



MAY APSASSIN AT GAT TAH KWÂ (MONTNEY)

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DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS: May Apsassin talks about Dane-zaa oral tradition, how stories are passed down through the generations, and the importance of revitalizing the Dane-zaa/Beaver language. She laments that while there used to be a lot of people at Gat Tah Kwâ (Montney), there are now few elders left in the community.

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KEY: 00:00 indicates time in minutes and seconds; [] Indicates translator's note.

00:00

And our before us grandfather, grandmother. And next our dad and mom, and next us. And after generation our granddaughter, our grandson, our oldest daughter, our oldest son. They carry on like that.

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But today getting down, a lot of things lost. Even they lost their language, and I just hope, I want to come back to life again. To use our Beaver language, and the Cree use their Cree language. Around in Blueberry [Reserve], there's, there's, it is just only straight English.

00:55

And whatever we hear these stories, from, he hear from my dad, and I hear from my Dad, or my Aunt Mary Pouce Coupe, and we all hear it good, and today we still remember. We say it to you and who, who want to pick it up. And that's what I was saying to my family. I say,

“Go to school, hang on to your language, hang on to your tradition way of living, and you be a hundred percent good person.”

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I said, I told her, “If I am gone, you can carry on.” Cheyenne, Ronnie’s daughter– I was in Doig. She tell story about that guy got his eyes in his stomach? She said, “My grandma tell me, tell story like that.” They all sit outside, I guess they make fire. And she tell story, and all them little kids just quiet, Sandra was saying. And I said, “That’s good, that they learn something from what I tell you.” See, we are just carry, from this, that, and all these things. Even today, moose hide making, moccasin sewing, there hardly anybody getting beads.

03:00

And I just think, I hope all the things come back to life, but, it don’t look like the one. The world is getting close. And all this, this reserve, Dane-zaa nané?, it is right here, yíidone [across river] And that time our, our family our cousins,

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our uncles, aunties, there are lots, and today, look, just me and Tommy. Our Dad and Mom, they’re gone.

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And, and now just me and him, we, and Billy, and Madeleine, and Annie, Margie. So I hope all these writing in the paper, 1920, 1930, forty, fifty. Somebody pick it up, and they can see what was there, and how people were live. It was good, I say, long time people, they are friendly, they are kind, and they always help. They are there for anybody. Anybody’s children. Anybody got no home they say “Come, eat with me. And you are welcome.” That’s how our ancestors used to say.

05:13

It was so good. And I just wish all these young people still hang on to their language, and that way they’ll get somewhere, they believe, and their school. One thing I know, school is very important, and that’s for our kids’ future.