18, 1872 and that the inoculation of the Cree in Stanley Mission was accomplished on June 10, 1872 (ibid: 103)

Cree immersed in the traditional religious belief system would have been completely unprepared for such a situation. The failure of traditional methods must have caused tremendous confusion.

Indigenous medical practices of conjuring were powerless to stop the spread of the diseases or to control and cure the diseases once they had infected the individual. In the Cree religion, success depended upon the protection of the guardian spirit and the strength of the relationship between the human and the supernatural. The failure of the pawakan to protect the hunter and his family would have shattered the Indian hunter's very being, causing him to question the beliefs of his forefathers and the strength of traditional rituals.

The need for a rational and culturally acceptable explanation was essential under such epidemic circumstances. The most believable reason for any unexplainable illness and death was sorcery by an individual in an enemy group. If this was the suspected source of the epidemic then it also had to be assumed that the sorcerer was extremely powerful to kill so many at one time. Medicine men were unable to stop or slow the disease through traditional conjuring methods, so the sorcerer was assumed to be more powerful than the medicine man. The source of the sorcerer's power would be his pawakan, which had to be more powerful than the medicine man's pawakan. Rituals like the shaking tent were not working so a medicine man would have felt that his puagan was angry or unresponsive to his pleas. The continual failure of the medicine man would leave him, as the spiritual leader of the group, without the social prestige awarded him. No alternatives were available within the Cree belief system if such failure were to occur. There is no evidence that contagious disease and widespread



illness had ever been a problem among the Cree, so a mechanism for explaining their failure to cope with them was not in place. The resulting void was of immeasurable significance, occurring whenever a powerful leader becomes ineffectual in times of disaster. The failure of the belief system, the rituals and the religious leaders to provide any relief or guidance threatened the entire Cree culture. If it was to survive, an alternative adaptation was needed because the cognitive system of the Cree was undermined by the plague situations and this had dire implications for the puagan and the vision quest.

If the imagery of the pictographs was drawn directly from such a cognitive base with a set of accepted images and characters with relatively predictable behaviour patterns, then, what would unexplainable forces do to such a cognitive system. When faced with illness or starvation the medicine man would appeal to his pawakan, who would or would not appear. What if the spirits behaved oddly when encountered in the dream state as a result of the dreamer's state of starvation, increased anxiety or even the symptoms of the illness? How would the dreamer respond if these dreams were to be relied upon to guide and provide solutions or predictions about the future? How would the medicine man react if the dreams, influenced by these other factors, provided hallucinatory sequences? If his dreams suggested inappropriate or dangerous actions, then were shared with the people, what would be their reaction? All of this is hypothetical, but it is conceivable. In conjunction with failure in hunting, considerable

confusion must have resulted. Few records of Indians response to these events are available.

Much has been made of the wihtikow myth over the last half century and possibilities exist for an analysis of the "Windigo psychosis". With the need for survival in the face of starvation conditions, wihtikow myth story-telling would have increased. This correlation was first made by Charles Bishop (1973) and was elaborated upon by Leo G. Waisberg (1975) in "Boreal Forest Subsistence and the Windigo: Fluctuation of Animal Populations". The 'carrying capacity' of the forests had been stretched by the increased demands of the fur trade, though it had not changed the behaviour patterns of the native people. Movements of other native groups in pursuit of fur-bearing animals added to their problems. In a harsh environment such as the Canadian Shield periods of ebb and flow were allowed for even when the natural balance was not interfered with. The traditional mythology and religious belief system had instilled patterns for dealing with such situations of need. Potential cannibalism was averted by taboos against eating human flesh. These were entrenched beliefs, needed during those periods when the usual subsistence strategies were not successful. Bishop (1973: 5) suggests that the "base of subsistence" had been stable prior to the fur trade and that the increase in the instances of wihtikow behaviour was directly related to post-contact food shortages (ibid.: 13). When people were starving, their response was to note that such starvation had come around again and it was time to increase the influence of the

windigo myth in order to prevent cannibalism which would be detrimental to the group. Eating human flesh might appear as the only reasonable option for the survival of the individual, so the wihtikow myth was effective and needed. This type of adaptation to the circumstances in which the native people found themselves explains the increased frequency of the wihtikow myth being recounted. It is also in line with their customs and beliefs. The killing of suspected wihtikow was necessary in order that it would not kill again at another time or place. The strength of this conviction was apparent even in the "white man's territory" (Colombo 1982: 9). This interpretation is not meant to supercede that of Louis Marano; however it does help explain the seeming increase in the importance of the windigo during the historic period.

#### 4.6.1. THE MISSIONARIES

Missionary activity probably had greater impact on the traditional Cree lifestyle than did the economic transactions of the fur trade. Missionaries tried to convert the native people to Christian doctrine, and to provide formal education for children (Van Kirk 1980: 146). They also filled the void opened by the failure of the Cree religious belief system to cope with unexpected outside forces, like epidemics.

The history of missionary advancement in some ways parallels that of fur trade expansion, despite the time lag and different routes. West of Hudson Bay the missionaries followed the trading posts,

using a different access point than the fur traders. Red River was where the missionaries entered the Northwest, which was neither on the main route of the HBC or close to a HBC post (Grant 1984: 98). The first Anglican forays into Saskatchewan establish a mission in Cumberland House in 1840 and later in Le Pas and La Ronge (ibid.: 100). In 1850 the Holy Trinity Church was built at Stanley Mission by Reverend Robert Hunt.

Reverend James Evans, a Methodist, became superintendent and missionary at Norway House in 1839 (ibid.: 100 - 101). His posting was proposed by David Ross, concerned by the departure of Cree trappers to the Red River area to farm. Ross hoped that the establishment of a mission would slow resettlement. Evans journeyed from Norway House to Fort Edmonton in the winter of 1841-2. His return route included the junction of the Peace and Slave Rivers and a stop at Ile a la Crosse. Evans developed a system of Cree syllabics at about this time (ibid.: 111). In 1844, Jean-Baptiste Thibault passed through Norway House to reconvert to Catholicism the native encountered on Evans' journey. Evans set out to stop him, but his journey ended in tragedy when he accidentally shot his interpreter (Grant 1984: 101). Evans made no further attempts and Thibault baptized 218 persons at Ile a la Crosse in 1845. Grant claims that these events explain the lack of the Methodist influence in the north.

The north was open to the Roman Catholics, but it was more than Thibault could administer by himself. In 1845 the Oblates of Mary

Immaculate were persuaded to branch out from their work in Quebec and join in converting the north. In 1846 Louis-Francois Lafleche, a secular priest, and Antonin Tache, an Oblate, opened a mission in Ile a la Crosse. Later Tache travelled to Athabasca and Reindeer Lakes (ibid.: 102). By 1857 the Sisters of Charity of Montreal (the Grey Nuns) joined the Oblates, venturing west to establish permanent schools and other charitable enterprises in major centres.

The Anglican advance up the Saskatchewan River began in earnest with James Hunter's plans to expand towards Edmonton and the Rockies (ibid.: 104). James Hunter travelled north against the wishes of the Oblates in order to establish missions in the Arctic and Yukon. Attempts in Saskatchewan were blocked by Oblates in Ile a la Crosse and Reindeer Lake.

The Hudson Bay Company was receptive to the needs of Anglicans, whose missionaries depended on fur traders for transport, supplies and lodgings. The Hudson Bay Company took the initiative in appointing the first Protestant clergyman in the region (ibid.: 106). It was an uneasy alliance, however, and by 1825 Governor Simpson had his doubts.

Missionaries should refrain from imposing their moral scruples, especially on such issues as company marriages. They should be closely related to the company establishment, preferably as company employees. They should make their headquarters at company posts, teaching servants and such Indians as they could interest the rudiments of Christianity and English and promoting agriculture in depleted areas, but not spending much time in Indian encampments, where they might disturb Indians in their

way of life or lead them to abandon it. They should avoid areas where missions would be financially burdensome or ecologically threatening, or where they might attract competition. Above all, they should not meddle with the company's trade (ibid.: 107).

The missions and the posts were locked into a system of mutual benefit and conflict. The rivalry arose from competition for authority over the natives, while collaboration developed from a European view of an appropriate lifestyle for the natives. Attempts to curb alcoholism through Christianity increased the potential for stability and order in the Indians' lives, insuring the sound work ethic desired by the Hudson Bay Company.

As company and mission discovered the advantages of this symbiosis and as each came to recognize that the other was in the country to stay, their relations gradually mellowed. Tensions did not disappear, but crises became rare (ibid.: 109).

#### 4.6.2. SETTLEMENT AND AGRICULTURE

The establishment of fur trade posts and missions as permanent structures focused attention on specific locations for specific purposes and periods. To facilitate missionary directives, regular church attendance was a prerequisite, requiring a modification in the nomadic lifestyle needed for hunting and other subsistence activities. Settlement was desired by the missionaries but this was in direct opposition to patterns followed by the Cree. Implementation of this change had ramifications throughout the Cree culture. The decline of the hunt as a reliable means of subsistence forced Indians to consider alternatives. Agriculture was a solution being urged by the Europeans. The journal of Rev. J.A. Mackay (1963: 96, 101, 106, 109, 111), written in Stanley Mission between 1870-72, makes

frequent references to his crops.

Attempts at agriculture were then made in this area and others in the Canadian Shield. Reciprocal gift exchange was usual among the Cree in early stages of contact with the Europeans. When the Indians began to experience difficulties in acquiring food, particularly from 1821 to 1840, they expected that Europeans would reciprocate in accordance with this system of obligation (Thistle 1986: 83). Thistle suggests that the custom was regarded by the natives as an integral part of the trade relationship. Food and the means to procure it was given away freely at Cumberland House until the late 1820s when natives were required to purchase food or to work for it. Thistle suggests that working in post gardens for wages with which to purchase food probably prompted natives at Le Pas and Neepowewin to establish gardens of their own.

Potatoes and barley for planting were available at the posts.

Rev. Mackay made the following observation:

{1871 September} Wednesday 23rd - ...It's a great pleasure to see the flourishing state of the Mission establishment. The mission premises are in excellent order, the crops are not large but look well and Mr. Budd has a large number of cattle, horses and pigs. The Indians also are improving with industry. In the commencement of their mission they were accustomed to look too much to the missionary for temporal help. Now they are being taught to depend on their exertions and there is in consequence manifest improvements

(Mackay 1963: 105).

The threat of starvation forced people to maintain a physical relationship with the fur trade post, which represented an unfailing source of food. Their commitment to agriculture

indicated the decision to settle. Thus a pattern of Indian dependency on the Europeans was begun, eventually to be aggravated by government involvement in their affairs.

As mentioned, missionaries and fur traders were planting crops to increase their own supplies for the winter (Grant 1984: 109; Fidler and Stevens 1985: 185). Grant points out that the objectives of the missionaries were in complete opposition to that of the traders, since traders needed nomadic Indians hunting and trapping for the success of the post. By focusing on education and conversion, missionaries were proposing settlement and a change of religious beliefs. For Indians a migratory and nomadic lifestyle was a strategy for adaptation attuned to environmental conditions of their land and linked to the hunt. To change this premise of their religious belief was also to undermine the abilities of the indigenous people as hunters, but the issue of settlement vs. migration required a decision that would promote increased survival potential.

Informants in Stanley Mission and La Ronge have mentioned that the native people did have gardens in recent times, though the surveyor's reports from the 1921 period at Stanley Mission indicates that the soil consisted of only 2-4 inches of humus on hard clay and stones (Dept. of the Interior, File No. 4469984). On the northeast side of the Churchill River, two acres of potatoes and a garden were planted around Holy Trinity Church while on the next lot the Revillion Freres Trading Company maintained another



garden. On the southwest shore across the river, the Hudson Bay Company had cultivated gardens consisting of three acres of oats, potatoes and wheat, first broken in 1910. The Canadian Shield ecosystem neither is, nor was, the ideal region for agriculture, so gardens are not maintained in either of these locations at present. As well, native people in the research area no longer maintain gardens. Though Indians did attempt to utilize the new subsistence strategy, the ecosystem was nonresponsive to this solution.

#### 4.6.2. CREE RESPONSE

Settlement did have advantages. The permanent proximity to the posts and missions meant availability of food and other necessities. As the traditional subsistence activities of hunting and trapping became less efficient, and as the future provided no guarantees of improvement, the prospect of a more stable existence possible in farming might be appealing.

Reports of conversion and the ease with which it was achieved are drawn from missionary journals of the period. Missionaries were reluctant to admit failure. Their zeal met with success, though the native view of Christianity is less documented. Fidler and Stevens (1985) provide examples of reaction from the upper Severn River of northwestern Ontario. Of particular interest was the response of a Ojibwa clergyman named Adam Fidler, who in his youth was converted to Christianity through a dream experience and in which Christ became Adam's guide or pawakan (Fidler and Stevens

1985: 173) . At this time the people were starting to question the powers of the shaking tent as it had not saved the lives of several band members.

Adam, however, was cautious in what he accepted from Christian spiritualism for he was not a foolish man. He did not discard what he found good and necessary in his forest beliefs and he is best described as a Holy Man among the clansmen rather than a Methodist Christian. Adam Fidler was a Sucker clansman who could confront windigo, utilize the shaking tent, issue prophecies, and sing over his drum. Adam Fidler was more than a Christian. Adam's adoption of some Christian beliefs, though, did start a process of change away from some of the ancient ways (ibid.: 173).

Adam still used the shaking tent after this but it was for good. He used the shaking tent to get rid of bad things. Adam said, "As the wind blows and the tent shakes, it washes our sins away. Adam still beat his drums as an expression of joy to Manitou. When Adam used these powers, he didn't do it secretly (ibid.: 175).

The story of Adam Fidler was recounted by his descendants, Thomas Fidler and Edward Rae. On one hand, Adam was a Christian while on the other hand he was still very much of his people. He had a strong bond with the Methodist minister Frederick Stevens, developed from the starvation period of 1899-1900. The bond which was occasionally difficult:

In 1913, however, Adam Fidler told Stevens the nature of his spiritual teachings: "I cannot baptize children but I pray with the parents and urge them to live for Manitou. When the couple comes together, I pray to Manitou, that He will bless their union

(ibid.: 175).

The story of Adam Fidler is important to the history of his people. Through his actions, the Sucker clan of the Ojibwa was converted to Christianity and a church was completed at Caribou Lake by 1917. Until 1936 Adam was the only continuous Christianizing influence in their lives and many stories are

documented of his use of traditional rituals to heal people. He was considered a medicine man as well as a minister and, as Stevens records in 1940, "the people... have organized their religious life in a very satisfactory way among themselves" (ibid.: 187).

A possible explanation for the success of Cree conversion can be inferred from the Adam Fidler example. The Sucker clansmen were not touched by Christianity until the turn of the century. This group was only marginally in contact with a few white traders before 1907 when Jack and Joseph Fidler were accused and arrested for the murder of woman (ibid. 1985). This woman was a suspected wihtikow and during the arrest period Jack Fidler, chief of the Sucker clan, committed suicide. In 1909 his son Joseph Fidler died in Stoney Mountain Penitentiary, three days before the papers allowing his return to the land of his people arrived. The Sucker people were in shock after this first involvement with the white man's laws. Once aware of this isolated group, the government began to promote the protective powers of their treaty. Starvation and disease had already affected the Sucker clanspeople. Similarities in the concept of Manitou and God, and the debilitated condition and morale of the native people allowed the intrusion of Christianity into their belief system. A strong sense of cultural identity and a solid retention of traditional religious beliefs still exists among the Cree people, so the conclusion must be drawn that the acceptance of Christianity was an adaptative strategy. Conversion did not replace the indigenous

religion. Christianity was utilized in conjunction with native rituals and practices which required a belief in Manitou and puagan.

Conversion to Christianity was a widespread phenomenon and in some cases, like the Sucker clan, a group or tribal decision (Grant 1984: 241). Fieldwork conducted in northern Saskatchewan indicates that many concepts of the traditional religion are still in the minds of elders though ritual practices are no longer discussed or performed. As relates to the present investigation, the rationale for the vision quest is known and available but the vision quest is no longer pursued. With the correlation between vision quest and pictographs confirmed through fieldwork, it was inevitable that the making of pictographs would also end. Religious practice can die before belief in that practice dies. For example, Catholics now eat meat on Fridays, and Jews combine dairy and meat products. The question to be answered here is why the vision quest and the making of pictographs were discontinued?

Grant makes an interesting point when he poses the questions:

How genuine was the Christianity to which these Indians converted? Did they undergo a real change of heart or was their Christian profession a veneer that barely and sometimes not altogether successfully concealed a view of nature and the spiritual order radically at variance with that of Christianity?

(ibid.: 246).

The Adam Fidler case indicates that there was an amalgamation of Christian principles with traditional beliefs and practices. Grant questions the degree to which the Indians were in fact converted,

and the suggestion has been made that the combination of the two religions was an adaptation strategy to ensure the physical survival of the native people. We will never know what went on in the minds of the people as they made their decision or if a conscious decision was reached, yet the apparent conversion of the Cree across the Canadian Shield is a fact. In his analysis of the conversion of the Indians across Canada, Grant (1984: 246-254) provided a fascinating perspective on the question of the sincerity of conversion. When speaking of the converted he postulated:

Even in the case of these, if one looks honestly at the record, one is nagged by a suspicion that what they embraced was so different from Christianity as the missionaries understood it as to be classified more properly as a mere imitation of its externals or, at best, as a blend neither quite Christian nor quite traditional (ibid.: 246).

Grant (ibid.: 248) suggested that the Indians' interpretation of Christianity and the acceptance of it were influenced by their way of looking at the world around them. Indians considered themselves to be "inherently powerless" and felt that the Christian God would make power available to them. This could explain their abandonment of the traditional practices and beliefs which had provided them with power in the past. In the Cree religion Manitou was not approachable and indifferent to the affairs of man. Christianity provided more direct access to power without the intervention of spirit helpers. If all other characteristics of God were similar to those of Manitou, then God would be more desirable as a Supreme Being. The following comparison also provides reasons for the missionaries' success:

A priest, for example, might be regarded not merely as a dispenser of sacraments over which he had no proprietary right but as a shaman giving and withholding blessings at will. Petitot with his European assumptions was astonished to learn that his hearers accepted what he told them because they assumed that it had come to him directly in dreams (ibid.: 248).

Based on this interpretation, it is understandable that Adam Fidler and the conjuror from MacKay's journal embraced Christianity, rather than resisting it as being suitable for them. Grant considered the assumptions of both missionaries and anthropologists that Christianity was incompatible with native traditional values and practices and that conversion inferred replacement of of Cree religion. A fusion of Cree culture and Christian religion over the long term would allow for true conversion.

As missionaries have tried to come to terms with varied expressions of Christianity in countries of differing traditions, they have been less inclined to identify Christianity with the European mould in which it has been cast for many centuries. It may be most helpful to begin not by trying to estimate the sincerity of conversion, which in many cases was unquestionable, or even its authenticity, the criteria of which are debatable, but simply asking what conversion meant to Indians who embraced Christianity. What did they conceive themselves to be doing, accepting and renouncing, in becoming Christian? How did they understand the relation between their Christian profession and what they had always been? (ibid.: 249).

Models are suggested by Grant (1984: 249) to account for conversion. The first is that Christianity was an opportunity to supplement traditional beliefs and practices, not to replace them. This can be verified by the Adam Fidler example. As previously discussed, at the time of conversion, many circumstances were contributing to the failure of belief in the traditional rituals

and the spirit guardians. Grant provides an example from the Ojibwa Midewewin Society, in which the cosmology of the early chapters of Genesis were incorporated into traditional belief. In other areas, "Indians commonly added songs, stories, and rituals to their repertoire when they perceived them as helpful sources of spiritual power, and there was no difference in principle if the song, story, or ritual happened to have a Christian origin" (ibid.: 249).

The second model concerns the "yes that means no" (ibid.: 250). Grant suggested that the adoption of Christianity was a means of rejecting it. Native people would not wish to offend Europeans and would include aspects of Christianity in Indian practices so as to make them more acceptable to missionaries. The benefit of doing so was that missionaries felt they were making progress in conversion.

Such indications of success were short lived according to Grant (ibid.: 252-3). The initial feelings of inclusion in a community verses the isolation of hunting, and the reassurance of dealing with a responsive God, created a climate for rapid and enthusiastic conversion. As expectations were slowly left unmet, the commitment to Christianity began to fade. The expectations of missionaries concerning the advancement of religion after easy conversion turned slowly to frustration when Indians began to neglect the church, mission and school. The beginnings of these feelings are voiced by MacKay:

Easter Sunday 9th, [1871] -- Large congregation at both services and I feel sure that many entered with soul and spirit into the services at Holy Communion several in tears. 67 partook and the offertory amount to 10-11 (pounds). I feel often discouraged at seeing the empty pews Sunday after Sunday while my people are away at their hunting grounds but a Sabbath like this day makes up for many discouragements

(MacKay 1963: 100).

Grant (1984: 253) points out that less commitment to gardening and a return to hunting were symptoms of a waning enthusiasm. In Stanley Mission, the gardens of Rev. MacKay's day have been neglected and little or no evidence of them exists. A corresponding change of feeling towards missionaries also marked this period. All members of the band would have become Christian to some degree and, whereas formerly the struggle had been between Christians and non-Christians, the internal community dynamics were a confrontation between "traditionalists" and "young progressives". Traditionalists opposed the missionaries desire for change while the young progressives supported them, thereby earning positions of leadership in the community. Grant (ibid.: 253) stated, "Since old status-structures proved remarkably resilient, the result was a division of loyalties that lasted over generations". He later stated that, "The ultimate expression of dissatisfaction was a return to traditional practices" (ibid.: 255).

If Grant is correct in his assessment of the prevailing thought during this period, explanations may be made concerning the end of traditional religious practices such as the vision quest and the making of pictographs. Native elders, dissatisfied with



Christianity, might have returned to the traditional ways and Cree religion. This would include attempts to contact the spirit guardians. If, however, the spirits did not return or the vision was less than expected, the dreamers might have thought that the spirits had deserted them again because of their previous involvement with Christianity. Or, the visions might have returned and another period of active dreaming begun. Those individuals who had remained unconvinced about Christianity and had not converted to it presumably continued with the vision quest and it is undetermined as to when the final vision quest occurred or the last pictograph was made in the field work area.

In the field work area the vision quest did not survive the missionaries. The young progressives continued their support of Christianity and rejected the traditional culture and the Cree religion. Their children might have been told of the beliefs of the traditional religion but they were encouraged to maintain strong ties with the church. Those traditionalists who did believe in the spirit guardians and the vision quest eventually died and their descendents did not practise traditional Cree religion. Knowledge of Cree religion was passed on to the children of these people; however, their lives involved the church and mission schools far more intensely than it had their parents. Later, government prescribed educational requirements and the treaty meant other intrusions into their lives. Time spent in the communities and the influence of non-natives increased. Children were sent to residential schools in La Ronge and the influence of

the family and the traditional culture decreased.

It is impossible at present to determine which informants descended from the traditionalists or the young progressives. The amount of knowledge each possesses of the traditional Cree religion is not a guide since all residents of the field work area lived closely and the basics of the religion would have been known to all. The result of that period, however, was that the rituals were not continued. Grant's analysis of this period does explain why an understanding of Cree religion, vision quest and pictographs is available. It is possible to reject something yet retain an understanding of it.

The rejection has not been complete. The elderly native informants have contributed to a greater understanding of Rocky Cree religion through the information they have retained. Their memories are being tapped by the younger people in the band and publications are being produced to further preserve the traditional culture in its present form. A realization has been reached that the Cree were a strong people who had successfully survived in their environment for centuries. The religious beliefs of that culture and of their ancestors was one of which they can be proud. The history of the Rocky Cree has been complicated in the historic period but their culture has survived many challenges through to the present.

## CHAPTER 5. ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK AND PICTOGRAPHS

The historic record does not provide many answers about the origin, cultural function or meaning of pictographs. Archaeological dating methods, either absolute or relative, have not provided a time frame in which pictographs can be ordered chronologically. The researcher is thus faced with a body of images to be dealt with synchronically, though some may be suspected of being diachronic in the development of ritual and image, since culture does change and even the core concepts, such as religion, must adapt to incorporate significant events. Without a time frame, however, the making of pictographs must be assumed initially as being an action which was done during one period of time and studied as such, though the question of image development over time will be addressed later.

Archaeologists and historians who have undertaken research on pictographs have wished that they could speak with pictograph artists and discover answers to the mysteries surrounding these enigmatic images. Recommendations have been made that ethnographic investigation carry on where archaeology and educated speculation have left off (Dewdney 1970: 52; Jones 1980: 44). Attempts to do this have been made in northern Saskatchewan and other parts of Canada, but not as the main focus of interest and not over a period of time. Many older native people who know of pictographs and information related to them continue to travel to and from their trap lines, or are non-English speakers. A significant effort was required to have the time, the informant, and means of communicating with the informant all at the same moment. Selwyn

Dewdney (1970: 26) stated that during many years of research he spoke with over 150 informants across the Canadian Shield but was not successful in gaining indepth ethnographic information concerning the pictographs he was so conscientiously and meticulously recording. In Ontario, Thor and Julie Conway (1989) have recently combined an ethnographic approach with their archaeological research and their findings support the link between the vision quest and pictographs.

#### 5.1. PICTOGRAPHS AND THE VISION QUEST

The Rocky Cree are the present inhabitants of the fieldwork area and their knowledge of pictographs is extensive in particular geographic areas. Numerous informants have linked the making of pictographs to the vision quest (Table 1 and 2). Informant responses tend to be concise and involve all elements of the subject within a few short sentences. In Chapter 1. reference is made to the use of ochre in making pictographs. Ochre is a coloured clay while the pigment wathaman is described as a fine sand. Wathaman was the name used consistently by informants for the pigment used to paint the pictographs, although it is not a word found in the Cree language (Faries 1938). The origin of this word may be traced to the location where the pigment was obtained (Table 1 and 2), the Wathaman River and Wathaman Lake. In the following passages, mention is made of the medium used to make the paint. As well, the link between pictographs and 'dreams', and the reasons for making the pictograph.

All I know is that they painted their 'dreams' on these rocks

Table 1. Interview Analysis - Pictographs

	AMOS RATT	NOAH RATT	LYDIA NAPHTHALIA MCKENZIE	GEORGE/ BETSY MCKENZIE	BETSY MCKENZIE	WILLIAM RATT	EDWARD MCKENZIE	REV. HENRY COOK	ROSIE S. MCKENZIE	ELIZABETH COOK	LAZARUS ROBERTS	DENNIS MCLEOD	SAMUEL CHARLES
PICTOGRAPH LOCATIONS					XX	XX	XX	XX		XX	XX		
MENTIONED WATHAMAN	XX		XX		XX			XX		XX	XX		
-MINERAL	XX	XX						XX		XX		XX	
-OTHER							XX						
-HEATED OVER FIRE	XX	XX						XX	XX				
-POUNDED													
-MIXED WITH FISH OIL	XX	XX	XX						XX	XX	XX		
-MIXED WITH OTHER													
OTHER PURPOSES	XX	XX							XX	XX			
STORED IN BARK BASKETS										XX			
LOCATIONS OF DEPOSITS										XX			
REASONS FOR MAKING													
-PERSONAL MARKERS	XX	XX											
-UNKNOWN													
-TRAVEL MARKERS													
-UNUSUAL EVENTS	XX		XX				XX						XX
-SPIRITS			XX	XX					XX		XX		XX
-DREAMING			XX		XX			XX	XX	XX	XX		XX
-ANIMALS	XX						XX		XX		XX		

Table 2. Interview Analysis - Pictographs (Continued)

	DAVID ROBERTS	SALLY MCKENZIE	CATHERINE LINKLATER	ANDREW CUSTER	ELIE CUSTER	AMIEL LINKLATER	SOLOMAN MERASTY	SOLOMAN MERSATY	MATTHEW NATEWYES	JOHNNY BALLANTYNE	WILLIAM/ MARY CLARK	PHILLIP MORIN	JOE MORIN
PICTOGRAPH LOCATIONS	XX				XX	XX	XX	XX	XX		XX	XX	
MENTIONED WATHAMAN	XX	XX	XX		XX	XX					XX		
-MINERAL					XX		XX			XX			XX
-OTHER													
-HEATED OVER FIRE										XX	XX		
-POUNDED							XX						
-MIXED WITH FISH OIL		XX											
-MIXED WITH OTHER	XX						XX		XX	XX		XX	
OTHER PURPOSES	XX	XX				XX							
STORED IN BARK BASKETS													
LOCATIONS OF DEPOSITS		XX											
REASONS FOR MAKING													
-PERSONAL MARKERS												XX	
-UNKNOWN													
-TRAVEL MARKERS										XX			
-UNUSUAL EVENTS		XX									XX		
-SPIRITS			XX										
-DREAMING	XX		XX		XX		XX				XX		XX
-ANIMALS			XX										XX

All I know is that they painted their 'dreams' on these rocks with wathaman. These rock paintings were meant to stay on for a very, very long time. David Roberts (A.1.3.1.)

...I was told that long ago people would dream of someone or something and then they would paint this vision on rocks. They used wathaman on these rock paintings. We used to get this wathaman in sand around the lake nearby. We'd flatten this wathaman on flat rocks and heat it. It is red.

Elizabeth Cook (A.1.2.7.)

In past research, the binding agent of the paint has been a source of speculation. Jones (1981a:47) suggested that isinglass or sturgeon's bladder was used, based on data derived from ethnographic sources from other regions, historical references and informant data collected by Selwyn Dewdney during his research in La Ronge. In the following passage it is identified as being the binding agent for the wathaman and is the binder understood by most informants to have been used for this purpose.

The elders painted these rock paintings, I suppose, so other people would see them in the future, because this paint wouldn't rub off. They used to mix the wathaman with fish oil and use this for paint. Sally McKenzie (A.1.3.2.)

Some individuals interviewed turned out to be marvelous storytellers and could make even the most mundane task an enjoyable story to hear. In the following story told by Noah Ratt, the process of making fish oil becomes a very pleasant and lively experience and the details provided by Noah indicate various other qualities in the Cree lifestyle and attitudes which influenced the way in which they perceived and adapted to their environment. Specifically, the description of the fish flies (dancing rather than flying), shows an appreciation for even the smallest things in nature. The degree of intensity in Noah's observation of such a

small part of his world as a child acts as a reminder of how closely aligned with the elements of nature the Cree were in their traditional lifeways.

I used to see my mother making fish grease. They used to catch a lot of white fish where they used to spend their summer. There used to be these flies (mimisieiwak) that would be swarming around in numbers around the lake. The people used to call this 'dancing' instead of flies flying, they were dancing. Then the flies would eventually fall in the water. It seemed like this is where these little bugs were multiplying from because wherever there were water plants or weeds, there would be numerous numbers of these little baby bugs or flies (mimisisak) under these water plants. So the white fish would eat these baby flies and also catch the grown up flies floating in the water. So my mother used to set a fish net right in this area, like so, right along where the water weeds were. This was in a small narrows. Then she would approach the narrows from the opposite side and she would splash water with her paddle and as the white fish were swimming away or scared away, they would get caught in the fish net because that was the only direction they could swim to. Then she would get all the fish out of her fish net quickly before they got away. These white fish used to be very fat at that time of the year. Then she would cut these fish open and take out the guts of the fish. Then she would put all these guts all together in a big pot and boil them slowly. Then eventually you would see this fish oil floating - to mix with the sand used for the rock painting.

Noah Ratt (A.1.1.2.)

Locations of deposits of wathaman are well known to the informants.

In some cases, the location of wathaman collected for specific purposes was also identified. Noah was also able to provide an account of his father collecting and preparing wathaman for use. Other elders have confirmed his data in the course of their statements.

Yes, I can tell you about this. The red material which was used is not a paint, it is a sand. I saw my father taking some out. He didn't take the top layer which is already reddish from the sun, but he dug down a bit and took the fine grained light (bleached) sand from there. Then he'd put this coloured sand in a frying pan and heat it (or bake it) near



a fire. He kept shaking the pan to rotate the sand and to circulate the heat and in a very short time the sand would turn red.

...He used fish grease to rub on this red sand before he painted anything with it. Noah Ratt (A.1.1.2.)

This account corresponds with the description collected by Dewdney in 1963 from "B-Amos Ratt", who was probably Noah's elder brother. Amos was interviewed for this research in 1983 (A.1.1.1.), when he was in failing health. He died in 1984.

There is a great deal of consistency among the native elders contacted concerning the practical details of making wathaman and fish oil. This is not surprising as these were activities which these elders, as young people, anticipated performing during their entire lives. Similarly, the religious practices of dreaming and pictograph-making would have been activities which were closer to their past than to native children now. As children, they learned these practices during a period when European culture and Canadian society had not yet had much impact on their lives. The elders interviewed were in their 60s, 70s and 80s, and grew up on the trapline or in towns which could only be reached by boat or the infrequent bush plane. This degree of isolation from outside culture is characteristic of many native peoples living on reserves and other lands in northern Canada. The consistency of the collected data extends even to other Algonquian areas (Conway and Conway, 1989). Such direct confirmation of data relating to vision quests and pictographs through the collection of ethnographic data in other regions is as significant as is comparative material for other art forms, though each cultural group, including the Rocky

Cree, may be subject to specific variation.

#### 5.1.1. 'DREAMING': THE VISION QUEST RITUAL

The vision quest is a well known concept, utilized by a vast range of people globally for essentially the same purpose. It has been described often and in detail, with informants providing accurate and knowledgeable accounts based on personal experience or direct second-hand information. Rock art research conducted among the Australian aborigines has revealed the cultural context and function of the pictographs as well as the meaning of many images, since the making of pictographs was a continuing practise at the time of the investigation, and many pictograph artists still living are able to communicate the events, emotions, and meanings of the pictographs. In addition, a great deal was learned of the complex mythological belief system of the aborigines and of the legendary figures in their oral history culture. Unfortunately this is not the case in the present study. All data collected were derived from the memories of native elders who neither participated in the vision quest ritual nor were ever told by a 'dreamer' himself of the experience. Yet enough knowledge has been retained by the elders about 'dreaming' and the process of having a vision quest, due to its importance in the Cree culture, to be admissible in this context.

The vision quest had many purposes. Each account given by informants has noted different aspects of the practice (Table 3 and 4). It has traditionally been regarded by anthropologists as a

Table 3. Interview Analysis - Vision Quest

	AMOS RATT	NOAH RATT	LYDIA NAPHTHALIA MCKENZIE	GEORGE/ BETSY MCKENZIE	BETSY MCKENZIE	WILLIAM RATT	EDWARD MCKENZIE	REV. HENRY COOK	ROSIE S. MCKENZIE	ELIZABETH COOK	LAZARUS ROBERTS	DENNIS MCLEOD	SAMUEL CHARLES
VISION QUEST (LEVELS)													
-TREE NESTS								XX	XX				
-SIDE OF CLIFFS													
-COFFIN BOX IN WATER												XX	XX
LENGTH OF TIME													
-DAYS												XX	
-WEEKS													
-MONTHS									XX				
-OTHER								XX					XX
FASTING									XX			XX	
AGE OF DREAMER											XX	XX	
REASON FOR UNKNOWN								XX					
-HEALING			XX	XX								XX	
-POWER		XX		XX								XX	XX
-EVIL				XX									XX
-SPIRITS		XX		XX							XX		
-PREDICTION		XX		XX					XX				
-PAWAKAN		XX									XX		XX
-HUNTING POWER		XX											XX
-NIGHTMARE (WITIKWO)													

Table 4. Interview Analysis - Vision Quest (Continued)

	DAVID ROBERTS	SALLY MCKENZIE	CATHERINE LINKLATER	ANDREW CLUSTER	ELIE CLUSTER	AMIEL LINKLATER	SOLOMAN MERASTY	SOLOMAN MERSATY	MATTHEW NATEWYES	JOHNNY BALLANTYNE	WILLIAM/ MARY CLARK	PHILLIP MORIN	JOE MORIN
VISION QUEST (LEVELS)									XX				
-TREE NESTS			XX				XX		XX				XX
-SIDE OF CLIFFS			XX		XX		XX		XX				
-COFFIN BOX IN WATER	XX		XX	XX		XX			XX	XX			XX
LENGTH OF TIME													
-DAYS				XX									
-WEEKS													
-MONTHS	XX		XX		XX	XX	XX	XX	XX				XX
-OTHER							XX						
FASTING	XX							XX					XX
AGE OF DREAMER									XX				
REASON FOR UNKNOWN				XX									
-HEALING													
-POWER	XX		XX		XX		XX	XX	XX				XX
-EVIL													
-SPIRITS			XX					XX					
-PREDICTION	XX			XX			XX		XX	XX			XX
-PAWAKAN	XX		XX					XX					
-HUNTING POWER									XX				
-NIGHTMARE (WITIKWO)									XX				XX

rite of passage which is embarked upon by young men or boys as an initiation process into adulthood. Its cultural function was to provide a youth with the guardian spirit which would guide him with his decisions during the course his life. The guardian spirit would assist him in times of need, protect him in times of trouble and provide him with solutions to problems in times of difficulty. Most often this related to hunting and protecting his family from danger, but it could also involve other forms of problem solving, such as mediation in disputes between individuals in the group.

They did all sorts of different things when they were out to dream. They didn't eat, they just slept and dreamt. The spirits feared them. David Roberts (A.1.3.1.)

The Indians (dreamers) had spirits. They would have a vision and they would paint this vision on rocks. These visions were where the rock paintings originated from. ...My father saw one old man who was ninety years old who was a special person, a dreamer. This old man and (others) would sleep for seven months without eating like bears do in winter. In order to dream they had to go into isolation and they had to fast. Some of these people died during the seven month period. They didn't all make it, only some. They would sleep under water, on trees, etc.

Joe Morin (A.1.6.3.)

The medicine man or 'dreamer' slept here for one winter. This is how his most powerful vision looked like {the rock painting at Medicine Rapids}. Just like the ones they would paint on the rocks. He {meaning Elie Custer} heard this, he didn't see it himself. Apparently these old people, ... had a vision and he would know where to go for medicine. They say on this hill here {top of cliff on which the rock painting appears} there is no plants and additional qualities in them, but when he wanted medicine, like herbs, he would walk up this hill and go inside a cave and the medicine would be there as if he was walking into a medical pharmacy to get medication. Our Indian people have been all over these hills and they hadn't found any herbs, other plants with any additional qualities. They just don't grow on this hill.

Elie Custer (A.1.4.3.)

They must have been drawing what they dreamt of, like a spirit whom they had a vision of in their dreams. This spirit, usually an animal, helps them whenever they need help because they have power over these particular spirits and creatures. The old men who went on the vision quest were the ones, usually, who painted these pictographs on these rocks. Lazarus Roberts (A.1.2.8.)

They'd go someplace where nobody should disturb them there in any way whatsoever. They go there with nothing, just as they are and they only take their blankets because they go there to sleep. They don't take anything else along which they can live on. For example, they don't take any guns, and no knives. They say, they sleep all winter. I don't know how long they sleep after that. They sleep one winter and maybe all summer and/or two or three years. Then after this, those people come home, to where they had left their parents, wives, children, relatives and friends. That's their belief. They used to sleep in high cliffs, where there wasn't much room to lay down. They sleep here for ten to twelve months. I don't believe it myself, but somebody else might believe it. They claim this is true that people used to do this. A lot of people said they've found a lot of big spruce trees where these dreamers used to sleep. They'd cut these about three-quarters up and this is where they'd build their nest and then they would sleep there for one to three years. They didn't have any water nor any food to eat all this time. They say they had something to keep them alive. When they are done, they come down the tree and they go home. Those people were very smart, you couldn't hurt them, nor kill them. But I'm sure they're all dead now. And this happened years and years ago.

Soloman Merasty (A.1.4.4.)

They (the dreamers) had special spiritual powers and visions. The dreamers painted these visions on rocks. For example, they made teepees where the spirits would enter. Then the dreamers would draw paintings of teepees on the rocks. They would draw how many people live in this teepee, etc. By drawing these pictures, this was a way of communicating to others. This must have happened around two hundred years ago, at least. This was a way of knowing or letting others know that they were all right. The dreamers were sending messages back and forth. William and Mary Clark (A.1.6.1.)

A specific age has not been attached to the person's dream experience by most informants, but there is an implicit sense that young men were focused upon. As a rite of passage this religious

practice provided a boy or young man with the opportunity to make first contact with his guardian spirit or pawakan and to establish the most important supernatural/human relationship of his life. The guardian spirit encountered during dreaming would be his spirit helper and provide protection and guidance through his life. The man might also utilize the services of other spirit helpers at various times, but emphasis was placed upon the first supernatural being to reveal itself during the vision quest. A man with a powerful guiding or guardian spirit would be a powerful man, while a man whose guiding spirit was less powerful would be less powerful.

When collecting data regarding the vision quest ritual, a number of native elders indicated that there were three methods of isolating oneself for the purpose of dreaming, rather than the two usually associated with Algonkian vision quests (Table 3 and 4). One method known to be successful was to make a nest in a tree and to sleep and to fast in it for a period of time (Henry Cook, Rosie McKenzie, Catherine Linklater, Matthew Nathewyas, Joe Morin, and Soloman Merasty). Another way was to find an isolated spot on a cliff and sleep and fast until the spirits appeared to the dreamer (Catherine Linklater, Matthew Natewyas, Elie Custer and Soloman Merasty).

A third way of physically distancing oneself involved getting into a coffin-like box (Samuel Charles, David Roberts, Dennis McLeod, Catherine Linklater, Andrew Custer, Amiel Linklater, Johnny

Ballantyne, Matthew Natewyas, Joe Morin and Soloman Merasty).

Somebody told me that the people would go to the bottom of the lake or river to have these 'dreams'. They would go inside something like coffins. They would stay in the coffins underwater for a few days. When they came up, what they talked about is what they dreamt of.

Andrew Custer (A.1.4.2.)

The dreamer would sleep in a sealed box which would float on top of the water. He would sleep there all winter long. If the dreamer didn't make it the box would freeze, but if he kept alive the box would keep floating. And when they awoke, they would draw the most powerful visions which they dreamt of during that winter. They honoured their dreams.

Elie Custer (A.1.4.3.)

...I heard of one old man named Othapacikew who went for a dream. He was placed in a box, made of wood, and then the box was sunk into the lake. This took place in the fall. He stayed in this box all winter long underwater. Then it was time for him to come out the people dragged the box to the shore and they let him out. He came out of there still smiling and looking healthy.

I guess he told the people to let him out of the box when the water froze around where the box was sunk. But it never froze, so they got him out of there in the spring when everything was melted. ...He had so many spirits to help him as he had joints in all of his body. He dreamt of all these animals and creatures of some sort during his vision quest or 'dream'. David Roberts (A.1.3.1.)

K.L. Did you ever hear about when they put them {dreamers} in the boxes under water?

Soloman: ...I heard they'd cut ice, about two or three feet thick, they'd cut a hole... and they'd cover it when the dreamer got in it, to sleep in it for a whole winter. Then all of a sudden this dreamer would appear at home when he was done dreaming. Soloman Merasty (A.1.4.4.)

As described, the box was sealed with pine gum to be waterproof and the dreamer would enter the box, position himself horizontally within it, would be sealed in and then be lowered into the water. During the period of time the coffin-box was left submerged and the dreamer pursued his guardian spirit, the box would be monitored by those above. A device was attached to the dreamer's body and would move to the regular breathing pattern (A.1.5.2.). If the device



was not moving then those above would assume that the dreamer had been unsuccessful and had died in the attempt. The body would then be removed from the water. Although not stated, this signalling device was probably also used to indicate that the vision quest was completed and the dreamer desired release. Information provided by Dennis McLeod of Stanley Mission (A.1.2.9.) has added to this experience a procedure which would give the dreamer even greater power - the body of the dreamer would be cut into pieces and placed in the box. The successful dreamer would be able to reassemble his body during the vision quest and by doing so achieve greater power than his peers.

This method of contacting the supernatural sounds extremely dangerous and nothing of this type has been described in other literature concerning the Canadian Shield vision quest. Each of these strategies was designed to distance the dreamer physically from the natural world in order that he might be more easily able to contact the supernatural world and his guardian spirit. When he had established a relationship with this supernatural being he would be able to call upon it when in need. These powers were directly related to a particular spirit contacted through the vision quest. Only one informant has indicated that if the vision quest were to go wrong and become a nightmare, an evil pawakan might become the dreamer's guardian spirit. Matthew Natewyas (A.1.5.1.) of Sandy Bay stated that a person could become a wihtikow if the spirit which appeared to the dreamer during the vision quest was a witikow. This is the only occasion when the

vision quest was identified as the cause of a person becoming a witikow yet the possibility of encountering an evil spirit during the ritual might have existed within the Cree consciousness.

'Levels' of the vision quest have been mentioned by informants. Catherine Linklater indicated that the dreamer could make his nest in the middle of the tree, in the water, or on the rocks (A.1.4.1.). The vision quest was compared to education in Canadian society and Elie Custer indicated that a dreamer could survive the winter's vision quest but not have gained as much from it as another person might (A.1.4.3.). He finished this point by saying, "Some of them knew more than others after their vision quest." Matthew Natewyes was even firmer in his analysis of the breakdown of the levels of the vision quest.

