



Kisiyiniw Pîkiskwêwin Pîyêsiw Iskotêw Elder's Voices Carried by Thunderbird Spirit's Fire

Preface:

This web site is a collection of 16 stories from the Dene (Dene Suline) & Cree (Nêhiyawak) communities in Northwest Saskatchewan . Joseph Naytowhow (Sturgeon Lake, SK), a Cree speaker, has been gathering these stories from Dene and Cree Elders since October of 1995. Saskatchewan Elders say each of the poles of the tipi represent a moral value. Represented in this collection of stories are values borrowed from this model - reflective of both Cree and Dene worldviews. This site has four titles: Cree and Dene with English translations for each. The stories are also in both Dene and Cree with English. Welcome!

Elder's Biography:

Flora Gladue was born and raised on Flying Dust First Nation and Gladue Lake during the Frog Moon, April 26, 1909. She married William Gladue when she was twenty years of age. He passed away in 1965. Although Cree custom of the time specified arranged marriages, she was attracted to her husband and they were allowed to marry on that basis. A big feast and dance was organized in their honour.

Flora had six children with William (five sons and one daughter). She was raised by her grandparents Madeline and Gilbert Matchee. Flora's grandparents prepared her well by educating her through Cree traditions and a way of life dependent on the land. During summers, Flora attended various ceremonies such as the Sun Dance and the Memorial Feast. In the fall she would go with her grandparents on trapping, hunting and gathering expeditions.

Very few people inhabited the Flying Dust area around the time when Flora was born. Houses were made from various kinds of trees and spruce boughs served as flooring. Thick canvas from the local trading store was used as floor carpeting. Duck feathers sewn into light canvas material was used for the bedding. Rabbit skin blankets were also made.

For the past twenty years Flora has been travelling throughout Saskatchewan as an Elder representing Flying Dust, attending meetings and talking about child care, health and cultural issues. She also continues to be active as an Elder and participant at various cultural and spiritual events held at Flying Dust or neighbouring communities. She is an amazing storyteller. She is also an excellent beader and maker of moccasins.



sokhâtsiwin

(Strength)

Elder's Name:

Mrs. Flora Gladue

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1. At one time the Cree from around the Meadow Lake area made a cache where they kept their dried meat and berries in birch bark baskets. My grandfather had built one such cache.

2. Every now and then he would check to see if any animal had tried to disturb it. Sure enough one fall day he came home and told us that some creature had been stealing from our cache. Grandfather was not sure what kind of an animal was disturbing it; he thought it might be a bear or wolverine.

3. Preoccupied, he paced back and forth in the house, muttering as he went. We dare not bother him; he was disturbed enough as it was. Finally he stopped in his tracks and announced that he was going to set a trap using his rifle. You see, in the early 1900's grandfather had a rifle that needed to be loaded from the muzzle and bullets had to be specially made. In a matter of minutes he was gone out the door and down the road.



1. pâyakwâw êsa mâna nêhiyawak, paskwâw-sâkahikanihk ohci k-ôsihtâcik astâhcikowin, ita mâna ê-ki-kanawêyimâcik îwahikana, êkwa mînisa kâkwayiwatihk, ê-asowâtêyiki. nimosôm êsa k-ôsihtât pâyak êkwatowahk astâhcikowin.

2. âh-âskawi êsa mâna nitawâpinikêw mahti kîkway pisiskiwa ta-tasihkamiyit.

tâpwê êsa kêtahawê pâyakwâw ê-takwâkik kâ-pê-kîwêt, ê-pê-âcimostâkoyâhk kîkway pisiskîsa ê-kâh-kimotiyit. namôya kêhcinâhîw nimosôm, kîkwây itowahk pisiskîsa. itêyihitam wiya wâkâyôsa ahpô okihkwahakêwa.

3. pîkwêyihtamihik, iyikohk kîkwâsk ê-pimohtêt kisik ê-pîkiskwêt. namôya ninohtê-mikoskâcihânân. piyisk êkwa nakîw ê-wî-wanihikêt pâskisikan ê-wi-âpacihtât ê-itwêt. kayâs ayisk mâna 1900's mêkwâc, nimosôm kî-ayâw pâskisikan mâna nîkân ohci ê-kî-wiyaskinahtât, êkwa môsosiniya piko ê-kî-mosc-ôsihtâhk. aspin ê-wayawît, kî-atimohtêw mêskanâhk.



4. Once at the cache he began tying his rifle on a sturdy tree and aiming the muzzle towards the door where intruding animal had been entering. Then, with some string he'd brought along, he tied one end to the trigger of the rifle and the other to a stick inside the door. Surely any intruder would trip the string causing the rifle to fire into its path.

