

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: PATRICK GIROUX
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: SWAN RIVER RESERVE
ALBERTA
INTERVIEW LOCATION: KINUSO
ALBERTA
TRIBE/NATION: CREE
LANGUAGE:
DATE OF INTERVIEW: JULY 13, 1977
INTERVIEWER: ROSE SADDLEBACK
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: J. GREENWOOD
SOURCE: OFFICE OF SPECIFIC CLAIMS
& RESEARCH
WINTERBURN, ALBERTA
TAPE NUMBER: IH-276
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 27
PAGES: 8
RESTRICTIONS: NONE

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Aged 76.
- History of Lesser Slave Lake Reserves.

Rose: Please state your name first.

Parick: Patrick Giroux.

Rose: And your age?

Partrick: 76.

Rose: Your birth place?

Patrick: Assineau.

Rose: What month were you born?

Patrick: December 30.

Rose: 1901?

Patraick: Yeah.

Rose: The reason I'm here is to find out from you the historical background of the local bands since the time they first accepted treaty. The bands were given their own land

allotments. Information such as residence, destination, etc. is what I will be asking you along with the ones I mentioned earlier.

Patrick: At the time when the band first took the treaty, I was not born yet, but as a young child I heard several elders talk about the past events.

All these bands were amalgamated as a single band. It was like one big reserve under the authority of the one chief. As time passed on this chief thought it was best to separate into own distinct bands and have their own reserve allotments.

Rose: Who was this chief? The name.

Patrick: He was known by the name Key no say oo. The last name was Willier.

Rose: The two bands situated north of here, namely Sucker Creek and Driftpile - the land allotment for both of these reserves surveyed contained one whole piece of land.

Patrick: Our reserve has a different set up. We have private owners in our reserve which does not have reserve status. Take for instance, your neighbor living next to your quarter section

of land may have a privately owned quarter and the next quarter may have a reserve status. It is not one whole piece of land or reserve.

Rose: That's Swan River reserve?

Patrick: This is what I heard through elders.

Rose: Do you recall the name of the surveyor who surveyed Swan River Reserve?

Patrick: I forgot.

Rose: Approximately what year was it when the survey was done or when the survey was conducted?

Patrick: I vaguely remember it. I was very small at the time. It was conducted a few years after the treaty was accepted.

Rose: Many of the Indian people living at this area firmly believed that this was one large single band and not separated into small bands. (leading question)

Patrick: That was probably the case.

Rose: Were there only 4 or 5 bands here?

Patrick: I'm not exactly sure. You see, there is also one other reserve called Grouard which is further north.

Rose: That's right.

Patrick: I'm just not sure of the number of bands located around here. The people probably wanted their own reserves. I took the treaty too or rather my parents witnessed the treaty and took it.

Rose: Are you saying they were accepted into the band membership?

Patrick: Yes.

Rose: Can you tell me anything about the brothers (younger or older) Key no say oo....(interrupted).

Patrick: A younger brother.

Rose: What were their names?

Patrick: His Cree name was Astachukun. The last name was Willier. I do not know his English name.

Rose: Was that his older brother or...?

Patarick: No, younger.

Rose: Key no say oo?

Patrick: Yes.

Rose; Were there other younger brothers in the family?

Patrick: They were numerous.

Rose; Was one of them Mustus?

Patrick: Yes.

Rose; And now - the cemetery site. Was there land set aside for it?

Patrick: It is probably at Assineau as many people stayed there permanently. There were no people occupying this portion around here. There was no mode of transportation such as a railroad, ordinary passable road (absolutely immobile).

There were many people that lived at Assineau and many of them deceased there. They eventually had a cemetery site.

There's another cemetery site north of Swan River (Wap pak).

Rose: How would you say that (Wap pak) in English?

Patrick: Narrows.

(Note: I obviously didn't make myself clear when I asked this question. He went on to name various cemetery sites.)

During the flu epidemic (around 1919, I think), another cemetery site was set aside not too far from here.