They dreamt of everything they knew about. Some of them slept in the trees. They start by sleeping on the bottom, then in the middle and then at the top of the tree. The higher they sleep the more knowledgeable they get. But they just go to these three levels. It would be like going to school and starting from the bottom and learning higher levels. And some of them would sleep in boxes underwater. They built a wooden box and they put poles all around it just like fence posts and this turns around all winter. They stay and sleep in the box for six months.

Matthew Natewyes (A.1.5.1.)

This understanding of the vision quest corresponds with Dennis McLeod's assertion that an individual could strengthen the power of his vision quest in the coffin-box by having his body cut into pieces before entering and then being able to reassemble his body using the power derived from the vision. A similar incident is described in the epic of Nianimis, when he and his men were starving (B.4.3.2.). Although this was not a frequent practice, it

appears that an individual with great power, such as Nianimis, could use it when the circumstances required it.

#### 5.1.2. THE SPIRIT WORLD

Of the dreamers, David Roberts (A.1.3.1.) stated that, "The spirits feared them". Lazarus Roberts (A.1.2.8.) spoke of the spirits helping the dreamers because the dreamers had "power over these particular spirits and creatures." It has been assumed that since the Cree sought the vision quest and the guardian spirit that they fit into a classic form of animism. They attribute power and the ability to control events of the physical world to spiritual beings which could manifest themselves in the forms of animals, birds, fish, rocks and other inanimate objects.

Prentice Downes (1988: 67-68) reinforced the idea of the Rocky Cree belief in guardian spirits which coexisted in the world they inhabited. To keep such coexistence pleasant, one had to keep the spirits contented and honoured. Since a person's power was directly related to that of his 'puagan' or pawakan, it is difficult to believe that a "sunbeam, the rainboe [or] a grain of sand" (ibid.: 67-68) could be a protective influence, able to assist a person when he was being acted upon by an evil medicine man. The concept of a completely animistic world can be quite frightening, so the idea of a guardian is very comforting. However, the stories collected in northern Saskatchewan indicate that there might have been a hierarchy of spirits.

Many shorter stories collected from La Ronge, Stanley Mission and Pelican Narrows contain accounts of animals speaking to humans and of animals assisting humans. The Wisahkicahk stories show different animals helping Wisahkicahk do things, though two different types of events occur within the stories. In the epic tale of Ayas (B.4.1.3.) a human character requested a toad's help to fix his moccasin and when he was dissatisfied with the effort, he killed the toad. Another version of this story has him kicking the toad rather than killing it, yet the toad does nothing in response (B.4.1.2.). In the second Iyas story, the human later asked a chipmunk woman to sew up his moccasin and left her alone when he was pleased with her work (B.4.1.2.). In the story of Thundercloud Lady, the youngest brother became very angry when the female spirit would not talk to him, so he shot her with his bow and arrows (B.3.6.). This spirit had been looking after the brothers and had done nothing to harm him personally. She also did not retaliate. Such examples imply that spirits feared humans and were willing to aid them even without being asked. In fact, none of the stories collected indicate that the spirits in animal forms ever refused to perform the task a human demanded.

Such stories indicate that creatures like the toad either did not have power or chose not to use it if they had it. There are also instances of spirits which would not assist humans. In the story of the Swimming Stone (Noah Ratt A.1.1.2.) the rock has a will of its own and is unresponsive to humans.

These people I mentioned before, who used wooden canoes,

used to see this one big rock sitting up on top of this rock hill on this one island. So this one time as they were paddling along this island they noticed that this big rock was gone. Then they saw this same big rock sitting on the shore of another island across from the island where it originally sat before. This big rock looked like it got out of the water and got onto the shore and was facing the island. So the people said that this big rock swam across to this island. So they started giving this big rock things such as some tobacco. In turn they would ask the big rock for favours, like the wind to blow a specific direction so they can sail away to where they were heading at that time or to have good luck in their travels. They must have had dreams of this big rock. This is what I used to hear. This is how Swimming Stone Rapids got its name. Noah Ratt (B.1.1.2.)

Despite the fact that the humans left offerings as a gesture of respect, the rock did not speak or make any contact. In fact, it is not apparent that the humans received the things they asked for. What they were asking for were non-specific enough so that failure to receive them could be blamed on other factors. In the story of the Sacred Rock (B.3.3.1.), however, the rock initiates contact with some young boys and encourages them to bring all the people from their village to hear what it has to say. When the people made offerings to this rock and showed their respect for it, the rock told the people legends and made predictions about the future. This too was a one-time occurrence, despite the indication that the people continued to make offerings without another word from the rock.

Far more significant are spirits which were openly feared by people who made deliberate efforts to avoid contact. Wihtikow is the most obvious example of a terrifying spirit. However, there were others. The 'Little People' or memekwesiw lived in rocks and could

play with the children they would protect (B.3.1.) but were feared by Cree across the Canadian Shield because these little people had access to powerful medicine and could cause terrible things to happen to the humans who offended them. In the story of Niskisis (B.3.1) the girl's parents were terrified when she picked up the little man in his canoe and brought him home, since they feared guilt by association. Most current informant data deal with the locations of these tiny creatures without noses, rather than the consequences of crossing them.

... they are supposed to be people. Some kind of people. But they don't speak our language. And those people... (pause) the way they used to catch them... If somebody knew where they were, they would go there. The Indians had to have power through dreaming, that's the only way they can speak to them and catch them. The island nearby Southend where they've seen these people is called Mimikwesew Island. Soloman Merasty (A.1.4.5.)

They (the little people) must have been living in a cave in there somewhere. They must have been included in the medicine men's dreams. Because since people were not 'dreamers' anymore, these 'little people' didn't exist any longer either. Nobody ever sees or hears about them anymore.

...People used to hear these little people wherever there was an island with a lot of rock leading right into the water.  
Noah Ratt (A.1.1.2.)

The people would dream of the 'little people', that's why they knew where they lived. Since they were 'pawakans' maybe they thought these people can send bad medicine to harm or kill them if they got them angry or something like that. Probably this is why they were afraid of them.

Samuel Charles (A.1.2.10.)

An account by Downes, provided by his friend Adam Ballantyne of Pelican Narrows, tells of the wrath of the "Mimigwesseos" when molested (Cockburn, 1984: 26). Three young men saw a canoe containing three little men. The men grabbed the canoe and demanded to hear the news (a form of greeting). The first little

man told the human that he would not see the snow fly. The second human repeated the greeting and the second "Mimigwesseo" told him he would not see the new year. Undaunted, the third young man asked the last "Mimigwesseo" for news. The little man said, "You will never see the spring." Then the canoe sped away. As predicted, each of them died before the appointed date. This story was apparently well known, as the last man was said to have died in La Ronge, where the myth of the "Mimigwesseo" lives on.

Another spirit which was greatly feared was the great lynx, Misi pisew, which lived underwater. The following story illustrates the power and stealth of the lynx.

It's called Manitou Rapids. I heard that when people travelling and using wooden canoes would approach the rapids, they would paddle very quietly as if they were trying to avoid disturbing whatever existed in this rapids. The rapids are very small. The Crees used to believe that something lived here under the water. They called it a big lynx. If they made a lot of noise while they were shooting the rapids, they would fear most for this big lynx. So they were very careful not to be noisy when they go over these rapids as though it was their god of Manitou. The dreamers used to say something lived here under water.

...I heard that one time one man was shooting these rapids quietly when suddenly he saw a very large paw coming from underwater and trying to get hold of his canoe. This paw looked like a lynx's paw. He said he was lucky that this big lynx didn't kill him but it couldn't reach or grab a hold of the canoe, but it almost did.

Noah Ratt (A.1.1.2.)

When considering the question of the vision quest and the acquisition of a guardian spirit, it seems reasonable to assume that the most powerful creatures of all would be the most desired as pawakan. As a young man was preparing to embark upon his first vision quest, the importance of the contact must have been foremost

in his mind. The direction of his life might be decided by the spirit guardian he encountered. Leaders and medicine men were able to gain great power from their pawakan. Having heard stories like the ones above, the desire to have a powerful spirit might influence the course of his vision. Each experience would appear to be a period of anxiety.

The characters of Wisahkicahk and Wihtikow were legendary figures in the Cree and Ojibwa oral histories, although they might be known by different names or variations of these. Each was significant and fulfilled a need within these cultures. They were perpetuated and expanded upon so that particular behaviour patterns were avoided by the human population. For example, the character of Wisahkicahk (B.2) was popular in Rocky Cree legends and was described in many different situations and adventures. He represented the foolishness in man and his adventures demonstrate vividly the folly of behaving without thinking things through. When Wisahkicahk encountered the killdeers in the story told by Harry Harris (B.2.2.3.) and saw them throwing their eyeballs into the air, he was tempted. The birds told Wisahkicahk the secret of this action and warned him of the consequences of abusing this behaviour. If he ignored the warning and did A, then B would occur but if he heeded the warning and did not do A, then B would not happen. Naturally Wisahkicahk was unable to resist temptation so he ignored the killdeers' warning, placing himself in a situation of logical consequence. This progression is found within all such Wisahkicahk stories and on an educational level were meant to



impress upon a young audience. Wisahkicahk's actions were to be viewed as ridiculous and as something that a normal human would neither encounter nor consider engaging in. This emphasized the point by placing it in a memorable context.

It is unlikely that Wisahkicahk was a candidate for inclusion among the supernatural beings that an individual would draw upon while on a vision quest or in need of a spirit helper. His unreliability would not give him the credibility that would be desirable in a guardian spirit. Equally unappealing was the legendary character Wihtikow the cannibal (Appendix B.1.). If Wisahkicahk was considered to be the initiator in an A-then-B scenario, then Wihtikow was a logical consequence of a particular scenario. Wihtikow was a cannibal without conscience or soul. He killed without thought or reason. The data collected from the native elders were not greatly in variance with the material found in the fur trade records, though more details and specific situations were described by elders.

Wihtikow was described by one informant as being the result of a nightmare during a vision quest but for the most part the origin of the wihtikow are not a concern of the elders. Their focus was the actions of wihtikow and the horror of encountering one.

Fear of the wihtikow acted as a means of preventing injury to other members of the group as well. Individuals were encouraged not to wander away from camp alone at night or the wihtikow might attack

them (B.1.4) and if a member of the group disappeared without explanation the wihtikow was blamed. The survival of the group depended on the protection and security of its members, particularly those who provided subsistence, and fear of the Witikow prevented those individuals from taking unnecessary risks while alone. If the individual disappeared, the wihtikow myth provided a culturally recognized means of accounting for the loss.

According to Isaiah Roberts of Stanley Mission, before the coming of the whiteman there were no diseases and people either died naturally or were killed by the wihtikow. This statement may be an over simplification, but Isaiah believed it and implied that moral and behavioural standards were such that no other form of death was recognized. Wihtikow must then account for any death which was unnatural and this minimized the choice of behaviour patterns following death. The form of appropriate response would be determined by whatever cause was accepted by the group and discouraged unexpected responses which might further threaten the safety of the remaining members.

Belief in wihtikow could be a means of emphasizing proper behaviour patterns. A negligent mother was responsible for the transformation of her child into the cannibalistic being.

Even some of the babies could be wihtikows. There is a superstition about leaving babies attached to their crib-boards at night and if you leave a baby in overnight then it will turn into a wihtikow. Once there was a child about one year old, old enough to be teething. One evening his grandmother went to check on him and found he had meat in-between his teeth.

The medicine man/shaman tried to figure out how this had happened but he couldn't so they decided to watch the child that night. When everyone was asleep the child flew out of the teepee through the smoke hole and went into another tent. He would hit someone on the head with the crib-board and then would eat them. The only way to kill the child-witikow was to break the crib-board and thaw the ice which had formed around the child's lips.

(recounted by Isaiah Roberts, Stanley Mission Saskatchewan, 20 August, 1983. Translated by Teresa McLeod)

The purpose of this myth was to remind young mothers to release their children from the crib-board, thus preventing injury to the child during the night.

Cannibalism might arise during a period of crisis. The consequences of crisis starvation is a universal fear. Traditional Cree lifeways were completely dependent on the environment for subsistence. If starvation became prolonged the possibility of cannibalism increased so a horrific image of a cannibal was introduced into the cosmology to exemplify the loss of humanness resulting from the transgression of eating human flesh. When a human resorted to this unnatural act all human qualities were lost by the cannibal, who was then possessed by the active spirit of the wihtikow. The taking of human life in this manner and for this purpose meant irreversible transformation into an object of terror and horror, and an eternity of mindless wandering in search of human flesh. The prevention of cannibalistic behaviour was an obvious function of wihtikow belief and in crisis starvation situations a temptation that was probably hardest to resist. By introducing a cannibalistic character into the cosmology, the

unconscious suggestion of possible survival behaviour was established so the consequences of such action must be forcefully repulsive to counteract the impulse.

Some legends do not lend themselves easily to explanation. The reason for this may be that the legend's significance does not agree with an outsider's interpretation. Another reason could be that the emic explanation may not be related to any events of the story. The legends have not been manipulated to fit any model, though some plausible functions within a model do present themselves (A.1.3-A.1.6). Functions for the witikow legends are suggested in an article entitled "Ethnographic Reconstruction of Witigo":

1. scare children into staying close to the camp or house.
2. scare children into being quiet at night, to go to sleep.
3. excite children when they go to play the the game of witigo.
4. inform people about the contingent nature of the world.
5. used to scare adults into deference to some sorcerers.
6. used to accept the disappearance of individuals.
7. used to assert the appearance of monstrous persons.
8. deliberately imaginative contributions (Preston 1978: 65).

Some of these points have already been discussed. Others have not because they are not applicable to much material from northern Saskatchewan, aside from #5. Marie Merasty provides stories in The World of Wetiko (1974) where medicine power was used to harm individuals who had offended another or would not comply with the wishes of another, but these stories do not mention a "wetiko" (See B.1.6.). Mrs. Annie Roberts of Stanley Mission claimed the shaman could use telepathy to send messages and that the purpose of these messages was usually to kill an enemy. She claims she once saw a

message going through the clouds on its way to an enemy, so she yelled at it and it burst. According to Mrs. Roberts this was the only means of killing the shaman's message. As for the rest of the list (Preston 1978: 65), further ethnographic investigation in northern Saskatchewan may provide substantive material to justify the additional functions but at this point they are just 'noted'.

The characters of Wisahkicahk and Witikow have been examined more closely than other supernatural beings because more is known of them from the abundance of stories collected. Though they are the most dramatic of the supernatural beings, others were preferable as spirit guardians. The speed of the fox (B.2.2.3.), the strength of the lynx (A.1.1.2.) and the curing powers of the little people were each qualities which would assist the dreamer more than Wisahkicahk, the trickster and Witikow, the cannibal.

### 5.1.3. POWER: DIFFERENT FORMS OF CREE MEDICINE

Power was an important principle within the larger Cree culture and its meaning went beyond the physical or/and mental ability to convince others to do as you wished. Power was directly related to the ability of the individual to tap into the supernatural realm and to change things within the natural world through its use. Informants stated (Tables 5 and 6) that power obtained through the vision included abilities to heal and cure people of illness and injury, to predict future events, and to excel as a hunter, particularly supernatural actions, such as transformation of form or size, telepathy, and kinetic transference of objects

Table 5. Interview Analysis - Forms of Power

	AMOS RATT	NOAH RATT	LYDIA NAPHTHALIA MCKENZIE	GEORGE/ BETSY MCKENZIE	BETSY MCKENZIE	WILLIAM RATT	EDWARD MCKENZIE	REV. HENRY COOK	ROSIE S. MCKENZIE	ELIZABETH COOK	LAZARUS ROBERTS	DENNIS MCLEOD	SAMUEL CHARLES
SHAMANS													
POWERS-WHERE FROM				XX									XX
-TRANSFER OBJECTS													XX
-LEVITATION				XX									XX
-TELEPATHY													
-PSYCHIC				XX									XX
-WOMEN-GOOD													XX
-EVIL													
-WRESTLING													XX
-FOOD													
-OTHER													
-FIGHTING EACH OTHER								XX					
-HEALING				XX				XX					XX
-EVIL													
-GOOD OVER EVIL													
-DEVICES													
-PREDICTIONS				XX									
LITTLE PEOPLE-DESCRIPTION		XX						XX					
-LOCATION		XX						XX				XX	XX
-EVIL												XX	XX
-DISAPPEARANCE		XX											XX
-MEDICINE		XX										XX	XX
-AS PAWAKAN													XX
MANITOU-CREATOR		XX						XX					

Table 6. Interview Analysis - Forms of Power (Continued)

	DAVID ROBERTS	SALLY MCKENZIE	CATHERINE LINKLATER	ANDREW CUSTER	ELIE CUSTER	AMIEL LINKLATER	SOLOMAN MERASTY	SOLOMAN MERSATY	MATTHEW NATEWYES	JOHNNY BALLANTYNE	WILLIAM/ MARY CLARK	PHILLIP MORIN	JOE MORIN
SHAMANS													
POWERS-WHERE FROM		XX					XX	XX			XX		
-TRANSFER OBEJECTS													
-LEVITATION													
-TELEPATHY	XX												XX
-PSYCHIC													
-WOMEN-GOOD													
-EVIL	XX												
-WRESTLING	XX												
-FOOD	XX												
-OTHER		XX											
-FIGHTING EACH OTHER							XX						
-HEALING											XX		
-EVIL		XX											
-GOOD OVER EVIL													
-DEVICES										XX			
-PREDICTIONS								XX		XX			
LITTLE PEOPLE-DESCRIPTION					XX			XX					
-LOCATION					XX								
-EVIL													
-DISAPPEARANCE					XX			XX					
-MEDICINE													
-AS PAWAKAN													
MANITOU-CREATOR													

over great distances.

Some forms of power differed from others. The need to heal and cure illness were vital to the doctor, while the ability to excel as a hunter and to predict where game could be found would be needed by hunt leaders. As the group was delineated into basic specializations, depending on size of population, an individual was able to develop skills appropriate to his talents - or as the guardian spirit allowed. In some instances, the group would consist only of one family unit, so the degree of specialization was negligible. Each person in the group had to have some degree of exposure to and skill within several areas because survival necessitated such knowledge. However superiority in certain areas was recognized.

Women were never referred to as dreamers. They had power without a vision quest, as demonstrated in the story of Wahaypistes and the old lady from Pine House (Annie Johnson B.4.4.1). The concerns of women with power were not well developed in the collected stories (Tables 5 and 6) and generally the women with power seemed emotionally unstable. For example, the rolling head sequence began when the mother/aunt become insane after her pet snakes were killed (B.4.2.1.-2.). Similarly, the evil elbow ladies in the Ayas stories were deranged and their attempt to kill Ayas with their elbows was unprovoked (B.4.1.1.-2.). The evil woman who tried repeatedly to kill Wayahpistes was doing so because he would not



give her food and had bested her when challenged to a wrestling match. Neither of these would be reasonable explanations for the hatred which developed into a shamanic battle to the death. All women mentioned above used their power to destroy another human being. This was unlike the power possessed by men, though evil medicine men did appear in the stories as well.

The usual purposes of the vision quest or dreaming were to obtain medicine which would be of benefit. 'Medicine' was a term informants associated with power, as its connotations go beyond the ability to heal the body. The knowledge that one had a spirit which could be called upon for assistance would be of great emotional and psychological support. As has been discussed previously with reference to the ravages of European diseases and the onset of frequent starvation due to declining animal populations in the late 19th and early 20th century, demoralization occurred when the support of the guardian spirits and the other spirit helpers appeared to be withdrawn from the native people.

Aspects of power involving psychic processes, such as prediction of specific future events (rather than those which could be called prediction), the projection of objects over distances, and the ability to change one's form or size, were highly regarded by the Cree. An individual able to perform such feats was granted respect and, depending on how he chose to use his powers, could be feared.

Acquiring a power to predict was a reason given by informants for the vision quest (Noah Ratt, David Roberts, Rosie McKenzie, Andrew Custer, Johnny Ballantyne, Matthew Natewyas, Joe Morin, and Soloman Merasty). The power to predict events would be a great gift among any people, but for the Cree it was regarded with special awe. The ability to predetermine where game would be, when to move from a location threatened by impending danger or an unexpected arrival of enemy groups could increase chances for survival. Soloman Merasty told of the coming of a warring Blackfoot group and a prediction which saved several members of the group:

One of these old men was very wise. He could foretell what will be happening in the future. He had spiritual powers and lots of pawakanak (more than one). The wiser old man said to the other, "I'm leaving tomorrow morning because somebody is going to come here that's not friendly. Something is going to happen."  
(Soloman Merasty A.1.4.4.)

The old man and his people were saved because they believed in the prediction. Whether it was an educated guess based on an unconscious absorption of facts, or legitimate psychic ability, the Cree believed that the vision quest would allow them to tap into the future. This belief and the actions which resulted from the prediction allowed the Cree to be saved from events which might otherwise have threatened their survival. Prediction could save them from wihtikows and could thus pit one form of power against another, while giving the dreamer the respect of his peers.

Obviously, the ability to predict future events through the vision quest was a separate function, differing from that of an initial

'rite of passage' into manhood. Prediction was an additional power which could be acquired by a man later in life and did not require the ritual of the vision quest. In the story of 'Wahyahpistes', Annie Johnson recalled, "So Wayahpistes went hunting. He had a vision. He saw a lot of people on horses coming towards them. So he stopped hunting right there. He warned his people of the danger ahead". Most predictions spoken of in legends occurred outside the vision quest ritual, though the premonitions or forecasts did occur in vision form. Vision quests could be undertaken by an older man in need of spirit helpers or guardian spirits. This, then, established two distinct forms of the vision quest - the initial 'rite of passage' and the subsequent communication by a mature and initiated individual with the supernatural in order to tap into power.

The dreamers dreamed a long time ago. They were medicine men also. They would put up a teepee where they would dream, usually one at a time in one teepee. These teepees were held up by four large poles and covered with moose hide. This is one place where dreamers would dream. This is where the dreamer would communicate with the spirits and get their spiritual powers from these dreams and/or visions.

William and Mary Clark (A.1.6.1.)

The 'shaking tent' ritual was another means of contacting the supernatural world which was used on occasion by characters in Rocky Cree legends, though it was not discussed at length during the interview process (Tables 7 and 8). Earlier accounts from George Nelson's journals tell of the ceremony and the supernatural visitors to the shaking tent. The purpose of this ceremony, as Nelson understood it, was "to obtain information about persons or events distant in space or time or otherwise inaccessible to the

diviners" (Brown and Brightman 1988: 147). Shaking tent rituals are infrequently mentioned in northern Saskatchewan. Noah Ratt (A.1.1.2.) described a shaking tent ceremony meant to increase the power of bullets for hunting.

A variety of devices were used by medicine men and these are revealed in the legends collected from informants and other sources (Tables 5 and 6). Shamans were able to project their thoughts through the air and make contact with others at a distance. Telepathy between shamans was the most frequent form of communication although several stories contain references to unexplained voices which were ultimately shown to belong to shamans in another location. It is stated that the ordinary person heard the voice, implying that he heard it with his ears, though the voice may have been heard in his mind, in which case it would be telepathy. When one medicine man contacted another it was usually to challenge his power and the two might eventually try to kill one another.

The means by which one shaman would try to kill another was by moving objects with his mind and sending them through the air to kill the other medicine man. This was often successful due to the element of surprise. The surviving medicine man was then assumed to be the more powerful of the two. Without intending to undermine a belief in this power, this appears to be a very reasonable explanation for unexpected death, since the projected object was said to enter the person's body and kill him from within. As the

conflicts between shamans could last indefinitely, a death at any point in the conflict would be assumed to mark the success of the survivor.

But the old lady was still out to get him. When he went hunting something fell from up in the sky and hit his groin and almost killed him. But he regained consciousness. A black bear helped him, as if he fixed him up to get well. He dreamed of bears too, so they were his spirit helpers. He had power over them. And now he was totally angry with this old lady who keeps sending bad medicine to him to kill him. So the medicine man in turn sent this old lady some bad medicine that night. He intended to kill her. He had sent her a piece of jagged edged metal. He told the people when they travel by where this old lady lived, they had nothing to fear anymore because he killed her {in the future}.

So as the old lady was sitting down mending some fish nets this metal fell from above and hit her. She yelled and she flew a distance away and this thing killed her. So when the people went there, they asked about her and sure enough she died when she got hit by this metal. Annie Johnson (A.4.4.1.)

During an earlier physical conflict between these two shamans a moment occurred when the struggling bodies were actually elevated or levitated from the ground. This is the only mention of the power to lift bodies off the ground though medicine men were believed to be able to change their physical bodies and assume another form. In the story of "Muhikunistikwan", the evil medicine man was able to change his form from that of a man to a giant frog, and then back (A.3.7.1.). Many examples of this form of power exist in the oral history of the Rocky Cree. Wayahpistes was able to change into a loon and back several times in order to escape the evil old woman in the power struggle referred to above.

## 5.2. LEGEND ANALYSIS

It is necessary to tap into the collective memory of this culture through contemporary native elders and to assemble all mythological and legend material held in their memories, or in any other reliable and credible source available, during the fieldwork period. Unfortunately, the usual body of stories which would be considered myths were not forthcoming during the interview process. This would include stories concerning the creation of the land, animals, birds, fish, water, and all other things in the world of the Rocky Cree. The myth category would also include stories about the creation of man.

The ethnographic material collected during the fieldwork period is distanced in time from that believed and recited by the people who had sought visions and who made the pictographs. There are abundant legends told by the elders and the living Cree elders have provided sufficient knowledge of the cultural function of pictographs and the vision quest. An explanation for a lack of origin myth is proposed in Chapter 4. The oral history and legends contained in Appendices A and B are regarded as being as close to first-hand informant data as is possible at the present time. The elders did not have to communicate in English and some did not speak it, though most understood it. Cree culture has traditionally been independent of a written language system and although syllabics are understood and written, most of the stories recalled by the elders and reproduced in the appendices of this study had not been previously documented in written form.

When a culture is without a written form of its language, all material must be passed on to subsequent generations through verbal transmission, based on memory. It was through this traditional pattern that the elders contacted for this research had obtained knowledge of the myths and legends of their people from their ancestors. The oral history practice was the means by which they were able to disseminate this important heritage information to their children and grandchildren. Materials in the appendices illustrate the range of stories available and will also demonstrate the accuracy of the memory based culture. Details are important in the transmission of culture and these legends and stories are rich in description and humour.

Variations occur in legends like "Wisahkicahk and the Ducks", but the essential elements of the story remain intact. Some individuals are better story tellers than others or variants of a story may have descended through different patriarchal lineages. Such variation does not interfere with the relationship to pictographs and they may even increase the amount of information available for analysis. On occasion, several stories become merged so the middle portions of the stories have become interchangeable. For example, the stories about the "Rolling Head" and Ayas/ Wisahkicahk are epic adventures with a number of twists and turns in the story line. A series of adventures and unusual events are strung together in legends of this type, creating an exciting tale. The 'mix and match' nature of the middle sections does not detract from the story's quality or become distracting to the listener, since the

beginning and conclusion of these stories are consistent and meaningful. It is not important whether the rolling head went through fire or over water on the back of a pelican, only that the younger brother was transformed into a wolf. What this 'mix and match' of story parts reinforces is the possibility of controlled variation, deliberate or accidental, on the part of the story teller. Controlled variation may occur, despite the seeming contradiction of the need for accurate transmission of stories, because the individual does not invent the variation and therefore create his own, new story. He utilizes elements which are already in the body of accepted legends and manipulates them to intrigue and captivate the audience.

### 5.3. SYMBOLIC ANALYSIS OF PICTOGRAPHS USING ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA

It has not been the intention of this study to definitively identify any particular figures in pictographic works as being Manito or some other specific character from Cree mythology, or to attach meaning to a scene which suggest a narrative. Any identifications made within the text which follows are based on information provided by native informants in the fieldwork area. If some identifications are suggested or implied, they follow from an exposure to Rocky Cree culture over a period of time and with some understanding of the basis of this group's religious beliefs and practices.

When the identity of an animal in a pictograph appears to be obvious through visual identification, it must be realized that



the animal image may also be symbolic of several others things:

- 1) a supernatural being in animal form;
- 2) particular characteristic or qualities attributed to this animal and being suggested to the viewer through the symbol of the animal; and
- 3) a combination of any of these, all of which were hidden in the unconscious reality of the collective Cree traditional belief system.

#### 5.3.1. PIPE SYMBOLS

When a symbol has been isolated for study or identified as being of particular interest ethnographically, the distribution of the symbol should be determined so as to discern whether the symbol is regionally important or significant to the entire Cree cultural group. To illustrate this, the 'pipe' symbol, which is an easily identifiable image, will be examined. Within T.E.H. Jones' survey of Churchill River pictographs (1980), a number of human figures were found in proximity to pipe symbols (Figures 12 and 13), indicating each was smoking a pipe or was part of an action involving a pipe. The pipe is horizontal and on a level with the human figure, and appears as it would if in use. The pipe symbol at the Uskik Lake site - face II (Figure 14) is in the same position as the others described, but the living being that the pipe is pointing to is not human. It is some kind of animal, though it has its mouth open as if ready to receive the pipe.

In the fieldwork area, pipes are not a frequent symbol however two other pipe images (Figure 6) appear at the Hickson-Maribelli site (HbNc, face XXVI). They are closely associated with human figures and are of the same brownish paint tone as the human figures,



Figure 12. Pipe and Human, Hickson-Maribelli (HbNc-1, Face Vc)

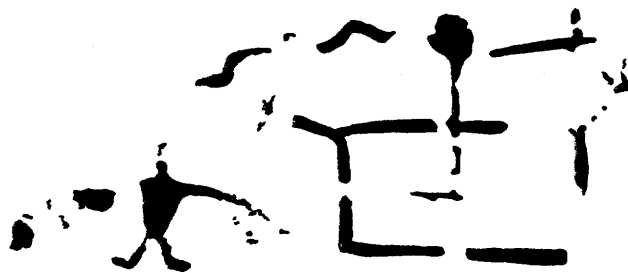


Figure 13. Vision Quest with Pipe, Maple Leaf Rapids (GjMn-1)

therefore indicating a similarity of period and authorship. These scenes are different than those of the other pipe scenes discussed because the bowl of each pipe faces the human figure instead of being positioned as if the human was using it. This suggests that the human was not using the pipe but was being acted upon by the pipe or by the individual who possessed it. The pipe could have also symbolized an event associated with the human figure. The cultural context and the understood meaning of the pipe is that it conveys messages, has power and is an offering of peace. Annie Johnson speaks of the death of a chief, "They left his body there all covered or wrapped in a red cloth. They left him his pipe, tobacco and other things, even his canoe." The symbol of the pipe in the pictographs may have similar meaning to the pipes in the stories. If the symbol had the same meaning within the pictographs then the meaning of the entire image may be clarified.

### 5.3.2. ARM GESTURES AND HANDS

The meanings of the different gestures are not clear and were not referred to by informants. However, it is possible to bring some meaning to these gestures by comparing them with other images where more information is available. In Ojibwa pictographs, Steinbring (1978: 14) stated that, "They [arms] occur normally in an upright attitude, in supplications for the power bestowed through receipt of the 'migis' or magical shells of the Midewiwin." As mentioned, the hands of the human figure at Cow Narrows (Figure 15) and the hands of the 'dreamer' (Figure 16) at Stanley Rapids



Figure 14. Animal with Pipe, Uskik Lake, Face II (GiMu-1)



Figure 15. Cow Narrows (GjNd-1)

are raised with fingers clearly visible. One figure at Hickson-Maribelli (Figure 10) shows three symbols -- a pipe, a human figure and a moose (Jones 1976: 26) -- in a scene which suggests a number of things, based on the information discussed in relation to other sites. The hands of the human figure are clearly drawn on his upraised arms, though this man has only three fingers on each hand. The human figure is identified as being masculine by his genitals, which are shown. The figure of the moose is positioned to the left of the man and slightly above the man on the horizontal. This could indicate that the moose is at a distance past the man, through the use of perspective, or that the moose was levitated or elevated from the ground upon which the man appears to be standing. The pipe symbol is situated at an angle between the two, with the stem of the pipe close to where the animal's mouth would be, while the bowl is pointed to the man's waist. The upraised hands and the presence of the pipe may affirm contact between these two beings, though not of the same supernatural intent as the vision quest images. The direction of the pipe is at variance with the pipe shown in the vision quest scene and since the direction of the pipe suggests the direction of the contact, it appears that the moose is making contact with the man. The success of the contact is shown through the lifted arms. This could be the record of the appearance of a guardian spirit, the moose, to the dreamer during the vision quest.

The other scene including pipes at the Hickson-Maribelli site (Figure 6) also indicates direction of contact from the image of a bird, or 'thunder bird' to a human with upraised arms. The stem of the pipe is located slightly above the head of the thunder bird and the bowl of the pipe is at the side of the human head on a level with its eyes. The human figure above the bird image is also in association with a pipe but this figure has only one downcast arm with three fingers. This might also be a vision quest scene. It is possible that both Figures 6 and 10 might involve shamans disguised as animals and that the human was being contacted through shamanic medicine. It is impossible to determine if shaman-to-shaman contact through the pipe might be symbolized differently than the human-to-supernatural contact of the upraised arms.

The hands of the human figure in Figure 6 are raised upward, as are the hands of many human figures in pictographs in northern Saskatchewan. The hands of the 'dreamer' (Figure 16) at Stanley Rapids are uplifted. This pictograph has already been discussed as representing a successful vision quest and contact with the supernatural realm. The number of human and partial figures with upraised and well defined hands and fingers are many, particularly at Hickson-Maribelli (Figure 10, 4 {two of three figures}, HbNc-1 site 2: face I, Vc, XII, XXVI, XXIX; HbNc-2 site 3: face III). There are also human figures with upraised arms and no fingers (Figure 17, HbNc-1 site 2: face B between XIX and XX), human figures with outstretched arms and no fingers (HbNc-1 site 2: face

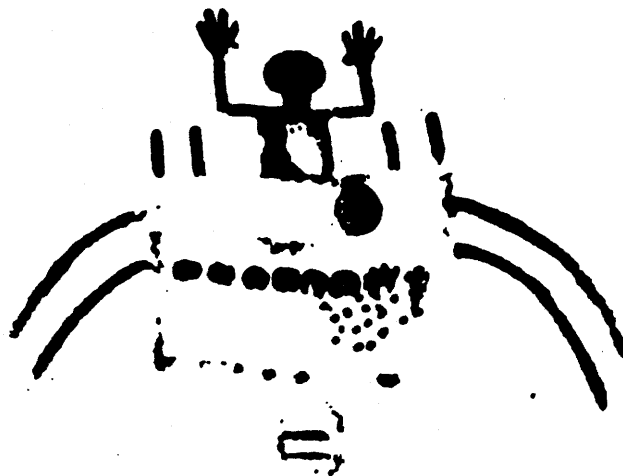


Figure 16. Stanley Rapids, (detail)Face III (GiNc-4)



Figure 17. Humans with Upraised Arms and No Fingers,  
Hickson-Maribelli (HbNc-1, Face XIII)

XIII), human figures with downcast arms and defined fingers (Figure 8), non-human figures with upraised arms with defined fingers (Figures 4, 9, 18, HbNc-1, Face Va), and non-human figures with downcast arms and no fingers (Figure 19).

In images where fingers appear, not all the fingers are shown and some hands have only three fingers, while others have four or five. The significance of fingers in the images is unknown and was not referred to by informants. Robert Lowie mentions that a Crow 'dreamer' would heighten the degree of supernatural sympathy during the vision quest by cutting off a finger joint of his left hand (Lessa and Vogt 1979: 286). However, this was not mentioned in relation to Algonkian-speaking people.

Informant information regarding the use of the coffin-box as a part of the vision quest ritual makes the Maple Leaf Rapids site (Figure 13) intriguing. Though outside the fieldwork area, the coffin-box at this site was identified by Johnny Ballantyne (A.1.5.2.) as part of the vision quest and the figure with its head above the box was the 'dreamer'. In the mouth of the dreamer appears a pipe, with the bowl facing away from it. From the back of the dreamer's head 'power lines' extend outward and somewhat down, until they reach the figure of a bird. This bird has been identified by Margaret Ballantyne of Sandy Bay as a thunder bird, a supernatural being of great power. Judging from informant data regarding the vision quest, the pictograph may signify contact





Figure 18. Non-human Figures with Upraised Arms and Defined Fingers, Hickson-Maribelli (HbNc-1, Face II)

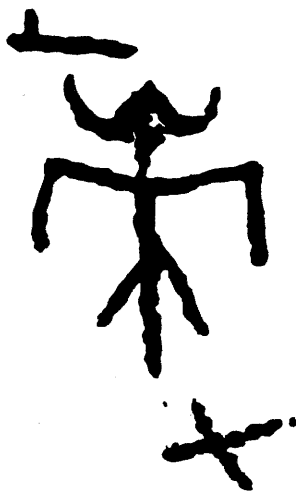


Figure 19. Non-human Figures with Downcast Arms and No Fingers, Hickson-Maribelli (HbNc-1, Face II)

with a guardian spirit. The pipe may indicate a shamanic involvement in this vision quest since the pipe's bowl orientation suggests a shaman's use of the pipe toward those he was attempting to contact, probably as a symbol of peaceful intent.

### 5.3.3. POWER LINES

Lines of power are also symbols that can be identified with relative certainty. They occur at the following sites along the Churchill River: McDonald Bay site, GkNo-5; High Rock Narrows site 2 Face VII, GjNk-1; Cow Narrows, GjNd-1; and Island Portage, GiNa-1; Maple Leaf Rapids, GjMn-1 (Figure 1). Informant data are available concerning events which occurred at Cow Narrows and which influenced the naming of the site and the making of the pictograph (Figure 15). A direct connection can thus be made between the described events (A.1.2.1.) and the depicted scene. According to informants, a woman was paddling in this spot when she observed a cow (or cow buffalo) surfacing from under the water. This was a very strange event so a pictograph was made of this animal. Many informants in Stanley Mission knew of the event and were able to repeat it with accuracy, some indicating that it had occurred within living memory. The pictograph shows the cow clearly, though it is not located in the water (as in the informant accounts) but on the same level as the human figure to its left. Two sets of lines link the cow image to the human figure, one from the mouth area and the other from the region of its eyes. The wavy line from its mouth touches the human figure on the left arm and the other

line, from its eyes, make contact with the human's head (though the painting is faded and this portion of the pictograph is not clear, enough exists to allow this observation).

#### 5.4. CROSS CULTURAL COMPARISONS

Animals were believed to be capable of extraordinary and supernatural actions, like the cow described by living informants (Tables 7 and 8). These existed in myth and legend. Contact between humans and supernatural beings was possible so this cow image would represent a supernatural being in contact with a human while the wavy lines represent this contact. Supernatural beings have power which can be tapped through contact so the lines may also be symbolic of a transfer of power from the supernatural cow to the human.

Brenda McGee Lipsett (1970) examined the Mide birch bark scrolls and other Ojibwa symbols in order to place meanings to pictographs. She found the similar wavy, connecting lines in both pictographs and the scrolls. She (*ibid.*: 184) concluded that these lines were indicators of supernatural power. She (*ibid.*: 188) quotes Hoffman (1891: 223), who stated, "The wavy lines extending from the head denotes superior power".

Power lines appear in many pictographs in northern Saskatchewan. Their connotation strongly supports Lipsett's suggestion about the transference of power the figures involved. If the pipe was meant to symbolize a message being transmitted from one figure to

Table 7. Interview Analysis - Strange Events

	DAVID ROBERTS	SALLY MCKENZIE	CATHERINE LINKLATER	ANDREW CLUSTER	ELIE CLUSTER	AMEL LINKLATER	SOLOMAN MERASTY	SOLOMAN MERSATY	MATTHEW NATEWYES	JOHNNY BALLANTYNE	WILLIAM/ MARY CLARK	PHILLIP MORIN	JOE MORIN
TOTEMS	XX	XX											
OFFERINGS													
WITIKOW-SIGHTING													
-KILLING SOMEONE										XX			
-KILLED BY SHAMAN	XX												
-DESCRIPTION	XX												
-BECOMING ONE													
-BABIES													
UNEXPLAINED VOICES													
SHAKING TENT													
-VISIONS											XX		
-RATTLES											XX		
FISH-TALKING													
-UNUSUAL THINGS													
ANIMALS-TALKING													
-UNUSUAL THINGS	XX												
-TRANSFORMING	XX												
BIRD-TALKING													
-TRANSFORMING													
INANIMATE OBJECTS TALKING													
-TRANSFORMING													
SPIRITS													
-DOING UNUSUAL THINGS													

Table 8. Interview Analysis - Strange Events (Continued)

	AMOS RATT	NOAH RATT	LYDIA NAPHTHALIA MCKENZIE	GEORGE/ BETSY MCKENZIE	BETSY MCKENZIE	WILLIAM RATT	EDWARD MCKENZIE	REV. HENRY COOK	ROSIE S. MCKENZIE	ELIZABETH COOK	LAZARUS ROBERTS	DENNIS MCLEOD	SAMUEL CHARLES
TOTEMS													
OFFERINGS		XX		XX								XX	
WITIKOW-SIGHTING													
-KILLING SOMEONE									XX			XX	
-KILLED BY SHAMAN				XX									XX
-DESCRIPTION				XX					XX				XX
-BECOMING ONE													XX
-BABIES													
UNEXPLAINED VOICES		XX											
SHAKING TENT		XX		XX									
-VISIONS													
-RATTLES									XX				
FISH-TALKING	XX												
-UNUSUAL THINGS	XX	XX											
ANIMALS-TALKING									XX				
-UNUSUAL THINGS	XX	XX							XX				
-TRANSFORMING													
BIRD-TALKING													
-TRANSFORMING													
INANIMATE OBJECTS TALKING									XX				
-TRANSFORMING													
SPIRITS		XX											
-DOING UNUSUAL THINGS		XX							XX				

another, then the power lines which join two figures indicates a similar connection. When the lines join a thunderbird to a human figure, as at Maple Leaf Rapids (Figure 13), the power is flowing from one to the other. Johnny Ballantyne identified this as a vision quest image, because of the coffin-box, so the power might be flowing from the spirit guardian to the dreamer. The dreamer has a pipe pointing away, indicating he is sending a message. The message might be intended for the guardian spirit, who responded by giving the dreamer power. Power lines also connect the figure of the cow and the human at Cow Narrows (Figure 15) and might symbolize the transfer of power from the spirit guardian to the dreamer. This, however, does not coincide with informant data (A.1.2.1.)

Power lines do not always connect figures. In some pictographs the power lines are associated with only one figure. At McDonald Bay (GkNo-5) the figure of the thunderbird has power lines directed toward his head, yet they do not lead to anything specific. Power lines are indicated horizontally above the thunderbird figure and vertically down from under its wings in the pictograph at Stanley Rapids, Face I. Wavy lines appear in isolation at this site, as well, dividing animal figures from other animal figures. At the top of Face I and II an animal is nearly encircled by what appear to be power lines. The animal might be protected by power, possibly indicating that it is sacred and not to be hunted. If this is the case, the animal inside the power lines might be the

dreamer's guardian spirit.

Figures enclosed, or partially enclosed by lines, appear on the Churchill River. At High Rock Narrows, on Black Bear Island Lake, the figures at Site 2, Face VII (Figure 20) are separated from one another by a box-like formation open at the top. Below, two human figures are watching the events in the box. One thunderbird figure has a power line extending down from each wing to 'protect' a circle formation, which represent drums in Mide birch bark scrolls.

The Midewiwin birch bark scroll found at Leech Lake has 'circles within circles' incised on it. Hoffman's explanation of these figures is that they "...denote the sacred drum, which may be used by him (the candidate) during his initiation..." (1891: 172). A pictograph found at Diamond Lake (Dewdney and Kidd, 1967), Figure 50 shows the same form, circle within a circle. From this comparison on the basis of form, it can be said that the Diamond Lake pictograph is a drum  
(Lipsett 1970: 184).