4. astâhçikowinihk ê-takohtêt êkotê, êkosi sêmâk mâci-tahkopitam opâskisikan mîtosihk, itastâw itêhkê iskwâhtêmihk ita ôhi k-ôh-pâh-pihtikwêyit pisiskîsa. pîminahkwânis êkwa ohci tahkopitam tasinikan êkwa kotak pîhçayihk iskwâhtêmihk. pokw âna kîkway ta-tasêwêpiskahk anima pîminahkwânis, êkosi ta-tasipitahk pâskisikan ita pimohtêci.

5. With the trap in place, he started to walk away when he felt something tugging at him. His foot had somehow gotten entangled in the trap he had just set! He could not move fast enough when the trigger engaged and shot him in the foot.

His foot had somehow gotten entangled in the trap he had just set!

“êcik ôma êtasêwêpiskamâsot owanihikan kâ-kî-kîsastâtât ôma.”

5. ê-kî-kîsastât owanihikan êkwa, êkosi nimosôm atisipwêhtêw; kêtahawê kâ-môsihtât kîkway ê-tahawâkiskahk. êcik ôma ê-tasêwêpiskamâsot owanihikan kâ-kî-kîsastât ôma. namôya kî-kisiskâ-waskawîw nimosôm, kâ-tasêwêpiskahk pâskisikan, ositihk kâ-pâskisokot.

6. Quickly removing his boot grandfather checked to see how much damage the bullet had caused. Looking closely, grandfather could see the bones that led from his toes to the top of his foot. The flesh was completely torn away leaving his toes dangling and his foot useless for walking. Now he had to move fast because blood was gushing out.

6. sêmâk kêçikowêpinam omaskisin nimosôm, ê-nitawâpinahk osit, tânisi ê-itatahahk. kâ-wâpahtahk oskan ositihk. sikwataham oyîkisitâna ê-mostakotêyiki êkosi namôya kîh-pimohtêw. mitoni êkwa wî-kakwê-kisiskâ-waskawîw iyikohk mihko ê-wayawîkotêyik ositihk ohci.

7. Ripping a piece of cloth from his jacket, grandfather wrapped his foot up very tightly. How he managed to keep his foot off the ground so that he wouldn't lose too much blood is not known, however, he did manage to drag himself home. It's hard to believe he survived the two mile trek with such a serious wound. But he did.

7. manipitam pahki oskotâkay êkwa ê-tahkopitahk osit nimosôm. sihtwahpita, tânisi ê-ka-pimohtâkêt osit, êkâ mistahi tasi-wanihtât omihkom nimosôm, sôskwâç namôya kiskêyihâtâkwan. mâka piyisk kaskihow ta-kîwêt. mâmaskâç, namôya tâh-tâpwêhtamihk ê-kaskihtât nîso tipahaskân isi ta-isi-kîwêt, êkosi ta-isi-pistahosot awiyak. mâka wiya kî-kaskihtâw nimosôm.



8. Once home, he pulled out his knife from its sheath and immediately placed it on the hot coals of the fire stove. Unwrapping the makeshift bandage, he took the red hot knife and one by one, began to slice off each of his dangling toes. It was quite an amazing and gruesome site to behold. Luckily grandfather had completed his traditional gathering and hunting duties earlier that fall. We probably would have starved that following winter if this had not been the case.

9. Reflecting on this situation, I am inclined to believe that he must have used some herb to stop the profuse bleeding of his foot and help speed its recovery.

10. Yes, my grandfather truly was one of the brave and courageous Cree men from this area.”

8. pahkaci ê-takohtêt wîkîhk êkwa, otinam omôhkomân iskotêhk astâw kotawânâpiskohk. tâpwê piko kêcikonam otahkopison êkwa anima ê-mihkwâpiskitêyik ohci môhkomân mâhmanisam pâh-pêyak oyîkisitâna anihî kâ-mostakotêyiki. sêsêskinâkosiw tâwâpamiht. nitaki wîpac êkospî ê-kîsahkamikisit nimosôm, ê-mâh-mânaskihkowêt, mîna ê-kî-mâh-mâcît, wîpac ê-takwâkîniyik. ahpô êtikwê nikâh-kî-nohtêkatânân êyako ê-pipohk êka êkosi kîh-ispayik.

9. anohc êkwa mâna mâh-mâmitonêyih tamâni niwî-itêyih tèn, ahpô êtikwê kîkway ê-kî-akopisot maskihkiy êkâ êkoyikohk kâ-mihkowit osit mîna ê-kî-kisiskâ-mîyw-âyât mâna.

10. âha, nimosôm tâpwê mistahi kî-sohkêyimow mîna kî-sohkitêhêw, ôta ohci niyanân.