



# Rebecca Francis

REBECCA (LAROQUE) FRANCIS

**VAGÒONLIH:** Jideendoo Ts'an 1, 1935

**NIJÌN VAGÒONLIH:** Ganinlaii

**VIYÙUGHWAN KAT:** Ellen Larocque

**VÌTSII TS'ÀT VÌTSUU:** Catherine ts'at William Smith kat hàh

**GWICH'IN:** Teet'it Gwich'in

**TR'OONJIK:** Teet'it Zeh gwizhit Amos Francis, 1954 dàì' vatr'oonjik

**VITR'IININ KAT:** Kathy, Gloria, Bruce (d), Anne, Connie, Bryan ts'at Calvin kat hàh

**BORN:** December 1, 1935

**BIRTHPLACE:** Cut Off (down the Delta)

**PARENTS:** Ellen Laroque

**GRANDPARENTS:** Catherine and William Smith

**GWICH'IN:** Teet'it Gwich'in

**MARRIED:** Amos Francis, 1954 in Fort McPherson.

**CHILDREN:** Kathy, Gloria, Julia, Bruce (d), Anne, Connie, Brian, and Calvin



Nìch'it zhuu nili dàì', yeedi' Ganinlaii gitr'àhnuu gwidi' gwà'àn ditsii ts'at ditsuu kat hàh duk'agahthat. Vitsii ts'at vitsuu kat hàh gehkhee ts'at chan vachaa Alvie, voo'u William, ts'at William Nerysoo kat hàh ezhik danh t'àngunch'u'. Ihlat dàì' t'at shin hee guuzhik Rebecca chan ts'at Catherine Nerysoo deetree jak ginahtsi' ts'at luk dàa' tat vakadhàach'u' zrit nuh. "Laanch'u' hàh dhandai vanalndai," àhnùh. "Shik au gag-watalndak zrit nihthan."

Dachan tat gwà'àn tr'agwuidai' zrit ganadhindai àhnùh. Chihvyàh natr'inaa'in', t'ee k'anagahdadal ts'at uutsik tr'ahtsii ts'at luk ts'ik ts'at luk k'in' vakadhàach'uu zrit ganadhindai. Jidi tthak vat'atr'idahch'uu ts'at duuyeh ejuch'u' uu'àn natr'ahthak. Luk ts'ik zrit tthak vakatr'ahch'uu ts'at luk ghài' sri-hee tthak vat'atr'idahch'uu. Vitsuu ihlèh vàh t'unch'uh dàì' zrit shik dzih ants'at, at'an, luk ghài', tsuheejoh, dmeedzil, jak, thoo'ah, ts'at shoh ghài' srihee jidi tthak geenjit koh, ch'u ah, vazrak gwahts'ik, dugwaht'oh, ht, vàh gwalzhal, didrihdok gwits'ik, akoo ts'at ts'ik vagòontrih hàh tthak geenjit vat'atr'ijahch'u' loo hàh ganadhindai. Jidi tthak vitsuu k'òo gideedi' ts'at nan ts'at jidi tthak guts'an aht-sau geenjit k'òo gideedi' vanadhindai.

1954 dàì' yaa'at St. Matthew Tr'igukhi Zeh danh Amos Francis zrit vatr'oonjik. Nihkhatr'agwahnchih dàì' khàhts'at srugòonch'uu gogwahtsai, atr'ij'al, atr'aadzo' ts'at tthak hàh nakhwínagijahshei. Nihkhàh zrit tr'uin vanchoh nàk'oh zhàk dhitiin geedi'in'. Gintsal dàì' goovàh T'òondih danh tsigeedi'in'. Vành hee tr'uin edik'èetr'ahtraa dàì', Rebecca zrit luh tlok gooveenjit vaka'at'uu ts'at nihkhàh agg'al. Adanh ts'at didinyahch'i' Amos hàh au tr'uin kat nits'òo adagogwadaandai geenjit gagoovooniltin ganadhindai nuh.

Juk drin zrit nits'òots'at digichei kat nijin nakhwèk'it tat nagahdadal ts'at guyàh akòo t'igidi'u' geenjit shòh nili nuh. Nili hàh dha'au ts'at troo chyya geenjit. "Loo hàh gwitr'it gwizrii gogwahtsui!" shòh hàh t'muh. Vichei gagoonahntan geenjit vat'au hàh akòo t'idi'u. "Juk gweendòo zrit au k'eejit kat duuyeh yee'òk dachan tat nagahdadal kwaa. Geetàk hee digyùughwàn kat k'eejit kat goovàh nagahdadal gwàt nits'òots'at kheen-jit gwitr'it t'agogwah'u' chan gahgidandai kwaa. Uunjit k'yuu goots'at tr'igukhi dàì' au gwizrii nakhootadhach'yaa t'agòonch'uu. Duulèh nakhwèginjik zhìt dajidinu ezhik danh gwizrii gahgwiheedandai gavihhh."



As a child, Rebecca remembers being raised by her grandparents down at Cut Off. Along with her grandparents, Rebecca also remembers her brother Alvie, her uncle William, and William Nerysoo. Rebecca fondly recalls a summer memory, gathering a pail-full of crowberries and cooking them with some fish blood that Catherine Nerysoo had collected. "I remember, it was very good," she says "I always wanted to tell that story."

Rebecca reminisces on the days of living off the land. She remembers fishing, returning to camp and making dry and smoked fish and fish eggs. Nothing was ever wasted and nothing was ever thrown away, she recalls. The fish guts were cooked and they kept all of the fish oil as well. During the short time Rebecca's grandmother was still with her, she remembers her using plenty of gum, leaves, fish oil, juniper, tree cones, berries, branches, and bear grease as remedies for

colds, mosquito bites, stomach aches, cuts, sores, infections, tuberculosis and other cancers. Rebecca and her grandmother would pray over and give thanks to the land for giving them the natural remedies they used to survive.

In 1954, Rebecca married Amos Francis in the St. Matthews Church. Their wedding day was filled with festivity, dancing and feasting. Together, Rebecca and Amos had nine children. When Rebecca's children were small, she used to play with them at T'à'oon dih. Every morning, while her children washed up, Rebecca would prepare a delicious meal for them (like pancakes) and together they would all eat. She recalls her and Amos working together with the children in order to teach them how to live off the land themselves.

Today, it brings Rebecca joy to see her grandchildren partaking in the traditional ways. From skinning and cutting any meat, to splitting wood, "they do really good work!" she exclaims. She takes great pride in teaching her grandchildren. "Today young people never go out on the land. Sometimes parents will take their children, but the kids don't really know what to do. If we speak to our young in English, it makes it easier for them to understand what to do. And if we explain the words of our language in English, maybe that way they'll remember their language."