The implications of the circle with a cross inside it are not known but further examination of the scene is revealing. A second bird has a single power line extending down from one wing. Below this figure are two humans with upraised arms and visible fingers. The connection between the second bird and the humans is clear. The supernatural being with power has made itself known to the human figures, though it has not contacted either directly with this power. The upraised arms might indicate that they have recognized the bird as being a spirit. This scene is surrounded by a box formation, separating these figures from the larger human figures below. The larger figures have round objects on sticks in their hands, which could be symbolic of the drums (Cockburn 1983a: 42;

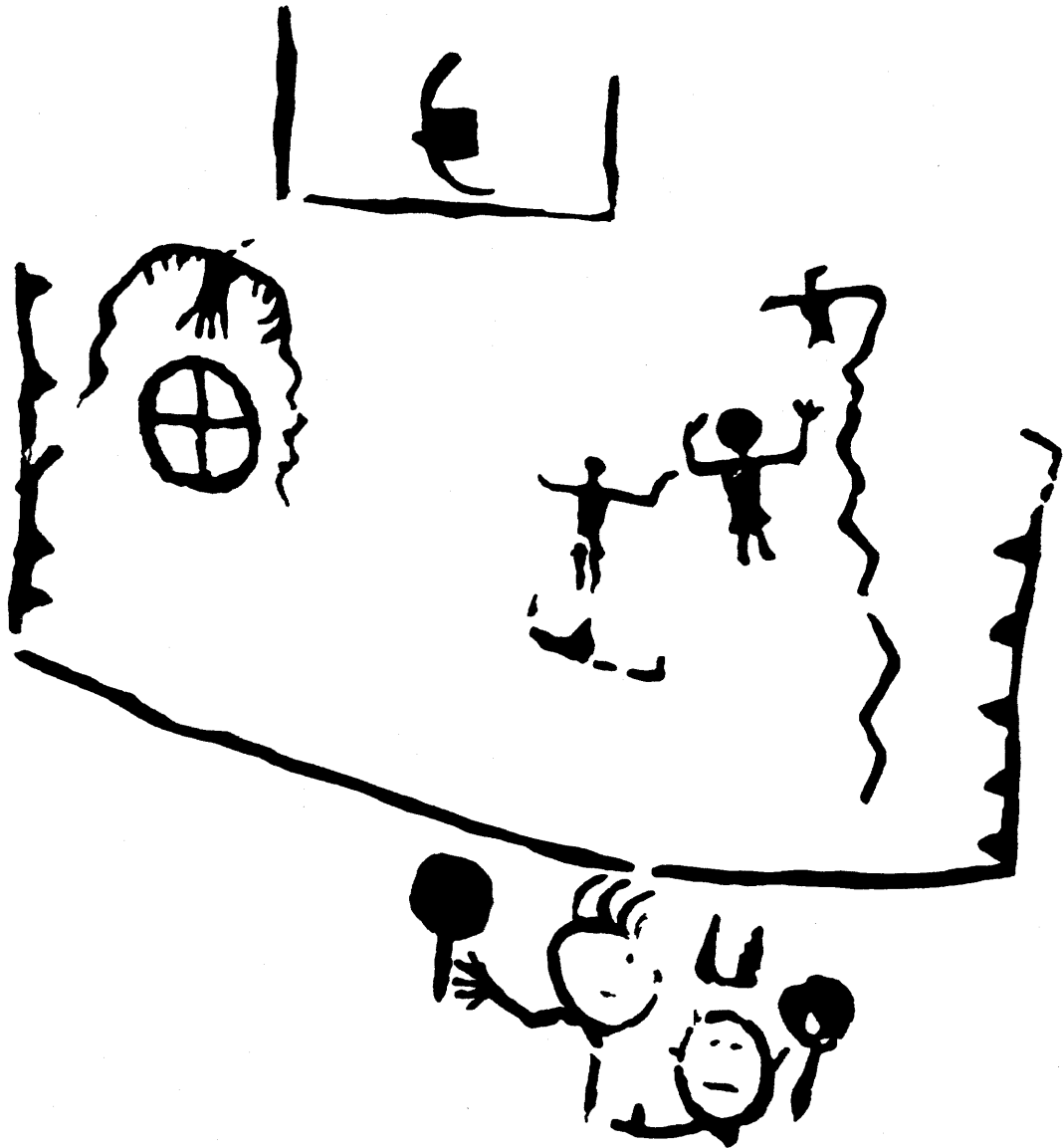


Figure 20. Shaking Tent Ritual, High Rock Narrows (GiNk-1)



Whelan 1983: 79) or rattles (Brown and Brightman 1988: 39) used by conjurors in the shaking tent ceremony.

He was prepared, and entered with his rattler, shortly after which the box [conjuring lodge] and the rattler began to move in the usual brisk and violent manner. Many [spirits] entered, and one asked what was wanted that they had been called upon. The indian from outside of the frame (for only the conjuror alone and naked enters) inquired if there was not some evil spirit near from whom he had much everything to dread

(Brown and Brightman 1988: 30)

From this description, the High Rock Narrows scene depicts a shaking tent ceremony and the humans and spirits that participated in it. This would explain the box formation and the triangular shapes attached to it. These lines do not correspond with power lines because they are straight and are not associated with figures. In the top left corner of this scene is the figure of a turtle in a second, undecorated box. This is unusual in itself, as turtles are not found in northern Saskatchewan. If the figures in the large box are spirits from the shaking tent ritual, the turtle might also be a spirit. This box is reminiscent of the coffin box and might indicate that this was the spirit contacted during the vision quest and is therefore the dreamer's guardian spirit.

Other symbols in the birch bark scrolls of the Midewiwin, or Grand Medicine Society of the Ojibwa, have been of special interest to those researching pictographs in more eastern regions of the Canadian Shield. In particular, pictographs in northwestern

Ontario have been studied in relation to Mide birch bark scrolls because of their religious function and similarity of images.

Leaders in the Mide:

were thought to possess great supernatural power; they had long rituals to remember, and to help them to do so they frequently recorded them upon rolls of birchbark. Pictures of birds, animals, and men were scratched into the inner surface of the bark to serve as a reminder of the various stages in the ceremony and of the sequence of songs. It was also rather common for the men to scratch symbols of their clans upon their war clubs, pipe stems, and other personal belongings, and the same symbols were sometime incised upon their grave markers (Dewdney and Kidd 1962: 109-110).

Lipsett (1970: 188) also described a pictograph of a human figure holding a Mide bag. This image closely resembles the figure of a Mide priest inscribed on the Leech Lake birch bark scroll. Whelan (1983: 77) suggested this symbol to be "pinjigusan", a skin bag made from a mustelid hide to hold medicines and shells used in curing rites by shamans. Whelan argued that when a "pinjigusan appears in a painting of a mide shaman, its association with rites is manifest" (ibid.). The symbol also appears in rock paintings without the shaman. The image of the pinjigusan from the Nelson River site looks like an animal being held, with its head up and its legs splayed, and a tail hanging down.

Although the Cree did not have a society like the Midewiwin, this information may be of value to northern Saskatchewan pictographs. A figure similar to those described by Whelan and Lipsett appears at the Foster River mouth (GkNk-1), at the western extreme of the fieldwork region, and at Mountain Lake Peninsula (Figure 21).



Figure 21. 'Pinjigusan' at Foster River Mouth (GkNk-1)

Human figures in pictographs frequently appear with horn attachments on their heads. Lipsett (1970: 189) stated that horned humans were not exclusive to the Ojibwa and appear also in the Shoshonean rock paintings of Utah. Informant data collected in northern Saskatchewan does not contain references to head gear in ceremonies. Pictographs of horned humans have been identified as shamans by Dewdney and Kidd (1963) and by Vastokas and Vastokas (1973) in other research areas (Whelan 1983: 82). This identification was also based on Mide scrolls, but not a great deal is known about these figures. The similarity between the Ojibwa pictography and Rocky Cree pictographs indicates that this identification might extend to the pictographs in northern Saskatchewan, but not enough to clarify the meaning of the horned figures shown holding pinjigusan.

Snakes are a recurring symbol in Rocky Cree legends and are described in unfriendly terms, in stories like the "rolling head". When they are mentioned in reference to the memekwesiw, snakes are presented as being part of a test the dreamer has to overcome in order to gain power. Snakes do not appear in northern Saskatchewan pictographs, despite their importance in the myths. Similarly, wihtikow is a feared spirit in the mythology and the dreamer who has wihtikow as a guardian spirit will become a wihtikow himself. Only one pictograph suggests the witikow spirit (Figure 8), indicating a difference between the value or the perceived intent of a symbol in the oral cultural and the ritual practice, the

application of the symbol in another medium. There was a reluctance to commit the images of the feared spirit to pictograph form. This possibility that there were symbols that should not appear in pictographs was not discussed with informants and should be considered in future pictograph research.

Boat symbols appear frequently in other parts of the Canadian Shield (Steinbring 1976; Vastokas and Vastokas 1973) but are almost completely absent from the fieldwork area. Only one figure, a detail at Kinosaskaw Lake (GkNi-2), could be considered a canoe with one passenger. The canoe was the principle means of transportation in both the Great Lakes region and in northern Saskatchewan. The lack of boat images may not imply the same reluctance to depict, which is discussed above with reference to snakes, but may indicate that canoes were not considered part of the supernatural realm and therefore not an aspect of the vision quest.

#### 5.5. CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS FOR PICTOGRAPHS

Several attempts have been made towards an inventory of pictograph symbols in some regions of the Canadian Shield. Classification systems devised by Whelen (1983) and Steinberg (1978) in Manitoba have merit as a tool for identifying known sites and individual symbols, providing a basis of comparison between regions. Such efforts do not distinguish or acknowledge reasons for localized symbols or provide a chronology of pictograph image development. Steinbring (1978: 17-19) argues for the evolution of the

thunderbird image from the human figure image using a range of images derived from such diverse sources as Mide paddle motifs, a Mide bark roll, an Ojibwa drum image, and three pictographs. Rock paintings occur at one end of the development (1 to 3) and show a subtle transition from human to bird, while the Mide symbols are at the other end (4 to 6) and show the development of the bird symbol to abstraction. The third pictograph and the first Mide image (4) are so similar that the proposed development looks convincing.

Steinbring's reasoning shows the influence of Campbell Grant (1967) who compared figures from nine major pictograph sites across North America in order to show a development in style from the naturalistic image to the stylized and finally to an abstracted version of the original. Such image development would be useful in allowing images to be dealt with diachronically, firstly in establishing a chronology where none exists at present and secondly in establishing which images may be subjected to analysis based on ethnographic data. However, if their ages are as great as Steinbring suggests, then the meaning that may be attributed to images through contemporary ethnographic data may be minimal.

Another problematic aspect of such theorizing is that the evidence is gathered from a huge territorial range. Allowing for prehistoric movements and the trading of ideas and stories between different groups, this was a leap that Steinbring (1978: 21) acknowledged and expanded upon in the development of stratigraphic correlations by horizontal banding. He used examples from Hickson-

Maribelli because the site has a large number of these images. His method was to isolate all images on the same horizontal plane, since he assumed they could only have been painted from a canoe when the water in the channel was at different levels. The site is separated into upper and lower units and the images were examined as to similarity. Steinbring found that all the images in the upper unit were 'thunderbirds' while all those found in the lower unit were animals, human figures (most detailed), geometric forms and abstractions and pictographs suggesting European contact. Both levels shared images of horned humans, tailed humans, crosses in association with animals and humans and alone, pipes, and figures with upraised arms. Based on the fact that water levels do vary over periods of time and even seasonally, this breakdown could be suggestive, if it were not for the images themselves. It seems reasonable that thunderbirds would be shown to be higher than human figures. It is also possible that a dreamer could stand up in the canoe and paint the image, rather than assume that they were painted at different times, as the water levels allowed. Steinbring admits,

Some 25 sites have been analyzed in this way, but no conclusive statements on form correlations for bands can yet be made. It is clear that bands exist at many sites, but there is as yet no proof of designated order at individual sites... If order exists on this site, and the sequence proposed by Grant can be applied, we must reflect on the fact that different times may also see the same level of water  
(1978: 24-25).

The development of classification systems and chronologies for pictographs are to be encouraged but the need for ethnographic data concerning pictographs is vital. The difficulty at present is

determining which end of the development is the beginning and which the end product. The analysis of symbols based on informant data has added to an understanding of the images. If such analyses were incorporated into a chronological model, the evolution of images in the manner discussed by Grant is possible.

#### 5.6. CULTURE CHANGE AND PICTOGRAPHS

Comparison with Ojibwa pictographs has proven successful in bringing greater meaning to Rocky Cree pictographs.

Pictographs were the result of contact with the supernatural, either through the vision quest or another means of contact.

There are however, a number of pictographs are that associated to historically traceable events which should be considered.

Stories about the events which inspired pictographs are known to informants, so the pictographs were recently made. This does not imply that those images of a more traditional nature are not also of recent origin.

##### 5.6.1. HISTORICAL PICTOGRAPHS

Selwyn Dewdney recorded an image of a shaman on horseback at the Agawa Site on Lake Superior, Ontario (Dewdney and Kidd 1973: 11).

This pictograph was first reported by Schoolcraft (1851), as it was described to him by a Chingwauk:

We have yet to identify the Chingwauk who gave Schoolcraft the bark drawings and interpretations of this site. It might have been Shinguaconse, widely known warrior in the 1812 campaign... (ibid.: 81).



The event which led to the making of this image was the crossing of Lake Superior by Myeengun, a respected and feared Mide Shaman, and his war party. The series of dots beneath the shaman and horse represent the days the event took to complete.

Examples of European trade goods appear in pictographs across the Canadian Shield. The intrusion of non-indigenous objects in a pictograph with sacred implications is disturbing but the purpose to which these objects are used were consistent with other pictographs. Guns appear in scenes in both Ontario (*ibid.*: 11) and at Stanley Rapids. This does provide a maximum age for the pictographs and proof that the vision quest and subsequent pictograph-making were active practices at the time of early contact. Bows also appear in pictographs in similar contexts to the guns, therefore the inherent value of the pictograph as sacred practice has not been affected.

Cree syllabics appear in a pictograph at Black Bear Island Lake, suggesting the presence of non-indigenous influences as early as 1840. With the exception of Lydia and Rosie McKenzie, informant responses indicated that no individual in the Stanley Mission area has made a pictograph during the last 50 or 60 years (Bella Ratt). During post-contact period, pictograph making has not been extensive and it appears that the external influences which might have acted on the vision quest and caused change within pictograph imagery are negligible.

### 5.6.2. REGIONAL VARIATION

Analysis of pictographs has revealed significant aspects of the vision quest which are at variance with other Canadian Shield accounts. Several explanations may account for the possible exaggerations found in informant data. For instance, the extended lengths of vision quests into periods of weeks, months, seasons and years, has caused some concern and confusion (Table 1 and 2). It is difficult to believe that the vision quest lasted more than a few weeks, particularly when fasting. Some informants, knowledgeable about other aspects of the vision quest and the making of pictographs, with their information confirmed by others, seem to exaggerate about the time involved.

The coffin-box as a vehicle for dreaming is unheard of in other areas where rock art research has been conducted. A reasonable and believable explanation for this phenomenon is difficult. The entire story can be dismissed as the result of overly active imaginations. Initially, information concerning the lengthy vision quest and the coffin-box vehicle was received with scepticism. Informants stated that the dreamer would stay in the dream state for months at a time and even over the entire winter before completing the vision quest. In the favour of this information were two positive identifications of pictographs (at Maple Leaf Rapids and Stanley Rapids) depicting this form of vision quest. Specifically, the painting at Big Stanley Rapids (Figure 16) has been the subject of a various interpretations by native informants. In this case, the rainbow formation on which the coffin-box rests

is identified as the lines used to secure the box to the shore above the rapids. The round dots underneath the scene were symbolic of the passage of time and represent the sun or the number of days/ weeks/months this event took. The box is the casement used for the vision quest while the human figure is the successful dreamer with raised hands.

This pictograph site is also known locally as the 'devil of the rapids', presumably for the frightening aspect of the human/devil figure. The devil theme is possibly linked to the number of witikow stories circulated in this region and to the rumour about the building of Holy Trinity Church at Stanley Mission. Rosie McKenzie talked of the sound of a crying baby at the proposed site of the church at La Ronge. This was a bad omen so the church was built at another location. The painting of the 'devil at the rapids' was intended to keep the unhappy spirit below the church and therefore protect it.

A specific variation occurs when researching other uses for wathaman. An assumption has been that wathaman, or ochre, has retained its sacredness as a material and has been restricted to those activities and uses directly associated with the traditional Cree religion. It was surprising then to receive information that indicated that wathaman had been used in secular, utilitarian contexts, as well as the sacred. The use of wathaman in the making of pictographs has reinforced the assumption but the other uses must be mentioned.

Then when my father would paint his paddles, he would first mix this wathaman with fish grease and then he would use this mixture to paint with. It was an excellent water repellent. The water did not soak through the wood of which the paddles were made of and thus kept them light weight and this made it easier to use these paddles.

They used wathaman to paint this church (at Stanley Mission). They went by canoe to get wathaman way up north at Wathaman Lake and they used birchbark baskets to haul this wathaman in.

Elizabeth Cook (A.1.2.7.)

They also used wathaman to paint fences around graves in the graveyards... they used wathaman to paint birchbark canoes with.

Sally McKenzie (A.1.2.2.)

Careful reading of these uses provides a clue as why it was permissible to use wathaman in a 'non-sacred' context. In the statements of Elizabeth Cook and Noah Ratt, the question of the paddles is problematic. A possible explanation would be that the Indians made such frequent use of their paddles and were dependent on the functionality of a good paddle that the addition of wathaman provided waterproofing, as Elizabeth had said, but also that it also gave the paddle a bit of spiritual assistance, through its very presence. This is speculation, and has not been confirmed by informants, but this cultural group would not take lightly any advantage over their environment. Similarly the use of wathaman on canoe would provide both the physical advantages related concerning the paddles, and the spiritual advantage mentioned.

The question of the church at Stanley Mission is a more complex and perplexing issue. In order to determine why the Rocky Cree of this area would use a traditionally native sacred material on the Anglican Church, it is beneficial to refer to the examples in

Chapter Four of the combining of traditional religious practices with Christian practices by Adam Fidler (Fidler and Stevens, 1985: 173, 175). It is possible to reconstruct the native people's emotional state in the Stanley Mission region during that period by remembering that a number of smallpox epidemics had ravaged the population and that the small island located a short distance directly in front of the point on which the church is built contains the graves of the victims. It is a mass grave and a constant reminder of those times. The native people would have noted that the white people living in the area had food and were less affected by the disease, and wondered whether their God was more powerful than the guardian spirits.

It is very reassuring to have a personal guardian spirit but the courage needed to renounce that spirit and give it up forever may have been too difficult during such troubled times. Instead, the wathaman used to record the vision quest experiences was brought into the church as a means of combining the two systems of religious belief. This would seem to be an adaptative strategy, designed to increase the group's chances for survival. By taking the sacred material of the old religion and offering it to the new God, who appeared to have so much power in saving His people, the Rocky Cree were in effect offering the most powerful thing they had - their means of recording their visions.

Sally McKenzie's statement about the painting of the fences around the graves in the graveyards is also suggestive of the attempt to

combine the two religions in some comprehensible form. The letters written by Harry Moody (1954) to Prentice Downes mentioned a grave found by Moody, in which the body of a native man was found. Moody assumed that this was the grave of a shaman, or medicine man, because of the bands of ochre found around the man's neck and wrists, and because of the contents of the other grave items found at the site.

The following information, provided by Elie Custer of Pelican Narrows, creates another set of contradictions. Elie stated that the church was painted with wathaman but that the wathaman did not contain the medicine to make it last a long time. This could be a recognition of the fact the the benches inside the church are no longer painted with red pigment, or it could suggests two possibilities - either the Rocky Cree in the Stanley Mission area had forgotten the medicine needed to make the wathaman powerful or they were not prepared to completely transfer the entire power of the wathaman.

They used 'wathaman' to paint on rocks. They also painted the church at Stanley Mission with wathaman. They knew where the wathaman came from, but the people didn't know the medicine which was mixed with it. The dreamers were the only ones who had this knowledge. Some of these medicine men used to tell people how to mix the medicine with the wathaman before they painted on the rocks with it. The wathaman is plentiful around the Stanley Mission area. The people didn't use the medicine when they painted the church, so I don't think the paint would last as long as it does on these rock where the medicine was used. The old people at Stanley Mission got the wathaman and mixed it themselves but they didn't know the special medicine which was needed to last. These rock paintings with this special medicine may be one thousand years old.

Elie Custer (A.1.4.3.)

If in fact the people had not forgotten the medicine believed to keep the wathaman in place for long periods of long, and if Elie was correct is believing that they did not use this medicine in conjunction with the painting of the church, then it is possible that they were using the wathaman in an experimental context. The wathaman might have been applied to the benches of the church as an indication of a willingness to believe, but the decision to not provide it with the power from the vision quest might be a sign of retaining some of the traditional religion in reserve. It is unlikely, in light of the degree of knowledge demonstrated by native elders at this time, that the ability to provide the medicine was lost. The confidence of those previously involved with the vision quest, and therefore able to provide the medicine, might have been badly shaken but even under those circumstances they might have used their knowledge to increase their chances of success with this adaptation strategy.

The adaptation to circumstances and the ability of this religious system to survive is further demonstrated by informant knowledge. Firstly, informants were able to provide extensive data concerning a religious practice that had not occurred during their lifetimes. Secondly, they were able to recount a broad range of myths and legends which, in its entirety, constitutes a rounded sampling of Rocky Cree traditional myths and stories. Finally, the actions of the ancestors have been elevated beyond the human realm to include supernatural powers and abilities, thereby perpetuating a belief in the strength of the traditional Rocky Cree religion and its rituals.

## CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS

The data collected in northern Saskatchewan for this study indicate that a greater emphasis on rock art research at this time in Cree history can yield positive results about the meanings of pictographic images and about the cultural context of pictographs.

### 6.1. PICTOGRAPHS AND THE VISION QUEST

Conclusive links have been established between the vision quest ritual of traditional Rocky Cree religion and the pictographs of this region. Further, ethnographic interviews revealed suspected and previously unknown data concerning aspects of the vision quest. Fasting and isolation were integral parts of the quest to obtain a guardian spirit, and three means of becoming isolated from the group were described by informants. New information was collected concerning an underwater submersion vision quest.

The ethnographic material collected from both informants and other sources allowed for a broader understanding of Rocky Cree religion and analysis of several types of pictographic images. Identification of images through information from the traditional, religious belief system provides the analysis with a credibility not possible without it. Adaptation is a key factor in the Cree culture and the religion reflects this. The traditional religion was a successful adaptation to the environmental conditions in which they lived. The guardian spirit assisted and protected the hunter and, in response, the hunter honoured, feared and worked to appease the spirit. It was these spirits which the Indian



encountered while on the vision quest. Informants have stated that dreamers painted what they saw in their visions; therefore, it is these same spirits which appear in the pictographs.

By looking to the legends and stories about these spirits, an understanding of the spirits' characteristics and personalities is possible. Obvious visual features might aid in identifying these spirits. For example, the lack of facial features of the little people, which distinguish them from other humans, are not apparent in the pictographs. Conclusions may be drawn, however, through comparison with other field work areas and, in particular, the data concerning the Midewiwin Society of the Ojibwa. The Ojibwa practised the vision quest ritual and made pictographs, as well as sharing other similarities with the Cree. Based on the closeness of the two cultures and stylistic similarities of the rock paintings, both in image and form, it was permissible to use comparative data from the Ojibwa to aid in identifying Rocky Cree pictographs.

Using the objectives and theoretical approach of Symbolic Anthropology, some elements of the images have been easier to identify than others. Pipe symbols, power lines and animal figures are easily recognizable. Analysis of these symbols using interview material, information derived from myths and legends, and comparative data from the Ojibwa, allows for a greater understanding of the importance of these symbols in the pictographs. Guardian spirits, vision quest and shaking tent

rituals have been identified by combining knowledge of individual symbols with religious behavioural data. The cognitive significance of the symbol and its meaning in the traditional culture is suggested using the data from these sources.

It is impossible to recapture the intent of the artist in portraying some aspects of the vision quest and these elements will probably never be clarified. Narrative sequences are among the most difficult pictographs to explain. The historic record provides accounts of journeys in the world of the supernatural beings (Brown and Brightman 1988: 35) and it is likely that these scenes involve humans interacting with supernatural beings during the vision quest.

## 6.2. CREE RELIGION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The analysis of the Rocky Cree religion based on the data collected in the field produced startling conclusions. The elders had clear ideas about the heritage of their people and the rituals that were part of it. Their recollection of myths and legends was relatively complete and consistent when compared with one another. Their knowledge was extensive to a degree that discrepancies were initially regarded as being errors or exaggeration. It was not until the data provided by individuals was examined in relation to one another that the inconsistencies were re-evaluated. The deviations from the understood facts of the Cree religion were examined and the conclusion drawn that the religion had not entered a static phase with the arrival of Christianity.

What is of particular interest is that the religion appears to have changed and evolved despite, or because of, Christian influence. A loyalty to the traditional religion, as indicated by the amount of data available from native elders, suggests a number of possibilities, including the maintenance of traditional practices while on the trapline and participation in Christian practices while in the settlements. They may have been disillusioned with Christianity as it appears that Christianity did not fulfill all their religious needs. A fascination with the past and the 'dreamers' was pervasive with Rocky Cree informants. Despite the influence of Christianity, the Cree religion has undergone significant constructive changes. These developments could be considered an evolution of the Cree religion.

An indication of such evolution is the degree of exaggeration concerning various aspects of the religion. For example, the informant's perception of the length of time of the vision quest. Responses range from the period of three days to one year (Figure 10). The minimum is consistent with the historic record but the maximum is problematic (unless viewed as an adaptation to the events of Rocky Cree history).

They may have attempted to reclaim their own religion. For whatever reason this was not successful. A void was created concerning their past and their culture. Christianity had taken away the indifferent Manitou and replaced him with God. The antics of Wisahkicahk and his participation in the lives of

animals, birds and humans, which resulted in the various characteristics of each, were replaced by the Bible. The spirit guardians were no longer necessary because of direct access to God. All that remained were the actions of the ancestors.

In the stories recounted by elders, the actions of 'the dreamers' became more supernatural in character. The ancestors were capable of doing things which humans could not normally do. They could fast and dream for long periods of time. They could live underwater in the coffin boxes and survive. They could be cut into pieces before the vision quest and gain greater power by reassembling their bodies. They could move objects with their minds. They could talk to animals and other creatures. The elders' belief in the dreamers' abilities to do things normal people could not shows they perceived their ancestors as being, "outside the normal operation of cause and effect", which is one definition of supernatural (Sykes, 1986: 1159). By allowing that the ancestors were capable of superhuman and supernatural acts, the elders had adjusted their thinking about traditional Cree religion - it had changed in some ways so that it might survive.

The use of the coffin box in the vision quest is a widely held belief among the Rocky Cree elders and it is the belief in the practice, not its' origin, which is of significance here. The dramatic nature of the coffin box as a means of pursuing a vision quest makes it an unusual occurrence. This form of vision quest may only have occurred once or twice but the story and many of its

details has spread throughout the entire fieldwork area. Rocky Cree informants were fascinated by it and many found it difficult to believe that it was possible for the ancestors to survive this vision quest. It was stated that many died who attempted to dream in this way but those who survived had great power.

The analysis of the coffin box as a method of the vision quest ritual requires an adaptational model. As has been stated, no record of a similar form of vision quest exists in the historic record or in any other ethnographic account. The description of the box suggests a European coffin, which could have been used in a water burial. The rectangular form and the wooden planks used to make the coffin box indicate a post-contact influence; however, the use of planks could have been an incorporation of newly available materials. This is, however, a localized belief and possibly based on an isolated event which was not recorded. Since the coffin box appears in pictographs on the Churchill River, the event which precipitated its inclusion in the Rocky Cree religion must have occurred before the dreamers stopped making pictographs.

### 6.3. 'CONTEMPORARY' ROCKY CREE RELIGION

Localized beliefs are very important to the study of pictographs. The individual beliefs must be identified and related to the pictographs of the specific region. These beliefs were combined with other Rocky Cree religious beliefs and a part of the mythology. Once they are accepted as being a legitimate component of the religion then they were part of the set of beliefs that

could be visualized while dreaming. Since it is not known when the last pictograph was made in this region, these changes in the Rocky Cree religion must be considered. The coffin boxes were painted as part of the vision quest ritual and it is possible that the effects of smallpox and crisis starvation found their way into other pictographs. This is very difficult to determine.

It is also impossible to identify recent variation in traditional stories told by the elders. Elements like guns and evil traders are obvious European influences. More difficult to separate are the changes in moral and value codes. It is possible that no changes have been made to the stories which reflect conceptual differences in thinking. However, what is not spoken of is as important as what is said. For example, the origin of the Cree people was not mentioned by informants. Origin myths provide the basis of religion and the absence of an origin myth is unusual. The book of Genesis in the Christian Bible replaced the indigenous creation myth and the typical response of informants when asked where the Cree people came from was that they had always been there. If such an important aspect of the traditional Rocky Cree religion has disappeared, how are other elements to be identified? Wihtikow stories have been discussed in relation to cause and effect but developments in Rocky Cree stories which reveal new attitudes about how people think of themselves are less obvious. An example is the concept of property. The traditional culture was egalitarian and property was considered to be communal or could be requested as a gift. In contemporary Cree culture,

property is regarded more personally, though the offering and receiving of gifts still occurs. The stories do not reflect a change in attitude from the traditional view. The conclusion that must be drawn is that change has occurred in some stories but not in others.

An awareness of the continuing development of Cree oral history must be brought into the study of pictographs based on informant data. The data collected relating to the length of the vision quest, the coffin box and the other examples were not questioned at the time. Data was accepted from informants as it was given -- the facts as they understood them. Judgements were not made about the data's validity or the reliability of the informants. It was recorded in conjunction with other information, which was found to be consistent with the historic record or when compared with data collected from other informants. Similarly the stories were recorded as they were told. The only clue as to a story's antiquity was the number of informants who tell essentially the same tale.

Relating the traditional stories to the pictographs was intended to illuminate the meanings of the images. In many cases this was possible; however, it cannot be stated with assurance that the narrative aspect of the stories was translated into the visual. Since the pictographs were visual representations of what occurred while dreaming, the stories of Wisahkicahk or Ayas would not be relevant, although the events and symbols in the stories could be

revealing. More important were the characteristics of the supernatural beings described in the stories and then encountered during the vision quest.

The examination of Rocky Cree religion and pictographs through the analysis of legends, myths and other related material has contributed greatly to an increased understanding of the meanings of pictographs. Similar examinations must occur in other areas of the Canadian Shield so cross cultural comparisons may continue. The vision quest may have ended and the pictographs will not increase in number, but the Rocky Cree culture remains strong and clearly defined in the minds of its elders.



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APPENDIX A  
ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEWS

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A. APPENDIX ONE

A.1. ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEWS

The interviews which follow were conducted between 1983 and 1986. Many were conducted in Cree and all but one took place in the informants' homes. Most of the informants were over the age of 65 years and several were in their 90s. Various translators were involved with the interview process but all Cree interviews were translated (if necessary) and transcribed by Annie Torrence in Saskatoon, to insure consistency. When the spoken translation varied from what the informant said, both versions are provided. Insertions by the interviewer appear in square brackets [] while the additions for clarity provided by Annie Torrence are in rounded brackets ().

A.1.1. LAC LA RONGE INDIAN RESERVE/SUCKER RIVER

A.1.1.1. Amos Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Reserve, Saskatchewan

8 September, 1983

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Translated by Ray McKay

Transcribed by Katherine Lipsett

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

[The initial segment of the interview consists of Amos reminding Ray of an incident which occurred in the spring of 1947 at Birch Rapids when Amos' wife was asked to play mid-wife to John McKay's wife, Ray's mother. Amos told a story about Ray McKay watching him walk across the ice after looking at his traps. Ray said, "There goes that poor hunter. You can tell by looking at him that he didn't catch anything again."]

Amos: (In Cree) This little boy could tell I didn't kill anything from a long distance.

Ray: (In Cree) This lady's name is Katherine. She works in an institution. She teaches. She wants to ask you various questions about rock paintings on the Churchill River. I wonder if you can



tell us where you've seen rock paintings besides the Churchill River?

Amos: I have forgotten many things. But what I've heard I can tell. These rock paintings, the medium used is called wathaman.

Ray: Wathaman.

Amos: The people that wrote on the rocks said when you don't see my painting anymore, that is when I've died. That's what they used to say. They could have been lying.

Ray: You mean that the people that wrote on these, when the painting disappeared, they had died? When you couldn't see the painting anymore, these people died?

Amos: Yes. That's correct. Of course, there's one incident that we thought was incredible. Over in Stanley Mission, on a rock is drawn a cow [Figure 16].

Ray: A cow?

Amos: You see, right there these people were paddling there, all of a sudden you could hear the water made a noise. A cow emerged from the water, partly submerged. That is the cow that was painted and still exists today. That's what they used to say. I wonder if that was true. That I think was true.

Ray: I will tell the lady (translation). I wonder if you know if it was the Chipecwan Indians or our own people who did the rock paintings?

Amos: That was the kind a Cree [would make].

Ray: Cree.

Amos: And also, that person does things that are strange. People think that this person is still alive. You see, things like that are strange.

Ray: Yeah.

Amos: One man was packing his canoe. He [and his son] were going to get baby swans. While he was carrying his canoe, all of a sudden he met a little jackfish on the portage. "You are to go back from here. There are many Chipewyans," the jackfish told him.

A jackfish [laughter].

"Oh no, we must move on," the man told his son. By and by they got through the portage. And they got to where there were many baby swans. So the man began to hunt and shoot the swans. All of a sudden from all directions the Chipewyans attacked. In a short

while their canoe sank. You see, that little boy was found later when the search was carried out and the elder person was never found any place. And that is why he must still be alive or it is because the way he was dressed.

Ray: That was a good story.

Amos: I wonder if that was true.

Ray: Do you know how wathaman was made by the people who used it to paint on rock?

Amos: Oh yes! I even made that medium myself.

Trans: You've made it too, have you?

Amos: Yes, you see, where you get that thing [the ochre]...

(later)

Ray: Sorry we interrupted. Could you tell us how wathaman is made?

Amos: You see, you know the sand that is red, coloured by the sun, that's a place you dig down a little bit. There you will find, I mean to say, you find sand that's whitish in colour.

Ray: Whitish?

Amos: Yes. You take that and to make it you need a frying pan and dry willows that are put in the fire and in no time it colours. And you use it to write 'wathaman'. I used to make that myself.

Ray: What do you mix it with?

Amos: I don't remember. I don't think you mixed it with anything.

Ray: Well, some people say it's mixed with oil. I've heard oil was mixed with it - mix with wathaman, from there paint can be made.

Amos: Yes, yes.

(later)

Ray: What did you use when you made wathaman? Did you mix with water after you finished making wathaman?

Amos: It was oil I used. I think it was fish fat.

Ray: You mean fish fat?

Amos: I know for sure it was an oil. You see, then you can really paint with this. Wathaman, that's what it was called.

Ray: What did you use this paint for? What did you use it for?

Amos: On paddles. It was a paint that lasted a long time.

Ray: What did you apply it with? Do you know the meaning of these rock paintings? Why did the people do rock paintings? Were you ever told?

Amos: No.

Ray: What about evil spirits and windigo? Can you tell us stories about these?

Amos: I don't remember these things. I know some things I heard but you see my head is confused. My head is confusing me - like wine confuses me.

Ray: What about people with supernatural powers? I wonder if you could tell us some stories about hunters that used supernatural powers that helped them? Do you remember any of this?

Amos: I don't remember.

Ray: What about medicines that were used long ago? Can you tell us about Indian medicines?

Amos: No, I can't remember. I used to administer those things myself - the Indian medicine as it was called.

Ray: I think I remember your wife used to use rat root and I remember her giving us kids rat root. I remember that. I think you are tired because we've been asking many questions.

Amos: Yes, I am.

(later)

Ray: It must have been quite a while since you've been on the Churchill River?

Amos: Yes, a long time. But I still remember parts of my experiences.

Ray: I see. Do you remember the rapids called Evil Spirit Rapids? Why was it called that?

Amos: I suppose it's nothing really but isn't it that the water goes around in a circle and it goes right down deep and there

lives a big cat underwater. That's what I have heard. It must be a lie. That Evil Spirit Rapids.

End of interview

A.1.1.2. Noah Ratt

Sucker River, Saskatchewan

8 September, 1983

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Translated by Ray McKay

Transcribed by Katherine Lipsett

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

Ray: (In Cree) Uncle, she would like to ask you who you think made the rock paintings? Whether you think it was the Crees, or other people, like the Chipewyans?

Noah: (In Cree) I think it was the Crees. The Crees were able to do extraordinary things a long time ago. And someone had to have been able to do extraordinary things because these rock paintings still show up today. They've been there a very long time.

Ray: Do you remember anyone telling you around when these rock paintings were made?

Noah: Nobody told me about it.

Ray: Do you know how these rock paintings were made? Could you tell us about it?

Noah: Yes, I can tell you about this. The red material which was used is not a paint, it is a sand. I saw my father taking some out. He didn't take the top layer which is already reddish from the sun, but he dug down a bit and took the fine grained light [bleached] sand from there. Then he'd put this coloured sand in a frying pan and heat it near a fire. He kept shaking the pan to rotate the sand and to circulate the heat and in a very short time the sand would turn red. They used this red material to paint parts in a birchbark canoe and to paint paddles. He used fish grease to rub on this red sand before he painted anything with it. This way the wood would be mildly heated before he painted it with the mixture.

Ray: What kind of grease was this?

Noah: Fish grease is one for sure.

Ray: (In English) It's fish fat... baked in a frying pan. He had to dig down. (In Cree) Did he have to dig very deep down where he got the sand from?

Noah: No, it wasn't very deep down where he got that sand from. He got it from around that deep, as deep as where the sun can't weather or tan the sand.

Ray: (In English) Four to six inches.

Noah: This sand which is below the top layer which he found and dug out is very fine and off-white in colour. It's not exactly white but I can't describe the actual colour of it. I don't know what to compare it to.

Ray: Would it look somewhat like the sand you find in beaches?

Noah: Yes. The sand is very fine.

Ray: It's very fine.

Noah: That is why it is good to use for painting with because it doesn't wash or wear off.

Ray: (In English) Really fine grained and it's bleached. He said it's low enough that it doesn't get weathered by the sun. But it's fine grained and... because when you paint...

K.L.: Yes, that makes sense.

Ray: Yes, it does.

Noah: I used to see my mother making fish grease. They used to catch a lot of white fish where they used to spend their summer. There used to be these flies that would be swarming around in numbers around the lake. The people used to call this 'dancing' instead of the flies flying, they were dancing. Then the flies would eventually fall in the water. It seemed like this is where these little bugs were multiplying from because wherever there were water plants or weeds, there would be numerous numbers of these little baby bugs or flies under these water plants. So the white fish would eat these baby flies and also catch the grown up flies floating in the water. So my mother used to set a fish net right in this area, like so, right along where the water weeds were. This was in a small narrows. Then she would approach the narrows from the opposite side and she would splash water with her paddle and as the white fish were swimming away or scared away, they would get caught in the fish net because that was the only direction they could swim to. Then she would get all the fish out of her fish net quickly before they got away. These white fish used to be very fat at that time of the year. Then she would cut these fish open and take out the guts of the fish. Then she would put all these guts all together in a big pot and boil them slowly. Then eventually you would see this fish oil floating - to mix with the sand used for the rock painting.

This is what my father used to paint paddles with. And... whatever you can still see from the past (pictographs)... I don't

know anything about that. I didn't hear anyone talk about it (who painted them). But I think it was the Crees who painted these rock paintings.

Ray: (In English) He told me about the process of getting fish fat from white fish. He saw his mother doing it. White fish in the summer time were very fat. They would... open them up and take the insides out, and they would boil them and then collect the fat floating on top of the water. That's how they did it and they used that to mix with the red ochre.

They collected duck wings (the feathers from the edge). They used this as a paint brush.

(In Cree) Do you know what these rock paintings mean?

Noah: No.

Ray: (In English) He's telling the same story that Amos Ratt told us about that one painting... that when it quit showing he would be dead and that one is gone now. So he thought that this man would be dead now, but it's another site. I haven't seen that site. There's one about five hundred yards from his house. [showing directions on map].

(In Cree) Could you tell us if you heard any stories of what some of these rock paintings meant? Like the cow they talk about in Stanley Mission? Did you hear about this one?

Noah: Yes, but I said my nephew, I forgot what they used to say about it.

Ray: Your older brother told us yesterday that a long time ago some people were paddling by there and all of a sudden a cow popped its head out of the water right close to them. That's what he heard?

Noah: Yes, but I recall what I heard. It's possible. I know they named the island Cow Island ever since then, so I heard.

Ray: How did Needle Rapids get its name?

Noah: Yes, I do know. The rock there breaks to sharp flakes and when a person is wearing mocassins, it hurts your feet, just like needles, so that's why they called it Needle Rapids.

Ray: How did Silent Rapids get its name?

Noah: It's called Manitou Rapids. I heard that when the people travelling and using wooden canoes would approach the rapids, they would paddle very quietly as if they were trying to avoid disturbing whatever existed in this rapids. The rapids are very small. The Crees used to believe that something lived here under the water. They called it a big lynx. If they made a lot of noise while they were shooting the rapids, they would fear worst for this big lynx. So they were very careful not to be noisy when they

go over these rapids. That's why they called it Manitou Rapids because they treated this rapids as though it was their god of Manitou. The dreamers used to say something lived here under water.

Ray: (In English) We were talking about the Devil's or Silent Rapids. One of the outfitters in Churchill used a depth finder on this rapids and he said it was one hundred eighty feet deep.

Noah: I heard that one time one man was shooting these rapids quietly when suddenly he saw a very large paw coming from underwater and trying to get hold of his canoe. This paw looked like a lynx's paw. He said he was lucky that this big lynx didn't kill him but it couldn't reach or grab a hold of the canoe, but it almost did.

I heard that the Crees, long ago, thought a lot of their dreams. They believed in them. But their dreams used to come true in those days, and they were very powerful dreams. My father used to tell me what his grandfather was able to do. This old man used only his dreams and nothing else, and he was still able to do things that he did. Just like one time, in the summertime at their campsite as they were sitting around a camp fire, the Cree men were talking about how they just couldn't kill any moose for food at that time. So one of my uncles asked his uncle (dreamer/medicine man) if he could help them get a moose. So the old man sat there for a while, thinking, then he told them he probably could help them. So they made an underground hut first. They went in this underground hut which was used by dreamers, where they would perform their ceremonies. They used all the different types of trees which grew where they were at that time. They stood them up way underground, all around the hut after they dug a deep hole in the ground. Some of the trees were birch, poplar, pine and spruce. Then they would use canvas to cover the top of the hut. They made a door for the old man to get in and out from. The old man always had bells which he kept for years. So he tied these bells up on top of the trees which were in the hut. Then when he was ready to enter, the door would lift up as though someone opened it for him. But before he went in he would hold a rattle out and let the rattle enter the room first before he did. This rattle was made of bent willow and covered with a piece of tanned moose hide and inside it was shotgun lead which made a loud rattling sound when it was shaken.

As soon as he'd set his rattle in the hut, there would be voices in the tent. Then when he entered the room there would be more voices or noise in the hut. Then he'd start chanting a ceremonial chant. He'd start telling who was coming in first to speak to him. As soon as he was done saying this, you were able to hear a voice there but couldn't see it. You could hear voices of all sorts of animals and even the sun talking. All these creatures were in his dreams so he was able to tell them what to do. He had power over them. These creatures all came in the hut as though they were all working together with the old man to make this thing they would use to help the hunters with.

So when he was done there, he asked the hunters to fix up one of the teepees which they could use for the rest of the ceremony. People used to live only in teepees at that time. There were no tents then. He asked them to put fresh spruce boughs for the floor and to put fresh sand where the fire is usually built in the middle of the teepee. When this was all done he asked all the hunters to come inside the teepee with him. So my father said he went in too. He was a very young man then, probably in his early teens. The old man ordered them all to sit facing the tent, not him, and not to peek until he tells them that it was alright for them to turn around and look. He had a plate by the fresh sand. And my grandfather [the old man] started chanting once again, he said.

Suddenly we [they] heard a noise like when you throw burned ashes or gun powder on a fire, they would start making a sound like it's back-firing or something like that. My father said he really wanted to take a peek but he couldn't because he wasn't supposed to take a look yet. Then all of a sudden we {they} heard a noise like something was being poured right onto the plate. Then the old man ordered them to turn around and take a look. They saw the plate full of gun powder or ashes. They didn't know how he got those ashes because nobody else came into the teepee. So the old man said they could try using these ashes/gun powder in their next hunt and maybe they would kill something this time. And sure enough they killed moose, a lot of food for their families. This stuff was good and it worked. The old man used his dreams in order for him to do this extraordinary thing, something like magic.

Ray: (In English) He told a legend of what his father told him. When he was a kid the medicine man had to improve the gun powder they were using because they weren't killing any animals with it. He created some patent gun powder to kill animals with. And he went through the whole process about what happened in detail. It was a very good legend. (In Cree) Do you remember any stories about what people used to dream of, of what was going to happen?

Noah: No, I don't remember.

Ray: Do you know the story of how Swimming Stone got its name?

