



Clara Neyando

DOROTHY (VITTEKWA) ALEXIE

NIJÙK DÀI' VAGÒONLÌH: Nohjùu Ts'an
16, 1924

NIJÌN VAGÒONLÌH:
Old Crow, Yukon

VIYÙUGHWÀN KAT: John ts'at Effie
Francis

GWÌCH'IN: Teetl'it Gwich'in

VATR'ÒONJIK: Charlie Neyando

VITR'ÌINÌN KAT: Effie, Ellen, Joanne,
James (d.), Ruth, Georgina, Emily,
Charles and

BORN: February 16, 1924

BIRTHPLACE: Old Crow, Yukon

PARENTS: John and Effie Francis

GWICH'IN: Teetl'it Gwich'in

MARRIED: Charlie Neyando

CHILDREN: Effie, Ellen, Joanne, James (d.),
Ruth, Georgina, Emily, Charles and Kenny

“Old Crow gwizhìt gwiidich'in, shìtsii Peter ts'at shìtsuu Mary Snowshoe kat hàh!” Clara akòo didiinu' tr'ìinin nilii dài' gwats'at jidii ganadhindaii eenjit. Teetl'it Zheh gwizhìt giikhii ehdan geenjit giyuudahkat eenjit zhik ch'e'èenoo nidhiidjil, aii gwats'at tth'aih gwaa'an t'ànginch'uh. Adài' gwànoo t'at troo eelil, ts'at chuu kànàhee geenjit akòo t'ageedi'in' guuzhik khaii dài' zhoh gaghaa akòo t'agidi'ii. Shin guuzhik dachantat gwà'an t'ànginch'uu, digiyùughwàn kat John ts'at Effie Francis kat hah. Gwalàii chan nich'it nilii dài' Clara ts'at vijùu Sarah zrit Hay River Residential School gitr'ahnúu gwats'at gichùu'oh. Ezhik danh khaii tik gaghshùk t'aginch'uh. “Gwiizii diiyàh gòonlih! Giik'atr'aanjii geenjit srùdàach'uh, khaii tik geenjit guugàa,” Clara jùunuh. “Aii t'ee Aklavik gwats'at nakhwàh tr'ichil'eh gwàt dagwidinyàa'ai' geenjit zhik Teetl'it Zheh gwits'ee chidhiidà'oh. Shijùu ts'at shii chan shik geenjit niinji'iidàdhat,” jùu didiinu'.

Nijùk dài' didinyàhch'ì' Charlie Neyando hàh nihkhàtr'agwàhnik dài' duuyeh ganadhindaii, diyeenjit atr'a'aa nichii ts'at atr'aadzoo chan natr'agwàtsaii. Agadanh tr'ìinin vanchòh nàk'oh zhàk dhìtinh geedi'ì' ts'at dachantat akoo ts'at kaiik'it gwizhìt gwiizii guk'aginilti'. Geh eenjit gyàh nàtr'iniinlii, ìuk eenjit chihvyàh chigàhchuh ts'at utsik shik gwàatsii ganadhindaii khaii geenjit. Gwiinlit Clara dachantat gogwiindai' geenjit ganadhindaii, geetàk hee Aklavik gwizhìt dalàk kat gòonlii gooveenihee zrinuh. Khaihtak gwadhàhtsaii dài' geenjit Clara akòo dinuu Sriitsookaiik'it gwats'at, Dawson chan, gwehkhè' zrit Alaska gwizhìt Vihsrai K'oo srihee gwats'at chidhiidàjil. Tth'aih hee ezhik danh gwà'an valàk kat gòonlii, ihlèe

Teenjir Vàn gwats'at chùuzhii.

K'eejit kat ts'at giikhii geen-jit goodahkat, ezhik chan Clara akòo dinuu,” Nakhwiùughwàn kat ts'at oodhìdhohch'eii ts'at dàgwinuu geenjit akòo t'òhkhwè'ii.” Gàgootr'oonahntan chan veenjit iisrits'at gòonlii nuu ts'at veenjit gwiizii gwitoh gwichùudhat kwaa geen-jit gwiintl'òh ganlinji'ohthat goovahnúu. Gwiinlit diitat chan gwitr'it gòonlii gwàt aii tthak giik'ànohnjih kwah jì' lyaa gwiizuu. Anjòo kat ts'at geenjit giinhe', ”Anjòo kat ts'at oodhìdhohch'eii chan nakhwetr'ahnúu, aii k'lighe' niinzhùk gohòhndaii. Akòots'at gwidli ginohkhih kwaa!”

“We used to live in Old Crow with my grandparents, Peter and Mary Snowshoe,” says Clara as she recounts her memories of when she was a child. There was a need for an Anglican minister in Fort McPherson and so they moved over and lived here ever since. The traditional life of hauling wood and water in the summer and snow in the winter was no different here than anywhere else. During the summers the Francis family lived out on the land along with her parents, John and Effie Francis. When she was still a young girl, Clara and her sister Sarah were sent to Hay River Residential School at which she stayed for three years. “It was good! We enjoyed learning, even though it was for only three years,” says Clara. “They sent us back to go to All Saints School in Aklavik and as we were on our way, it became booked. So we had to come home. My sister and I used to miss going to school,” she adds.

Even though her recollections of when she married her husband, Charlie Neyando, she fondly remembers the huge feast and dance that was put

on for them in celebration. She bore Charlie nine children and took care of them both out on the land and in the community of Fort McPherson. Life on the land again consisted of setting rabbit snares, setting of fish nets and both preparing and drying of fish for the long winter months. Many of Clara's memories of life out on the land with her family and visiting her relatives in Aklavik periodically. When asked about her travels, Clara was glad to have gone to Yellowknife, Dawson and as far away as Arctic Village in Alaska. She recollects that she still have relatives living in Alaska and one attended Midway Lake's Music Festival.

When ask about what sort of message she would like to give the younger generation, Clara says, “Just to listen to their parents and do what they are told.” Education is also important to her as she recants that she was not able to finish what little education she was given but we today have a lot more opportunities than she did back when she was a young girl. On advice from elders, Clara recalls, “They told us to listen to elders, and you are going to have a good life. And, you don't talk back to elders!”