Rose: Apparently there was land surveyed for a cemetery site. I wonder if you recall why the band did not select their own cemetery site?

Patrick: A cemetery site?

Rose: Yes.

Patrick: At Assineau?

Rose; I guess it was not surveyed for them.

Patrick: No, there was no surveying done at all. They took land anywhere they wished for cemetery sites.

Rose; The members of Sawridge (those residing at the vicinity of Slave Lake) apparently held a meeting in 1912 in conjunction with the Swan River Band, to discuss transferred memberships. Key no say oo and the surveyor attended the meeting. There were supposed to have been five families transferred to Swan River.

Patrick: Our first councillor, Felix Giroux took them in.

Rose: What were their names?

Patrick: Edward Twinn and Bella Twinn.

(Note: the same as Isabella)

Rose: Just those two families?

Patrick: As far as I know those were the only people that came into this band.

Rose: I wonder if anyone is familiar with the exact details of the transferred memberships. Was he (meaning Felix Giroux) personally responsible for the transference of memberships?

Patrick: Yes, there was always lack of interest or attendance even though he tried to assemble the band members to discuss their concerns, the attendance was inconsistent. As a result, the councillor, Felix Giroux would take the responsibility upon himself. Take for instance, he was involved with the railroad agreement, passing through the reserve. He sold that portion of land and also the land where the town is situated.

Rose: Who sold this town?

Patrick: All of this area was Indian land.

Rose: Who bought the land where the town is situated now?

Patrick: Probably private owners.

Rose: It wasn't the railroad?

Patrick: The railroad company just bought the land where it passes through.

Rose: Whose arrangement was it to have the railroad pass through the reserve?

Patrick: It was probably Felix's.

Rose: After the completion of the reserve survey, the white people began migrating to this territory and took land wherever they felt most appropriate. The land was set aside for the Indian people. Do you recall the names of the private owners?

Patrick: One of them was Moses.

Rose: What was the last name?

Patrick: I don't know.

NOTE: People talking in the background attempting to assist him with the names. Someone said "Cariveau". He went on to say that: "I guess it was Moses Cariveau according to these people. This to me was a clear indication that he did not know the names.

He was a Frenchman. The other person's name was Coal (Khoal) (Koahl) but I don't know his first name.

Rose: White man?

Patrick: Yes.

Rose: Jim Posey?

Patrick: No answer.

Rose: I wonder if they were aware that the Indian people wanted this land and still encroach upon it?

Patrick: They took it without any authorization.

Rose: Did they know it was set aside for an Indian Reserve?

Patrick: I'm not sure.

Rose: Assineau River, who had access to this portion of land?

Patrick: Felix Giroux.

Rose: Was he a permanent resident of that place?

Patrick: He always lived there. During the time when the railroad was being built and freight coming in he had a stopping place which was where you load and unload freight.

Rose: How long did he live there?

Patrick: Ever since I could remember he's always been there.

Rose: Who resides there presently?

Patrick: No one.

Rose: After he left that place who took over? Did anyone go back to live there?

Patrick: No one.

Rose: I wonder who selected this site for a reserve?

Patrick: It's probably Felix Giroux and Samuel Sound including my father and Benjamin Giroux. My father's name was Michel Giroux. Alexan Giroux and Samuel Sound. These five people were all elders who selected the reserve site.

Rose: Were they leaders of this reserve?

Patrick: There were the only elders at the time. Felix Giroux had selected the elders to assist him in selecting land.

Rose: We would like to know the Cree names for various small locations. How do you say Sawridge?

Patrick: Kiss se puk ka mak.

Rose: And Driftpile?

Patrick: Nim taw tak kow seepee. Nim taw we tak kow see pee.

Rose: Sucker Creek?

Patrick: See peseek.

Rose: Does it not go by another name?

Patrick: The proper way of saying it is - Na nay peyoo see pee.

Rose: Grouard?

Patrick: They just call it Grouard most of the time. The other name is O chay na seek.

(End of Interview)

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