Noah: Yes, I know that story. These people I mentioned before, who used wooden boats, used to see this one big rock sitting up on top of this rock hill on this one island. So this one time as they were paddling along this island they noticed that this big rock was gone. Then they saw this same big rock sitting on the shore of another island across from the island where it originally sat before. This big rock looked like it got out of the water and got onto the shore and was facing the island. So the people said that this big rock swam across to this island. So they started giving this big rock things such as some tobacco. In turn they would ask the big rock for favours, like the wind to blow a specific direction so they can sail away to where they were heading at that time or to have good luck in their travels. They made this rock



into their god or manitou. They must have had dreams of this big rock. This is what I used to hear. So this is how Swimming Stone Rapids got its name.

Ray: The other rapids nearby is called Swimming Stone. Do you remember hearing stories of other animals living in the water just like the big lynx? Even just lately the people from Sportsman's Lodge saw a big animal in the lake popping its head out for air. This was around 1963 when I was still working for Sask-Air. One of the young men used to see this animal there, but they couldn't kill it. It looked like a big animal, fish like, from the ocean. They think it was a walrus\*. This animal has a head which looks like the head of an otter. They saw a very big one out there.\*\*

Noah: No, I don't remember any stories about this. Oh yes, I remember one story. There was once a big animal in the water that a man saw nearby. He said it looked like a big reef in the middle of the lake. He didn't know whether it was a big fish or what it was. He said he only saw the back of this animal so he couldn't make it out to see if it was a fish or what it might have been.

Ray: What about memekwesiw? I heard they used to live by rocky cliffs. Why do you think this happened? Or why would they live there?

Noah: They used to talk about hearing voices inside caves up on rocky cliffs, kids or people talking. These were real people, they used to say. Close to Stanley Mission there's a place where when they used to hear voices as they were travelling by. And one day, one man saw two people in a canoe while he was travelling through that area at that time.

One man saw two of these memekwesiw paddling in a canoe. He paddled towards them to see who they were. As he got closer the two little people wouldn't look up at him. The man started speaking to them but for awhile he didn't get a response. Then all of a sudden he heard one of the little men say to the other, "Could you look up at him since you look more human than I do?" So the other little man looked up at the man. The little man's eyes looked like anybody else's, but his nose looked different. It looked like a little bump or how a little pebble would look if it was covered with a sheet or something like it. I'm not sure exactly what they conversed about, but it had something to do with the memekwesiw hunting animals for food. When he was done talking to them, the two little men paddled towards shore by a rocky cliff. The door opened automatically for them and it shut automatically after they entered. This door was a rock on the cliff. These people lived inside this rock, probably in a cave.

A long time ago, I heard one old lady tell us this story, so we'd be quiet and behave ourselves when we were kids.

Ray: The memekwesiw lived in High Rock Narrows too. They could hear them when they walked near the caves.

Noah: I heard my father talking about the memekwesiw also. He and my mother were staying in their summer camp, this was before they had lots of kids. Anyway one evening as he was paddling his canoe home to his camp, he heard noises coming from these rocks at a point on one of the islands nearby. It sounded like a bunch of kids playing. He thought some people were visiting at their camp with lots of kids. But as he got closer to this island he knew that the noise was coming from these rocks. They [the little people] must have been living in a cave in there somewhere. They must have been included in the medicine men's dreams. Because since people were not dreamers anymore, these memekwesiw didn't exist any longer either. Nobody ever sees or hears about them anymore.

People used to hear these memekwesiw wherever there was an island with a lot of rock leading right into the water. They used to say that near Sandy Lake there is a place there where they say these little people used to live in a cave. This area is an old, old travelling area. People used to go through here while they were travelling for years and years. People used to make portages all over in this area because they were forever travelling around. If they had problems with their birchbark canoes, they would stop anywhere and build another birchbark canoe. It didn't take very long to build one. Then off they'd go again. As far as I can remember, people in those day never stayed in one place for a long time. They would keep moving camp throughout the summer. I've seen them lots of times building their canoes. I used to help a bit, but I don't remember how it was done exactly. But I remember what they used to hold up or tack the birchbark in place where they wanted it to stay up. They used a home-made puncture to poke holes through the birchbark and instead of nails, they used little sticks or home-made pecks to tack the birchbark onto the frame of the canoe. Then the woman sewed up the birchbark and when they were done then they were able to take the little sticks back out. After the birchbark was all sewn they would put tree gum on the birchbark. But when they built wooden boats, they had to use nails.

And in the fall the people would stay camping in one place and prepare food for the winter. As soon as winter came they moved camp again. They did this throughout the whole winter, kept moving camp. A lot of times they couldn't kill any animals for food and it was very difficult because they would get awfully hungary. They always took fish hooks along wherever they went. The ones that have only one hook on them. When they were going to fish they had to use fish bait. So they used a piece of pine tree bark (the outside layer) for fish bait. They did catch fish with these fish hooks and bait. And I remember how cold we used to be when we kept moving like this in the winter. No matter how cold it was the people would keep moving once they'd set their mind that they were moving on a certain day and so they did. And us as kids, I remember we used to be shivering cold, crying because we were cold and tired of walking. Our way of living in those day was very hard. There wasn't even any bannock in those days. But in those days people were very strong because they lived on wild game only,

no store bought food, or almost none.

We used to be very hungry at times when the hunting wasn't good. Then sometimes a bit later, some people would come by, some from Stanley Mission and some from other different places. They would come to sell some groceries to our people. This is the only time we saw sugar, a little bit of flour, bullets, warm clothes, tea, tobacco.

Sometimes I used to see my mother gathering black lichens and tying them in her apron. Then when we stopped to rest/camp while we were travelling, she would quickly boil these lichens in water. Then we would eat these. And she would melt some snow over the bonfire in a frying pan and this is the water we kids would drink. We didn't eat anything else but this. And when we had to camp some place for the night, when they boiled meat we would drink the broth and eat the meat. Then wherever they moved camp to, they would always come back to where they had spent or lived the previous fall. They would come back to repair their canoes or wooden boats which they left behind in the winter time.

One time one man lived in this one place. He would go hunting and kill moose. He had a lot of meat stored up. He kept it outside on top of this platform which he made for hanging up his food so the dogs wouldn't eat it all up. He had a wife and only one baby at that time. So one evening while he and his wife were sitting around in their teepee, he heard a voice speaking to him. It sounded like it came from the door but when he went out to see who it was, he couldn't see anybody out there.

The voice said to him, "If you ever get hungry, come and look for me. Look in the north for that's where I live."

So he thought to himself that he had so much meat, he didn't think he'd ever get hungry. He was surprised that this voice said this to him. He heard the voice again saying that he might be hungry one of these days and that's when he should go and see him [the owner of the voice] in the north. The voice sounded as though this man was going to be very hungry in the future. So the man said yes to this voice. In the morning when they awoke they looked for tracks outside but there were none. Then that morning and a lot of mornings after that, he would go hunting and he just couldn't catch anything at all. They ate all the meat they had stored up in no time.

So in desperation he remembered the voice which spoke to him some time back. He told his wife that he was going north in search of whoever spoke to him before. He also told his wife to follow his path if he took too long and if she gets tired to waiting too long for his return. So off he went.

He travelled all day long. When it was getting late in the afternoon he saw smoke across on an island. So he headed to where the smoke was and when he got closer he saw a teepee. He went inside the teepee. He saw an old man and his daughter in there. The old man said to him, "You must be hungry. You're a human."

He said, "Yes." So he [the old man] told him to sit down beside his daughter across the other side of the teepee. The old man gave him his daughter (in marriage). So he lived in this teepee with them. In the meantime, his first wife was getting

tired of waiting for his return, so she bundled up her baby and left, carrying the baby on her back. She followed the path which her husband took. Then she saw the smoke and started off across the ice to where the smoke was coming from. The people, including her husband, saw her coming towards the teepee. So the old man told his daughter to go and meet her and help her with the baby so her baby wouldn't get cold. So the daughter went out to meet her.

The first wife saw snow blowing and coming towards her and it went behind her and all of a sudden someone spoke to her and it was the old man's daughter who appeared there as a person. And so she carried the baby on her back and started back to the teepee. Then the daughter disappeared again, all you could see was snow blowing towards the teepee. So when the first wife arrived, she went in the teepee. The daughter was already sitting in the teepee holding her baby. The husband now sat in the middle and his wives sat beside him (on either side of him).

This is as far as I can remember.

\* Translator's note: seal

\*\* Note: In the summer of 1984, Jim Russell of Sandy Bay caught a six foot long sturgeon in the Churchill River, with a head that looked like a dolphin. The head was removed and frozen until it could be mounted. This head was shown to Katherine Lipsett.

End of interview

#### A.1.2. STANLEY MISSION

##### A.1.2.1. Napthalia and Lydia McKenzie, with Rosie McKenzie

Stanley Mission, Saskatchewan

5 June, 1984

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Translated by Rosie S. McKenzie

Transcribed by Katherine Lipsett

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

Napthalia: (In Cree) There are some paintings at that cave. I've seen those down at the rapids here [Stanley Rapids, Figure ]. I saw some on the cave where those memekwesiw used to live. Maybe those old people used to dream about those little men who lived there. They were people without noses, just two little holes and their lips too. They were called cave man. That's all I know about those rock paintings.

K.L.: Did the people from here make the paintings?

Napthalia: Yes. It happened a long time ago. The people used to go and fish at the cave of those memekwesiw who they were dreaming of. After those cave men left, the people used to keep them to buy

the medicine from the little people. There are some little shelves on the rock all around those caves.

One old man was paddling there, passing by there. He saw those memekwesiw go into the rocks so he went to the shore. He went to fish with those little people and he saw them cutting a snake into two pieces to be cooked. Those people told him they just came back from checking a fish net in Winnipeg Lake. He was sitting down there and saw another big snake lying down on the floor. The little people said, "If you come near the snake you can cure all the sickness the people are going to have." But the old man couldn't go passed the snake because he was so scared of it.

I only know the roots that grow in the north. That's all I know.

It was wathaman. The only thing they would paint was from that red powder. That's the only thing they could use because there was no paint a long time ago.

K.L.: Did they mix this powder with anything?

Napthalia: I don't know how they mixed it. That red powder looks like powder, not sand. The only thing they mixed with was fish grease. I don't know how to mix it, just that they mixed powder with the fish grease to make the paint. That's the only thing I know.

Lydia: There is some red powder in the house. Peter North brought it from [up] north. I believe that there are still wild animals under the water someplace. We used to hear a big frog up at Hornet Lake. That frog was as big as a cow.

(later)

K.L.: Do you know why the cow at Cow Narrows [Figure ] was painted?

Lydia: That was done recently. We know the lady who saw that cow. She was paddling down the river and suddenly they saw bubbles coming up out of the water.

K.L.: Did she live around here, the lady who did it?

Lydia: Yes. Her name was Barbara Hardlotte. She knew her too [meaning Rosie McKenzie].

K.L.: Do you remember when she painted it?

Lydia: No.

Rosie: That old lady died about ten years ago. It happened a long time ago.

K.L.: I'd been wondering why so many people knew the story about that painting when they don't seem to know about any of the other

ones.

Rosie: Yes, she was telling us about it. And she used to tell those stories.

K.L.: Why did she paint it?

Lydia: Because we never knew that a cow could live under water.

K.L.: So what did it do after it came out of the water?

Lydia: It dived again [laughs]. It was just to see what was going on. It didn't like those paddles. Maybe it was one of those spirits. Maybe that old woman dreamed of that cow.

Rosie: There must be wild animals under the water that have never been caught. At the trapline, there were some white people who were trapping over there. They saw a hippopotamus standing on the water. Standing at the rapids.

K.L.: Do you believe that?

Rosie: Yes, I believe it.

End of interview

#### A.1.2.3. George and Betsy McKenzie

Stanley Mission, Saskatchewan

26 January, 1984

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Translated by Lydia McKenzie

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

K.L.: How did they used to have their dreams?

George: They used to sleep for a very long time.

K.L.: When they had a dream about an animal, what did that mean?

George: It really helped them a lot. But also there was the bad side to it also. If one person didn't like someone he could send bad luck to him and this person wouldn't be able to kill any game for food at all. Then this person and his family would go hungry.

K.L.: Could they send their spirits to do bad things to other people?

George: Yes. They could send them to kill the other people.

K.L.: Somebody told me that sometimes the rock paintings were pictures of what people saw in their dreams.

George: Yes, that's true.

K.L.: So where would they go to have these dreams? Were they just dreams that you have when you go to sleep?

George: No, not usually. But this happened also. Some people went to sleep and dreamt about and knew things in this manner. They understood what their ordinary dreams really meant. And others dreamt in a different way. Like, for example, one old man used to dream but he dreamt of evil things. This happened not that long ago. This old man was from Montreal Lake. One day some men went out to fight fire. So they gave some tobacco to this old man and asked him to help fight the fire off (to put it out). They asked him for rain. And so the old man went in the bush to sleep for the night. Not long after it started raining and thundering. We couldn't even sit in our tents because it was so wet. That next morning the old man came out of the bush. He pretended he didn't know it rained that night. This old man had power to do things just by dreaming.

It was in the fall when this old man and his two wives were going out to set camp (somewhere near Swimming Stone). They saw a teepee. So the old man went in the teepee to see who was in it. He found a Chiipaywan man who was abandoned by his people. He was very, very sick. So the old man decided to cure this sick man. They camped on the same island where the sick man's teepee was. The old man ordered his two wives to make a shaking tent. It looks like a small teepee, usually covered in moose hide. Then they built a fire inside it and heated rocks in this fire. When they were done, the old man went inside this shaking tent and they heard him talking inside there. Suddenly they saw the whole tent shaking and they can hear the old man just talking away in there. Then after some time he asked the women to uncover the tent and so they did. Then the old man asked the two women to take him by canoe to the middle of the lake. He told them not to worry about him, he would be back when he was ready to. So he jumped into the lake and dived in. The two women returned to shore and waited in their teepee for him. It was getting very late and they were getting anxious for his return when all of a sudden he swam back to shore. He was carrying something which held a green liquid and he took it inside the sick man's teepee. Then suddenly they heard the old man and the sick man talking to each other. The sick man was cured from his illness. So the cured man told the old man who cured him to take his teepee and his guns before they left the next morning. He also told him there would be three moose nearby in the narrows and he could have these three moose also. So the next morning as they approached the narrows they saw the three moose standing there, and he killed these moose and they had plenty of food to eat for a long time.

There is another old man named Othapacikiw who was very powerful. He used to look after a lot of people and protect them from the wihtikow.

One day he told his people that someone was going to arrive at their camp. This someone was not friendly. So he asked

his people to mak a great big teepee so they can all stay in it. So when the teepee was finished, everyone went inside it. It was towards evening when the wihtikow came inside holding his axe. They were cooking beaver meat at the time. The wihtikow was famished. The old man offered him some beaver meat and so the wihtikow ate it all up in no time. The old man was hoping that the wihtikow would drop his axe while he was holding the meat but he kept hanging on to it. When the wihtikow finished eating the chunk of meat he threw the bone at the old man. So they offered him a large bowl of soup next. The wihtikow needed to hold this bowl with both hands and so he dropped his axe. The old man grabbed the axe away quickly. The wihtikow ran for the door and the old man chased after him and grabbed a hold of him. They fought and fought until they were up as high as the trees, as if they blew up there or something like that. Then they both fell down to the ground. The old man held the wihtikow down and asked onè younger man to chop his head off. But the younger man was so confused he almost hit another man who was their ally. So they burned the wihtikow. They had a very difficult time because the fire kept going out as though the wihtikow was made of ice. But the old man won and they were able to kill the wihtikow.

End of interview

A.1.2.3. Betsy McKenzie (widow)

Stanley Mission, Saskatchewan

13 June, 1983

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Translated by Rosie S. McKenzie

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

(In progress)

Trans: (In English) She saw the animals which were painted on the rocks, like moose, cow and some others. (In Cree) Do you know why they painted these pictures on the rocks?

Betsy: It might have been that the people who dreamt would paint their dreams on these rocks.

K.L.: When was the first time you could remember seeing these rock paintings?

Betsy: I don't remember.

K.L.: Were they there for a long time?

Betsy: Yes, they've been there for a very long time.



K.L.: Do you know what they made them out of?

Betsy: It must have been wathaman, because this is the only thing people used to paint with at that time, ever since they first built and painted the Stanley Mission church. They hauled this red stuff by canoes. Then they prepared this wathaman so they could use it to paint with.

K.L.: Do you remember anyone talking about the rock paintings?

Betsy: No, I don't remember. My grandparents and parents showed me the rock paintings but they didn't talk about any stories, as much as I can remember anyway.

K.L.: Do you think any of the old stories which people tell have anything to do with the rock paintings?

Betsy: No, I don't think so. People painted what they saw in their dreams.

End of interview

A.1.2.4. William Ratt and Edward McKenzie

Stanley Mission, Saskatchewan

3 June, 1984

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Translated by Rosie McKenzie

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

(In progress)

Rosie: (In Cree) Do you mean the rock painting of the cow [Figure ]?

William Ratt: (In Cree) Yes.

Rosie: (In Cree) Yes, she knows about that one. She would like to know of other places where there are rock paintings. Do you know who painted this cow?

William: No. They were elders long ago. Elders of long ago used to do extraordinary things.

Rosie: Do you know where there are other rock paintings?

William: So. I used to know, but I have a poor memory now, and have been sick so that has been in my way of remembering things.

Rosie: Why do you suppose these paintings were painted?

William: No... Maybe he [meaning Edward] knows.

Rosie: That rock painting has been there for a very long time.

William: Yes, we could see it when we passed by there.

Rosie: Do you remember when you first saw this painting of the cow?

William: No.

Rosie: It must have been there when you were a child?

William: Yes.

K.L.: Have you seen the rock paintings along the river? Do you remember them?

Edward: (in English) No, I don't think there is that many, up this way. There is only a few over at the narrows. There is one on that side and the other one is at Cow narrows but they coloured or repainted the cow with paint [vandalism].

K.L.: Yes. That paint will come off. The rock painting will stay.

Edward: Yes, that cow was there for a long time.

K.L.: Do you know who painted them - the rock paintings?

Edward: No, but they were painted a long time ago.

K.L.: Do you have any idea what they painted them with?

Edward: What?

K.L.: What they painted with? What they used?

Edward: I don't know. Some people say Cree medicine. (In Cree) Did some use medicine to paint with?

Rosie: That cow, yes, medicine was used to paint it with.

Edward: Yes, some of them painted with medicine, Indian medicine.

K.L.: Have you heard any stories about that painting at Cow Narrows [Figure 15]?

Edward: No. It was a long time ago, when they saw a cow there, wading there with his head above the water.

K.L.: So who painted it?

Edward: Then they painted the head on the rock.

K.L.: As a warning?

Edward: Yes.

(later)

K.L.: Why do you think there are so many rock paintings there?  
At Hickson [-Maribelli].

Edward: Well I don't know. They must be painted a long time ago.  
And that paint never comes off. There's a few at Otter Lake and in  
that creek.

K.L.: Why do you think the paint doesn't come off?

Edward: I don't know. Maybe it's going to stay there for a long  
time yet.

K.L.: Cree medicine keeps them there.

Edward: Yes. Some of them are coloured blue, red, orange.

K.L.: Where did you see the blue one?

Edward: Right up here at that creek.

K.L.: Oh. I haven't been that far yet. I haven't seen those  
ones.

Edward: Yeah, it's past two portages here. Then there is Otter  
Lake. Then you go in a boat from there to see those paintings.

K.L.: We are trying to figure out what the paintings mean and so  
I was wondering if you thought the old Cree stories were related  
to the rock paintings?

Edward: No, I don't remember.

K.L.: Do you know anyone who remembers the old Cree medicine?

Edward: No, I don't think anyone remembers. There's one old man  
here [Henry Cook] that's over eighty years old. Maybe he  
remembers.

K.L.: Is he a minister? I'll ask him.

(later)

K.L.: Can you think of anything else about the rock paintings?

Edward: No.

K.L.: What do you think they were made of? What's the red?

Edward: [shrugs]

K.L.: So you think it was before the priests came?

Edward: Yes.

K.L.: It's a long time ago.

Edward: Before I was born. I don't know anybody remembers. They've been here for a long, long time.

End of interview

A.1.1.6. Rev. Henry Cook

Stanley Mission, Saskatchewan

3 June, 1984

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Translator Rosie McKenzie

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

Rosie: (In Cree) We would like to know if 'our father' remembers about the rock paintings?

Henry: (In Cree) You mean stories of long ago?

Rosie: Yes, rock paintings?

Henry: I don't know what the rock paintings mean or stand for. A long time ago people didn't pray and they dreamt of things which they then painted on these rocks. This is what the Crees believed in.

K.L.: How did they get these dreams? These are not ordinary dreams.

Henry: A long time ago the Crees were able to do extraordinary things. I saw one person do an extraordinary thing. One lady was sick, all of one side of her face twisted, (her lips and mouth area was twisted or paralyzed) to one side. Anyway this lady's father-in-law made some Indian medicine for her. He poured water in a large cup and put some medicine in this water and boiled it. Then he covered the bowl by placing a large handkerchief or cloth over it. "If this water changes colour, my daughter-in-law will be healed," he said. Then he uncovered the bowl. Half of the large cup was dry with the medicine sticking to it. The other half had

the water which changed to a reddish colour in it. The lady drank this water and medicine and she got better.

K.L.: What do they have to do to get these dreams?

Henry: They used to sleep. Some of them prepared a place to sleep way up in the trees. Sometimes they slept there for a very long time without eating.

K.L.: What were they wanting to know from their dreams?

Henry: They dreamt of how to use things like roots, plants and herbs which grow or come from the earth. They knew what kind of medicine to use for whatever may be the matter with a sick person. The Creator gave them this knowledge. The Creator, or Manitou said, when he first made people, everything growing on this land is yours to put into good use. But in time the dreamers began to abuse this gift of knowledge they possessed. So if the dreamers used this knowledge or put it into good use and not abused it, this practise would still have been good today. But some people started using this medicine by even killing each other. So it was no good anymore.

K.L.: Do you remember who painted these rock paintings and when they painted them?

Henry: No.

K.L.: Do you know what they used to make the paint?

Henry: Yes. They used wathaman. This is the sand that's red. They cooked by boiling this red sand. Then after this red sand had been boiled, it turned to a deeper and brighter red. This paint never rubbed off.

K.L.: Did they mix this red sand with something else?

Henry: Maybe they did mix something with it.

K.L.: Have you seen any rock paintings around here?

Henry: Yes.

(later)

K.L.: Do you know any other stories about the rock paintings?

Henry: No. This medicine had been known by the Crees for a long time. This medicine is for the heart. This grows under water. When someone has a heart problem, if this medicine is ground very fine and boiled in water and the person drinks it, the person will feel better.

There's a very high mountain not too very far from here.

There's a cave in there where people used to live a long time ago. They looked like people but they didn't have noses like we do. They used to live in this cave. It looked like an ordinary cabin inside except it was a cave.

Rosie: I went in the cave once. I didn't see them, but I saw what they made and how they lived inside the cave. They were good at making Indian medicine. They had little knives also.

(later)

K.L.: Did that cave remind you of the little people.

Rosie: Yes.

(later)

K.L.: Is there anybody else that they used to get medicine from besides the memekwesiw?

Henry: No, I don't think so. Just men were able to make rock paintings, not women.

K.L.: How come just men?

Henry: Women never stepped over men.

K.L.: Do you remember anything else about the rock paintings?

Henry: No, I don't remember anything else.

K.L.: Do you think the old Cree stories are related to the rock paintings?

Henry: No. I used to hear old stories but some of them may not have been true. Also, one more thing, I heard the white people say that Indians came from [originated in] a different country. This is not true. This land, our land, the Indians always lived here. They did not come from elsewhere. They didn't have any guns or anything else like that. They only had bows and arrows which they used to kill animals for food. There were no white men living here at that time. They must have found this land way after this time. The Cree Indians were able to make their own cooking pots. These pots were made of clay. And they found a piece of white rock which the Cree Indians used at the tip of their arrows. This type of rock had been found underground around here lots of times, even now. And this thing was used as a tool of some sort a long time ago.

Rosie: It looks like it might have been used to scrape moose hide with.

(later)

Henry: In this rock painting [Stanley Rapids, Figure ], there is the moose and there is the wolf, and there is a person shouting something out to the wolf. That's what this means. The wolf is chasing the moose. The wolf is able to kill a moose, no matter how big the moose might be, because that's its food. That's what's painted here. And this person is shouting something to the wolf. This is the only one I know the meaning of.

End of interview

A.1.2.6. Rosie S. McKenzie

Stanley Mission, Saskatchewan

4 June, 1984

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Transcribed by Annie Torrence

Rosie: (In English) When my children were infants I used to use a yellowish powder (Indian medicine) on them when they were teething. I would just take this powder, rub it on their gums where the infection was. This would make them better.

K.L.: So a lot of people still use that kind of medicine when they are out on the trap line?

Rosie: Yes. Heart medicine was also used by some. It's really strong stuff. It grows in the rivers on the trap line.

K.L.: Did you say it grows in water?

Rosie: Yes.

K.L.: So it's sort of like a root?

Rosie: Yes, a root.

K.L.: And then what would you do with it?

Rosie: You pull it out of the water. Wash it out clean. Pull the excess roots off and then let it dry some place. Then use it when you need it. We use it when we cough. You leave a piece in your mouth. It is very strong and bitter. I also had a cut once. This also helps when you lose a lot of blood. I used this root on my cut and I got well. I didn't have to see the doctor.

If you wanted to make different colours, besides red, in a rock painting you would have to put this stuff in a skillet and cook it for a while until it looks different, even the white powder will turn black, yellow, or brown.

K.L.: How come it turns out red?

Rosie: Maybe they don't cook it, they use it like that. I've seen two different powders, one white and one red powder. Someone told me of a blue powder, but I don't know where it was. I never heard of it. They used fish grease to mix this stuff with. There was no paint a long time ago, so this is what they used. When they paddled, their paddles used to be so heavy when they paddled around with them too much. When they painted them with this mixture, the paddle would stay light [in weight]. This was their water repellent.

Some people painted their cabins with this mixture also. My grandmother used to tell me when they first brought poles from some place in England, to use in the church. So they were going to paint the church at Campbell Bay here in La Ronge Lake. But then, when they got all the poles there, they heard a baby crying three nights. And one man was dreaming that it wasn't good for the church to be built there. There would be lots of people coming here in the next few years and the church wouldn't be good anymore. So they took all the poles at Nisihtawayak, and threw them out there. After all the poles were gone from here, they painted the devil on the rock [pictograph at Stanley Rapids] so the devil wouldn't be passing this way. So when they started building the church they couldn't hear anything this time. This way they used to say the people will keep their church for some time. If the church was built over there, the people would go to church.

When the road came in anything and everything started happening in La Ronge and here. Stanley Mission used to be so quiet before the road was built here. I think the road was built around six years ago.

My grandmother used to tell me that these people didn't even know these animals they dreamed of. So they painted these animals on the rocks so the other people would know what they dreamt of, what the animals looked like. I just don't understand. Maybe they worshipped their dreams because they didn't have any churches at that time.

K.L.: Did she tell you how they had these dreams?

Rosie: Yes. They built a nest and they used to sleep there for a very long time, sometimes for two months. They didn't eat nor drink anything, they just slept there. They dreamt of the nests. Someone in their dreams tells them to go and sleep there.

You know where we live [on the point on the Stanley Mission Reserve], not far away from there, live five families. One man from there said that he dreamt of somebody who came to eat all of them up [wihtikow]. They made a hut and covered it with moose hides and the old man went inside it and sang. The animals started talking, even the beetles, underwater animals. They were all scared of the giant. They can't do anything to him, and the old man said that the giant was standing two lakes out from their camp. So they called out for every animal to help them. Nobody



seemed to know what to do. The old man called out for the wind so the wind can carry the giant away. He called the South, East and North wind but none of them can lift him up. The only one that was able to lift him up was the strongest wind, the West wind. So the people all laid down two lakes away from the giant, at their camp. The giant was standing way out there when it became very windy and the West wind lifted the giant up. This was in the middle of the winter. He pulled two trees out with his toes and he was holding one on each hand. Even though the wind was so strong he still had his knife with him. The giant cut off all the trees he can reach with his knife. It wasn't very long ago, one tree was still standing and it looked like it had been cut with a chain saw. Then the giant blew away. So after the wind, the people went to see what had happened. They say the leaves were on the ice and there was no snow on the ice either.

One time when Wisahkicahk [the trickster] came to the lake he saw a bunch of very fat ducks so he tried to think quickly of how he can fool them. They [humans] used to talk to any animals so he went to the bush and gathered moss. He wrapped this moss in his shirt really carefully so it wouldn't show or spill out. The ducks asked what he was carrying on his back. He told them they were his records (music). "We would like to hear your records and dance," said the ducks. So he asked them to come to shore. He made a place where the ducks would dance. So the ducks all came to shore. He started singing. It was a closed-eye dancing so the ducks had to keep their eyes closed while they were dancing. And while the ducks were dancing he would twist their necks and kill them one by one until one duck peeked and caught on to what Wisahkicahk was up to. So the duck yelled out that he was killing them off. The rest of the ducks ran away. So he had a nice supper that time.

End of interview

#### A.1.2.7. Elizabeth Cook

Stanley Mission, Saskatchewan

6 June, 1984

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Translated by Rosie S. McKenzie

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

K.L.: Did you see the rock paintings?

Elizabeth: (In Cree) Yes, I've seen them.

K.L.: Where do you think you've seen them?

Elizabeth: There are some up the river by the rapids [Stanley Rapids, Figure 16]. They are a bit difficult to see now because they've been there for a very long time. There is a pictograph of a man and a moose on these rock paintings. They are red like wathaman.

K.L.: Do you have any idea why they painted these on rocks?

Elizabeth: Yes, because I was told that long ago people would dream of someone or something and then they would paint this vision on rocks.

They used wathaman on these rock paintings. We used to get this wathaman in sand around the lake (on islands) nearby. We'd flatten this wathaman on flat rocks and heat it. It is red. Then when my father would paint his paddles, he would first mix this wathaman with fish grease and then he would use this mixture to paint with. It was an excellent water repellent. The water did not soak through the wood of which the paddles were made of and this kept them light weight and this made it easier to use these paddles.

They used wathaman to paint this church [at Stanley Mission]. They went by canoes to get wathaman way up north at Wathaman Lake and they used birchbark baskets to haul this wathaman in.

K.L.: Do you know if they used wathaman to paint anything else?

Elizabeth: No, I don't know if they used this mixture to paint anything else.

K.L.: Are the old stories related to the rock paintings?

Elizabeth: I don't know about this. I didn't hear about it.

K.L.: When did you first see the rock paintings?

Elizabeth: I was seventeen when I got married and this is when I first saw these rock paintings. I'll be 86 years old next month.

K.L.: Did you ever make a rock painting?

Elizabeth: No, I never did make any rock paintings.

K.L.: Does it [the painting] look the same as it did when you first saw it?

Elizabeth: Yes, it looks the same. Wathaman was used. I suppose it was because there was no other kind of paint in those days.

K.L.: Do you remember how people used to have their dreams?

Elizabeth: No, I don't know anything about this.

K.L.: Did you ever hear of anybody who had dreams when you were young?

Elizabeth: No, I don't remember.

End of interview

A.1.2.8. Lazarus Roberts

Stanley Mission, Saskatchewan

6 June, 1984

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Translated by Rosie S. McKenzie

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

(In progress)

Lazarus: (In Cree) They used fish grease mixed with wathaman to paint the rock paintings with. They took the wathaman around where there is a lot of flat rock.

K.L.: Does he know why they made the rock paintings?

Lazarus: They must have been drawing what they dreamt of, like a spirit whom they had a vision of in their dreams. This spirit, usually an animal, helps them whenever they need help because they have power over these particular spirits and creatures. The old men who went on the vision quest were the ones, usually, who painted these pictographs on these rocks.

K.L.: How would they have these dreams?

Lazarus: I really don't know. They weren't baptized. They didn't pray, for example. They didn't go to church and pray the way the white people do.

K.L.: How would they know which dreams to paint on the rocks?

Lazarus: I'm not sure. I think they drew the visions which they dreamt of in these rock paintings.

K.L.: When is the first time that he [Lazarus] saw one of the rock paintings along the river?

Lazarus: Over sixty years ago. I'm sixty eight years old.

K.L.: Do you think any of the old stories are related to the rock paintings?

Lazarus: No, I don't think know. When we were children we used to go with my grandmother and as we were travelling by canoe and we'd pass by these rock paintings she would tell us that the elders of long ago had painted these.

K.L.: Do you remember anything else your grandmother might have said about these rock paintings?

Lazarus: No, except she told us about this portage nearby. We call it Devil's Portage. She used to say that the people, long ago, used to see some kind of creatures, of maybe people, at this portage. But as they got closer to the portage the creatures would run into the bush. They say these creatures were in some of the dreams or visions which the elders dreamt of. But none of these particular creatures were painted on the rocks anywhere around Devil's Portage.

No, I haven't heard anyone else talking about the rock paintings.

End of interview

#### A.1.2.9. Dennis McLeod

Stanley Mission, Saskatchewan  
10 January, 1986  
Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett  
Transcribed by Annie Torrence

Dennis: (In English) There's a legend that is called Mosquito. In the olden days they used to be afraid of this guy. His name was Mosquito. Mosquito was a legendary man. He received his gift of stardom when he was born. He tried to pass it on from generation to generation. He was a great hunter and he had four wives along the way.

This guy [Mosquito's father] didn't make it that far. He was killed by Wihtikow. He was gone (from his camp) for four days and he just returned home. There was no noise around there so he looked in the teepee and saw his mother and father half eaten up. He didn't know Wihtikow was in the teepee and he walked in. That's when Wihtikow killed him.

Mosquito ('s father) had an affair with this Indian woman who had a camp ground about one hundred miles away. In the campground there were about six teepees. This Indian woman was pregnant by the (father of) Mosquito. When the child was born, they named him Mosquito. He was a castaway.

This child had dreams about what his father was like. He thought he was (must have been) a great medicine man. So he started helping the people and this chief told him he didn't belong in that camp because he didn't have a father. The chief ordered him out by saying, "You better get out of this place and go somewhere else." So the boy went away.

He left his mom. He found some other people to stay with and he helped them with things that they didn't expect him to do. Mosquito was about sixteen years old. Those people told him he could stay there with them but he was lonely for his mom. So he went back.

He was crossing this lake when all of a sudden he heard this noise. The chief was trying to prevent him from coming back. He (the chief) thought he would turn around and go back. But Mosquito went under the ice and through to the otherside. He got

back after one year to see his mom.

He found out that his mom had married the chief. He didn't like the chief so he took his mom back to where he just came from. They stayed there for about six or seven years. Mosquito's mom was lonesome because she and the chief were in love. Mosquito felt sorry for his mom and took her back to the chief's camp.

The same thing happened when they went back. The chief tried to get rid of Mosquito again. He sent him bad medicine which was porcupine quills growing into his chest instead of hair growing out of his chest. He (Mosquito) wanted to have a child before he died. So he married this woman and he was with her for two weeks before he died. The woman had his child. The child had the same power as his father. He turned out to hate people. He started war and the Indians killed one another. This child got to be chief because everyone was afraid of him. He got killed in the war by an arrow with a sharp porcupine quill pointed in the end. He wasn't supposed to have died but he did die. His mother was still alive and she had a little bit of power. She couldn't turn people into animals though. So she had another child. She named him little Mosquito because he wouldn't have any power. He died before the age of sixteen. He had these gifts that were about fourteen or fifteen years old. He fell through the ice with them. Little Mosquito drowned. They took him out and had to burn him because they thought he was possessed. A woman possessed him to drown in the water.

K.L.: What stages would you have to go through when you're an Indian?

Dennis: When you are ten years old you start manhood. You start working when you are ten, eleven, twelve or thirteen years old. You got to grow for the chief because they are not that many younger people. They could try to kill and see how strong you are and you have to go for four days without food. Try to live like animals. When you are fifteen and sixteen, that's when you are truly a warrior.

K.L.: When do you get to be a real warrior?

Dennis: You get to be a real warrior when you are sixteen years old. You are not allowed to go eat at your mother's unless she has invited you over for supper or until you are twenty years old.

K.L.: Would you have to live by yourself?

Dennis: No, you would live with the warriors. They live in a big house in the bush. They all sleep in there together. The rest of the families usually don't stay in one place.

K.L.: Did you ever hear about dreaming?

Dennis: Most of the people that really get through become chiefs or medicine men.

K.L.: What did your grandfather tell you about dreaming? Why would they try to have dreams?

Dennis: There was a guy who really wanted to be a chief but he couldn't. He didn't have enough power. So they cut him up in pieces and put him in a box and into the water for one whole year. When they went to open the box he stood up and got out of the box. He was in the box dreaming for one year. He didn't have enough power so he still could not become the chief. The chief still had more power than he did.

K.L.: Did your grandfather ever say anything about the rock paintings?

Dennis: They had to respect the Chipewyans who came down from the north. But the Chipewyans killed people at night.

K.L.: Did they think the Chipewyans had made the paintings?

Dennis: No, no.

K.L.: What did they call the red sand?

Dennis: 'Red Earth'. It is pretty hard to find. It's not that fluffy. It's not like sand, it's more like flour. It's very fine.

K.L.: Is it all together, like in a little pile in the ground?

Dennis: Yes. You find even more if you keep digging.

K.L.: So did he tell you any other stories.

Dennis: He told me a lot of stories.

K.L.: Did he ever tell you about the little people?

Dennis: Little people. Yes. They call them Memekwesiw. There's a lake where they used to live under a big rock (in a cave). Once in a while they would come down and kill people for nothing.

K.L.: I was told that they used to have medicine. You could get medicine from them?

Dennis: Yes, there are only special little people with medicine. The people found some of their medicine down by a rock and stole it from them.

K.L.: Would they give you medicine?

Dennis: Well, no. Not unless you buy it off of them or exchange food or something of value.

K.L.: Where did they come from?

Dennis: They stayed in the same place. Then all of a sudden they went away or died. Because they're not around anymore.

K.L.: Did they use to play tricks on people? Were they like Wisahkicahk?

Dennis: No.

K.L.: They would just mind their own business?

Dennis: They were all the same. They were little people but everyone was afraid of them.

End of interview

A.1.2.10. Samuel Charles

Stanley Mission, Saskatchewan  
15 January, 1986  
Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett  
Translator Rosie S. McKenzie  
Transcribed by Annie Torrence

K.L.: Do you remember anybody telling you why they made the rock paintings?

Samuel: (In English) They painted the spirits (animals and other creatures) which they dreamt about.

K.L.: So they would go and have a dream and the spirits would come in their dream?

Samuel: Yes. There is a waterfall at Nistawayak Falls where there are caves and one old man went inside here to get medicine from the spirits he dreamt about, which were not the little people in this case. They were some kind of animal.

The memekwesiw have their home (cave) at Rabbit Falls. They had a nice place. They had little shelves in their home.

K.L.: How come people were afraid of the little people?

Samuel: The people would dream of these little people, that's why they knew where they lived. Since they were pawakan maybe they thought these people can send bad medicine to harm or kill them if they got them angry or something like that, probably this is why they were afraid of them.

And when a lot of people started travelling near where the little people lived, they gradually disappeared. Perhaps they too were afraid of people in general, other than their own kind.

This is a true story - this really happened. The men from

here used to go for freight to Hudson Bay in a big wooden boat. Anyway at Hudson Bay the Hudson Bay manager used to make money or obtain gifts by having this great big old lady wrestle with the men that came there. They say she was very powerful and she never lost a fight. The men used to bring something, like a blanket, in order to fight with this old lady. The winner would receive the goods at the end of the wrestling match. This big old lady was known as Grandmother by all. She was everybody's grandmother (in name only. They weren't all related to her).

Anyway, one day, an old man named Othapaciquiw from Pelican Narrows decided to wrestle with Grandmother. This old man was also very powerful because he was a dreamer. Grandmother was getting ready to wrestle. There was a long line up of men waiting to wrestle with her. There were gifts all around. So Othapaciquiw offered some fabric so he too can get a chance to wrestle with Grandmother.

So Grandmother got all set to wrestle with him. She had a dress on and she lifted it up a bit and tied it up with something so it wouldn't get in her way. She marked her arms with something black. Then she took out her pipe and began to smoke. When she was done all this, she was finally ready to wrestle with this old man. This old man was much younger at this time. The old man grabbed her and they were both struggling to beat each other. At the same time they went up off the ground, but they weren't up very high when the old man overpowered her and they came back on the ground and the old lady fell right flat on her bare bottom since she wasn't wearing any underpants and her dress flew up in the air. The Hudson Bay manager said everything was showing. So the old man won the wrestling match. They said Grandmother would kill him with Indian medicine. But he wasn't afraid. Later that day he saw Grandmother coming towards his sister's with a big sack on her back. It looked very heavy as she was slouching as she carried it. She came to see him to give him the gifts which she said he won. She also told him he would live long (she was being a good sport about it). This old man was so powerful he killed a few of the wihtikow who used to kill off a lot of people in those days.

Othapaciquiw got his name from this: when he wanted to find out something about someone, no matter how far away they might be, he was able to see and know where they lived and whatever he wanted to find out. I guess he was like a fortune teller or something like that or a psychic.

K.L.: Did you ever hear, if somebody had an enemy, how they could send sickness or they could kill somebody from far away?

Samuel: This occurred not so very long ago. One old man is still living today who used to practise this type of thing, sending something to people to kill them just by using his spiritual powers and perhaps with the help of the spirits he dreamed about, because he had the power over them and they obeyed his wishes. These people used to make (usually) a sharp object and they would put this object in their mouths and then they would blow this sharp object to their enemies. In their mind they would be able to



control where on the enemy they wanted this object to hit them, like the sharp object might hit them on their leg, arm, or on their head. The person who got hit usually died from it.

K.L.: Did the person have to have a lot of power to be able to do that? Be a medicine man or something?

Samuel: Not necessarily, you didn't have to know medicine. This particular old man was not even a medicine man. All he knew was the evil things he dreamt about (spiritual dreams).

But a long time ago the medicine men who knew these types of things also had a lot of medicine. They knew how to cure people with Indian medicine. They used to have big birchbark baskets full of medicine.

People who knew Indian medicine used to cure a lot of people, like they were able to cure a person with cancer. This is a true story. One old lady here, who had cancer was cured by a medicine man.

K.L.: How would you have a dream? Did you have to do something special to have a good dream?

Samuel: People didn't pray a long time ago like the way they pray in churches now. So in those days the parents would teach their children their own way of worshipping and practicing their traditional beliefs. So this is why people practiced to dream. Some people used to build wooden birch wood box, like caskets. They would put their child in this box and sealed it up with tree gum. They did this in the fall when it was very cold. They they would put this box under the water. The child would sleep in this box all winter long and they would keep track of the child to make sure everything was alright. And in the spring they took the box out of the water and open it up. These were the children who became very powerful as they grew older.

K.L.: Somebody told me that one of these was a picture of that [picture from Jones (1981) Aboriginal Rock Paintings of the Churchill River of the pictograph at Stanley Rapids (Figure 16)]. That this was like the casket and these were the lines that tied to the shore. And these dots were the number of weeks that this person was under the water. And that this was the person who had the dream.

Samuel: Yes, this is true but some of the people who were taught how to dream in this way woke up being or turning into a wihtikow. I saw this particular rock painting also and this is what I heard people say about it. They say the dreamer had something like a nightmare, that's why he became a wihtikow. Wihtikow means one who eats everything and everyone in sight, to my understanding anyway. A cannibal.

K.L.: Did you ever hear a story about this rock painting at Cow Narrows?

Samuel: Yes, there was an old lady who saw a cow bobbing its head out of the water, as if it dived and came back up for air. The cow had horns and it had black and white spots. It was painted a long, long time ago, not by this old lady who saw the cow. There was a cave there, it must have lived inside there.

K.L.: So it didn't have anything to do with their dream?

Samuel: No.

K.L.: It was just to show where the cow was?

Samuel: Yes.

K.L.: Did you ever hear who made that painting?

Samuel: No.

K.L.: Can people dream of more than one spirit?

Samuel: Nobody practices this dreaming any longer.

End of interview

### A.1.3. GRANDMOTHER'S BAY RESERVE

#### A.1.3.1. David Roberts

Grandmother's Bay Indian Reserve, Saskatchewan

18 June, 1984

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Transcribed by Annie Torrence

K.L.: Have you ever seen any rock paintings around here?

David: (In English) There's none around here. I've only seen some up north at Wathaman Lake.

K.L.: What did they use to make the paint out of?

David: They mixed the wathaman with lard.

K.L.: Do you know why they used to make them?

David: To see how long the rock paintings would stay on, I suppose.

It was very hard to make a living in order to survive, a long time ago. People didn't get help by receiving assistance of any kind from the government. People used to trap for a living. There was no candy at that time. One lump of sugar a day was all you'd get in place of candy. We weren't raised in cabins. We lived only in teepees. There was only a little bit of flour that was

available for each family. We mostly depended on wild game for food. There were no blankets either. They used to make rabbit robes, caribou hides, etc., in place of blankets. They ate beaver meat, rabbit meat, porcupine meat, caribou and moose meat.

People used to be very much afraid of wihtikow in those days. Wihtikow used to eat up a lot of people a long time ago.

K.L.: Did you ever see wihtikow?

David: No, I just heard stories which were told to me about wihtikow. But one time the wihtikow came close to where we were, but we were making too much noise, talking, so we never got to see him. One of the dogs would run inside our teepee because it was so frightened. The dogs were barking at the wihtikow. They saw his tracks on the snow the next day. This was the time my mother and all of us kids were picking cranberries when all of a sudden someone threw a stick at us. I guess it was the wihtikow who threw the stick at us. But since religion has been introduced and existed here, there is no more wihtikow around here. When the wihtikow had an encounter with a person who has been baptized, his eyes would get blinded as though he had seen a very bright and blinding star.

K.L.: Did they ever use the wathaman to paint something else.

David: Yes, they painted birchbark canoes with wathaman also. A long time ago they only used birchbark canoes, not any other kinds of canoes. There wasn't even any canvas at that time.

K.L.: Do you think the rock paintings had anything to do with the dreams people had?

David: Yes, they painted their dreams on these rocks. There's one animal that looks like a snake, but it has wings.

K.L.: How did the people used to get their dreams?

David: I'm not really sure. But I heard of one old man named Othapacikew who went for a dream. He was placed in a box made of wood and then the box was sunk into the lake. This took place in the fall. He stayed in this box all winter long underwater. Then when it was time for him to come out the people dragged the box to the shore and they let him out. He came out of there still smiling and looking healthy.

I guess he told the people to let him out of the box when the water froze around where the box was sunk. But it never froze, so they got him out of there in the spring when everything was melted.

K.L.: Why did he do that?

David: He had to. He had so many spirits to help him as he had joints in all of his body. He dreamt of all these animals and

creatures of some sort during his vision quest or dream.

This old man also knew how to call the sun to help him bring down some 'special' powerful gun powder onto a black kerchief. He dreamt of the sun, so the sun would listen to him. He used this special gun powder to kill three wihtikow. The wihtikow were very hard to kill off. Ordinary gun powder was usually not powerful enough to kill them with.

K.L.: How did other people have their dreams?

David: I really don't know.

(later)

David: They did all sorts of different things when they were out to dream. They didn't eat, they just slept and dreamt. The spirits feared them.

K.L.: What did the dreams used to do for them? Why would they have these dreams?

David: They used to do that because they were so worried about wihtikow. If nobody would have dreamt and wasn't aware of when wihtikow was near their camp, everybody would have been killed by wihtikow. But by dreaming, the person could overpower wihtikow and also could warn his people when wihtikow was nearby and this way the people would be prepared to attack him and move camp.

K.L.: Could anybody have these dreams or is it just for special people?

David: Just one person, one person would dream in one camp.

K.L.: Is that the one who used to know about the medicine?

David: Not necessarily. When groups of people used to go trapping this dreamer is the one who had to protect his group of people somehow, so no harm would come to them if possible.

K.L.: Do the rock paintings have anything to do with the medicine?

David: No, it doesn't.

K.L.: Do you think the old stories have anything to do with the rock paintings?

David: I don't really know. All I know is that they painted their dreams on these rocks with wathaman. These rock paintings were meant to stay on for a very, very long time.

(later)

David: Once there was a little boy who lived with his grandmother. His grandmother told him not to shoot his arrow into the water, so he did anyway. He used a bow and arrow to shoot at a bird. The arrow fell into the water. So the little boy threw a string and a hook into the water to try to catch his arrow that was floating in the water. Instead a fish jumped at the hook and the little boy pulled in the string, hook and fish to shore. He took the fish home to his grandmother. His grandmother went down to the water to check where the little boy had caught the fish from. Then when she returned, she told the little boy that he had just killed his grandfather the fish.

So the little boy's grandmother put his arrows high up on the tree and ordered him never to climb up on the tree to get his arrows back. But of course he didn't listen to her. He always did what he was told not to do. So he climbed up on the tree to try to get his arrows back.

Each time he got close to his arrow he blew on it. Soon the arrow was way, way high up on the tree. The little boy kept blowing on the arrow as he kept climbing higher and higher on the tree. Then he was so high up that he saw earth from up there. He started walking on this earth. He saw a trail. He untied this arrow to get a wire which he had used to tie up his arrow with, which he needed to make a snare wire. Then he set his snare on this trail. Then he climbed back down to go home. He waited until morning to come back to see what he might have caught in his snare.

So the next morning when he woke up something very strange was happening. The sun would shine and then it would grow dark again. This kept going on all morning. He had snared the sun in his snare and that's why it kept going light and dark. The sun would push its way to come up and shine and it would go backwards because it was hooked in the wire and that would cause it to grow dark outside.

His grandmother asked him, "What are you up to? Did you set a snare somewhere?"

He replied, "Yes, I had set a snare over there," as he pointed up in the sky.

His grandmother told him he snared his grandfather, the sun. The boy asked a mouse (because it was very small, swift and has a pointed nose) to go up in the sky by climbing up the tree and chew the wire off the let the sun free. The boy promised no harm would come to the mouse because he would help to save him. So the little mouse went up there and chewed the snare wire off and then the sun was able to come up again. The boy saw a piece of black charcoal from a bonfire lying on the ground as he was looking for the little mouse. He said to himself, "This charcoal might be the little mouse." He kept blowing on this piece of charcoal until the charcoal turned back to the little mouse and the little mouse took off from there. So the boy kept his promise, he saved the little mouse after it did what he had asked it to do for him.

His grandmother told him not to go to this place. She told him his two grandfathers, two big bears, lived there. But as usual he didn't listen to his grandmother and he went where the two big bears were. As he approached this place, he saw the two big bears sitting there. He went straight for them. He saw two rocks nearby, so he shot at them with his bow and arrow. The rocks went to pieces. The two big bears saw this and began to run away from him because they said he would kill them. But the boy was so quick he took a shot at both the bears at one time and he killed them both. He shot one arrow through both of the bears' heads at one time.

Once again, the little boy's grandmother warned him not to go further down the road because there lived an old lady who was very powerful and no one had ever beaten her yet. The little boy had grown up to be a young man by this time. So, of course, the young man started off down the road to see what he could find or see.

Suddenly he heard people laughing. He saw two young women preparing a moose hide nearby. He quietly sneaked up on them. When one of the women accidentally poked a hole through the moose hide, the young man's head came out through the hole, as he was hiding behind the moose hide. The two young women began to giggle and giggle. Their mother, the powerful old lady, asked what they were laughing at. The two young women said they were laughing at the whiskey jacks who were flying around and around. Finally the old lady saw him. She invited him to come home with them to eat.

The two young women warned the young man not to eat any hard pemmican which their mother might offer him to eat. They said she used this hard pemmican to kill people with. So he went home with them. The old lady offered him the hard pemmican, but he refused to eat it. The two young women had offered him other food so he ate that instead.

The old lady was very angry with him because he had refused to eat the hard pemmican which she had offered him. So the old lady ordered him to have a wrestling match with her after he had finished eating. So he agreed to that. They both went outside and the old lady cleaned off a big smooth rock and said that the loser's head would get smashed on this rock. The old lady was sure she would win because she was very strong and she never lost to anyone before. They started to wrestle. At first the young man pretended he didn't have the strength and then the old lady tried with all her might to beat him, but by that time the young man began to show his strength. When the old lady realized she was getting beaten, she begged him to let go. She said he was killing her. But nevertheless the young man threw her down and smashed her head on the rock and killed her. So the young man took both of the young women home to become his two wives.

End of interview

A.1.3.2. Sally McKenzie

Grandmother's Bay Indian Reserve, Saskatchewan

18 June, 1984

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Translated by Rosie S. McKenzie

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

K.L.: Have you seen any rock paintings around here?

Sally: (In Cree) Yes, I saw some rock paintings around here. They used wathaman to paint them with. They got the wathaman from Wathaman Lake. The paint is red.

K.L.: Do you remember when you first saw the rock paintings?

Sally: I first saw them a very long time ago. But someone repainted the cow [Cow Narrows, Figure 15] and that ordinary paint came out.

K.L.: Why do you think they painted these rock paintings?

Sally: The elders painted these rock paintings, I suppose, so other people would see them in the future because the paint wouldn't rub off. They used to mix the wathaman with fish oil and use this for paint.

K.L.: Did you ever hear anything about the painting of the cow?

Sally: I think whoever painted the cow wanted the other people to know what a cow looked like.

K.L.: Do you know who painted the cow?

Sally: No, I don't know.

K.L.: Do you think any of the old stories have anything to do with the rock paintings?

Sally: No, I can't remember any stories which might be related to these rock paintings. I heard some, but I can't remember them now.

K.L.: So they painted the rock paintings just so the people would remember?

Sally: Yes.

K.L.: So that they would remember what?

Sally: So the people would be able to see these rock paintings for a long time.

K.L.: Do they mean anything?

Sally: They could mean something but I don't remember.

K.L.: Which paintings do you remember seeing?

Sally: I saw one painting up north.

K.L.: Do the paintings have anything to do with dreaming?

Sally: It could be. Some people used to dream a long time ago.

K.L.: Can you tell us anything about the dreaming?

Sally: No, I don't know anything about it.

K.L.: Did they ever use the wathaman to paint anything else?

Sally: They also used wathaman to paint fences around graves in the graveyards.

K.L.: Did they ever paint pictures like the rock paintings on anything else?

Sally: Yes, they used wathaman to paint birchbark canoes with.

K.L.: Did they ever use to paint them all red?

Sally: They used to painted them only red.

K.L.: Do you remember any of the other old people saying anything about the rock paintings?

Sally: No, I don't remember.

(later)

K.L.: Do you remember how old you were when you first saw the rock paintings?

Sally: No, but I was just a young girl then.

End of interview

#### A.1.4. PELICAN NARROWS

##### A.1.4.1. Catherine Linklater

Pelican Narrows, Saskatchewan

11 July, 1984

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Transcribed by Annie Torrence



(In progress)

Catherine: (In English) What are they there for?

K.L.: What? The paintings?

Catherine: That do they mean?

K.L.: That's what I'm trying to find out. We don't know. Do you ever hear what they were for?

Catherine: I don't know. Maybe. Some Indians, a long time ago, they used to sleep and dream... dream of something... like animals, anything they can dream of. To help them as a spirit.

K.L.: What do these spirits help them do?

Catherine: They help them. Some... they sleep on the rocks, some sleep on the side of the trees, or in the middle of the trees and some... in the water. Just imagine!

K.L.: Really? In the water?

Catherine: Yes!

K.L.: Were they in something?

Catherine: I don't know. I heard that they sleep in the water for six months, in winter. But they still survived. I don't know how.

K.L.: This was... just so they could have these dreams? (pause) So what were the dreams for?

Catherine: Most of the Indians, they used to dream. It must be just like a religion - dreaming - and they prayed to spirits. I don't know what kind of spirits they had but they called them spirits. And when there was danger of something, they prayed to the spirits and they [the spirits] helped them. And that's how they got good medicine or bad medicine.

K.L.: So they'd see that in a dream?

Catherine: Yes.

K.L.: So you don't know what they made the paint out of? Just that it stays for a long time.

Catherine: No. I asked my mother what they used for paint. They call it wathaman.

K.L.: Have you ever seen it used in anything else?

Catherine: No. Just on rock paintings.

K.L.: What about these things they painted? Do you have any idea what they mean?

Catherine: I don't know. Maybe that's what they dream.

K.L.: How long have the people been here, around Pelican Narrows?

Catherine: Oh, I don't know. Maybe... I don't know. Must be a long time, a long time ago. Maybe a thousand years or more.

K.L.: That must be strong paint to stick for a thousand years.

Catherine: Yes. Never comes out. This paint stays there.

K.L.: We were thinking that maybe the Cree old stories might have something to do with the rock paintings.

Catherine: No.

End of interview

A.1.4.2. Andrew Custer

Pelican Narrows, Sask.

19 July, 1984

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Translated by Catherine Linklater

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

Andrew: (In Cree) Somebody told me that the people would go to the bottom of the lake or river to have these dreams. They would go inside something like coffins. They would stay in the coffins underwater for a few days. When they came up, what they talked about is what they dreamt of.

K.L.: Why did they have these dreams?

Andrew: I don't know.

(later)

K.L.: Did you ever hear about people dreaming?

Andrew: Yes, I can tell you a story about an old man who had psychic powers from dreaming. This incident happened here in Pelican Narrows a long time ago. The men used to go for freight very far away, around 700 miles away. They had to leave their wives and children behind. So one old man knew someone was going to arrive at their camp before they actually arrived. So he took

three families across the lake to safety. When the enemy arrived they couldn't find these families so they left. These three families were saved by this old man. The next day the men came back from their very long journey.

End of interview

A.1.4.3. Elie Custer (guide) and Amiel Linklater

Pelican Narrows, Saskatchewan

28 July, 1984

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Translated by Norman Merasty

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

(This interview took place while Elie was acting as guide to pictograph sites. This conversation occurred at Medicine Rapids [GhMs-10] after viewing the site. Elie has volunteered this information about the site and the pictographs.)

Norman: (In English) The medicine man or dreamer slept here for one winter. This is how his most powerful vision looked like [the rock painting at Medicine Rapids]. Just like the ones they would paint on the rocks. He [meaning Elie] heard this, he didn't see it himself. Apparently these old people, like this fellow here [Elie], he had a vision and he would know where to go for medicine. They say on this hill here [top of cliff on which the rock painting appears] there are no plants and additional qualities in them, but when he wanted medicine, like herbs, he would walk up this hill and go inside a cave and the medicine would be there as if he was walking into a medical pharmacy to get medication. Our Indian people had been all over these hills and they hadn't found any herbs, other plants with any additional qualities. They just don't grow on this hill.

K.L.: Has he ever heard of the little people? Did they say anything of the little people and the medicine?

Norman: No. And apparently, a wathaman is a property of rock. Some people know what a wathaman is, the red stuff, but what they don't know is what property is in it which prevents it from washing out. It's some kind of medicine but they don't know what it is. He's wondering if they took a little part of that and put it in a lab for analysis if they somehow come up with what is in the wathaman.

He heard of memekwesiw but they didn't have ears. They lived in caves. They gave out the medicine.

He said his great grandfather used to go in these caves to get medicine. This happened around two hundred years ago. He never heard of what the paint was made out of. (In Cree) Do you know why they made these rock paintings?

Elie: (shakes head no)

(Later at Amiel Linklater's camp. From a conversation between Elie and Amiel)

Norman: The dreamer would sleep in a sealed box which would float on top of the water. He would sleep there all winter long. If the dreamer didn't make it the box would freeze, but if he kept alive the box would keep floating. And when they awoke, they would draw the most powerful visions which they dreamt of during that winter. They honoured their dreams.

They compared this like going to school and getting an education. Some of them may have survived through the winter but may have not had the same level of education as others. Some of them knew more than others after their vision quest.

They used wathaman to paint on rocks. They also painted the church at Stanley Mission with wathaman. They knew where the wathaman came from, but the people didn't know the medicine which was mixed with it. The dreamers were the only ones who had this knowledge. Some of these medicine men used to tell people how to mix the medicine with the wathaman before they painted the rocks with it. This wathaman is plentiful around the Stanley Mission area. The people didn't use the medicine when they painted the church so I don't think the paint would last as long as it does on these rocks where the medicine was used. The old people at Stanley Mission got the wathaman and mixed it themselves but they didn't know the special medicine which was needed to last. These rock paintings with this special medicine may be one thousand years old. (In Cree) Have you ever heard of anyone who made rock paintings?

Elie: (In Cree) No. I only heard what I know. The stories had been handed down from father to son. They honoured and worshipped these rock paintings.

Amiel: (In Cree) I never saw any dreamers in my time. My grandfather used to hear about them, but I never saw one in person.

End of interview

#### A.1.4.4. Soloman Merasty

Pelican Narrows, Saskatchewan  
30 July, 1984  
Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett  
Transcribed by Annie Torrence

Soloman: (In English) [Prentice] Downes. He's from the States, from Washington. I travelled with him twice. He wanted me to go very far north with him, as far north as you can go with a canoe. We never made it. I never went.

K.L.: What was the farthest north you've ever been?

Soloman: Wolliston Lake. That's where I worked with the Caterpillars. In winter time I used to do guiding that way also.

K.L.: Do you know John McKay?

Soloman: Yes.

K.L.: I was talking to him. He was talking to me about working out there with a Cat.

Soloman: I travel lots, by plane too, but I never go very far away. I went to Flin Flon, Manitoba by canoe. I came through here and right to Waterways, Alberta, crossing this province. This was in 1953. Oh, I was still young that time. That's what I liked, when I was younger. I liked seeing something different every day so I liked travelling and seeing this country.

K.L.: Where were you born?

Soloman: La Ronge. My brother Joe is in Stanley Mission. He doesn't speak English.

K.L.: A lot of older people here, they speak English, don't they?

Soloman: Yes, lots of them because they worked with the white men. That's what happened to me. I never was in school one day. I was sixteen or maybe fifteen, I started leaving for two or three months to work then I'd come back. I was guiding the tourists all the time. That's how I learned to speak English. After, when I was seventeen or eighteen, then I left home altogether. I worked and travelled around with white people. Sometimes I didn't speak my language for one or two years, just English.

(later)

K.L.: How did you meet Mr. Downes?

Soloman: Mr. Downes came here in 1936. He was a traveller, a book writer and a high school teacher in Boston. He taught millionaires, rich people's kids. He would teach for ten months at a time then he'd go out like that time he went to Baffin Island, Baffin Bay. That's way up north. He was down there for one whole month with the Inuit. He would just look around, to see the country. He didn't tell me about these painted rocks but he told me about writing books. He was interested in writing books. Several times, different people asked me about him. They wanted to find this one book he had written called Sleeping Island [1936]. He then came from Baffin Island to Canada, he came right through here. He came to Flin Flon by plane to here. Then he hired me. He got a canoe. I told him I had a motor but he didn't want to use a

motor. He wanted to paddle.

K.L.: What was he like, this Mr. Downes? Did you like him?

Soloman: Oh, yes. I liked him very much. He was just like an Indian.

K.L.: How?

Soloman: He'd eat anything that I'd eat. He was a tough little guy. He was a tough, strong little guy. This man talked a lot and he'd tell me a lot of stories. He's been in a lot of different places in the States, One time he told me he came down this one river. I don't remember the name of this river. It took him six weeks, all by himself.

K.L.: He travelled this river by himself?

Soloman: Yes, he came down by himself, paddling. The second time, he went to Brochet, Stoney, Black Lake, Fond du lac. I don't think he paddled at this time. I think he went by a big boat at Lake Athabasca, the one that goes South, Lake Athabasca and to Fort MacMurray. So he went down that way and went down the Athabasca River and right down to Edmonton, by himself by canoe. He was a very careful man. He never carried a gun or anything like that, just an axe and a knife and that's all. I don't know why he wouldn't carry a gun.

From Pelican, we went right up to Reindeer Lake, but we didn't go to the far end of Reindeer Lake which is Brochet. It was too late in the fall and his job would be starting soon. We only had twenty one days when we turned back from over there. It took fourteen days to come back from out there. There was a lot of rain and storms. We stayed on one island for four days and four nights. It was raining so much. We lost almost a week there and he had to get back home in order for him to keep his job.

K.L.: What did you take with you when you went on this? Just a canoe, paddles and the tent?

Soloman: Yes. And flour, lard, sugar, tea, coffee, and lots of smokes, lots of tobacco. Oh! He smoked a lot. I took a gun with us so I could kill us some ducks, seagulls, etc. To eat. Coming home... see after four days... after ten days, we were stuck in a storm in this 'Sleeping Island', we were getting short of grub.

K.L.: Is that the real name of that island?

Soloman: No. He gave it that name.

K.L.: What's the real name of this island?

Soloman: I couldn't say. I don't know what it was called.

K.L.: Do you remember where it was?

Soloman: Well, it's Sandy Island, not far from Southend.

K.L.: So did you go along the Churchill?

Soloman: We crossed the Churchill. We went up Deer River to Southend.

K.L.: What kind of a canoe did you have?

Soloman: An eighteen foot. It was an ordinary, canvas canoe, not a birchbark canoe.

K.L.: So he made this trip because he wanted to write a book?

Soloman: Yes. He wanted to go to Brochet, Manitoba, but we couldn't make it. It was too stormy. We had to come back.

K.L.: What did he want to go up there for?

Soloman: This is where he was heading and he would write too. He took a lot of notes along the way.

K.L.: Did you meet any people along the way? Do you remember meeting people?

Soloman: I met people at Southend. That's another Indian village. There's a lot of people down there. And we met quite a few travellers.

K.L.: Do you remember who he talked to in Southend? Any names of people that he talked to in Southend?

Soloman: Yes. They're all dead now. This was a long time ago.

K.L.: Do you remember what their names were? They might be interesting.

Soloman: Yes. George Cook, he was one of the old timers he talked to.

K.L.: Is he any relation to Henry Cook?

Soloman: I guess so. He also talked to Soloman McAuly and Soloman Custer. You see, the Cree names are gone now. When we came home, we went right through to Beaver Lake and we came this way. So he left me here at Pelican Narrows. I had to come home with another guy. He went to Flin Flon somehow, by train or I don't know. There was no highway yet. We paddled all the way all day long. We'd get up in the morning and go. If it was a good day, we'd travel all

the time until dark.

K.L.; What was the furthest that you've paddled in a day? Do you remember?

Soloman: We paddled thirty-five, forty and sometimes fifty miles in a day, if it was a very good day, when there was no rain or a storm. Yes, there was rapids and rivers.

K.L.: Did you shoot rapids?

Soloman: Oh yes. It was a lot of fun. But I was very sorry I couldn't make it to go along when he made the long trip, from Lake Athabasca. Yes, he asked me to go along with him, but I couldn't go. That's the time something else came up. I got on with a survey party, from June 7th or 8th and I didn't get back home until the middle of October. I worked around, from here all the way up to Stanley Mission, travelling around. We came back to Stanley Mission to get our supplies which the plane brought there. There were around twenty-six men in this survey party. That's the year they made those maps.

K.L.: About when you met him in La Pas in 1937?

Soloman: Yes, here.

K.L.: Oh, he was in Pelican?

Soloman: Yes, he came to Pelican. He picked me up here. He heard about me when he was down in the States. I was guiding.

K.L.: So he looked specifically for you?

Soloman: Yes.

K.L.: So you must have guided for somebody before who liked you?

Soloman: Yes, I guided all my life. I worked for policemen when I was young, travelling around with canoes, dogs and lots of different prospectors.

K.L.: [In letter to Soloman from Robert Cockburn, University of New Brunswick] Okay, it says here that you went also went on a freighting trip from Pelican to Beaver Lake in 1940. What do you remember about that trip?

Soloman: I remember that. Oh, we had a lot of fun. That's another year he went up there, north of Brochet, Manitoba at Reindeer Lake. He went up there by plane. He didn't come through here. But he came back down from there by canoe. Then he picked me up here. There were about four canoes, I think. So from here we went down to Beaver Lake to get some freight.



K.L.: Yes, it sounds like you two got along really well.

Soloman: Yes, he was a nice person.

K.L.: Did they send you these pictures?

Soloman: Yes. I got a couple of pictures some place. I don't know where though.

K.L.: Did they send you pictures?

Soloman: Yes, they sent me a couple of pictures from him but I don't know what happened to them. My first wife was still living then. She was a baby that time, this woman here [his daughter in a photograph]. No, it was before she was born. This picture was taken just down here, Hudson Bay beach.

K.L.: Is this you?

Soloman: Yes. And they say, this last guy who wrote to me [Cockburn] has lots of pictures of me with him [Downes]. Did he say here he's got some pictures?

K.L.: Well, this man [Cockburn] published his [Downes] journals. He kept detailed records of these trips and they were published and in these journals are some pictures of you.

Soloman: Oh yes.

(later)

K.L.: If you can find the pictures that you have of him, I'm sure they would be very interested in them.

Soloman: Yes.

K.L.: They'd really like to see them.

Soloman: I was thinking about that after I got these [letters]. I know he [Downes] had lots of pictures. He had a small camera.

K.L.: So I brought all my maps.

Soloman: Yes.

K.L.: You've been up to Southend? All around there?

Soloman: Yes, I've been to Southend.

K.L.: These are the ones [pictographs] I know about in Stanley Mission.

Soloman: Where's Stanley Mission? Can you find it for me?

K.L.: Stanley? It's right here.

Soloman: I know there's lots there.

K.L.: I've seen those ones.

Soloman: Oh, you've seen these?

K.L.: Yes, I've been to Stanley Mission. These are the paintings around there.

Soloman: I've seen one there. Oh it was nice!

K.L.: Right on the rapids?

Soloman: Yes, on that side of the river, this point there.

K.L.: Yes. It's really nice, isn't it?

Soloman: It's really nice. That's a caribou.

K.L.: Do you know what they made that paint out of?

Soloman: Yes, some kind of mineral. I don't know exactly how to explain or describe it in English. The mineral, it seems to me, it's so very old that it goes to pieces. When you touch it, you break it, it turns just like powder. The paint was made out of this stuff.

The people used to carry this rock in a tanned hide. This rock was used like a marker.

K.L.: What did they mix it with to make it into a paint?

Soloman: Water. Some people say they just used a little stick and mark with it as you would chalk.

K.L.: Do you know why they used to make these rock paintings?

Soloman: Well, that was their belief. There was no religion of any kind at that time. They call this powder stuff vermilion. They say they got this stuff from rock, rotten rock. It was some kind of mineral. They wrap this stuff inside a tanned hide and pound it with a hammer and it turns to powder. But the white men call this stuff vermilion. Have you ever been north of La Ronge to look for this kind of stuff?

K.L.: I've been to Stanley Mission and I've talked to people there. And then I went to Black Bear Island Lake and talked to people there. And then I came here.

Soloman: Did they show you? It's right along the Churchill River. Black Bear Lake, yes I've been there. In fact, I've been to Churchill River right up to Ille a la Crosse. There's only one little area there, not very far, I don't now how many miles, I didn't go. There's lots of these things (pictographs) there, but I can't recall where this place is exactly, but I have an idea where it might be. I was thinking I could mark it on the map but you've already been there to those ones I've seen lately around Stanley Mission.

K.L.: So you never heard why they made those paintings?

Soloman: That's one religion they had. One belief they had in their religion. There was no religion and no belief in those days. That's years and years ago. Nobody knows how many years ago. That's the only belief they had in those days, whatever they marked or painted. They painted caribou, caribou tracks, bear tracks, moose tracks, etc. But I don't know why they did that. I was told that this was their belief, their god.

K.L.: Well, how did they know what to put on the rock?

Soloman: I can't tell you that. I don't know. They say that stuff in the rock, you see it, it's marked here. It's way back about three foot.

K.L.: So it's like an x-ray, it goes right through the rock?

Soloman: Yes, that's what they say, I don't really know. I only saw it once. I don't know which area, down south, some place in the Rockies. They had a bunch of prisoners there, building the railroad. They were drilling right through the rock, then they put the dynamite in it. Away from this explosion they found or hit this stuff at first. You can still see that. That's the only one I've seen and I never saw one like that around here.

K.L.: Yes, all the rock paintings are... nobody touched those.

Soloman: Yes, it seems to me, the people think a lot about those things. They were made so many thousands of years ago, and they are still there. But that's one thing, you're not the only one who asked me this, "Why do they make those things?" That's all I can tell you. That's their belief, their religion. Like this, you take a picture [photograph] and it's still there for a long time. That's what I'd like to know, how they can keep those paintings in there and to stay there forever.

K.L.: It must have been powerful religion.

Soloman: Yes, it must be something powerful.

K.L.: Norman [Soloman's son] said that you know about the dreamers.

Soloman: Well, that's a part of that.

K.L.: Can you tell me about that?

Soloman: You dream about something, whatever you dreamt of, would come true sometimes right away or after. I can't really say. I'm unsure. But the people believed in this just like those rock paintings, that's all dreams. They dream about something, they paint it. So I heard.

K.L.: Do you know how they went about having these dreams? What they used to do to have their dreams?

Soloman: It's just like if they want to know something, like if someone wants to go to the university but it's very, very tough teaching. Generally they used to do that in the fall around October. They'd go some place where nobody should disturb them there in any way whatsoever. They go there with nothing, just as they are, and they only take their blankets because they go there to sleep. They don't take anything else along which they can live on. For example, they don't take any guns, and no knives. They say, they sleep all winter. I don't know how long they sleep after that. They sleep one winter and maybe all summer or two or three years. Then after this, those people come home, to where they had left their parent, wives, children, relatives and friends. That's their belief. They used to sleep in high cliffs, where there wasn't much room to lay down. They sleep here for ten to twelve months. I don't believe it myself, but somebody else might believe it. They claim this is true that people used to do this. A lot of people said they've found a lot of big spruce trees where these dreamers used to sleep. They'd cut these trees about three quarters up and this is where they'd build their nests and then they would sleep there for one to three years. They didn't have any water nor any food to eat all this time. They say they had something to keep them alive. When they are done, they come down the tree and they go home. Those people were very smart, you couldn't hurt them, nor kill them. But I'm sure they're all dead now. And this happened years and years ago.

Since I was small, I always asked, why these people did these things. The response I always got was that it was their belief, their god. They believed in these things for a long, long time. Some people still believe it. Then when religion came these things faded away.

K.L.: And these dreams would tell them what was going to happen?

Soloman: Yes, these dreams would tell them things ahead of time. But what things? I'm not sure. I heard they would know if a sickness would be coming around. Another example, if somebody doesn't like a certain person he can hurt or kill you with just their mind. They got a lot of power from those dreams. They were very smart men. That's why they say that these people used this as their religion, some kind of god to help them. That's really what

it is, what I understand in my language. I understand this, because I asked a lot of different people from all over Canada. I asked old guys that I had never seen before because I've travelled a lot of places. And one old guy, way down in Ontario, I think, and I asked him about this. He told me that this was the only religion people had in those days. They claim not all the people who wanted to be dreamers made it. Some of the people didn't have enough power or the devil took them, they say.

K.L.: So the people who were good dreamers would be really important.

Soloman: Yes, I'm just telling you what I heard, that's all.

K.L.: Did you ever hear about when they put them [dreamers] in the boxes under water.

Soloman: I never heard that, but I heard they'd cut ice, about two or three feet thick, they'd cut a hole... and they'd cover it when the dreamer got in it, to sleep in it for the whole winter. Then all of a sudden this dreamer would appear at home when he was done dreaming. But for me to believe it, I can't believe it. But I sure would like to know how they made those painting to stay there as long as they have.

End of interview

A.1.4.5. Soloman Merasty

Pelican Narrows, Saskatchewan

17 March, 1986

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Transcribed by Annie Torrence

K.L.: Well, how old was he [Prentice Downes] compared to you?

Soloman: (In English) Well, that's a long time ago. I don't know, I forgot the year. That's a long time ago. It must be forty years ago anyway. Thirty five or forty years ago.

K.L.: So that was in, what? In 1936?

Soloman: Something like that.

K.L.: So that would be fifty years ago. (pause) So what are the northern lights?

Soloman: I don't know what they are. I couldn't say. I've seen them many times, different times. Yet I don't know anything about them.

K.L.: Somebody told me that it was the souls of the dead.

Soloman: What's that?

K.L.: When people die... their souls... and they go up and they dance.

Soloman: I heard that too. The ghosts dancing, they used to say.

[K.L. reads a bit of a letter, mostly about Soloman and Prentice Downes from Robert Cockburn, University of New Brunswick]

K.L.: Do you remember anything about tattoos?

Soloman: Tattoos. No, I don't remember.

K.L.: No? And he also wanted me to ask you about seeing a wihtikow - on a train. Do you remember that?

Soloman: Well, I told him about that.

K.L.: Yes.

Soloman: What I heard. That's down east.

K.L.: Oh.

Soloman: The train was coming. Wihtikow saw it coming and he jumped right in the middle of the track. The engineer blew the whistle all he can because he couldn't stop the train that quickly. So wihtikow must have been smashed to pieces. He tried to stop the train. So I hear anyway. That's what I was told.

(later)

K.L.: There's a part in here that says, "There's an island near Southend where old men go to see 'mimikwisew' and to get herbs."

Soloman: Yes. Yes.

K.L.: Can you tell me about 'mimikwisew'?

Soloman: Well, they are supposed to be people. Some kind of people. But they don't speak our language. And those people... (pause) the way they used to catch them... If somebody knew where they were, they would go there. The Indians had to have power through dreaming, that's the only way they can speak to them and catch them. The island nearby Southend where they've seen these people is called "Mimikwesew Island".

K.L.: What are these people like?

Soloman: Well, they look like persons. But their faces - they're just like a fish. They haven't got a nose, but they have a mouth and they have eyes, but the rest of their bodies look like persons.

K.L.: How come you need power to catch them?

Soloman: I don't know. The Indians used to go and sleep and dream in order to get power. They tried to dream what they wanted to know. I heard some people stayed 10 - 12 months in one place. So they got what they wanted to know through their dreams. But that's years ago. I don't know how many years ago.

K.L.: Did you ever try that?

Soloman: No, no. I wouldn't try it.

K.L.: Why?

Soloman: Well, those people, they go some place in the bush, on an island, wherever they think they won't get disturbed or bothered by anyone or anything. They say some of these people go without eating or drinking for one year, just sleeping. Then they get their power of what they dream about.

K.L.: What does this power do for them?

Soloman: The power came into them. They get the power out of what they dream about.

K.L.: Was this to help them hunt?

Soloman: Yes. It helped them in everything they wanted to know.

K.L.: Did they used to have anything else that would help them hunt? Any medicine - or something like that?

Soloman: Oh yes! There was lots of medicine for that. But it's - we don't bother with that stuff any more.

(later)

K.L.: Oh, here it says, "After pushing up the passage east of Birch Point, we stopped and examined some figures painted on rock. These figures were evidently very old, and were done on the clean surface between crescents on summer low-water mark & high-water mark (Cockburn 1984: 154)." Do you remember seeing these paintings?

Soloman: Oh, yes! I know a lot of them yet.

K.L.: Could you show me where they are located on a map?

Soloman: Yes. Not far from Birch Point, at Birch Narrows.

K.L.: "Some others higher up were so covered with lichen as to be indistinguishable (ibid.)".

Soloman: The buffalo is the outstanding one.

K.L.: There was a picture of a buffalo?

Soloman: Yes.

(later)

K.L.: When people used to go and try to have a dream, when would they go?

Soloman: Some would go in the fall and some go in the spring.

K.L.: What is 'powamiw'?

Soloman: That's a dream. Anything you dream, for example, you dream of an animal.

K.L.: Would this animal help you? If you dreamt about an animal?

Soloman: I can't explain that. Some old, old women used to tell stories. I'll tell you a little story about what happened here at Pelican Narrows, before the white men came, not many anyway, maybe some. They used to have a store right at the Narrows. You know where the bridge is, but on that side. The store was very small and made of logs. This was the first Hudson Bay's store. This must be years ago. Anyway this old lady remembered from when she was a kid what she was told by her grandfather about this store. They had a battle here. The Blackfoot Indians came up this far. They built canoes at Big Stanley Lake near Nipawin. And from there they came to Little Bear Lake and down to Deschambeault Lake. And they paddled down this way. I don't know how many canoes. About half a dozen or something. They were just looking for trouble. That's what Indians did a long time ago. They'd go from one place to another and fight. And this outfit came right down here. But at that time it was towards the fall. Maybe sometime around September or maybe a little later. Anyway they were just waiting for a boat from York Factory. See, those people [were] from Ille a la Crosse, La Loche, La Ronge, Stanley Mission. Each Hudson Bay store used to have a boat to take the furs out into York Factory. That's where they used to meet the boat from England. And also to get the stuff, to get the freight. They met the boat and come back with the freight. At that time those fellows were supposed to be in Pelican [Narrows]. This incident happened around this time. But those fellows didn't get here that day.

There were two old men that stayed behind and were looking



after the women and children all summer while the men were gone down for freight. One of these old men was very wise. He could foretell what will be happening in the future. He had spiritual powers and lots of pawakan(s). The wiser old man said to the other, "I'm leaving tomorrow morning because somebody is going to come here that's not friendly. Something is going to happen." The other old man said, "I don't know anything about it." He was also a person who can foretell the future. I don't know what you call that kind of people in English.

K.L.: They are psychics.

Soloman: Is that what you call them?

K.L.: Yes, psychics.

Soloman: And that morning he left. He went just straight across the lake, here at the little bay there's a little creek. So this wise old man took all his people with him and the other old man didn't want to move, so he just stayed there. And the wiser old man, along with his people, went as far as he can go up that creek. He took the canoes way back into the bush. And he climbed up to the top of the hill so he can see the camp from out there.

And that evening everything was quiet because they didn't want these people to know they were up on the hill, hiding. They saw five or six birchbark canoes. Those were Blackfoot Indians coming! Those Blackfoot rode on horseback. They came through parts of Saskatchewan and then to Big Sandy Lake. It's close to mile 62. They left their horses there and some of their men to look after their horses. And they built birchbark canoes. When they were finished that, they ran down the Bear River and down to Deschambeault Lake. So those fellows came right here to Pelican Narrows. The Cree people had a camp here. They had teepees here. The Blackfoot killed all the people that stayed at this camp. These people were not prepared for a battle, [they were] just young boys. There were not many men at camp anyway. And that night when the Blackfoot were finished, they stayed there until morning and then they all left, about six canoes. They went back the same way they came from. Took the same route, across the lake here, to Sandy Narrows, Deschambeault Lake and to Little Bear River. The very day they left the men who went for freight came in. So the Hudson Bay store opened and the men got ready. They bought ammunition and stuff like that. They took the wise old man along on their hunt for the Blackfoot. About six canoes with three men in each canoe left. There are some reefs on the little island. The Blackfoot left two children there, all tied up. They were still alive! They did the same all the way up. One child here and one child there, right from Deschambeault Lake, up to Bear River. Those kids were from here and [they] took, I don't know how many women, 4 or 5, or 1 or 2 for each canoe. But I made a mistake in one place. You see, after they left, towards evening this old wise guy took two young fellows along to search around the area for survivors. They found one woman. They heard someone yelling, right

on the point. This woman was stiff, she'd been in the water for a long time. So they pulled her out and they saved her. One or two other women were hiding in the bush and came down to where the old man and his helpers were. They took all the women back to the narrows.

K.L.: So did they ever catch the Blackfoot?

Soloman: They killed all of them. Not very long [after] they crossed the lake and they went up the river. They could see the cones drifting down, so somebody was up the river. They could hear people singing and dancing, sounds of drums etc. They stopped up the river nearby and pulled their canoes up on land. They took whatever they needed and walked through the bush. They slept in the bush overnight. Before daylight, they started off again. They split into two groups. One group was on each side of the river. They could hear the Blackfoot coming. The river was not very wide. So they killed them all, except for the boss or the chief. I don't know what they did with him. Anyway they brought all their women back home alive.

K.L.: So they just came up here to make trouble.

Soloman: That's right!

K.L.: And that's the only reason they came?

Soloman: Yes. Or to steal women or something.

K.L.: So the men who had pawakan knew what was going to happen?

Soloman: Yes.

K.L.: They could predict what was going to happen?

Soloman: Yes. Well, they didn't know exactly what was going to happen but they knew something was going to happen. They can feel about people, for example, they can feel in their body that somebody is coming that is not friendly like the wise old man did in this story, but the other old man didn't want to believe him.

K.L.: And were there some people who, with their power, can make people better. They can heal them when they were sick? Were they different people or were they the same people?

Soloman: There were lots of these types of people, not only the two old men in this story.

K.L.: And that was because of their pawakan too?

Soloman: Yes, that's the power they had.

End of interview

A.1.5.1. Matthew Natewyes

Sandy Bay, Saskatchewan

26 July, 1984

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Transcribed by Annie Torrence

Matthew: (In English) There's three rock paintings down the river here. Just down the river. This one here. I have an idea what it means. This looks like the dam. And this is the point where the powerhouse is. Maybe the person who made this rock painting [examining Figure 33, The Aboriginal Rock Paintings of the Churchill River (Jones 1981: 38)] knew ahead [of time] that there was going to be a dam and a powerhouse here. Maybe there's going to be something else on this side also. And there's the highway. Maybe this is Island Falls.

K.L.: So he drew a map?

Matthew: Yes.

K.L.: Do you know anything about the dreaming they used to do?

Matthew: Yes. Some old men would sleep for around six months and would dream of things such as what was going to happen in the near future or in another thousand years from the time they dreamt about it. They drew pictures on rocks of what was going to happen. They couldn't live for one thousand years but they left the paintings to show what was going to happen. Some of them would get sick and get crazy while they were on their vision quest. And others did fine.

K.L.: Did they get anything else other than visions of the future?

Matthew: Yes, they did. Some of them, they go high, be more knowledgeable.

K.L.: Did they have anything to do with medicine?

Matthew: Yes, it did. They dreamt of everything they knew about. Some of them slept on the trees. They start by sleeping on the bottom, then in the middle and then at the top of the tree. The higher they sleep the more knowledgeable they get. But they just go to these three levels. It would be like going to school and starting from the bottom and learning to higher levels. And some of them would sleep in boxes underwater. They built a wooden box and they put poles all around it just like fence posts and this turns around all winter. They stay and sleep in the box for six months.

K.L.: What other things do they see in these dreams? Did it help them hunt better?

Matthew: Yes. [At] that time they used to fight against each other and the one who got more power he would win.

K.L.: So if you would go up the tree, you would have more power?

Matthew: Yes. Some of them slept on high hills, rock cliffs.

K.L.: Could everybody do the dreaming?

Matthew: Not everybody. Just some of them. The older men. They say they used some kind of a root to make these rock paintings. I never heard what they did with it. I don't know anything else about the dreamers. This is all I heard about them.

End of interview

#### A.1.5.2. Johnny Ballantyne

Sandy Bay, Saskatchewan

26 July, 1984

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Transcribed by Annie Torrence

Johnny: (In English) Do you know the meaning of these rock paintings?

K.L.: No, do you?

Johnny: Yes. I know some of them. This is a big bull [examining Figure 38, Aboriginal Rock Paintings of the Churchill Rock (Jones 1981: 42)]. This is its heart and these are its wings. Do you see where this wing is located? It looks like its holding something, but it is not. You see the end of its arm and in here this is connected to this joint here, its not holding anything. This grows on its wings and when it has to carry a big load this helps make the task easier. This thing spreads out.

K.L.: Did you ever hear what they make the paint out of to make these rock paintings?

Johnny: Yes. They got a special rock for the painting. They heat up this special rock and then they pounded it. After they pounded it, the special rock turns to powder. Then they mix this rock with something, but I don't know the name of this thing. It grows on trees. It's pure tasting and it looks like water and there's no chemical to it. It's not gum nor salve. You could touch it and you can't feel any water in it.

K.L.: What kind of tree would that be from?

Johnny: It looks more like a spruce tree, but the bark is kind of white. I don't know the name of the tree. They made these rock paintings because this was to tell the other people that would be travelling on this same route what they went through when they passed through here.

K.L.: Oh, I see. So it's a sign, like a date?

Johnny: Yes. And they put their marks there, like what they killed on the way.

K.L.: Did you ever hear anything about dreaming? Can you tell me about that?

Johnny: Yes. A long time ago, people didn't have any newspapers, no radios, etc. They had to find out things by themselves. So when they wanted to find something out, they would be wrapped in canvas and placed in a wooden box, put picks all around the box and set the box in water so the dreamer can be allowed to dream in there without disturbance. You put them underwater. You sink them down. A pole is tied up to the box and if this pole moves around that means the person is still alive. But if the pole stops moving, it means the person had died.

K.L.: How did they put this pole in so that it goes around?

Johnny: You see, that pole, they tie it up at the end here and then they tie it to the box. So when he's breathing that's what makes the pole move. A person can learn lots of things from these old signs if he stops and finds out what they mean. It's kind of a language in itself.

K.L.: Why did they go in this box under water?

Johnny: They wanted to dream of something, like what's coming ahead, in the near future. You see, each person was responsible to look after a number of families. You see, there would be a group of families here, some across and other families would be on the other side of the camp site where they were living at the time. So if this one dreamer was responsible for this one particular group of families and if he dreams that something is going to hurt or kill them, they will find out ahead of time. This person has to protect his people so he might have to move camp in order to keep them safe. Sometimes the wihtikow would eat up all the people if they aren't prepared to hide or kill the wihtikow before he gets to them first.

Everybody (dreamers) had the same dreams, but they have to go from there. They had to figure what the dreams meant on their own. This is the only way the dreams would help them. But if you don't understand or care for them, so the first wihtikow that comes along, you're a goner.

K.L.: Was there any other way that they had these dreams?

Johnny: Yes. They had signs too. Some people would take three sticks. Each stick was tied up, for example, you would tie one here, you tie the other one here and here. Then all the sticks were tied together here. You can't pull them out yourself. But if one comes loose this meant this group of people were going to encounter trouble. And these two other groups have to try to protect these people. These two old people have to warn the other old fellow whose guarding the group of people who are going to encounter trouble in the near future. He has to figure out a plan to protect his people or all the three groups of people can join together to help each other to stay safe. If one of the old men won't agree, he won't be able to protect his people and himself because he doesn't know when trouble will strike.

End of interview

#### A.1.6. SOUTHEND

##### A.1.6.1. William and Mary Clark

Southend, Saskatchewan

16 August, 1984

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Translator Marjorie Jobb

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

Trans: Have you seen paintings on rock? The old way of painting? Drawing on rock?

William: This way, over at Black Duck Bay, there are three locations where these type of rock paintings can be seen. It must have been such a long time ago and you can still see these rock paintings so clearly and from so far away. It must have been a long time ago, at the time when they still used birchbark canoes for transportation. The dreamers used to use these birchbark canoes.

Mary: They used wathaman to paint on the rocks.

William: They must have boiled the wathaman or maybe did something else to it. It will probably show up until the end of the world. It just doesn't rub off or wear out.

Trans: They might have boiled the red ochre off the top of the rocks with sand to make this red paint they used in their rock paintings. Some of these rock paintings consisted of bears, lynx, etc.

William: They (the dreamers) had special spiritual powers and visions. The dreamers painted these visions on rocks. For example, they made teepees where the spirits would enter. Then the dreamers

would draw paintings of teepees on the rocks. They would draw how many people live in this teepee, etc. By drawing these pictures, this was a way of communicating to others. This must have happened around two hundred years ago at least. This was a way of knowing or letting others know that they were all right. The dreamers were sending messages back and forth.

Trans: The dreamers dreamt and painted these dreams onto the rock, for example, they would paint animals, people, etc. From these rock paintings the other persons would know how they were doing. They painted on these rocks as they were travelling. This way one tribe or group of travellers would know that the other groups of people were doing okay and would know approximately where the other groups of people were and vice versa. The Indian people used to hunt with bow and arrows at this time. They used bow and arrows on fish for there were no fish nets at that time.

William: The dreamers dreamt a long time ago. They were medicine men also. They would put up a teepee where they would dream, usually one at a time in one teepee. These teepees were held up by four large poles and covered with moose hide. This is one place where the dreamer would dream. This is where the dreamer would communicate with the spirits and get their spiritual powers from these dreams or visions.

K.L.: What did the dreamers do and where did they go to have these dreams?

End of Interview

#### A.1.6.2. Phillip Morin

Southend, Saskatchewan  
16 August, 1984  
Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett  
Transcribed by Annie Torrence

(In progress)

K.L.: Do you know anything about them [rock paintings]?

Phillip: (In English) I saw one there, not too far... about eight miles. I only saw one.

K.L.: Have you ever heard anything about them?

Phillip: The oldtimers made that rock painting around three to four hundred years ago.

K.L.: Do you know what the painting is made of?

Phillip: Someone told me it's made out of clay.

K.L.: Do you know what they mixed it with?

Phillip: No.

K.L.: Did you ever hear why they made these rock paintings?

Phillip: I don't know. It could be a souvenir for years and years, I guess. Because there's something about it [the rock painting]. There's one rock painting on the east side of Deep Bay.

K.L.: Did you ever hear anything about the dreamers?

Phillip: No.

End of interview

A.1.6.3. Joe Morin

Southend, Saskatchewan

16 August, 1984

Interviewed by Katherine Lipsett

Translator by Marjorie Jobb

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

Joe Morin: (In Cree) They took this paint from rocks. They wanted people who understood this to see it and would know what it meant. The rock paintings consisted of things the dreamers dreamt.

Trans: (In English) The paint was taken from rocks. There was no specific name for it. They called it a marker. (In Cree) Did they do anything with it? How did they make the paint out of it?

Joe: Maybe, they made it.

K.L.: Does he know how old the rock paintings are?

Joe: Around one hundred years ago.

Trans: (In English) He remembers when he was a child the paintings were already there. (In Cree) What tribe of Indians made these rock paintings?

Joe: Indians [meaning Cree Indians]. These people were very different than we are today. They did things very differently.

Trans: He's seventy years old so he figures this could have taken place around one hundred years ago or so.

K.L.: Does he know why these were painted?



Joe: No, I don't know. They painted these things. They were the only ones that knew what they meant.

Trans: Do you understand what these rock paintings meant?

Joe: I don't understand what the rock paintings mean. They painted things such as animals. They (dreamers) communicated with each other through these rock paintings.

K.L.: Does he remember anyone talking about them?

Joe: My father didn't say anything to me about these rock paintings. They (dreamers) dreamt them.

Trans: The Indians (dreamers) had spirits. They would have a vision and they would paint this vision on rocks. These visions were where the rock paintings originated from.

K.L.: What were these visions for?

Trans: They believed in their visions. For example, each type of animal meant one certain thing or sent out one kind of message to the other tribe of people that were travelling nearby.

Joe: These dreamers were very unusual and special kind of people. There were only a few around. For example, one lived in Southend, Saskatchewan and the other dreamer lived in Pelican Narrows, Saskatchewan. These two dreamers would communicate with each other.

My father saw one old man who was ninety years old who was a special person, a dreamer. This old man and (others) would sleep for seven months without eating like the bears do in winter. In order to dream they had to go into isolation and they had to fast. Some of these people died during the seven month period. They didn't all make it, only some. They would sleep under water, on trees, etc.

End of interview

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## APPENDIX B:

The following stories were collected from a variety of Rocky Cree sources. They are broken into four categories: Witikow, Wisahkicahk, Short Stories, Epic Tales. Each contains stories about Supernatural Beings in contact with humans. Their powers and personalities have been discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

### B.1. WIHTIKOW

The characteristics of Wihtikow have been described in Chapter Four and Five while the functions of the myth in the Rocky Cree culture have been discussed in Chapter Five. There are variations in the spelling of this name.

#### B.1.1. Child Wihtikows

Fear of the child wihtikow is recounted in other stories, such as B.4.3.2, however the means by which a child became a wihtikow is illustrated by the following two stories.

##### B.1.1.1. Neya-Ne-Miss

Collected by Dennis McLeod  
History and Culture Report - Stanley Mission - La Ronge  
Unpublished and not dated

Neya-ne-miss was born in a big camp of nomad Indians. Before he was a year old, little babies of his age were getting lost from the teepees. Pretty soon the people got busy and kept guard at nights.

One night after one of the babies was missing they examined everybody in the camp. Neya-ne-miss had already a few teeth and after they had looked at them they found that he had been eating meat. So they kept a close watch on him. One night when he thought everyone was asleep they saw him crawl out of his moss bag and crawl outside. They followed him and found him heading for one of the teepees where a child was. They caught him and took him home. They knew for sure he was the one that was stealing the babies. He was born a cannibal.

As punishment they left him along with his family to survive on their own.

Years passed and Neya-ne-miss grew up to manhood. He never again turned cannibal. His fame as a mighty hunter spread and

finally he and what was left of his family were taken back into the tribe. He had powers beyond any other medicine man for miles around. It was said that in one hard winter when hunting and fishing were so poor that the tribe was starving he got the men to cut poplar around three feet long. Next he had them cut holes in the ice but not to reach the water. Then he had them lay the poplar logs in the long holes they had made. He had them cover the logs with hides. He stayed up all night and at sunrise he yelled at the men to go out to where they had covered the logs and to uncover them. The menfolk did what he told them and found one big trout for every log they had put in. So Neyane-miss saved the tribe from starvation that winter and for many years to come. He did many great deeds for his people and his tribe set him up as chief and head medicine man which he held for the rest of his life.

#### B.1.1.2. The Child Wihtiko

Told by Ida Ratt

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch (n.d.)

One morning long ago, in an Indian village, a woman discovered that her baby was gone. She found the baby's blankets ripped apart and bones around the teepee. She told her people about it and they tried to figure out what could have eaten her baby during the night. They wondered if it had been a bear, but decided not because a bear would have cracked and eaten the soft baby bones as well.

One morning a few days later, the screams of another woman awakened the village. She had found her baby outside her teepee, half-eaten and still wrapped in its baby blankets. There were no animal tracks left behind.

The elders decided to take turns watching the village at night. They hoped to find out what was eating the children and destroy it. After a few nights they decided to call off the night watchman because everything was peaceful again. There were still no answers.

Then one night a third woman turned over in her sleep. Through habit she groped in the dark to check her baby. The blankets were still there but the baby's bones trailed towards the doorway of the teepee. Again they could not find any clues.

One evening, a mother was changing her baby, who was able to crawl already. She noticed little pieces of meat stuck between the baby's teeth. She called one of the elders to her teepee. They inspected the baby's teeth and found that the meat was human flesh.

Now they knew what had been eating the babies of the village. The woman's baby was a child 'wihtiko'.

The woman gave her baby to the village people. They started a big fire in the centre of the village and threw the baby into the centre of it. They kept the fire going all night and most

of the next day since a 'Wihtiko' was partly made of ice. They had to burn the baby right to the last bit of bone.

#### B.1.2.1. (Untitled)

Lucy McKenzie

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

Lac La Ronge Community Television: Tape #268

Lucy McKenzie: (In Cree) This old lady's husband went ahead to go for groceries at Stanley Mission. He froze to death on the way there. So the son left their camp for the same reason. He, too, froze to death on the way to Stanley Mission. When they didn't return the old lady told her children that they should all leave. She told them that she dreamt that there was a moose lying dead nearby which they can eat. And so they all left their camp. The young daughters pulled their younger brothers and sisters in a sleigh and off they went.

They got to where the old lady's son was frozen to death. She dragged the body off the ice to shore. The old lady had told her daughters to prepare a place where to put the moose and also where they can sit. They placed spruce boughs on the ground for this. The old lady took a knife and was about to cut her son's body open when the young daughters started crying and said to their mother, "Leave him alone. That's our big brother."

The old lady let go of the knife and said, "Hurry up then before I kill all of you." The daughters grabbed their mother's hands, so she wouldn't do anything wrong. They had to pull the sleigh at the same time. They ran as fast as they could. The daughters told some people that they felt as though they ate good because they got a sudden burst of energy to run as fast as they did that day.

My father and another man went to where the old lady's camp was and to where the dead bodies were. They wanted to find out whether the old lady might have been eating something bad, like some kind of Indian medicine or poison of some sort. But no, she didn't eat anything like that. It was true what the young ladies told the people in Stanley Mission. They found the knife beside the old lady's son's dead body. This old lady really came close to finishing off all her children.

#### B.1.2.2. A Hard Winter

Told by Isabelle Ratt

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1985

Long ago, people had a rough time getting meat for their families in the winter time. When they could, they killed fish, grouse, and muskrats and sometimes moose, deer and caribou. They hung this meat in caches along their traplines.

When food became scarce in Winter, they had to depend on these caches until hunting became better. However, a lot of people starved.

One family had problems of this sort one winter. When they were almost out of food, the father went out to one of their caches. After a few days, he still had not returned.

The mother sent her oldest son out to help his father. Maybe the father was having trouble carrying the meat.

The family lived on beaver skin soup while they waited for the father and son.

A few days passed and neither father nor son had returned. The mother had no choice but to go in search for them.

She pulled her youngest child in a sled while the older girls walked behind.

They soon came upon the son partly covered by the snowfall. The old woman called her daughters to see what they had found on the trail. She was so overcome with hunger that she did not realize that it was her son, lying there frozen. She thought it was a young deer or moose and took a knife from her pack so she could butcher it.

The girls cried out and told their mother that it was their brother not a moose.

The old woman told her children to keep travelling without her because she was starting to see them as food and not as her children. She told them she would travel slowly so she wouldn't catch up to them and kill them.

The children travelled ahead pulling the young child in the sleigh. Finally, they reached one of the caches and found their father there frozen. He had died of starvation just before he made it to the meat.

The children cooked some meat from the cache then ate and rested. They put some meat in their packs on the sleigh and resumed their journey.

A few days later, they reached a settlement which is now Stanley Mission. They told the minister to hurry to their mother.

The minister left right away by dogteam carrying food, medicine and blankets. He found the old woman alive and brought her back to Stanley Mission.

The family was fed soup for quite a long time because solid food gave them cramps and made them sick.

The minister led a search party with a dogteam and they recovered and brought back the bodies of the father and son. They were buried at the cemetery.

It was many weeks before the old lady was able to get up and around but she eventually got well.

### B.1.3. Wihtiko Came Over the Portage: A Short Story about Wihtiko

Told by Adam B. Ratt

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1984



One evening in the month of April, long ago, a young boy watched his grandmother as she headed into a portage trail. Usually a trapper checks each trap twice a day when the muskrat are plentiful, once in the morning and once in the evening. His grandmother was going to make her evening check.

The boy decided that when it was time for his grandmother to return, he would hide along the trail and give her a little scare. He walked over the short portage.

Pretty soon he saw someone bending over the edge of the ice, looking at the meeting of the ice and water. He thought it was his grandmother, but then a strange thing happened.

Instead of going around the ice edge until she could reach the shoreline, his grandmother came straight over the water without going under! The hair on the back of the boy's head stood on edge when he realized that it wasn't his grandmother. It was the 'Wihtiko' that the people were expecting to travel through the area in the Spring.

The boy kept still in his hiding place and watched the 'Wihtiko' as it looked at the trail and nodded it's head back and forth. It crossed over the portage trail that the boy had just walked down.

The young boy waited for his grandmother and walked home with her, telling her what had happened. That night, the big wind that usually accompanies the passage of 'Wihtiko' blew through the trees.

#### B.1.4. My Grandmother and the Wihtiko

Told by Norman S. Charles

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1984

One evening, just as it was getting dark, an old man took his water pail and went out of his cabin to get some water. Just as he was closing the door he caught a glimpse of something trying to hide from his view.

He went back inside and asked his wife to step outside with him to see if she could see anything. He thought maybe his eyes were playing tricks on him.

There was only him and his wife at their trapline and their nearest neighbours lived about twenty miles away.

The old woman stepped outside but she couldn't see anything. Just as she was turning to go back inside, the old man saw the creature again. He was sure it wasn't a human being, but it walked like one. His wife got the .22 rifle and some bullets from inside the cabin. Together they approached the place where he last saw the creature disappear into the bushes. Since it was becoming dark they didn't go too close but stood around listening.

After a few minutes they headed back and decided to get a pail of water together. Just as the old man was heading over with the pail, the creature appeared from a trail that wound along the shore line. The old man was ready and shot it with the rifle.

He hit it on the shoulder and yelled at it at the same time. The creature was shaped like a man but was white all over with little bits of white fur on it's body. It stood eight or nine feet tall. It fell when it was hit with the bullet.

The old man and his wife stayed up all night waiting for the creature in case it should return during the night.

When morning arrived they went out to check where they had shot the creature. There were places on the ground where the snow had not yet melted and where they found huge footprints. The creature did not wear shoes.

That day the wind started up and a light drizzle of rain fell now and then. They assumed they had seen a 'Wihtiko' since it usually travelled at that time of the year and usually travelled on the wind.

#### B.1.5. Wihtiko at the Bow River

Told by Mary E. McKenzie

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1983

One evening long ago, two women and one small two year old child were at camp. The women were expecting their husbands to return very soon from the day's hunting trip. One woman looked down the shore and saw someone approaching. As the figure came closer, they recognized that it was a Wihtiko.

The women took the child and fled down the shoreline of the river to hide. From their hiding place they saw the Wihtiko search both their teepees and then set fire to them. The Wihtiko soon disappeared into the bushes. They waited to see where it would go from there.

Soon the men arrived in the canoe. The women told them what had happened. The Wihtiko did not appear again. It must have travelled on down the shore to look for more people to try to eat.

#### B.1.6. Wihtiko and the Wolf Spirit

Told by Matilda Halkett

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1985

A long time ago my grandfather and grandmother went out Spring trapping. They had no children of their own, so they had asked my grandmother's sister to come with them to their trapline.

During this season some snow is usually gone from the ground wherever there is a sheltered open area.

One morning, my grandfather went to a river to look for bear signs and along the way he found tracks in the sand. They were made by someone walking in bare feet.

He followed them a little while and soon got very, very tired. He just had to get some sleep so he lay down on the warm

sand and quickly fell asleep.

When he woke up, he found tracks going in a circle around where he had slept.

As he walked home, he found places where the grass had been uprooted and clay dug up and eaten.

Sometimes a person will feel very tired and want to sleep or feel scared when a Wihtiko is travelling nearby.

My grandfather knew then whose tracks he had found and this made him travel all the faster to get back to camp.

When he got home, he didn't tell his wife anything except to pack up as quickly as possible. That same day, they started travelling to where his father had his cabin. They got there in two or three days and surprised the old man.

My grandfather's brother's name is Thomas. He had gone off to do some fishing. He said he had just seen a Wihtiko where he was fishing.

Thomas was surprised to see his brother and sister-in-law there.

My grandfather then told everyone why they had packed up in such a hurry and left their camp.

That night they could hear the Wihtiko's heartbeat as it came closer. The people had forgotten to bring the ice chisel into the cabin and everyone was afraid to go and get it.

My grandfather's mother volunteered to go if her daughter-in-law would come with her. They went down to the lake together and the old lady fell down in a deep depression where the snow had melted.

The old man got up and laughed at her clumsiness even though the Wihtiko's heartbeat was getting louder all the time. They found the chisel and brought it into the cabin.

One old man by the name of Patrick happened to be a Medicine man so the people at camp all went over to his teepee. A few people still lived in teepees at that time.

Patrick started praying while the people waited and watched for the Wihtiko to appear.

Closer and closer came the Wihtiko's heartbeat.

Patrick had dreamt of a huge wolf the night before and understood that it would help them in some way sometime in the future.

Soon the howling was heard going around and around the teepee as the heartbeat of the Wihtiko gradually got further and further away.

Patrick stepped out of the teepee calling, "Chase him! Chase him my pup! Chase him a long way off, so he won't bother us again."

Sure enough the heartbeats could no longer be heard as the howling drew further and further away.

#### B.1.7. Short Story: Wihtiko

Told by Mary McKenzie

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

## Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1983

Some years ago, when people used to believe in 'wih-tik-o', we had quite a scare after we returned from a hunting trip. We had run into some bad weather and spent most of the day under a pine tree. Because we were unable to start a fire, we decided to head back.

After we returned to camp and had turned our canoe over on dry ground, my grandfather came from his tent to see if we had got anything on our hunting trip. We told him what had happened and he told us to come to his tent to warm up.

We had some tea and dried off. Then my grandfather told us that he had been hearing a sound all day as if someone was chopping down a tree. He thought it might be the heartbeat of 'wih-tik-o' and we better be prepared for the night in case it should be heading towards our camp.

I decided that I should get our Bible and read a few chapters. That night my grandfather, my nephew and I stayed up late to see what would happen. I was sitting beside a little wood heater and my nephew sat on the other side. My grandfather was sitting by the doorway of the tent. He took a peek outside because the chopping sound became louder as the wind blew harder.

Just as my grandfather had his head all the way out, our dog, 'kis-kan-uk' decided to have a peek inside the tent. These two startled each other so much that they jumped away from the doorway at the same time! This gave us all a laugh before we resumed our watch.

I became more frightened after thinking about how fast my grandfather had pulled his head from the doorway. I was afraid to even walk outside for a few minutes so I got out the Bible again and read a few more chapters.

My nephew said he was staying awake all night and I tried to stay awake with him. However, I fell asleep sometime during the night and woke up with a burned forehead because we kept the stove going to keep warm.

In the morning the chopping sound was not as loud as the night before. We decided to go for a ride in the canoe and check out the sound. As we drew closer to the noise, we saw a large crack in a rock by the shoreline where the waves were slapping in and out.

"So this is what's been keeping us up most of the night!" my grandfather said. We had another good laugh and I was very relieved it wasn't the 'wih-tik-o's' heartbeat after all!

B.1.8. Beware of the Wihtiko in the Springtime

Told by James Ratt

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1984

About 150 years ago, people used to expect a Wihtiko to travel in the springtime around the months of April or May. This

was when the warm weather sets in and the ice starts melting on the lakes. This story was told to my mother who was told by her mother who has long since passed on.

One night when we were children, we were usually sent to bed early after we had eaten our evening meal. We were awakened that night by our sled dogs growling and barking at nothing in particular. All the Elders in camp had gotten dressed and let some of the meaner dogs loose since they were expecting the Wihtiko at any time. We were told to put our clothes on and carry our blankets to the canoes. Then we paddled to one of the nearby islands for the night.

This was exciting for us, since it wasn't every night that we got to travel to a different camping place. All night we could hear the dogs barking and growling right until the morning. A sudden wind came up and kept blowing for most of the night.

One old man had stayed behind to look after the tents so that the dogs wouldn't get into any mischief during the night. When we paddled back in the morning, the old man told us that the dogs kept charging at the canoes and running back to where he was by the campfire. This had kept him up most of the night until the early hours of the morning when the wind had started up.

He had taken his rifle and gone down to the lake to investigate. Some of the dogs were barking towards the bushes along the shoreline. He didn't want to go too far. He went to just where the canoes were turned over. Just as he was turning the other way, he got a glimpse of something on the water which looked like someone's reflection running along the shore. Some of the large dogs chased after it away and came howling back.

The old man was sure it was the Wihtiko since everyone else had gone to the island. That was when the wind started to get worse and worse. It didn't stop until the following day as it was getting towards evening. Some people say that a Wihtiko travels on the wind and can't touch the ground until the wind stops blowing. That spring people from other camps and small reserves told similar stories of a Wihtiko that had passed through or close to their homes. Some said it could sound like a small child in pain so that it could lure the unsuspecting towards it. Others said it could sound so terrible when it howled that it could make you weak with terror. Some say that when a Wihtiko is near it will make you feel drowsy and fall asleep. So when you are out camping in the spring, you better watch out for the Wihtiko!

#### B.1.9. The Bear Trail

Told by Roderick Bird

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1983

Once upon a time, long ago, an old man decided to take his rifle and wait by a bear trail close to a creek. He knew that there was a bear feeding in the evenings on fish from the creek. He lay down where the bear wouldn't see him or catch his scent.

Sure enough just before sunset he heard a noise and he got his rifle ready.

Instead of a bear he saw a Wihtiko. It was looking from side to side with its eyes rolling upwards in its head. The Wihtiko passed so close to where he was laying that he was overpowered by its smell of rotting flesh.

As soon as the Wihtiko had disappeared from sight, the old man ran for his canoe which was close to the mouth of the creek and paddled home.

He got his tent and his supplies. He paddled most of the night to get to a settlement of people who were finishing a season of spring trapping.

#### B.1.10. Wihtikoo

Recorded and translated by Collin Charles  
La Ronge, Saskatchewan  
Unpublished and date unknown

Long ago, the Indian people believed in people with great powers who could do unbelievable things with their medicine. They could cure you or they could make you really sick just by calling on their spirit friends to do these things for them.

In the cold months of winter, when all the game was scarce, some would turn into "Wihtikoo". This being would eat up his or her family and friends in their camp and start wandering for some more people to eat. His clothes were tattered and torn, his lips were chewed to the bone and he had ice inside his body. The frost could be seen on his back. His hair was all dishevelled.

The coming of spring was the most common time that the Wihtikoo travelled. Even when he was far away, you could hear his heart beat, sometimes for the whole night. But sometimes even before you could hear the distant heart-beat, the medicine man would know his whereabouts by his dreams. The Wihtikoo would come in a storm or tornado. He could break off big trees at the trunks with his cane. It would wrestle up and down, sometimes above the tree tops. The vanquished Wihtikoo would fall to the ground and only then did the people come out.

They would gather wood and pile it up, throw the Wihtikoo on top and burn him up. Sometimes it took two or three nights for the Wihtikoo to get all burned because of the ice that had formed inside his body.

Christianized Indians used to claim if you used a page from the Bible for wadding in your gun, you could kill any Wihtikoo.

#### B.1.11. (Untitled)

From the files of the Cree Culture and Language Program  
Keethanow School, Stanley Mission, Saskatchewan  
By Jeannie and Lisa

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

This is the story of the origin of the witikow. Once there was a woman who used to trap way up north. She caught a great deal of fur. One day the dogs got into her fur and destroyed all of them. The woman was very upset. She got so depressed that she gradually became insane. Then she became a witikow. She flew from north of Moose Lake. She followed a light to get there. She landed on a narrow road. In those days there was not much settlement. We never knew she was there. One day a doctor happened to discover the witikow. We saw her peeking as soon as she was looking inside the log house. He went and asked her why she was there. She told him of her story of her pelts and the dogs. The next night he told her she had to leave because he didn't want to have to kill her. She answered and said that she would leave here because she saw that there was another light to follow. What she saw was the cedar light. What she saw had been seen by many people in Moose Lake. It's located on the reserve side near the lake. To this day the ground remains bare on that particular area. Nothing grows there.

B.1.12. The Cannibal and the Birch Bark Canoemaker

Told by Napthalia McKenzie  
Stanley Mission, Sask., c.1980  
Translated by Lydia McKenzie  
Collected and transcribed by Lois Dalby  
Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

Once there were two Indian families of the same tribe spending the spring together at the end of a lake. One of the old men was making a birch bark canoe. The other old man said to the other, "Eyo! Let me help you. At least to peel the bark off the trees." The first old man said, "Ah it's up to you."

So in the morning the old man set out in the canoe with his old lady. The ice kept blocking the way, until they finally reached the end of the lake with the winding stream. The man got out of the canoe and said, "You wait for me here, old lady. I am going to see the birch bark here." So he went into the bush and saw lots and lots of birch trees. The birch was good for the canoe. He walked until he saw a clearing up ahead and thought there was a little lake there.

He got there and saw a beaver dam. There were signs of beavers. He went back to where he had left his wife. He didn't peel the birch trees yet. "Come on, old lady, I'll carry the canoe. We'll stay overnight over there at the little lake. I'm going to shoot beaver this evening. There's beaver there," he said.

So the grandmother got out of the canoe and bundled the blankets up in one blanket and went to the lake. They got into the canoe at the beaver dam. They went paddling until they came to the beaver house. They went further along until they came to a good place to camp.

When they finished making a fire and drinking their tea, the old man went to shoot beaver in the afternoon. It wasn't very long until he shoot all of them. There were only two so he went home.

"Let's stay for the night. It's already dark," he said. So they stayed for the night. They built a shelter from birch bark. They thought it was going to rain so the grandmother took her shoes off and hung them up on a tree. Then they went to sleep.

All of a sudden they were wide awake and scared. "Ah, old lady, I think someone is sneaking up on us," said the old man. The old lady grabbed her shoes from where she had hung them and put them on and they jumped into the canoe. From there they saw someone sneaking up on their shelter with a big stick and hit their shelter. He was a wihtikow! They paddled real fast to the end of the lake. Fortunately the lake was long, but it did not take the wihtikow long to catch up with them. They turned at the end of the lake and paddled for their lives, straight to the portage. The grandmother bundled up the blankets, threw them on her back along with the two beaver. The old man carried the canoe on his shoulders and had his gun in one hand. In case the wihtikow caught up with them he was going to shoot it.

They ran for their lives on the portage. The man threw the canoe down and the grandmother threw the things into the canoe. They just had shoved off when the wihtikow hit the end of the canoe. He nearly caught them. Then they started paddling fast again to the end of the winding stream where they rested.

The wihtikow was already running there on foot. "Hey, where did you come from?" shouted the old man. "I come from the East," said the wihtikow, "I have already eaten two families."

They started paddling again. They had a good trip home because the ice didn't block them. They got home and skinned and cooked a beaver and the old man told his story, "Somebody just about caught and killed us." The other old man said, "It will be sure to come here, don't anyone leave this place".

After they had eaten, the other old man went to check up on his canoe that he had been making. They used to make those birch bark canoes in a clearing in the woods. When he got there it was completely destroyed.

He went back down and told them, "That's what I said, he's already here. Don't anyone leave this place".

He went back into the bush and saw an uprooted tree and the wihtikow was there. "Go on, go on, my Spirit Helpers, go and see him." It wasn't long until they yelled "Come here. Here he is. Do whatever you want to do with him. Didn't he get you mad because he destroyed your canoe?"

So he went over there and the wihtikow couldn't move because the Spirit Helpers were holding him.

The old man twisted the cannibal's head off and killed him. He built a fire and threw his body on it. The fire started dying out because the ice from the wihtikow was melting. He kept throwing firewood in there until the ice was all gone.



## B.1.13. (Untitled)

Annie Roberts  
 Stanley Mission, Sask.  
 Sept. 1983  
 Translated by Teresa McLeod

Once there was this family living in a wigwam and the woman said there was a wihtikow coming. The old man didn't believe her though because he thought he should have known first that it was coming. He kept telling her that the thumping she could hear was just her thighs bumping together. He was wrong though and the wihtikow did come.

## B.1.14. (Untitled)

Isiah Roberts  
 Stanley Mission, Sask.  
 Sept. 1983  
 Translated by Teresa McLeod

There was a man who used to be called looking glass because he owned a telescope. He could kill the wihtikow. He knew that a wihtikow was coming so he went to the lake by the spruce trees. He heard yelling and then he saw a young female wihtikow. She started yelling at him and then she jumped on him. He called to his grandfather to save him and the spirit of the looking glass helped him. The reason he had gotten in trouble because he was having dirty thoughts about the female wihtikow.

## B.2. WISAHKICAHK: The Trickster

Tales of Wisahkicahk are frequent in the Rocky Cree culture and his antics usually result in difficulties for himself and others. The following stories illustrate how Wisahkicahk's mischievous personality has affected other animals in the forest.

B.2.1. Why the Whiskey Jack does not go South for the Winter

Told by Ida A. Ratt  
 Collected and illustrated by James Ratt  
 Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1985

It is told that 'Weskuchanis', the whiskey jack was a very ordinary bird who had a short tail, short wings and a rather large head. There was nothing very beautiful about him and this caused great concern to Weskuchanis. Often the plain old whiskey jack was the subject of scorn and laughter by the other birds of the forest.

So, one day the bird asked his older brother, Wesuhkechahk, what he should do in order to look more distinguished when he met with other birds of the woods, "Wesuhkechahk, can you help me? I want to look very important and handsome."

Wesuhkechahk thought this over for awhile and then spoke to

the bird, "Go and borrow some feathers from the other birds and put them on your coat. They will make you very handsome."

So Weskuchanis flew off and considered the suggestion made by his older brother. Now in the month when the leaves are turning red and gold, the birds hold great pow-wows before they go south for the winter. Soon it would be time for such a pow-wow and the whiskey jack was determined to attend with a new set of feathers.

So he went around to all the birds in the forest and begged for a feather or two here and there. With the new feathers, Weskuchanis made a fine long tail and strong wings for himself.

Now the whiskey jack was one fine looking bird!

The time came about for the great pow-wow so Weskuchanis flew off in search of the great meeting.

But flying along he found that he couldn't control his wings and tail properly. Suddenly he would turn and almost fall to the ground. He couldn't fall very well either. When he flapped his wings he soared and then swooped downward.

The whiskey jack arrived at the pow-wow by sailing out of the sky and crashing into the ground. The other birds laughed and laughed.

Niskuh, the Canada goose teased him, "My how graceful you are, Weskuchanis."

The whiskey jack was very sad and embarrassed. He flew off into the forest as the birds kept taunting and teasing him. There he tried pulling out the feathers he had borrowed but they stuck fast to his body. It was obvious that the poor whiskey jack would never fly well again so he decided to stay in the forest by himself.

To this day, Weskuchanis is very clumsy in the air and does not associate with other birds. He prefers to spend his time close to the camps of people.

This is also the reason why the whiskey jack does not fly south for the winter.

#### B.2.2.1. Wesakejak

Told by Mrs. Annie Ratt

Translated by Moses Ratt

Illustrated by Rose Roberts

Lac La Ronge Band Teachers B/B Committee (n.d.)

Once upon a time Wesakejak was walking along a shoreline. Wesakejak was feeling very hungry. Then he saw all kinds of ducks in the water. He thought he would get some.

Wesakejak sat down to think of a way to get the ducks to come ashore.

Finally Wesakejak thought of plan. He started putting moss into his knapsack.

Wesakejak started walking along the shore. Of course the ducks saw him. The ducks were curious to find out what he was carrying in his knapsack.

The ducks called out to Wesakejak. They asked what he was carrying. "Hey brother Wesakejak! What do you have in your

knapsack?"

Wesakejak stopped and said, "my songs!"

Wesakejak started walking again. The ducks asked and asked Wesakejak to stop. "Please stop Wesakejak. We want to hear your songs." Wesakejak kept walking and walking.

Finally Wesakejak stopped and spoke to the ducks. He said, "Okay, but first you must help me build a big teepee where we can sing and dance." So all the ducks helped to build the teepee.

When the teepee was built, the ducks asked to hear Wesakejak's songs.

Wesakejak told them, "There's one more thing you must do. You must come into the teepee. Hop around in a circle, keep your eyes closed, while you are hopping around. Then I will sing."

All the ducks began to hop around Wesakejak.

Wesakejak began to sing.

While he was singing he would catch a duck and wring its neck off.

Wesakejak put the dead ducks in his bag.

Wesakejak caught many ducks and put them in his bag.

The loon secretly opened his eyes and saw what Wesakejak was doing.

He shouted a warning to his brothers. The ducks ran out of the teepee.

The loon was last.

As the loon was running out, Wesakejak kicked him in the back.

Wesakejak told the loon, "You will never again walk on land. You will stay in the water as long as you live."

So that is why the loons stay in the water, and make their nests there too.

#### B.2.2.2. Wesakejak and the Ducks

Informant unknown

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch (n.d.)

Wesakejak was walking by the water. He saw some ducks. The ducks were playing in the water. There were white ducks, grey ducks, brown ducks, and one loon.

Wesakejak was hungry, so he made up a plan to get the ducks to come to shore. He put some moss in his knapsack and walked along the shore. Soon, the white ducks turned to the grey ducks, the grey ducks turned to the brown ducks and the brown ducks turned to the loon. The loon said, "I wonder what is in his knapsack?"

The ducks called out to Wesakejak, "Hey brother Wesakejak, what do you have in your knapsack?"

Wesakejak stopped and said, "My songs."

Wesakejak started walking again. The ducks followed Wesakejak, the grey ducks followed the white ducks, the brown ducks followed the grey ducks, and the loon followed close behind.

They all cried, "Wesakejak, please stop, we want to hear

your songs!"

Wesakejak kept walking.

The white ducks followed Wesakejak, the grey ducks followed the white ducks, the brown ducks followed the grey ducks and the loon followed close behind.

They all cried again, "Wesakejak please stop, we want to hear your songs!"

Wesakejak stopped and said, "You may hear my songs, but first you must help me build a teepee."

The white ducks turned to the grey ducks, the grey ducks turned to the brown ducks and the brown ducks turned to the loon. The loon said, "Let's help him build a teepee!"

All the ducks helped build a teepee. When it was built, the ducks all cried again, "Wesakejak please, we want to hear your songs!"

Wesakejak told them, "There's one more thing you must do. You must come into the teepee, hop in a circle, and keep your eyes closed while you are hopping around.

The white ducks turned to the grey ducks, the grey ducks turned to the brown ducks, and the brown ducks turned to the loon. The loon hopped into the teepee. The white ducks hopped after the loon, the grey ducks hopped after the white ducks, and the brown ducks hopped after the grey ducks. Wesakejak began to sing...

"Come into the teepee and dance around,  
around and around and around.  
Hop up and down, listen to the sound,  
around and around and around.  
Wah hey ya hey ya hey ya ho  
hey ya hey ya hey ya ho.  
Close your eyes as you dance around,  
around and around and around.  
Come little brothers and listen to me,  
and I'll sing a little song.  
Wah hey ya hey ya hey ya ho,  
hey ya hey ya hey a ho.

While he was singing, Wesakejak would catch a duck, wring its neck and put it in his knapsack. The loon opened his eyes and saw what Wesakejak was doing. He cried out a warning, "Run brothers, run, Wesakejak is killing us!"

The white ducks ran out the door. The grey ducks followed the white ducks, the brown ducks followed the grey ducks, and the loon followed close behind.

### B.2.2.3. Weesakaychak and the Ducks

Harry Harris

Pelican Narrows, Saskatchewan

Date unknown

Collected, translated and transcribed by Robert Bear

My name is Harry Harris from Pelican Narrows. I'm not that old. I'm 73 years of age so I can't remember everything that

happened in the past so instead I think I'll tell a legend about Weesakaychak. I don't know where he was born or anything but I do know about parts of his life.

One day as he was strolling along, he came upon a lake with a flock of ducks swimming about. And being very hungry, he thought, "How can I kill these ducks so I can eat?"

He proceeded towards them. "What have you got there, big brother?" one of the ducks asked.

"These are dances where you dance with your eyes shut," he replied adding, "You won't want to dance to them anyways."

"Sure, we'll dance to them," the curious ducks replied.

"Well, come ashore. I'll build a lodge close by here so you ducks can dance," answered Weesakaychak. So he hurriedly constructed a dance lodge with sticks and when he had finished, he called out to the ducks to come and dance.

The ducks all ran ashore as soon as they were called for they loved to dance. Weesakaychak was the first to enter through a purposely small opening in the lodge and afterwards the ducks all filed in. Soon the lodge was packed. When everybody was in order, he began to sing.

"You all dance with your eyes shut and I will dance with you," he sang. As he sang and danced he started to wring ducks' necks and fling them aside. He killed off a lot in a very short time. One duck who wasn't quite dead tried to yell out a warning but only made a little sound. Another duck peeked through one eye and saw what Weesakaychak was doing.

"Our brother is going to kill us off," he warned and they all scrambled for the doorway. Weesakaychak blocked the opening and grabbed them as they ran by. He kicked one duck as it ran by and knocked his legs out of joint. These are the hell divers.

He decided he had enough ducks so he left them alone at that and built himself a big fire after taking down the lodge he had constructed. He threw the ducks into the fire with only the feet sticking out. He then decided to work up an appetite by taking a stroll. He left and as he came over the hill he saw a fox limping towards him but the fox was only pretending to limp and was deliberately making his way towards Weesakaychak.

"Brother, why are you limping?" Weesakaychak inquired.

"My paw is very sore," replied the fox.

"Over this hill, I'm cooking some ducks. Let's have a race and whoever gets there first can eat," said Weesakaychak.

"But, brother, I can't even walk," said the fox. Even though Weesakaychak was good at taking advantage of others, the fox had the advantage when Weesakaychak, determined for a race told the fox he would tie rocks around his ankles.

He finally persuaded the fox to race him around the lake. Weesakaychak tied a big rock around his ankle and the race was on with both of them limping badly. Weesakaychak couldn't run fast due to the rock tied around his ankle.

When he got there he could see the feet of the ducks sticking out just as he had left them. But when he tried pulling out a duck all he got was the foot.

"I accidently burnt my meal," he said. It finally dawned on

him that the fox had been there already and had eaten everything, because he saw some of the burned remains all scattered around the fire. He got very angry and decided to track down the fox.

After having a big meal, the fox decided to take a nap in the prairie where there was tall grass. Sometime later Weesakaychak found him sleeping in the midst of the tall grass. He set fire to the grass all around the fox. When the fox woke up the fire was already close to him. He leapt over the raging fire and in doing so, singed his fur and his descendants are the foxes whose fur isn't too good. Weesakaychak made them that way.

After getting his revenge, Weesakaychak departed, but the fox followed and kept out of sight. While strolling along the prairie Weesakaychak heard laughter in some bushes. Upon investigating he came upon some killdeers, throwing their eyeballs up onto the branches, then shaking the tree so that their eyeballs would fall right back into place again. The killdeer then would burst into hysterical laughter.

"What are you doing that for, my brothers?" Weesakaychak asked.

"We have headaches and after we do this, we feel better," they replied.

"Brothers, you should give me that gift, I always seem to have headaches," he said.

"I don't think we'd be able to do that, it's hard. You can only do it four times a year and no more," said the killdeer. Finally after a great amount of coaxing, Weesakaychak persuaded the killdeers to give him the gift.

"Alright, we'll give you the gift but don't do it more than four times a year," the killdeers warned Weesakaychak.

So after they gave him the gift he departed. He was just on the other side of the bush when he pretended to have a headache.

"My, I sure have a headache, a real splitting headache," he said. So he went through the same procedures as the killdeers had gone through. As his eyeballs fell back onto place he would laugh hysterically. He felt very good. He hadn't gone far when he pretended to have another headache. He did this four times, the number of times he was allowed to do this. He had not gone much farther when he again pretended to have a headache. Again he threw his eyeballs atop the branches, shook the tree but his eyeballs did not fall into place, they fell to the ground separately. He groped around on the ground but was unsuccessful in finding them for he was blind.

Ever so often he would bump into a tree and ask them what tree they were for he was looking for a pine tree. The fox had been watching all this time, and Weesakaychak grabbed the fox's hind leg by luck.

"Let me go. What are you searching for?" the fox asked.

"I'm searching for a pine tree," he replied.

"Let me go and I'll show you where there are some pine trees," the fox pleaded.

"I'll make your fur nice again if you lead me to where there are some pine trees," Weesakaychak bargained.

So the fox agreed and led him to a pine tree. Out of the

sap Weesakaychak made himself a new set of eyes. This is the way Weesakaychak regained his eyesight.

#### B.2.3.1. The Adventurersone Wesuhkechahk

Told by Absolom Halkett

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1985

One winter Wesuhkechahk wandered far to the south to spend a few months in a warmer climate. During the trip, he had many adventures like tying a knot in the tail of wuchuskos, the muskrat...

...and scaring a village of Indians half to death by making strange noises in the night.

Much of his trip was made on the back of a buffalo...

...and sometimes he travelled on the back of an eagle until he reached the southern shores of North America. Wesuhkechahk stayed there during the winter months, but when the weather changed, he decided to travel back home to the land of the Cree Indians.

One morning he saw a flock of geese preparing for their long flight back north. He asked the chieftain goose if he might travel with them.

The chieftain goose was afraid of Wesuhkechahk because he had played tricks on the geese in the past. The goose finally made his decision.

"Wesuhkechahk, you may come with us, but you must fly very high and not look down when we fly over Indian villages."

Wesuhkechahk agreed to follow these instructions.

Then he hung a medicine bag around his neck and turned himself into a Canada goose.

The birds flew for several days without incident. Wesuhkechahk behaved himself and he followed the instructions of the geese.

Soon they were over Cree country and Wesuhkechahk saw an Indian village on the shore of a lake. He was full of curiosity, so he flew down to look over the camp.

The Indians saw him and let their arrows fly. Wesuhkechahk was hit and fell to the ground with an arrow stuck in his skin.

The Indians ran to the place where he fell, but all they could find was a piece of goose skin. However, they could hear Wesuhkechahk running through the forest screeching in pain.

#### B.2.3.2. Wesakaychak and the Geese

Possible source George McKenzie

Collected and translated by Tom McKenzie

From Cree Culture and Language Program, Keethanow School, Stanley Mission; Received 20 March, 1978

One day, as Wesakaychak was sitting by a lake watching some geese frolicking in the sun, he thought to himself, "My, they move with such grace and speed. Why should they alone enjoy the power of flight? I am sure man is also worthy of this gift.

He decided to speak to the geese and discuss it with them.

He walked to the lakeside and called to them. But they knew Wesakaychak. He was always up to something and so they did not trust him. After a great deal of persuasive talk on the part of Wesakaychak, the head gander came over, followed by the other geese.

"I have a favour to ask of you and I admit it is of no advantage to you and your people. As you know, I have been busy settling matters here on earth so that it is peaceful and everything works in harmony. I have had to deal with many harmful creatures in doing so. Consequently I have been too busy to look into what happens to creatures of the sky. I now have time for this matter. If you could give me a pair of wings, I could fly above to see if all is well."

The geese discussed this proposal for awhile. After much hesitation, the head gander said, "It is not because we are selfish and would refuse to give to others what we ourselves enjoy. We hesitate for the simple reason that flying is a dangerous way of travelling, even for us to whom it is natural. However, we have decided to let you have a pair of wings, but we warn you to be very careful."

He promised that he would consider the gift as sacred and use it only for the good of others. He was given a pair of wings in an extra large size. Wesakaychak was delighted! He was cautioned that he had to wait for a few days before flying as the wings needed time to grow.

As usual, his impatience was so great that he didn't wait the required time and besides he wanted to show off. He managed to get up in the air but almost at once one of his wings broke down and he fell into the lake. The geese scolded him severely for this foolishness. Now he sat and waited patiently for the wings to grow.

The time came for the geese to move to other feeding grounds so they flew into the air in their usual V-formation. Wesakaychak placed himself at the head crying, "Honk! Honk!" He'd been warned to keep away from the people's camps but wanting to play a joke on them, flew straight over one. Men came running out of their teepees and started to shoot arrows at them. Wesakaychak laughed but the geese were very alarmed. He soon stopped laughing when an arrow struck his wing. Down he went, rolling in the air.

People came running to see the monstrous goose they had shot down. When they arrived at the spot where he lay, they laughed to see it was only Wesakaychak getting up from the ground with a sheepish look on his face. He walked away, then pausing said, "Every creature according to his gifts; with these only must he work out his destiny."



#### B.2.4. Wesuhkechahk Omikiy Mechiw

Told by Evelyn Gamble

Collected by Marg Gardpy

Illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1983

One very hot summer day, Wesuhkechahk left his home to look for food and water. He walked along a path for a long time and grew so tired. The sun was now really beating down and he was hungry and thirsty.

He came to a big rock and decided to rest a bit. He didn't know that the rock was very hot and didn't feel his rear burning right away. When he did, he jumped up so fast that some of his rear got stuck to the rock. He was really sore after that.

He kept walking, looking for food and water. After a while he found a stream with clear, cool water. He had quite a bit to drink and did it ever taste good! He then bathed himself and washed his scabby rear in the stream. After he was finished, he applied mud from the stream bed to his sore.

It was now getting later on in the afternoon and he decided that he would go home. He still hadn't found food but he thought, "Manitoo will not let me starve." As he walked along the path he came to the same rock that he had sat on, but he was so stupid that he didn't remember. Anyway, there on the rock were two pieces of meat. He picked up the pieces and tasted them and found them really tasty so he ate them all. "Manitoo takes good care of us," he thought.

He didn't know that he was eating his scab that had gotten stuck to the rock. Ever since then the chickadees sing this tune in the summer, "Wesuhkechahk omikiy mechiw, wesuhkechahk omikiy mechiw."

#### B.2.5. Wesakaychak and the Flies

Told by Ida Swan

Collected and illustrated by Margaret Brass

Pelican Narrows Teachers Aid Program (n.d.)

Long time ago there was a man named Wesakaychak who was able to talk to all the creatures of the woods. Wesakaychak was always hungry and always tried to think of ways to get food and also the easiest way to get it.

One day he was walking in the woods when he saw a swarm of flies circling a dead moose. He stopped to watch them and then finally decided to ask them a question. "Ahee, my little brother," asked Wesakaychak, "What are you doing?"

"Oh, big brother, we are breaking up this moose so it will go back to Mother Nature," replied the flies.

Wesakaychak stood by and looked at them for awhile. He was really hungry and trying to think of ways to get the moose for himself.

"Ahee, I really envy you flies," Wesakaychak told the flies.

When the flies heard this they took pity on Wesakaychak and then changed him into a fly. When he changed he flew toward the head and started busying himself. Whenever he thought that there wasn't anyone looking he would break several eggs at a time so they would not hatch.

It wasn't very long when one of the flies saw what he was doing. "Look what our big brother is doing," he told his brothers angrily.

What Wesakaychak was doing made all the flies really mad, because they worked hard laying those eggs. Then they changed him back into human being.

When he changed back into a human he still had the moose's head on. He tried and tried to get it off, but it would not come off. He gave up trying to get the head off and so he moved on into the woods.

He didn't walk very far when he came to a point of a large bay. He wanted to get to the other side of the bay, but being lazy he decided to swim across instead of walking along the shoreline.

There was a group of people that were camping at the other side of the bay, which Wesakaychak hadn't noticed. When they saw a moose crossing the bay, they grabbed their bows and arrows and hurriedly ran for their canoes. They paddled toward the moose and when they got within range they started shooting at it.

Wesakaychak was swimming along, when he suddenly heard an arrow whizz by his head. When he realized what was happening, he ducked under the water as fast as he could.

The people were quite surprised, because they had never seen a moose duck into the water before. One of them said, "Ahee, it must have been Wesakaychak playing a trick on us." They all laughed and then headed back toward their camp.

In the meantime Wesakaychak was swimming back to the shore as fast as he could, because he was really scared. When he reached the shore he slipped on a rock, which caused the moose head to break open and fall off his head.

The last they saw of Wesakaychak, he was pounding into the woods like a bear.

#### B.2.6. Why the Rabbit Turns White in Winter

Presented on Keethanow Community Television

Narrated by Tantoo Martin

Date unknown

Transcribed by Annie Torrence and Katherine Lipsett

[All portions which appear in brackets are additions for clarity]

Long ago after the creator had created the Indian people there came a summer with no rain. The grass became brown and dry. The little streams grew smaller and smaller until there was no water found in them. The animals found no water to drink and no grass to eat so they headed to the northwest. It was a bad time.

The children cried with hunger. Then the warriors were feeling sad that summer. Then the people went to their brother Wisahkicahk for help.

Wisahkicahk listened to their story about the dry summer and how all the animals have left. How there was nothing to hunt and no food to eat. "Now it was late in the season and winter is coming. What will happen to us Wisahkicahk, with nothing to eat? Perhaps the great spirit is angry with us. What can we do? Please help us Wisahkicahk. There's no food to eat and our children are hungry."

Just then the little child started to cry.

"Don't cry, there, there. Hush, hush don't cry. Of course I'll help you. Didn't the creator make me your teacher?" [said Wisahkicahk].

[To himself he said,] "Oh, this is terrible! I wonder why there's no rain and I wonder where all the animals went." Wisahkicahk went to ask the only one who would know the answers to his questions - the great spirit. "Oh great spirit," [he called.]

Then suddenly there came a great wind. "Tansi, Wisahkicahk, Tansi. You called me?"

"Yes," [he said,] "I was wondering where all the animals have gone."

"I sent away all the thunder beams so there would be no rain," [said the great spirit].

"You did?"

"And I took away all the animals as well," [said the great spirit].

"But why? The people are hungry and thirsty," [asked Wisahkicahk].

"They did not respect what I gave them. They drank without thanks. They hunted without thanks. They took without thanks," [said the great spirit].

"Oh, Creator. Sometimes they forget things. They're only learning and sometimes they make foolish mistakes. You are their teacher. They learn from your example," [cried Wisahkicahk].

"Well, that's true. All the gifts of creation must be respected."

"I'll remind them about that, but right now what should I do? All the people are hungry and winter is coming," [said Wisahkicahk].

"Go to the great river in the northwest. Perhaps you could find what you seek," [instructed the great spirit].

"The great river in the northwest. That is way in the mountains. That's far away from her. I better hurry," [thought Wisahkicahk]. So he hurried off, anxious to find the animals to feed his people.

The great spirit wanted all his animals to be treated with respect, even if it must be hunted for food. The hunter should give thanks to the spirit of that animal and to the great spirit for the gift of that animal's life. Wisahkicahk, as teacher of the Indian people had forgotten to teach them this. Then the great spirit sent them all a dry summer and sent away all the animals to teach them a lesson. Now Wisahkicahk's people are starving. He must get the

animals fast, before it's too late. So he began a great journey. The creator said the animals went towards the great river.

"I'd better take my canoe. Oh, it's heavy," [said Wisahkicahk]. For many days he walked, carrying his canoe. "I hope I find that great river soon. I'm getting tired." But he wouldn't give up. He knew the people were hungry. He had to find out where the animals have gone. "Oh, I'll try to persuade them to come back with me. Masqua, the bear and Atik, the deer, Mooswa, the moose, Amisk, the beaver. Oh, I'm tired. This canoe is heavy," [thought Wisahkicahk]. "I can't walk another step. Oh, what's that noise?" Exhausted, he managed a few more steps and there he saw the great river. "Oh, at last! Now I can use my canoe."

He paddled his way along. He watched all the time to see if any animals came to the river banks. But he saw no signs of any creatures. At last, after he had travelled a long time. He felt very tired and knew he must rest. "Oh, this looks like a good place to make camp," [he thought].

Wisahkicahk drew his canoe up to the side of the great river and got out. Here he slept the night. "Oh, it's chilly tonight," [he thought]. "Maybe I should make a fire. I feel winter's coming. I'm tired from all this travelling. Where are all these animals? I know they must be here someplace. But how to find them. Oh, well. Maybe tomorrow."

Tired, Wisahkicahk fell asleep. He was willing to do a lot for his people. Already he had travelled for many days in search of the animals the people needed for food and he didn't know that the hardest part of his journey was yet to come.

During the night the heavy fall of soft snow had come. Everything was covered in it, even Wisahkicahk. He looked around and everything was white. This made him real happy. "Oh, good!. Now I'll be able to see the tracks of the animals when they come to drink at the river. Then I'll follow their trail and find where they're hiding."

It wasn't long before Wisahkicahk came across the tracks of Mooswa, the moose. "Mooswa, now I'll find where you're hiding," [he said]. Then he followed the tracks deep into the woods. "There are the tracks of Atik, the deer. There's Masqua's [tracks] over here, Kakwa, the porcupine. I'm very, very close to their hiding place."

Quietly, Wisahkicahk moved in the forest. Then he saw them in a meadow. All the animals. Then suddenly Masqua the bear saw him watching them. "Oh, Tansi, Wisahkicahk. How are you?" [he said].

"Oh, Tansi Masqua. Tansi all of you. I've been looking for you," [he replied].

"The great spirit called us to come here. So here we are".

"My people are starving since you left us. There's no food to eat," [Wisahkicahk said].

[The animals replied,] "They deserve it."

"But even the children are hungry and they cry," [said Wisahkicahk].

"Oh, I don't like to make children cry. What can be done?" [said Masqua]. "Um, Let me discuss this with the others." [A few minutes later he said,] "Wisahkicahk, here's our decision. If the people always remember to give thanks to our spirits for the gift

of our bodies, they may hunt us again."

"That's a good suggestion," [said Wisahkicahk]. "I'll go back and I'll tell them. After they agree, we will all return. Thank you Masqua, thank you. I will go now."

"Wisahkicahk, do you need help finding your way back to the great river?"

"Oh, no! Not me. I never get lost. Thank you again my dear brother," [he said]. So Wisahkicahk left the clearing to begin a long journey back to his hungry people. When he [was] returning to his canoe, it began to snow again. Soon everything was a ghostening sight and the tracks that he followed were covered over. The sun shone on the snow, making it very bright, as Wisahkicahk found his way to the great river. He found that it was harder to see.

"Oh, this snow is so bright, I can't see. Oh, where am I? Everything looks the same. It's all white. If I get lost, who will save the people?" [he thought. Wisahkicahk was afraid he might get snow blindness from looking at so much white snow. Then he would never find the river in his canoe. If only he had listened to Masqua. "Wait, what's that?" [he wondered].

Wisahkicahk could see a brown something bouncing towards him. What was it?

"Tansi, Wisahkicahk," [it said].

"Oh, is that you, Wapoose?"

"Yes, Masqua asked me to check on you. To see if you needed any help." [said the little rabbit].

"Well, I'm very glad to see you. I can't see the river and I really need a guide," [said Wisahkicahk].

"I'll guide you! Watch me and follow my dark fur against the white snow." Wapoose went ahead and Wisahkicahk was able to follow his brown body until at last they reached the bank of the great river.

"Oh, good, my canoe is still here. Oh, I have to hurry. I must hurry," [said Wisahkicahk]. Before he left he turned to Wapoose, the rabbit. "My little brother, you have been very kind to me. Because of you the lives of the people will be saved."

"I was happy to help, my big brother," [Wapoose responded].

"I want to leave you with a gift, my brother. From now on each winter, with the first snow fall, your brown fur will turn white," [said Wisahkicahk].

"Each winter I'll turn white?"

"Yes, that way no one will see you against the snow," [explained Wisahkicahk].

"I'll be safe from anything that wants to hurt me?" [asked Wapoose].

"Come closer to me," [said Wisahkicahk]. So Wapoose came closer to him. He made a movement with his hand. When the rabbit suddenly turned white. All you could see was his eyes blinking. "Your enemies will need to have sharp eyes now little Wapoose, and work hard to see you."

Wisahkicahk began to paddle his canoe back to tell the people that soon there would be food to eat. When he returned he reminded them to give thanks to the great spirit and to each animal before killing it. Then there will always be plenty of food, even

in winter. He also told them about the kindness of Wapoose, the rabbit. So from that time on every winter the rabbit turns white, to remind us of the time he helped Wisahkicahk save the people.

#### B.2.7. Cha-Ka-Pees

Collected by Dennis McLeod

History and Culture Report - Stanley Mission - La Ronge

Unpublished and not dated

Cha-ka-pees was a little boy and he lived with his grandmother. One day he went out hunting. He headed east and after a long walk he saw a spruce hen sitting on a branch. He went under it and shot up at it with his bow and arrow. He missed the spruce hen and his arrow got hung up on one of the upper branches so he slung his bow over his shoulder and started climbing for his arrow.

Every time he got closer to his arrow he'd blow on it and the arrow would move higher and the tree would grow taller.

Finally, after a long, long climb he noticed a well-beaten path. He wondered who would be making a path so high up so he took off his bow-string and set a snare on the path and tied his bow string to the tree and then he started down the tree and went home.

When he got home his grandmother was already asleep, so he had a little to eat and went to bed too. After a good sleep his grandmother woke him up. She told him that she had been up a long time and the sun had not come up yet.

Then Cha-ka-pees remembered his snare so he told his grandmother about the day before. She told him he may have snared the sun so he went back to his tree and checked the snare and sure enough he had snared the sun but he could not get close enough to let it loose so he had to climb down.

He started gathering little animals to try and get them to chew through his bow-string. One by one they tried but the sun was too hot. Finally he had just a little shrew left. The little shrew went up to the bow-string and started chewing it and the sun was pulling on the bow-string too. When the shrew chewed through the bow-string all the animals fell to the earth but Cha-ka-pees got thrown to the moon, and to this day the shrew has stained teeth because they got so hot from chewing through the bow-string.

#### B.2.8. How the Muskrat got its Tail

Told by Percy McKenzie

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1985

It was evening. Wesuhechahk had just removed a caldron of delicious soup from the fire. But the soup did not cool fast enough, at least not for Wesuhkechahk. He had been too busy all day to stop for the midday meal. Now he was dead tired and hungry. The soup was still too hot when he noticed a muskrat swimming a few

metres from the shore.

Sometimes the muskrat swam on the surface of the lake, sometimes diving and disappearing further away.

"Hey! Little sister! Come here quick! Listen, little sister!" said Wesuhkechahk.

The muskrat obeyed and hobbled along, threading its way through the grass.

"What is it, big brother?" she asked.

"Will you do me a favour? My soup is too hot and I am dying of hunger. Will you plunge it into the cold water of the lake for me?"

"Gladly!" she answered.

Wesuhkechahk emptied the soup into a moosehide vessel which he tied with a cord. The muskrat plunged under the water bearing the precious burden. However, just at the moment when the vessel was going to disappear under the water, the cord gave way and the animal's tail received a shower of boiling soup. The vessel disappeared and the soup mixed with the waters of the lake.

In an angry rage, Wesuhkechahk stormed and fumed. Wuchusk, the muskrat, came out of the water with a scalded tail! Wesuhkechahk saw that all the hair was gone from its tip. He made a vow that no hair would ever grow or cover the tail of a muskrat from one generation to the next. To this day, Wuchusk has a naked tail!

### B.3. SHORT STORIES

The following stories were collected from various sources in northern Saskatchewan. They contain many references to unusual events, such as transformation in shape or size, inanimate objects talking, encountering the 'little people' and dreaming. Many of these forms of medicine have been discussed in Chapter Four.

#### B.3.1. The Little People

Told by George Charles (Thunder Cloud)  
 Collected and illustrated by James Ratt  
 Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1983

Long ago, a little girl named Niskisis lived with an Indian band camped close to a river up north. One evening her mother asked her to go to the river's edge to gather some dry firewood.

Niskisis took her time and watched the leaves and twigs floating on the current. Suddenly she saw a tiny canoe, about as long as her hand, riding close to the river bank. It was paddled by a small man dressed in green.

Niskisis was very excited. She forgot her parent's warning not to bother any of these little people. It was thought that they had strong medicine of all kinds, and if they were angered bad luck would fall on her people. She waded out into the water, picked up the small canoe, and laughed at the little man.

The little man did not like being picked out of the water.

He was so angry that he would not speak to the young girl. Niskisis ran home and called to everyone about what she had found.

Her parent were shocked with Niskisis and felt frightened. "Go and put him back where you found him," they cried. "Or else something awful will happen to one of us."

Niskisis carried the little man back to the river. She realized that the little people might be very offended, and she whispered to the small man as she carried him, "If I have done you wrong, please forgive me and don't punish me or the people back at the camp. I meant you no harm, and I think your people are very fine canoe makers. Even your paddle shines from such fine carving."

She placed the little man and his canoe in the place where she had found them. For a moment she thought he would speak to her, but instead he paddled away without saying a word.

Summer passed quickly, and the time when the moose rut and fight for their mates arrived. It was September. One day Niskisis went with four young girls to gather berries by the river. They carried baskets made from birchbark and walked on high ground along the riverbank. They didn't have much luck because other berry pickers had already been there.

One of the girls said that the berries across the river were riper and bigger and that it was a pity they couldn't get across. Niskisis said, "I wish that little man would come. It was around here someplace that I picked him out of the water."

Suddenly they heard a small voice saying, "Come over here and I'll take you and your friends to the other side of the river."

To their astonishment, there was the little man with four friends, each in his own canoe. The little man told Niskisis and her friends to step into the small canoes.

Niskisis did so, but the other girls just laughed. They thought she would surely crush the little canoe when she stepped into it. As soon as her foot touched the canoe, however, she became as small as the little man. Niskisis sat down and called to her friends to get into the other canoes.

The little people paddled the girls across the river. The moment Niskisis and her friends placed their feet on the ground, they grew to their normal size.

The girls thanked the little people and watched as they paddled out of sight around the curve of the river.

That evening the men from camp found the girls with overflowing berry baskets. They asked Niskisis and her friends how they got across the river, but the girls wouldn't say anything.

The girls had decided to keep their secret to themselves.

### B.3.2. The Dream

Told by Ida Ratt

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1984



One night long ago an old Indian hunter had a dream. In those days a person believed a dream to be an omen. If you could understand its meaning, the dream could be a source of good luck.

The hunter had a silly dream about a bug which told him that if he should ever get into trouble in the future, to call upon him for help.

One day the hunter and his two companions went out hunting for meat. They didn't have much luck that day. As they were heading home, they heard a war cry from the distance. They knew that this cry came from a tribe of Indians who stole from others and then would later torture and slay the villagers.

The three hunters began to panic and ran to a hiding place where they could sit together and wait for the war party to pass.

As the sound of the war cries came closer, the three hunters realized that they were being surrounded. Soon it would be dark and Indians never attacked at night because they believed that the spirits of their victims wandered around searching for their killers.

All night the three men sat in their hiding place wondering how they would be tortured and killed in the morning. All night the war party sang the death song for their intended victims. They sat in a huge circle around the three hunters who could not even try to escape.

Early in the morning the old hunter remembered what the bug had told him in his dream about calling for help. The hunter told his companions not to worry because he would get them out of there alive.

The three men suddenly realized they were getting smaller and smaller. Soon, it appeared that the places in which they were sitting became three huge valleys out of which they could travel.

The hunters started crawling on their hands and feet until they were a safe distance from the war party.

When they were safe the old hunter called upon his friend, the bug, to take his charm off them so that they could return to their normal size. By the time the sun was up, they were miles and miles away from their close encounter with death.

#### B.3.3.1. The Sacred Rock

Told by Jean Roberts

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1983

Long ago, there lived a widow who had two small boys. She made two small bows with arrows and taught them how to use them.

One day she told them to go out and shoot some birds to eat.

"Later, I will make you stronger bows so that you can shoot bigger game," she told them.

She put some ready cooked meat in a bag and told them to sit on a large rock when they got hungry and wanted to eat.

Every day the boys came home with many ducks, geese and

grouse.

The people of the village smiled as the two boys came home each day with their bags filled.

One day while the boys were eating their lunch on a large rock, they heard a voice saying, "I'd like to tell you boys a story."

They looked all around but did not see anyone so they kept on eating.

"Shall I tell you some stories?" the voice asked again. It was coming from the rock they were sitting on.

"What kind of stories do you tell?" they asked then.

The rock said he told stories of things that happened a long time ago. He said, "If you will give me your birds, I will tell you many stories."

The two brothers laid their ducks and geese beside the rock and sat close to it as it told them strange stories and legends. It was almost sunset when the voice from the rock said, "You have to go home now, but come back tomorrow and I will tell you more stories."

On their way home, the boys shot three birds each. When their mother asked why they didn't have more, they said the ducks and geese were getting scarce. The same thing happened the next day and also the day after.

The mother knew that her children were not telling the truth; so she went to the Chief and told him the problem. The Chief said, "I will send two men tomorrow to follow your sons to see what they are doing with their catch."

This was done and the two men watched the boys shoot ten birds each. The boys then laid them down beside the rock. As the men watched, they were surprised to hear a voice from the rock saying, "Bring all the people from your village here tomorrow. Tell them to bring some food or a gift and I will tell them many stories."

The Chief and all the people were astonished to hear what the braves had to tell. The Chief said, "We will do as the rock says."

Everyone took some gifts or some foods and went to the talking rock.

When they had all made their offerings, they sat down on the stone and the voice began to speak. It told wonderful stories of beautiful lands and strange creatures. It told of animals that could talk to one another and of people yet to come to this land.

When it was almost sundown, the rock said, "I have told you many stories and it is up to you to keep them as long as the world lasts. Tell them to your children and grandchildren but make sure they always place tobacco or a little food before the story tellers."

The rock never spoke again, but for many years the Indians visited the sacred stone.

Today, some old people still remember those legends and stories.

When you visit old people, you should always carry a gift. The old person will never refuse it.

### B.3.3.2. The Magic Arrow

Told by Jean Roberts

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1985

One night long ago, a young hunter was having a bad dream. He moaned and thrashed about on his blankets until his wife woke him up. She was a pretty but jealous woman and she asked her husband, "Who are you seeing in your dreams?"

The man sat up and told her that he had dreamt he had turned into a bear and had killed three hunters with his paws. The hunter's arrows couldn't hurt him.

The young wife soon went back to sleep but the young hunter couldn't sleep again that night. In the morning he went down to the river to wash. He felt a pain in his side and found a long arrow in his flesh.

He didn't remove the arrow. He went immediately to see the Chief and the Medicine man. When they pulled the arrow out of him the wound did not bleed. Everyone was surprised and each examined the arrow. It was made of wood of a kind they didn't have on their land.

The young hunter decided to take the arrow on a hunting trip to see how straight it would shoot.

He hadn't gone three miles when the three men of his dreams surrounded him. They came at him from both sides and behind. He shot the magic arrow into the closest man, who fell dead.

Before the young hunter could reach for another arrow the magic arrow flew twice more from his bowstring and the other two men were dead.

On his way home a deer jumped in front of him, so he shot it with his magic arrow. He couldn't miss the shot because the animal was so close, but when the arrow touched the deer, the animal disappeared.

When he got home, he told the Chief what had happened and said he didn't want the arrow anymore.

The Chief put the arrow away for safekeeping but the next day it was gone.

All the people were ordered out of their teepees while the Elders searched for the missing arrow. They could not find it anywhere.

Later that same day, a woman went into the woods to gather fuel for her campfire. She laid her baby in a 'tihkinakun' on the ground. The baby began to cry at once and when the woman looked him over she found the magic arrow sticking in his side just as it had on the young hunter's body.

The woman hurried home to the Chief, who pulled the arrow out of the baby's side. Just as before, there was no blood in the wound. The baby stopped crying.

The Medicine man from the village said, "No one can keep this arrow so I will hang it on a tree at the edge of the camp where we can all keep an eye on it."

This was done. Whenever a strange Indian came close to the camp, he was found dead with the magic arrow in his side. Men who tried to steal belongings from the camp died the same way.

No one from the Indian camp ever touched the arrow except the young hunter who first found it sticking in his side. He used it only for hunting when the other hunters came home without any success. When that happened the Chief would send him out with the arrow to bring them all fresh meat.

The young hunter praised the arrow before and after the hunt and also before hanging it up in the tree.

One day the young hunter found the arrow broken in half. His jealous young wife had broken it because everyone praised him each time he came home from a hunt. She said, "You never give me credit for going out to help you on a hunting trip."

The young hunter was too sad to argue with his wife. He walked into a thick stand of poplar trees near the camp. Soon the people at the camp saw a fire in the poplar grove. They reached the fire too late to save the young hunter. He had wanted to die the same way the magic arrow had been destroyed - his wife had thrown it into the campfire.

She told the Chief and the people that her husband had taken the magic arrow with him when he died but not one believed her.

No one pitied her when she had to do her own hunting in the cold of Winter because she no longer had a husband to take care of her.

#### B.3.4. The Cry of the Chickadees

Told by Ida A. Ratt

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1985

In the fall when the leaves of the trees are changing colour, great number of families go out on the lakes and rivers to their traplines.

Long ago, one family went to a certain place every year because moose, muskrat, beaver, caribou and rabbits were plentiful there. Life was good for their people in the winter and by the time spring had come, they had trapped many muskrats, beavers and rabbits.

The family had so much meat that they did not know what to do with it. The father did not want to leave it behind to rot. This meant that he would have to make two trips in order to haul everything to their summer camp. He decided to leave his children behind and take his wife and most of the meat with him on the first trip.

The man and his wife started on the journey to their summer home with the meat. The trail was unbroken, deep with snow, and the trip took much longer than they expected. They were not worried about their children because there was food for them to eat, and there was little danger from wolves and other animals.

One day after their parents had left, the boys awoke one morning to find that their little sister had wandered off into the forest. They began looking for her in places in which she liked to hide, but they could not find a trace of her.

The boys wondered if the little girl had followed their parents, but they were afraid to follow the trail because it was a great distance and they were too small to use bows and arrows if the wolves attacked them. But the boys were worried about their little sister.

That night as they sat by their campfire outside the lodge, two owls in the forest began hooting back and forth to each other about the little girl. When it was completely dark, the boys went to the lodge.

During the night, they heard footprints around the cabin and they were very frightened. They could hear growling and barking as wolves came closer to the camp.

The boys picked up their bows and arrows and waited at the back of the cabin ready to protect themselves. But nothing appeared and the barking and howling faded as the sun was high in the sky before they went out to look for their little sister.

They cried and cried for her, "Ni-se-mis, Ni-se-mis!"

Suddenly they started to shrink in size and grow feathers. They were changing into two tiny birds. They flew into the camp and picked at the meat until they were full with food. Then the two birds continued to stay in the camp because there was food available for them.

Several days passed and the father returned to the camp to get his children. When he was near the cabin, he listened for their voices, but he could hear nothing. He ran the rest of the way to the cabin thinking that the children might be hiding from him. He looked and looked everywhere for them.

After he searched for days, the father gave up because he thought his children might have been eaten by wolves or bears. The meat still remained in the lodge where the father sat down to think. He was very sad because he had lost his children.

Suddenly he heard someone outside calling, "Ni-se-mis, Ni-se-mis!" He was so happy that he jumped up and hurried out of the cabin thinking it was his sons. But all he saw were two little birds.

"Why are you crying like that, little birds?" he asked.

The birds chirped, "Oh Father! We have lost our little sister." Then the birds started crying again and flew into the forest. That is why chick-a-dees cry differently in the spring than they do the rest of the year. It is the cry of two little brothers searching for their lost sister.

#### B.3.5.1. The Beaver Story

Told by Ida Ratt

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1984

Once upon a time, not too long ago, an old man met three white men paddling out of the mouth of a river. They seemed to be coming straight toward him, so he stood along the shore to wait for them.

The three men exchanged greetings and the old man asked them how the river was for travelling. The three men told him it was all right and could be paddled easily. Then the men asked him where the river flowed out because they had to travel as far as possible before winter set in. The old man told them all he knew about the river conditions up ahead and about the rapids and waterfalls.

The old man decided to make some tea on a campfire while the three men paddled on. After collecting some small twigs for kindling, he returned to the shoreline to see which way the men had headed. All he saw were three beaver swimming close along the shore. He wondered if he had imagined talking to the men. However, after he had some tea, he returned to his camp and told his family about his strange experience. They didn't know what to make of it either.

That winter there didn't appear to be as many beavers as the year before. The following winter there were almost none left. For the next ten years there were no beavers to be seen in the area, but there were stories of how plentiful they were further north.

The old man and his family wondered if there was a connection between the three men and the three beavers which had passed through and had headed towards the place where the rivers flowed north.

#### B.3.5.2. The Huge Trout

Told by Ida Ratt

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1983

Long ago, when the settlement of La Ronge was small, people relied on old methods of catching fish. In the spring time there was snare fishing. Also, people closed in a small shallow area in a stream and then waded in and threw the fish to shore with their hands.

Another was to bait the line with the tail of sucker. Then you could leave your line overnight and check in the morning to see if you had a trout. Trouts are usually in shallow water in the spring until they move out to the lake trout holes in June. An old woman set a baited line like this and left it for the night.

The next morning she went paddling along the shore checking the lines she had set the previous evening. She got a couple of good sized trout and paddled to check the last one. She went very slowly so that she wouldn't startle a fish if she had one.

As her canoe glided slowly over her hook she saw a huge trout, as long as her canoe, wriggling its tail beneath her canoe.

She was so scared by the size of it that she didn't bother with her baited line. The trout could have pulled her canoe under.

At the shore she cut the line connected to the bait hook and then paddled home to tell the people of what she had seen.

The people believed that there were one or two trout in Lac La Ronge Lake which surfaced once a summer when the lake was calm and glassy. They believed that if a person saw it, he or she or a relation would pass away within the year.

Some old people still believe in this huge trout today.

### B.3.6. Thundercloud Lady or Pidisiwiskwiw

Informant Unknown

From Cree Culture and Language Program, Keethanow School, Stanley Mission (n.d.)

Once there were these three trappers.

They came home once and felt that there was something different about the place. Everything in the house had been tidied up and cleaned. Someone had done the wood. Inside, it was all tidy. Someone had tidied it all. Their clothes were clean. They were amazed.

Who is taking care of us? they wondered.

Then the oldest brother said, "Do not ever try to bother this person."

He had dreamed of this Thundercloud Lady trying very hard to live. If they scared her they would never see her again.

Then once the youngest brother thought, "Okay, I think I will try to see this person."

Next Morning: "I think I'll stop here," he thought.

When his brother started off he hid from them. He succeeded. Then he went back to their house.

He waited inside the house.

Soon, while he was looking out the window, he saw a woman coming. She dropped a load of wood. He tried to talk to her but no; she disliked him.

He grabbed his bow and arrows and he shot her. He got her in the ribs then he quickly went inside. "I'll chase her," he thought.

But Thundercloud Lady half flew and he couldn't overtake her. So he stopped going after her and went back home.

When his brother got home: "Why is it that there is no wood here?" they asked.

So he told them: "this morning I waited for this person who worked for us. When she got here, I saw it was the Thundercloud Lady. She didn't like me. So I shot her. I maimed her. I went after her. I didn't come close. Because she was halfway flying and half running. So I lost her."

"I told you so," said the oldest brother, "Now only I can find the Thundercloud Lady."

So, in the morning, he left.

He tracked the woman's trail of blood. Soon, he came to a

very high mountain. He couldn't do anything so he stood around. All of a sudden, he saw a little teepee. He went inside and there was an old lady sitting there.

"Welcome," she said to him, "What has brought you here?"

"Grandmother, I am looking for the Thundercloud Lady."

"My grandson, she travels by here, on this high mountain, but a human being cannot climb this mountain," she said.

"That is who I'm looking for," said the man.

"Okay, my grandson, I will give you these three furs, so you can get to the top of this mountain. Here is a chipmunk's fur, a weasel's fur and a squirrel's fur."

"Thank you," said the man. So in the morning he went to try to climb the mountain. He went up to it. First he put on the chipmunk's fur, and turned into a chipmunk. The chipmunk started off, jumping up the mountain. Soon, his nails wore out. He tried the weasel's fur and when that wore out, he put on the squirrel's fur last. When that one was almost worn out, he jumped up and over to the top of the mountain.

(At this point the story ends. This is a rough draft collected by Kate McKenzie, Stanley Mission)

#### B.3.7.1. Muhikunistikwan

Told by Sarah McKenzie

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1984

Long ago a band of Indians was ruled by an evil medicine man named 'Muhikunistikwan'. This medicine man would not let the people of his village visit with friendly neighbouring tribes.

He told them, "If you go into the woods wild animals will kill you, and if you go in your canoes, the underwater people will tip your boats and drown you."

A young girl in the camp had a grandmother who lived across the lake with another tribe. Many times the girl wanted to visit her grandmother and take her little gifts. The medicine man would not let her go. The girl was secretly angry and thought, "I don't believe that there are dangerous, strange animals. 'Muhikunistikwan' is just trying to keep us all from seeing friends across the lake."

The evil medicine man knew what the girl was thinking, so he kept a close watch on her. If the people stopped believing in him, he would no longer get free fish and meat from them. He planned to get rid of the girl somehow, very soon.

One day 'Muhikunistikwan' saw the girl getting ready to go across the lake in her canoe. She had a new pair of moccasins to give to her grandmother.

As the girl was pushing away from the shore, her pet dog jumped into her canoe. She let the dog stay to keep her company as she crossed the lake.

When she got to her grandmother's, she jumped out of her canoe and started pulling the canoe up on the sand.



Instead of her pet dog, there was now a giant frog in her canoe. The frog leaped at the girl and she screamed. The men from the camp ran down the shore as she was hitting the giant frog with her paddle.

The men killed the giant frog. The girl then told them that it was the evil medicine man from her village taking the form of the frog. The men went to their teepees and called the people to come and see the giant frog.

The girl took her paddle and the pair of moccasins and walked along a path that led to her grandmother's teepee.

As she was walking 'Muhikunistikwan' jumped out of the bushes and demanded, "I want those moccasins."

The girl spoke up bravely, "You can't have them. You tried to get the frog to kill me but couldn't do it."

The medicine man again told her to hand over the new moccasins but the girl still refused.

'Muhikunistikwan' rushed at the girl and growled, "I will kill you now."

The girl waited until he was very close and then struck him hard on the head with her paddle and killed him. She went back to the shore and told the men what she had done.

The giant frog had disappeared and they were frightened.

The girl knew what had happened. 'Muhikunistikwan' had changed himself back into a man when he jumped out of the bushes at her.

The men walked back to the path with her and found him there, dead, just as the girl had said.

They put the body of the evil medicine man into a canoe and then dragged it far out into the lake. They shot arrows through the canoe until it sank.

#### B.3.7.2. Wesuhkechahk and the One who carries a Bullet

Told by Noah Ratt

Collected and illustrated by James Ratt

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch 1985

Long ago, a man had a beautiful daughter whom Weshkechahk liked very much. But one day, a strange man killed the girl and her father had no idea who had committed the crime. He wanted someone to volunteer to go after the killer.

Wesuhkechahk jumped at the chance. He told the girl's father that he would track down the murderer and kill the man himself.

By now the killer was miles ahead, but Wesuhkechahk had good strong legs and would not tire as easily as the man he was chasing.

The killer's name was "The one who carries a bullet". Wesuhkechahk kept saying the man's name over and over as he travelled. He also planned how he was going to kill him when he caught him.

In those days, some people could do unbelievable things by

using charms and medicine. "The one who carries a bullet" was such a person and he was able to hear whatever Wesuhkechahk was saying or thinking from a great distance away.

"The one who carries a bullet" knew that Wesuhkechahk was getting closer, so he decided to turn himself into a tree.

"Let my trail go ahead of me when I turn into a tree!" he said. Immediately, the trail appeared.

Wesuhkechahk soon passed by the tree which he had looked at for a moment. Then he went on the trail. As he ran, he kept saying what he planned to do with the killer when he caught him.

Soon the trail ended abruptly and Wesuhkechahk remembered the tree he had passed. He also knew that the tree was really the man he was chasing. Wesuhkechahk ran to where the tree had stood, but it was too late.

In place of the tree was another trail leading away in a different direction. Wesuhkechahk followed the new path.

But "The one who carries a bullet" knew that Wesuhkechahk was getting closer again, so he said, "Let there be a camp up ahead where a man and his wife live with their two daughters." Immediately the camp appeared with the family nearby their teepee. "The one who carries a bullet" travelled past the camp before Wesuhkechahk arrived there.

On the way, Wesuhkechahk reached a place where pine boughs had been gathered which were used for bedding inside the teepee. As he went over a hill, he happened to see one of the beautiful daughters. He combed his hair with his fingers before he went down to the camp.

The old lady invited him to come inside the teepee and to sit down before her two daughters. Both girls were offered to Wesuhkechahk as wives by their mother and father. He forgot all about "The one who carries a bullet".

That night he slept with both women and in the morning he awoke to embrace them, his arms only encircled the snow.

Wesuhkechahk realized that he had been fooled again. "You are not going to trick me a third time!" he said to himself.

But again "The one who carries a bullet" heard him and decided to fool him again.

This time two teepees appeared and when Wesuhkechahk passed by, he found places where two campfires had just been put out. The people had recently packed up and moved. Wesuhkechahk was sorry he had just missed a chance to visit with them. Then he heard a dog barking ahead which he began to chase.

He caught up with the dog which was old. It had a belly so large that it could not run very fast. Wesuhkechahk kicked him because its whinnying and yelping irritated him. The dog opened its mouth but couldn't make a sound because it had been kicked so hard.

Wesuhkechahk was certain was certain that the dog was another trick of "The one who carries a bullet".

Wesuhkechahk continued travelling and looking for the people who had just moved their camp...but nothing again, the trail ended abruptly.

"Oh, no!" cried Wesuhkechahk. "He's fooled me again! It

looks like I will never catch him!"

He ran back to the place where he had left the old dog, but only found another trail heading in a new direction.

This is where the story ends. For all we know, Wesuhkechahk is probably still chasing "The one who carries a bullet"!

### B.3.7.3. Wisahkicahk

Marie Merasty

Interviewer unknown

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (n.d.)

Marie Merasty: (In Cree) Wisahkicahk lived with his wife and his wife's daughter. They had only one young son. So one day he told his wife that he was sick. "When I die, leave this place, leave my body behind. Just cover me with spruce boughs," he said.

So he pretended to be very sick and then he faked dead. So the wife and her daughter packed up getting ready to move camp. So they covered him up with spruce boughs as he requested. Then they left. Finally they set up their teepee. When a teepee is first set up, usually the campfire they built inside burns the ground further and deeper than it was intended to. But before he supposedly died, he also said to his wife that there would be a young single man who would arrive at their camp. He told her to give her daughter to this young man to marry. So he didn't leave the old camp site right away. But after a short while he left and headed for his wife's camp pretending to be this young single man.

He stood outside the teepee and spoke loud enough so his wife can hear him. "You will go inside where there is a young single woman. This is what my father told me before I left him," he said.

So his wife let him in thinking he was the young single man her husband had told her about. She told him to come in and sit across the other side of the fire in the teepee where the young woman was sitting. So Wisahkicahk went and sat beside her. This meant he was married to this young woman.

So that night they went to sleep. But the young boy [Wisahkicahk's son] was sleeping closer to the fire than his mother when he noticed something. When there was sparkle from the fire he would jump up and when he looked across he recognized his father sleeping across from the fire. Wisahkicahk was burned so there was a hole through his pants and he had a bare behind. So he [the son] said to his mother, "That is my father sleeping there!"

The young boy's mother just told him not to say that, because that was his brother-in-law who was lying there. So everyone went back to sleep. Then there were more sparkles from the fire which caused it to burn closer and deeper to the ground where they were sleeping. The young boy repeated the same thing to his mother. But the wife had kept a stick beside her to keep the fire in control and push the burning ashes closer to the fire.

"That's my father!" the young boy exclaimed in surprise. So finally the wife sat up and looked at the man who was lying there with a bare behind. Then she finally recognized that it was truly her husband. So she got up, took the stick and hit him with it. He fled out the door. So much for the new groom.

#### B.3.7.4. The Fat Bellied Boy (Mischuchuyawasis)

Informant unknown

Interviewer unknown

Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education Branch (n.d.)

Once upon a time there was a vain lady who thought the world of herself. She hated men and she would never go out with one.

In the lady's village lived a little boy whom all the people disliked. They called him 'Mischuchuyawasis' because he had a fat belly.

One day the lady went for a pee and the boy was watching her from behind a tree where he could not be seen.

After the lady was finished, the young boy went over and peed on the same spot where she had been. "She will have a baby boy when she gets pregnant," the boy said.

The lady did get pregnant and her father was very mad at her. When the baby arrived, it was a baby boy just as 'Mischuchuyawasis' had said it would be.

The lady's father insisted that there should be a meeting to try and find out who was the father of the daughter's child. The old man decided that the villagers would gather in a circle and pass the baby around. The person on whom the baby peed would be the father.

Just then 'Mischuchuyawasis' walked in and sat near the doorway where he would not be noticed.

The old man spoke up, "Get out of here Mischuchuyawasis. You're no good."

But another man said, "No. it's all right. He can stay."

The man began to pass the baby boy around in a circle. When it came to 'Mischuchuyawasis', it peed on his fat belly.

The old man became furious and shouted, "We will leave them here and go to other hunting grounds. We'll leave them here to starve."

Later, 'Mischuchuyawasis' asked the pretty lady, "What kind of man would you like to marry?"

She replied, "A man who is of medium build, with muscular calves and blonde curly hair."

The young boy then said, "Could you leave the teepee for awhile? I'll call you when I'm ready for you."

While the pretty lady waited outside, 'Mischuchuyawasis' bathed himself in steam from the fire. He chanted as part of his ritual which only he could understand. His whole appearance changed. Then he called the pretty lady back. Right before her pretty eyes was the kind of man she wanted to marry! Yes, they

married and lived happily ever after!

B.3.7.5. (Untitled)

Told by Lucy McKenzie

Date unknown

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

Lac La Ronge Community Television: Tape #268

Lucy McKenzie: (In Cree) Once there was an old lady who had three daughters. Suddenly someone knocked on their door. A big bear stood at the door. The elder of the three sisters opened the door. The bear asked her if she'd marry him. Her reply was, "No." Then she shut the door. The next evening the bear came back. The middle daughter answered the door. He asked her if she'd marry him. She also she no and shut the door. The next evening he came back again. The youngest daughter answered the door this time. The bear asked her if she'd marry him. She said, "Yes." So he said, "Get on my back." So she did and off they went.

It was blowing snow that evening. Finally the bear arrived at his house with his new bride. She lived there with him. The bear would be banging around and chopping wood all day long like a real man would. He had a very nice home. At night he would turn to a man. The young lady was curious to see what her husband looked like as a man. He would then turn back to a bear during the day.

Her husband asked her if she would like to go for a visit, he would take her. She wanted to go and visit her mother so he took her to visit and left her there for a while. Her mother asked if she was getting along fine with this person who took her home. The youngest daughter replied, "Yes, and he takes very good care of me and he has a very nice home. But I don't like the part where he always turns into a bear." She added, "And when we get in bed to sleep, he turns to a man."

Her mother said, "Just wait. I'll give you a candle and while he's sleeping you can see what he looks like." Her mother added that she should turn her ring around, so he'll know she wants him. Suddenly the bear knocked on the door and the young lady went back home with him. She took the candle along with her.

So that evening she lit the candle while he was asleep. He knew what was happening immediately. He jumped up in a great hurry and ran out. As he was leaving he told her that she would never see him again. She felt very badly. She left, in search for her husband. She followed all the paths, but she couldn't find him. Her husband went up north. So she saw an old lady on the way and she asked her if she saw someone walking by here - a man.

The old lady said, "Yes. He walked by here but he went very far away. Your grandfather lives over there close by. He will tell you exactly where he went," she added.

The old lady gave her a nice rubber ball and then she left. She arrived at this place. It was so clean and tidy at this place. She entered. The old man asked, "What is it, my grandchild?"

She asked, "Did a man walk by here?"

The old man replied, "Yes, but I can take you to him if you want to go and get him." He gave her two items - a very nice comb and brush set. When they stepped outside, the old man said, "I have to make my breathing air first". The old man turned round like a balloon as she was watching him inhaling air in his body.

Then he said, "Let's go now. Get on my back." So they left. He let her off on the top of a high hill. He said, "There is a cabin out there across the river where your husband lives."

Before she left, the old man told her he would be back for her after three nights so she can go back home. She went across the river. She didn't know exactly what to do as she couldn't talk to her husband. He had already found another woman to live with. So she played with her rubber ball and the other woman came outside.

The other woman asked her, "What could I give you in exchange, if you give me your rubber ball?"

"If you'd let me borrow your man," she replied.

"If you give me the ball, I'll give you my man."

"The young lady said," Yes, I'll give it to you." So she did. So that evening the young lady couldn't wake her husband up. The other woman gave him something, so he wouldn't wake up when his {first} wife tried to wake him up. So the next evening she gave her the comb. She tried waking her husband up, but couldn't.

Then one of the men at work asked him, who is the woman who cries by his bedside in the evenings. He replied, "I don't know." So the other man asked him not to take the stuff the other woman gives him before he goes to sleep, so he'll find out who's been trying to wake him up without him knowing.

That evening he didn't take the stuff and he stayed awake that evening. That evening the young lady gave the other woman her last item - a brush. So that evening the man found out that his [first] wife was the person who was trying to wake him up. So the next morning he said the woman that can take the candle wax off him would become his wife.

The other woman tried to get it off but could not get it off. His [first] wife got the candle wax off of him. So she went with him. She told him that they were going home.

"Our grandfather must have been waiting. This is the day he told me he would come for me," she said.

So they left. The old man was waiting for them up on the hill. They went flying home on the round old man's back. When they got home, they found out that the round old man who took them home was the North Wind.

#### B.4. EPIC TALES

Epic tales and their place in Rocky Cree culture have been discussed in Chapter Five. These tales are based on the adventures of one principal character and involve numerous examples of power a human may possess.

##### B.4.1.1. The Story of Ayas

Lucy McKenzie

Date unknown

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

Lac La Ronge Community Television: Tape #268

Lucy McKenzie: Once there was a young man named Ayas who lived with his mother and his uncle\*. His uncle was very mean to him. One day the old woman was gone out to cut wood. Ayas killed a partridge. Somehow he managed to get his cousin in trouble. His uncle, the old man, was very angry with Ayas.

The old man had a plan. He said, "Ayas, we'll go out on the lake to find some eggs." So the next day they went way out in the middle on the lake to a small island that was by itself in the midst of nowhere. They got out of their canoe and picked seagull and other bird eggs from this island. The old man filled his canoe right full to the top with eggs.

Ayas asked, "My uncle, where am I going to sit?"

The old man replied, "You'll put some eggs on your head and you'll place grass in the canoe, so you won't break the eggs." Just as they were getting in the canoe to leave, his uncle said to him, "I saw some eggs right behind a rock. Run for them."

Ayas did as he was told. He repeatedly asked, "Is it over here?" His uncle would reply, "No, no, it's further out there." The next time he called out, Ayas stopped quickly, for he realized that his uncle intended to leave him on this deserted island. The old man was already paddling his canoe a long way from the island.

Ayas started crying. He called out, "My uncle, you left me all alone on this island." In anger, Ayas threw a rock at his uncle. He hit him on the head and the old man went dizzy for a short while. He paddled his canoe in circles, going nowhere for some time before he came to and went on his way home, leaving Ayas behind.

Ayas finally fell asleep. He had a dream. He dreamt of a seagull flying around the small island where he was. He also dreamt that someone spoke to him and told him that there would be eggs already cooked for him to eat when he awoke. When Ayas was awake, he remembered he was still in the middle of nowhere. He wondered how he would be able to fly back home. But in his dream, he remembered the voice which told him to put on the seagull skin after he'd killed the seagull. He remembered his dream! There were eggs there that were already cooked like what he dreamt. He ate the eggs. Then he further remembered his dream. He remembered the voice saying that if he could fly with the seagull skin outfit four times around this small island, then he would be able to fly

across to the big island.

So Ayas saw the seagull flying around the small island. He had a knife with him so he aimed it at the seagull and killed it. Then he flew around the small island once, very, very slowly. And then he went and sat on top of a high rock and looked at the big island from there. The big island looked foggy from where he was since it was so very far away. Then he tried to fly over to the big island.

He flew very, very slowly. Then as he was getting closer to the big island he could see the bottom of the lake since the water was shallow there. He started flying faster and faster when he suddenly went splash in the water. So he waded the rest of the way to shore. He finally managed to get on the big island.

He started walking along the shore of this island. He saw a teepee nearby. He went in. His grandmother, a frog, lived in this teepee. So Ayas asked, "Grandmother, could you take me across to the mainland?"

The bull-frog replied, "No, my grandchild. I tend to sink when I try to swim." She said, "Your grandfather lives at the edge of this island. He is a good swimmer."

So Ayas went to see his grandfather. He saw a big snake or sea serpent sitting there. He asked, "Grandfather, could you take me across?"

The snake replied, "Yes but could you look for a flat rock so you can hit my feelers when I start slowing down." So Ayas got a flat rock immediately.

The big snake asked him, "How do you want to travel? On top of the water or under the water?"

Ayas said, "On top of the water."

The big snake asked, "Could you look up in the sky to see if it's cloudy? I'm very much afraid when there is a thunder storm." So Ayas looked up to see if it was cloudy. The black clouds were coming closer and closer. He told his grandfather that the sky was clear and off they went across the lake towards to mainland. When they got to the middle of the lake, they heard thunder.

The big snake asked, "What was that noise, my grandchild?"

"It is your body that's making vibrating sounds because you are swimming so fast, my grandfather," Ayas replied.

The big snake said, "Hit my feelers every so often."

They were very close to the mainland when they heard the sound of thunder again. Ayas knew the thunder was out to get his grandfather, so he jumped off his back just as they were getting close to shore. The lightning struck the big snake and he flew to pieces. Ayas walked around, then he cried for his grandfather, the big snake.

Suddenly he noticed the big snake's bones were moaning and groaning. Ayas picked up the bones and he blew on them. A baby snake appeared as he was blowing on the bones. Ayas said, "Go, my grandfather. Travel under the water this time. Go back home and go sit where you were sitting like before." So the snake took off, under water.

Ayas started walking along the shore. He would be going by



his uncle's 'pawakan'. [These were] his uncle's helpers, his uncle had spiritual power over these people. His grandmother had warned him of this old man who lived nearby. She told Ayas that this old man was out to kill him and that he should watch out. She told him to disguise himself as a mink. She said that the old man's dog would bark at him.

So Ayas, disguised as a mink, started walking along the shore, when suddenly he heard a dog barking at him. The dog said, "I'm looking for Ayas." So the old man came outside to see who was there. All he saw was a mink jumping into a hole in the ground. He said, "If my dog was really barking at Iyas, his eyes will be swollen in the morning." The next morning, sure enough, his dog's eyes were so swollen, they were shut. "My dog really did bark at Ayas!" he exclaimed.

From there Ayas kept walking and he saw another old man on the way. This old man's legs were very big because they were so swollen and infected. He used his legs as weapons to kill people with. Just before Ayas arrived at this old man's home, he had picked up a young fox and took it along with him. He told Ayas stories. Ayas was getting very sleepy, when he noticed the old man was approaching him slowly to try to kill him. Ayas let the young fox go and the young fox jumped on the old man. This gave Ayas time to run for his life and so he did.

As he was walking quite a long way from the old man's place, suddenly the earth split in half right by his feet. A voice came from the crack of the earth and said, "I'll bite Ayas." But Ayas had a string of small white fish which he took along with him so he threw them between the crack and quickly jumped over to the other side.

Then as he continued on with his journey, all of a sudden he heard two old ladies laughing. So he sneaked in their teepee, because the two old ladies were blind. One old lady was boiling human bones and the other, animal bones. They were making grease by boiling these bones. Ayas started eating the boiled animal bones. He knew the other pot was full of human bones so he didn't touch those.

Ayas kept scooping the water and grease out of the pot to get to the animal bones. The old ladies noticed their cooking had been tampered with. There was no grease on top of the water in one of the pots. One old lady said, "Oh, sister-in-law, Ayas has arrived. There is no grease coming out of these bones."

The other lady wanted to find out what was going on, so she went around the teepee jabbing her elbows around to see if she could feel anyone in the teepee. Then right by the doorway she jabbed something soft. She asked, "Is that you Ayas?"

Ayas said, "Yes."

The old lady said, "Come and sit over here." They asked him to come in and they fed him. The two old ladies were planning to kill him. As he was trying to eat they were filing their jagged elbows, so they would be extra sharp and pointed. They asked Ayas to say, "I'm going out now," when he was ready to leave. So he bundled up something together and he threw it to the doorway as he said, "I'm going out now." He couldn't even eat because he was

scared of the 'jagged elbows'. The two old ladies fled to the door jabbing away with their elbows. They jabbed at each other, each thinking they were jabbing at Iyas. They jabbed each other to death.

Ayas stalked up with food which the old ladies had gotten ready for the winter. He started off on his journey once again, when he heard someone chopping wood nearby. He tried taking a peek at this person. It was Ayas' mother. Her face was all scabby and burnt. Just then a bird said to the old lady, "Your son Ayas is back!"

Ayas' mother threw sticks at the bird and started crying. She asked, "What is he trying to say? My son Ayas got left behind on an island a long time ago."

Ayas then said, "It's true, mother, I'm back. How come you look the way you do?"

The old lady replied, "Usually right after I've chopped wood, your uncle drags me onto the hot ashes."

Ayas said, "When you take the wood down, the old man's wife will be taking her baby out of his bunting bag. Ask to hold the baby. While the fire is burning good, throw the baby into the fire and yell out, 'My son! My son!'" The old lady felt braver with her son around. Sure enough as she got there, the old man's wife had the baby out of its bunting bag. So she asked to hold the baby. The old man said, "Don't give her the baby. She'll throw him in the fire!"

The wife asked, "Why do you say these kinds of things whenever she wants to hold the baby!" The wife let the old lady hold the baby. The old lady threw the baby into the fire and she ran out of the teepee yelling, "My son! My son!"

The old man cried out, "Where? Where is her son? I left him on an island a long time ago."

Ayas answered, "Right here!" He was back. Ayas burned the forest down. He made 'Ayas wood' (burnt wood). The old man asked Ayas, "Nephew, where am I going to take your cousins (your younger brothers and sisters) for safety?"

Ayas replied, "In your grease!" He burned all of them to death.

\* Translator's note: Relationship between mother and man unclear. Could either be her brother or the man she was married to.

#### B.4.1.2. Ayas

Told by Mrs. George (Betsy) McKenzie

Translation by Florence McKenzie

From Cree Culture and Language Program, Keethanow School, Stanley Mission (n.d.)

Ayas' uncle used to hate him. One time, his aunt went to get wood, so he followed her, he was looking for grouse. He killed on grouse. Then he threw it at his aunt, which the old woman

picked up and rubbed it on her chest so the claws scratched her. Then she ran home to tell her husband that Ayas scratched her. So when Ayas went home, his uncle took him to an island and left him there. So he sat down and cried until he finally fell asleep. He dreamed of many gulls, so he started throwing rocks at them, until he finally killed one. He woke up and for sure there were a lot of them where he had been sleeping. He killed one, then he skinned it. He put on the skin and feathers, then he flew to the mainland. He had just about reached shore, when the skin and feathers ripped. So he just waded to the shore and he started on his journey.

The continuing story of Ayas:

So, Ayas was walking along when suddenly he saw a teepee, standing close to the path. He walked in, and there sat an old toad. He asked her to sew up his moccasin that was torn. So the little old toad sewed up Ayas' moccasin. After she had sewn up his moccasin, he put it on and saw that it was very poorly sewn, so he got the toad and kicked her right out of her teepee. Then he started off again.

While he was walking along he suddenly came upon another teepee. His moccasin had started to get another hole in it so he walked in and saw an old chipmunk woman sitting there. He asked her to sew up his moccasin. So she sewed it up and did a fine job.

He started walking again when suddenly he heard something moaning, so he went to check who it was. There he found an old man sitting inside a teepee, with his knees wrapped in bandages where he had a big sore. The old man started to lay out food for Ayas but Ayas rushed out of there because he didn't want to eat there because the old man was sick.

Then he walked cautiously down the path. He walked along and again he suddenly saw another teepee. He went into it and there he saw two old women. One of them was cracking human bones into little pieces and boiling them, while the other old woman was cracking moose bones and boiling those ones too. So he sat there by the door, close to where the moose bones were boiling. He watched the old women from there. He was also dipping his fingers in the pot where the moose bones were boiling, eating the fat that was coming to the top. Suddenly the women knew he was there. They didn't know he was there at first because they were both blind. One woman said to the other, "Hey, cousin, my pot of bones is not giving any fat. I think Ayas has arrived."

She picked up her cane and poked around with it by the door. She found Ayas and asked him, "Is that you, Ayas?"

"Yes," answered Ayas.

The old woman said, "Wait. Just sit there and we'll give you something to eat. Tell us when you are finished and going out the door."

Then the old women gave Ayas some chopped up moose meat. So he sat there and ate the food. When he finished he jumped to the other side of the teepee, where the moose meat was. He grabbed one of the bags full of meat and threw it at the door.

"I'm going out now," he yelled.

He watched as the old women started stabbing the bag with

their elbows, because they had sharpened their elbows while Ayas was eating. Suddenly one of them stabbed the other old woman.

"Hey, cousin, you're stabbing me," said the old woman.

So the other said, "Well, you're stabbing me too."

After a while they killed each other. So Ayas packed some meat for himself. Then he started off on his journey again.

He was walking along when he suddenly heard, "I'm going to hook up Ayas," something was saying that to him. He looked up and saw hooks tied in a bunch, so he threw some fish there, which they grabbed, then he jumped over them. He was walking along when again he suddenly heard, "I'm going to bite Ayas," said the thing that he heard. So he walked over there, and saw that it was some earth that had split. He threw something in there and the earth closed up, and he jumped over it.

Then he continued on his journey. He suddenly heard something else. Somebody was chopping wood. So he went to pack and saw that it was his mother. She had marks all over her face because the old man was so mean to her. Ayas walked over to her.

"What's the matter?" he asked his mother.

"When I have gathered wood the old man makes a big fire, then he throws me into it," replied the mother. So Ayas got angry.

"When you go home take some wood inside and the child.

While the woman is holding him as usual, ask her to give him to you. After you've made a big fire then jump out the door and throw the child in the fire," he said to his mother. "I will be there. My son, my son, you will call," he said. So the old woman went home, and Ayas went over there too. Then he waited outside watching as his mother took some wood inside. The old woman made a big fire, then she asked the woman for the child so she could hold him.

"Hey! Don't give him to her. She will throw him in the fire," said the old man.

"But she never holds him," said the woman. She gave the child to Ayas' mother. The old woman had hardly grabbed the child when she threw him in the fire and jumped out the door.

"My son, my son," she yelled.

"Aha! Sure, sure, she'll see her son," said the old man.

He also ran out and Ayas came dashing from behind. He grabbed the old man and they wrestled right there. Then the old woman started a fire on the ground.

"Where am I going to take my children!" cried the old man.

"Take them to you fat," said Ayas, as he chopped off the woman's head, then the head of the woman started rolling away.

The other two children, who had been there already, ran away. There were the ones that the woman's head followed. But the Ayas' mother had given them some things to throw behind them when the head of the woman came rolling close. So the head went rolling after them. They saw it coming closer. They had been given a comb to throw at the head so lots of little trees would spring up from there, close together. So for a little while there they delayed the rolling head. Then the children ran away again.

Suddenly they saw it behind them again, coming closer. So they again threw something behind them.

There went a roaring red blaze. They stopped it there for a while too. Then the head finally made it through the fire, but the children had run quite a long way this time. Suddenly they saw the head coming after them again. They then threw some soap behind them and there flowed a big river. So they finally ran away from the head. They walked along the shore, when suddenly they saw somebody paddling along. He had oars, one on each side. He was coming to where they were.

"Step on my paddle," said the old man, whose name was Wimisosow. One of the boys stepped on his paddle and the old man put him in the canoe.

The other boy wasn't taken so he ran along the shore, calling to his brother, "My big brother, my big brother, I might as well be a wolf." The other boy was paddled away with the old man.

When they arrived at their destination, the old man tipped the canoe ashore along with the boy. The old man went up the hill, to go and tell his daughters that he had brought home one boy. He told his younger daughter to go down to the canoe and to take some soap, toadstools, and some blusher. So the young girl went down but came right back up the hill.

"Oh! He's nothing," she said.

So the older sister went down, but she also came back up saying the same thing.

The old man said, "He just looks that way from crying. Just wait. I'll go and wash his face."

So he went down and washed the boy's face, brought him up, then he sat him down between his two daughters.

"Sit on each," he told them.

And I think that's the end of the story.

#### B.4.1.3. Iyas and the Old Man

Informant unknown

Collected by Gloria Clarke.

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[This is one of the stories which were told by students at Southend Reindeer School in 1976. The stories were learned from 'Their Grandparents'.]

Gloria: My father told me a legend story about a boy named Iyas and the old man.

One day the old man said to Iyas, "Let's go to one of the islands." Iyas said yes, and they started to paddle towards the farthest island and it was the littlest island too.

The old man told Iyas to go around the island once and Iyas said, "It's time to go back home." "No," said the old man, but the old man was paddling back home. Iyas called the old man a

second time and the old man didn't call back so Iyas decided to go and check where the old man was and there was the old man already far away. Iyas was so mad that he started to throw rocks to the old man and the old man said, "Ha, ha you didn't hit me," and the old man got away. So Iyas went to sleep in the bush.

He was dreaming about three big seagulls. When Iyas woke up in the morning there were three big sea gulls, and he started throwing rocks at the sea gulls. He killed one and cut off the wings and dried them.

After drying them he put the wings on and started flying home.

He started to cry and there came crawling a snake. She said to Iyas, "Why are you crying?" Iyas said to the snake, "One of the men left me here on the island and I came by bird's wing to here and I fell down."

While he was flying the wings broke and he fell down but he wasn't hurt.

The snake said to Iyas, "Get on my back and if you see lightning tell me, and I'll go deep in water so it won't kill me or hit my horns." "We'll go fast," said the snake and they were riding fast.

Suddenly the snake heard something, "Is that the lightning?" asked the snake. "No," said Iyas. But Iyas was lying. They kept on riding and suddenly the lightning hit the snake and killed it.

Iyas swam to the island where there was a hole and there was somebody in the hole. Iyas started to walk and he saw the hole. He was taking a fish along. He came near to the hole and somebody spoke, "Iyas, Iyas I'm taking you," said the thing in the hole.

Iyas threw the fish in the hole and he was free.

While he was walking there was a teepee and a toad was sitting there.

It was an old toad, "You better fix my moccasin good while I go to get you some wood or I'll kill you." Iyas was finished getting the wood and the toad gave Iyas the moccasins and Iyas looked at them.

"You did a wrong job," said Iyas and he got a stick and hit the toad on the head and killed it.

He started walking and he saw some houses and there came the old man that left Iyas on the island. He said to his wife, "Give Iyas the fur to be soft on his feet. His feet must hurt," said the old man. Iyas said, "My feet are not hurt," and he went home. He came back with a bow and arrows, with fire on the edge of the arrows. "Where should I hide your little brothers and sisters?" said the old man. "In the water," said Iyas and he shot into the water. The water started boiling and the old man and Iyas' little brothers and sisters were dead.

B.4.2.1. The Rolling Head and Wee-Sa-Kee-Chak

Collected by Dennis McLeod

Unpublished and not dated

History and Culture Report - Stanley Mission - La Ronge

When Wee-sa-kee-chak was a young boy he lived with this father and a baby brother. Just about every day his father went out hunting and his mother would go in the bush to gather fire wood. Wee-sa-kee-chak kept his brother.

His mother stayed in the bush for long periods of time, so one day while his baby brother was sleeping he went looking for his mother. Finally he saw her standing by an old stump. She'd give a tap on the stump and snakes would come out and she'd play with them and fondle them. They were her pets. Wee-sa-kee-chak got mad because he had to babysit while his mother was just wasting time. When his father got home his mother had just got back with the firewood and she didn't have supper ready. His father got very mad; he took Wee-sa-kee-chak outside and asked him why it was that supper was never ready. So Wee-sa-kee-chak told him how his mother was always playing with the snakes.

So the next day Wee-sa-kee-chak's father took a turn in getting the firewood. He went to the old stump and gave it a tap. One by one the snakes came out. Everytime one came out he'd kill it and throw it in a sack. When he got home he got his wife busy on something to do must to divert her attention. Then he took the snakes and made stew. When he was through cooking he told his wife to try his cooking. While she was eating he asked her if she knew what she was eating. She said she didn't know and then he told her he had killed all her pets and that she was eating them. Wee-sa-kee-chak's mother ran out of the teepee and raced to where she kept her pets. When she got there she gave the stump a tap but nothing came out. She went raging mad.

While Wee-sa-kee-chak's mother was checking on her pets his father gave him three things so that when his mother was chasing him he could throw them on his back trail and wish for a blockade. He took his baby brother along. When Wee-sa-kee-chak's mother got back the boys were gone, and she started fighting her husband. Wee-sa-kee-chak's father chopped his wife's head off but that didn't stop her. Then she started chasing them.

When Wee-sa-kee-chak saw the rolling head coming he took one of the objects his father had given him and he wished for a thorn barrier. Then he started running again. But the rolling head went through the thorns and started chasing again. Soon the rolling head was catching up to the boys again so Wee-sa-kee-chak threw the second object and wished for a fire barrier which held the rolling head busy for awhile getting around the fire, but it got around that too. And now Wee-sa-kee-chak had only one object left to throw, so he threw that on his back trail and wished for a wide river. When the rolling head got to the river it saw a pelican on the river, so it called to it and asked it it could

take it across the river. The pelican agreed but in mid-stream the rolling head rolled off the pelican's back and was drowned.

Now Wee-sa-kee-chak was carrying his little brother along and he got hungry and started crying. After awhile they saw an owl sitting on a limb and the owl asked him what was wrong with his little brother. So he told the owl that he couldn't make his brother stop crying. Then the owl gave him four of his talons and told him to put them on a string and he stopped crying.

After awhile they came to a lake and they walked along the shore and Wee-sa-kee-chak would throw the string of talons up to amuse his brother. After awhile they saw a man paddling along the shoreline so they went up close to the shoreline and went to meet him. Wee-sa-kee-chak was still throwing the string up for his baby brother when they were level with the man. The man stuck his paddle up and knocked the string into his canoe. Wee-sa-kee-chak begged him to give them back and the man told him to lay his brother down and get the string from inside the canoe. So he did what the man told him to do. The man shoved off and paddled away with Wee-sa-kee-chak, leaving his little brother on the shore. When they were quite away out the little brother jumped up and started running along the shoreline; he had turned into a wolf. He yelled at Wee-sa-kee-chak and said he was going to stay a wolf. That is the first animal brother Wee-sa-kee-chak had but he warned him never to go after moose in the water.

So to this day when wolves chase moose they go around a lake. And as for Wee-sa-kee-chak that was when his wandering began.

#### B.4.2.2. Chi Chi Pis Chi Kon and the Snake Heads

Told by Catherine Linklater

Collected and illustrated by Catherine Ballantyne  
Pelican Narrows Teachers Aid Program (n.d.)

There was a woman who had two boys and a husband. She had a big boy and one small one. This woman was called Chi Chi Pis Chi Kon. She was a mean woman. So every time her husband went out to hunt she would leave her two boys all day long. The man started to realize everytime he arrived home there was nothing ready on the table, and the boys were telling their father, they never ate during the day. So one day, he asked the boys where their mother went when he went out. No one spoke, then suddenly, one of the boys said, "She goes into the deep forest but we don't know what she's doing there."

So one day he went out but he did not go far because he was planning to follow her. She started going on her way, but she did not go to where the tree was. So the man came back to the boys and asked the boys, "Where is the tree standing?" The big boy said to his father, "My mother was telling me about the tree."

"Every time I hit the tree, she said, there would be snakes but they are not snakes they are my men." The next day, the boys and their father went into the forest till they came to a big



tree, then the man started to hit the tree, suddenly snakes came out of it. The father took an axe and chopped off the snakes' heads. Then he put them in a pail and took it home.

He said to the boys, "I will cook those for your mom. I will make soup." The soup looked like blood. She got back that evening, and he said, "There is some soup on the table." She looked at the soup then she asked, "Where did you get that bloody soup?" Then he replied, "I went to chop off you men's heads." So she got very angry and began to fight. They were fighting so much they ended up outside their house. So the man grabbed the axe and chopped her head off. But her body was still moving and the head was rolling away. Still mad, the man chopped her into three parts. He killed a part of her, but her head was still alive.

Now the two boys ran away. The head followed them saying, "I'll kill you, I'll kill you." The boys were very scared. They went very far, but she would be close to them at all times. So one day when the boys were sitting by a big tree they met an old lady. The old lady asked the boys, "Why are you hiding?" They told that their mother was trying to kill them. "Here are three things," she said to the boys, "Take these and every time the head comes close, throw it at your back and say anything you want and something will appear."

They went on their way. Suddenly they heard the head rolling close by them, so the big boy touched the first thing and said "Fire." Fire appeared, and the head could not go through. So they ran far far away. While they were walking the head came close again. This time it was trying to trick them. The small boy started to cry, it was really close. The big boy took out the second thing and threw it back and said, "Big, big rock," and a big rock appeared and the head was stuck again. The boys ran further and further. The head saw a caterpillar by the rock and asked the caterpillar, "Can you make a hole in the rock. I want to go get my two boys. I will marry you if you do that for me."

The caterpillar was very happy. He started to make a hole. When he finished the head went rolling away. So while the boys were walking they heard it coming. They just had one more thing left but they did not know what to do next. It was closer. Then the boy took the third thing out of his pocket and dropped it in front of him. He was scared. He shouted, "I wish there was a river," and a river appeared, but there way no way they could get across. Right then a Pelican came down the river. "Please," they said, "Take us across. Our mother is trying to kill us." So the Pelican did.

Soon the head came rolling, but it got stuck. Then it saw the Pelican. It said, "Can you take me across. I want to kiss my children. If you do that I will marry you." So the Pelican did. The head got onto the Pelican's neck. They went down to where the kids were. The Pelican said, "Please don't hold me too tight. You're hurting me." She did not listen so he flew off.

Now the head was rolling down the river. It was saying, "I wish I was a Sturgeon." Just then it turned into one and then it was a fish. The boys were watching. They started crying because there was nobody to look after them and they had no magic things

left. Then by the river a little boat came. There was an old man in it. He asked what was wrong. They told him their story and why they were crying, then he took them and let them live with him, and they were happy there.

B.4.3.1. (Untitled)

Interview with Bella Ratt

Collected by Brenda Charles

Translated by Rosie S. McKenzie

From Cree Culture and Language Program, Keethanow School, Stanley Mission (n.d.)

Bella: This place called Stanley Mission, a long time ago when the people were starting out to the trapline they used to stop at the big rock hill. They used to pull an arrow to the top of the hill. If somebody's arrow didn't go all the way up them they wouldn't come back from the trapline alive. If somebody's arrow didn't go all the way up, they'd die before the snowfall. That's why those people were dreaming. That's how they used to do it and they lived on the trapline.

Brenda: Why is Grandmother's Bay called that?

Bella: I don't know.

Brenda: What is the west wind?

Bella: I don't know. you should know everything because you go to school and speak English. A baby was born and he was so eager to be born that his mother was torn up during his birth. It was so windy that day and it was a west wind. That's how the people came to call him west. That's the only child who ever tore up his mother's body being born. That's why the west wind is the strongest wind. That's how the people came to call the west. It happened to the Indians a long time ago.

Brenda: What about the south?

Bella: South. I heard this story about the south a long time ago. The people used to walk. They would dream and they used to go and try and find each other.

One of them was short of tobacco - I wonder where he got the tobacco from. He sent his two boys to go and get tobacco and tea so they left and finally reached one big house. Then they saw a man, a trader, and first they ate with him. The trader told him, "We'll talk tonight."

So that night they talked and got used to each other but that night they talked too long. They old each other news and the two boys went to sleep. That night was so cold that the two boys were frozen. So the trader threw them in a hole and they froze to death. That was the north wind, they went to the north wind.

Then the man who sent the two boys went out to look for them and he found his way to the big house. He went inside and there was the trader sitting there. The man said, "We'll eat first and then tell the news to each other." The trader said okay but he was mad already.

So that night they told news to each other and they talked so long that the men started to get cold. He thought he what had happened to his boys. He knew why they didn't come home.

Then he turned to south. He wants south to blow the warm air so the snow was melted quickly. The wind was so hot the trader nearly died and after the bodies were melted he took his boys out. This boys came to life and the man told the trader, "I want my boys to buy some tea and tobacco before we go home." That's why they call it south. Maybe that's where warm air came from.

Those men were eating. The trader went out and gathered some wood and put it all around the house. The man put some gas on it and burned his house down. When the man and his sons knew there was a fire the man got our his pouch with some kind of fur in it. He pulled it out and he heated it on the fire three times and he threw it under the house. They followed the pouch and went through the ground and came up down the hill near the water.

They called back to the trader from there and he started to cry. The house was burned already. The three men went home safely. That's all I know about north and south. That's how the old people used to know west, north and south.

Brenda: What about east (the ugly wind)?

Bella: Somebody was born ugly when the wind was blowing from that way, east. When the leaves are turned yellow and the ground starts to freeze, that's the fall. And when the snow starts to fall and then it freezes up and gets so cold, that's winter. And when it gets warmer and the snow is melted to the ground, that's when it's springtime. And after the snow melted, the ice melted too, and when it starts to get hot, that's when we call summer.

Brenda: What about the sun and the moon?

Bella: The sun and the moon in the fall when the moose are calling. That's September - called 'moose calling' (month). And the other one is called 'hang month', when they were hanging fish, October. And November is 'frozen month', that's when it freezes up. And the other one called the 'frost month', when the ice crystals form on the trees, that is December. And they also called it 'Christmas month'.

The other month's called 'cold month' (January) and February is called {unclear word}, (just like when the wind is trying to dust the snow off the trees). The other one, March, is called "eagle month' and it starts to get warm. That is when the eagles come north. April is called 'geese month' and that's when the geese came north. May is 'frog month' because that's when we hear the frogs. June is the 'laying egg' month. That's when the birds are laying their eggs. August is the 'flying month'. That's

time when the birds start flying. July is when some ducks are losing their feathers and some of them don't fly. September is the mating season and that's why the moose are calling.

End of interview

B.4.3.2. Nianimis

Samuel Charles

Interviewer unknown

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (n.d.)

One winter, there were four men living in one camp with their wives and children. Each family had each one baby boy and that's it. A long time ago the babies used to be in moss bags even as they got to be toddlers or even older than that. They used to be in moss bags which were tied up half-ways up to their waists.

At this camp one of the boys was at that stage. His name was Nianimis. So one winter night one of the women lost her baby boy. They searched all over the place for the baby. He was nowhere to be found. The four families couldn't see any tracks on the snow. They thought someone might have gotten in their teepee to steal this baby boy. So the mother lost her baby permanently.

So the next evening, one more baby was missing. They couldn't find him. And the next evening after that the third baby boy was missing. And they couldn't find him either. So only one of the women at this camp still had her baby with her. So early the next morning this mother was looking at her baby, Nianimis, sleeping with his mouth opened and thus his teeth were showing. She noticed particles of fresh young meat between Nianimis' teth. So naturally she figured out what had happened to the rest of the three baby boys at camp.

So the mother told the rest of the families that it was obviously her young son who had eaten up the three baby boys. So she told them to do whatever they see fit to her son. She said her son would probably kill all of them eventually anyway.

Nianimis heard this from inside the teepee. So he asked them not to kill him, but just to abandon him at this camp. So they agreed with this request. The four husbands and their wives all moved to another camp to run away from this wetiko. They left him all by himself outside after they've taken the teepee poles and canvas down.

He started getting very, very cold. So he put his head down and started chanting. Suddenly he heard a noise like the sound of canvas when a person is in the process of putting a canvas over the poles of a teepee to cover it so it would stay warm inside. So when Nianimis sat up straight and lifted his head up, he was inside a teepee which was nice and warm.

Then that evening he gathered up all the bones of the three baby boys he had eaten up earlier. He had saved all the bones and had hidden them under some spruce boughs which were placed all

around the teepee. The bones were all in perfect condition because he didn't break them or bite any of them. So he fixed up a spot on the floor of the teepee and carefully placed all the bones side by side on this floor. Then he covered his face and as he was sitting beside the bones he began to chant. This is how he made a fire inside the teepee to keep warm.

All of a sudden he heard voices. They sounded as though they were coming closer and closer. So he turned around facing towards the bones. There he saw three young men lying side by side, instead of the bones. The dead baby boys came back alive and all grown up to three fine young men.

So Nianimis ordered them to get up. He told them that they would be going along with him to hunt and trap. And so they did just that. But unfortunately one day they ran out of almost everything. So Nianimis asked the young men to go for food. He told them to run straight down a path pulling a sleigh along with them. He said, "When you get to the store just trade in your furs and buy some food immediately. As soon as you are done buying come out right away. Don't listen to the fur trader if he says something like he wants you all to wait while he builds a fire so you could have tea while he tells stories or news."

So the two young men left to go and buy some food. Nianimis favoured one of the young men over the other two, so that young man stayed behind with him. And so they arrived at this trading post and they bought their food immediately, and as they were hauling them out to the sleigh the fur trader asked them to stay for a while. He told them they had a long journey ahead of them so he would make them some tea first before they left for home. So he pretended he was making tea and he sat around the middle of the floor and began to tell the two young men stories. Suddenly they heard crackling noises like ice cracking up, in the store. They began to get very cold to the point that they couldn't move any longer. So the two young men were frozen to death. Then the fur trader hid the two bodies behind something along with their groceries and other supplies.

When the two young men didn't return Nianimis asked his favorite young man to go out there and to return with some food as soon as he had bought it and he was not to listen to whatever the fur trader suggested to him. So the young man fled, running to the trading post. When he arrived there he did what Nianimis had told him to do. He did not see his two partners anywhere. But just before he left to come back home to their camp, the fur trader asked him to stay for tea. So the fur trader did the same thing to this young man. He, too, was frozen to death.

When he didn't return home either Nianimis knew what had happened to him also. He was furious. So the next morning as he was putting on his moccasins, he gathered up lint from woolen socks and he put his in his pocket. Then he started off to the trading post, running. When he arrived where he was going, he bought his food immediately. He looked around in the store to see if there was any sign of the three young men, but there wasn't. So the fur trader suggested the same thing as he did with the three others and Nianimis agreed to stay for tea because he had a different plan in

mind.

So the fur trader began to tell his stories and as he went along it became colder and colder inside this log shack. It was beginning to look frosty all around the shack. Nianimis began to get extremely cold, so he suggested that he too would like to tell a story in turn for a short while, and so he did. As he was talking he pulled out the lint from his pocket and began wrapping it all around himself. Then he said to the fur trader, "My older brother used to tell me to use my socks as a cocoon when I couldn't use them as socks anymore."

As he was talking the log shack sounded like when ice is melting and water is dripping onto the floor. The log shack became severely hot. So the fur trader asked Nianimis to leave and go back home now. But Nianimis kept saying he wanted to keep telling stories for a bit longer. Soon the fur trader was shrinking. You see, the fur trader was actually the north wind (Keewatin). He couldn't handle the heat.

Suddenly he heard some noise, then from behind where he hid the three bodies, the three men started waking up and got up. They became alive when they thawed out. So they took their food and supplies and they all fled back home to their camp.

When they were back home Nianimis told the three young men that he made the 'Keewatin' very angry so he would do something very severe to them. And sure enough, the next morning the north wind was blowing and blowing. It blew every day for several days. The north wind was so powerful that in no time all the islands on the lakes were destroyed by this wind. They ate all their food up and so they were getting very, very hungry. They were unable to go out hunting or trapping.

So one morning Nianimis was so hungry, on the verge of starvation, so he suggested that the three young men kill him. Then he went on and suggested they cut out all his flesh off his body frame but he asked that they don't break his bones or cut up the ligaments where any of his bones are connected or joined together. Then he went on and said that when they were done they were supposed to go onto around the middle of the lake and break the ice and bury his bones in there as deep as they can put them. Then he told them to prepare his flesh, as they would moose meat and dry it up and then when it was dry to pound it into very fine pieces. When they were done that they were to salt this pounded meat and take it down to the lake where they buried his bones. They were to sprinkle this pounded meat all over his bones and/or skeleton and bury it like that.

And so the three young men had to do as their boss ordered them to do. And so they did just as Nianimis had asked. So that evening as they were sitting around in the teepee they were thinking and worrying because they thought they would freeze to death here or starve to death. All of a sudden they saw Nianimis coming running towards them laughing and saying that the north wind taught him a lesson. He came inside their teepee and the next morning he suggested for the three men to take their sleigh and go down to where they had buried his bones and meat to see what might be in there. The young men went down and dug down where the bones

were and they found all sorts of different types of fish in place of these bones. So they filled up their sleigh with fish and went back home.

So from this day on it got very nice and warm outside. The weather was beautiful. So after all that had happened the four young men moved away to a different camp because they were afraid of Nianimis' father because they knew what sort of power he had. But one day they got brave enough to go and check how he was doing.

They saw a light in a teepee where Nianimis' father lived. They could hear him laughing. He knew ahead of time that the men were coming to his teepee even though they thought they were sneaking up on him. So Nianimis' father told them to come inside and so they did. He didn't recognize any of these four men. The rest of the other families didn't recognize them either. So Nianimis introduced the men to them. He said to one family that the first young man was their son and so on. Then he told his father who he was. So the families got each of their sons back.

#### B.4.4. Wayahpistes and the Evil Woman

Annie Johnson

Interviewer unknown

Translated and transcribed by Annie Torrence

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (n.d.)

Annie Johnson: (In Cree) Two men went to Pine House for freight. There was a very wicked old lady who lived at Pine House. She used bad medicine to kill a lot of good men for practically no good reason. The people used to be afraid of her so they would try to be nice to her.

These two men would take the whole summer long to go on this journey where the freight was. They didn't wear shoes because there were no shoes at that time. The two men had very thick soles on their feet because they were barefooted a lot of the time. They used to take along with them pemmican made of buffalo meat in their journey. They only had bows and arrows at that time. They didn't have any guns. They would probably kill ducks and rabbits on the way also.

This wicked old lady used to bring her large bowl down to the shore to meet the people who arrived, so she can {sic} ask them to give her some pemmican. If a person refused she used to kill them with bad medicine.

So one day the women were getting very impatient because their husbands hadn't returned from their journey yet. It was getting to be fall and the snow was already falling. So they asked Wahyahpistes (the medicine man) to help them. They wanted him to find out what had happened to their husbands. Wahyahpistes made an underground hut where he would perform this ceremony in order to see ahead what had happened to these men. He told the women to back home and he would let them know what he had found out later. So after some time he came down to the two women's camp site. He told them he came with very bad news. He said the men will arrive

tomorrow around noon. But, he said, out of these two women, one will not see her husband return alive. The old lady had killed one of the men. The men {generally} used to wear red shirts when everyone was alive. But when one or two men were dead, the men used to wear black. So when the men were coming home, they were all dressed in black, just as the medicine man had told them. One of the men did die as the medicine man had told them ahead of time.

Wahyahpistes (the medicine man) went on the journey to Pine House that next summer. He was very angry at this wicked old lady who'd been killing these men. They call this place 'House' because there were houses there. A long time ago there were only huts everywhere else, not houses. Anyway as they arrived at Pine House, Wahyahpistes told all his men to leave everything to him. He told them not to give any pemmican to the old lady. So that's exactly what they did. The men told her that their chief was the one who ran everything and if she wanted pemmican or anything else she would have to ask him for it.

So the old lady went down to ask the medicine man for pemmican. She took her large bowl down with her. She asked him for some pemmican. Wahyahpistes told her that he would not give her anything at all so she might as well go back home. The wicked old lady was furious. She threatened the medicine man. She told him to watch out because something was going to happen to him on the way back home. So Wahyahpistes and his men left for home. Nothing happened to him, he got home safe. He was more powerful than she was so she couldn't kill him.

When the Indian people wanted to know about Indian medicine or about 'dreaming', they had to sacrifice one thing one summer and they had to do this for ten summers. Then they would have been worthy of earning this knowledge or gift. For example, a person would give one horse in one summer, to an elder who would teach him how to learn about Indian medicine. This is not done at a sundance.

They say people can do extraordinary things during a sundance, although I've never been to one. It is just like people are making themselves suffer. Some of them don't eat anything for four days (fasting), don't drink anything and they make it. I heard people talk about seeing a sundance, lots of times. My husband told me he was intrigued when he saw this. But he said, "The Creator gave these people the knowledge of how to live, so I think." They had a God given knowledge to have 'dreams', so they can follow what they've dreamt.

For example, when an Indian wanted to kill a buffalo, so he did using a bow and arrow. The arrow would hit the buffalo and the arrow would kill the buffalo because the people had to eat. They didn't have guns, knives, and axes at that time. They lived in teepees covered with buffalo hide, had to make their own clothing, out of buffalo hide also. They say the buffalo used to go in herds like deer would. One young man would run towards the herd of buffalo. This young man had to be a good person. The young man or whoever went on this buffalo hunt 'dreamt' of where this herd was. Then he'd take a white cloth or kerchief along with him. He'd wave at the herd with this white cloth. At first the buffalo wouldn't notice him. But as soon as one notices the white cloth it would



come running to charge at it and the rest of the herd would follow. Then they would be running so fast that they'd fall right into the buffalo pit and if they weren't killed from the fall, they kill them with bows and arrows. They used the buffalo for their food, and the buffalo hides were used for their clothing and shelter. I saw a very old pit, a long time ago near Sandy Lake. There was a large gate made of the ground (dirt) and the buffalo couldn't make a get-away.

A long time ago, people used to dream. Wayahpistes was one of these men who used to be a 'dreamer'. This man and others used to move their camps a lot around Manitou Rapids. Some strangers used to go around trying to steal women. Wayahpistes knew this was going to happen. He was slow to anger but when he was angry then people would have to watch out. When these strangers went hunting, they would sneak up where they saw canoes during the night and the dogs would bark at them. The women were terrified of these strange people. This medicine man and the other people used to move around and soon the strangers were getting very hungry spending their time chasing these people instead of hunting for food. So finally the medicine man said he would go and look for these strangers the next morning and they would leave and go back where they came from after his visit. So he left the next day. He didn't take his paddles along. His canoe moved along as though he was using a motor. Then when he got closer to where these strangers camped, he made it look foggy. The chief came down to see who had arrived. The medicine man shot him on the chest. The chief called for help. The other strangers came running down to help him. They couldn't see the medicine man through all this fog. So they finally gave up and took their chief back to camp. So after this they left here for good. People heard they went through La Ronge area and down to Stanley Mission but eventually they all left. So later they went to see where the strangers had camped. The chief did die eventually. They left his body there all covered or wrapped in a red cloth. They left him his pipe, tobacco and other things even his canoe. The people took the canoe and used it.

Once there was a big rock sitting on an island near Manitou Rapids. The people say it swam across to an island and stayed there. The old man said the next time you go by this island the big rock will be gone, it will be sitting on the other side on a different island. When the people did travel through this island, sure enough, the big rock was on the other island.

"Watch out for me on your way back home," said one old lady to Wayahpistes. This old lady was angry with him because he didn't give her any food. So the old man and his family left.

It was getting late so they camped on an island for the night. The old man felt like something was going to happen to him. So he made a last request to his family. He said if he should die sometime in the future he wanted them to put his body right along the shore in the water.

So one day they found him dead and so they obeyed his last request and put his body in the water. They mourned for him. Then they kept on travelling.

They camped on this one island when they saw two loons

landing by their camp site and making a lot of noise, then they [the loons] flew away towards the point on the island. Then Wayahpistes came walking on the path through the portage. He was the one who made himself turn into a loon but then he changed back to a human. The old lady didn't make it to kill him after all.

Soon after, Wayahpistes went to spend one winter at Canoe Lake. He told people ahead of time that he knew what was in the water wherever he's been. For example, he said there was a giant jack fish across from Mouse River and there was a giant sized turtle in another area. And the people used to set their nets at Mouse River and twice they almost caught this big fish but it got away and tore up their nets. So eventually they took their nets out from there and fished elsewhere because their nets were getting destroyed.

Also he said there was a cave on top of a cliff where the turtle lived. And there is one part of the lake in Canoe Lake that is so deep that you can't hit bottom with a paddle or a tall pole. The medicine man said a giant white fish lived there. The loons would swim around here. The old man said he would go out there and get some Indian medicine from this giant white fish, and so he did. He brought giant white fish scales back with him. The loons loved this white fish. When the giant white fish came up all the loons were swimming around and making their calls or singing.

But the old lady was still out to get him. When he went hunting something fell from up in the sky and hit his groin and it almost killed him. But he regained consciousness. A black bear helped him, as if he hit him up to get well. He dreamed of bears too, so they were his spirit helpers. He had power over them. And now he was totally angry with this old lady who keeps sending bad medicine to him to kill him. So the medicine man in turn sent this old lady some bad medicine that night. He intended to kill her. He had sent her a piece of jagged edged metal. He told the people when they travel by where this old lady lived. They had nothing to fear anymore because he killed her [in the future].

So as the old lady was sitting down mending some fish nets this metal fell from above and hit her. She yelled and she flew a distance away and this thing killed her. So when the people went there, they asked about her and sure enough she died when she got hit by this metal.

Then the medicine man and his people started travelling again, going to La Ronge by canoe. So they camped on the mainland when it got dark out. So Wayahpistes went hunting. He had a vision. He saw a lot of people on horses coming towards them. So he stopped hunting right there. He warned his people of the danger coming up ahead. He told them to get in their canoes and take off before the strangers got to their camp. So he made it look foggy once again so the enemy wouldn't see where they were going. They fled at night and camped on an island. The kids had to be very quiet so the enemy wouldn't hear them. And sure enough the enemy got there but they couldn't see where these people fled to because of the fog. The enemy were there for a very long time waiting. There was old grass still at their campsite which they used to feed their horses. I don't know what they would have done to those people if they caught

them. The next summer after the people travelled through where the enemy lived {the people's old camp site} and this is how they knew that the enemy had been there for a long time by what they saw at the camp site.

End of interview