

Michael Pindegayausch
Narrator

Karissa White
Minnesota Historical Society
Interviewer

August 23, 2006

KW = Karissa White
MP = Michael Pindegayausch
BP = Brian Petrie
EA = Elisse Aune

KW: Okay. Today is August 23, 2006. We're at the home of Michael...

MP: I can't even hear it.

KW: Just wait. We'll speak louder. How do you pronounce it?

MP: Pindegayausch. (Pin-de-GAY-osh)

KW: Pindegayausch. (spelling) Pinde...

MP: (spelling) ...gayosh.

KW: My name's Karissa White. We're here with Ben Petrie and Elisse Aune. Okay.

MP: Can you hear me?

KW: Yes. (laughter)

MP: Can you hear me? Over.

KW: Do you go by Mike?

MP: Michael.

KW: Michael.

MP: Everybody call me Mike around the reservation. Boy! Michael is my name.

KW: Do you have a middle name? What's your middle name?

MP: Leonard.

KW: Leonard.

MP: Leonard Pindegayausch.

KW: When were you born, Michael? Your date of...

MP: Right here. 1921.

KW: 1921. What day?

MP: 21?

KW: What month and day?

MP: 6-30-21.

KW: 6-30-21.

MP: Yes.

KW: Okay. And you were born here in Mille Lacs?

MP: Yes.

KW: Were you born in a home?

MP: Yes. We're at a house.

KW: What was your parents' names?

MP: John and...I always forget her name. My mom.

EA: Leones.

MP: Leones?

KW: Leones?

MP: No. I don't think so.

EA: Yes, dad.

MP: Is it?

EA: Yes.

MP: Doggone I forget. There's a Mr. John Pindegayausch. That's my mom and dad.

KW: Did your mom die when you were little?

MP: Yes. I must have been about eight years old. It was about in there. I don't know. She was about thirty-eight. Something like that. Pretty young.

KW: Do you have any memories of her? Any stories of her?

MP: Yes. They used to take me all over. Pow wows and...downtown. There was a buggy ride in them days. All go from our place to Onemia. Horse riding, you know. It was every weekend almost. My dad worked every day.

KW: What did he do? Where did he work?

MP: Well, I don't know. They call that...logging on the Mississippi. Logging logs and all. From International Falls, someplace out there, to Minneapolis. The Mississippi you know. I don't know what they call that. I know what they call that in Indian. (speaking Indian) Logging on the river.

KW: You said you went to pow wows when you were little?

MP: Yes.

KW: They had pow wows around here.

MP: Well, we had pow wows almost once a month, twice a month down then. We don't have anymore. Just once a year. It's no good. Another thing I like...did you see...you didn't go? The pow wow up here? That (unclear) I didn't like. What they had before. I didn't like that at all. Because the flags and all. I try and tell them. That's not for us. That's not for the pow wow, the Indian pow wow. No. It's American Indian pow wow now. White man make that pow wow now. What do they call...AIM. AIM pow wow. That's what they call it. Now when I told them, you know, we don't like that pow wow. Nobody does now. Now we didn't have any, any of them flags when we had a pow wow down there. Boy, I was happy. Oh, oh, oh (sound of tapping feet). I mean I like that a lot. That's not for us. Years ago at pow wow they didn't have anything like that. They sell a little cane or something like that. That's all we had. (unclear) We didn't have any (unclear). No. We didn't have any.

KW: How long would they last? Were they day pow wows? When you were little the pow wows. Why were they different back then?

MP: At that time?

KW: Yes.

MP: That's a regular Indian pow wow. Indian ways and stuff like that. That's as regular...we never forget that, you know. That's it.

KW: Did they have different kinds of songs?

MP: What?

KW: Were the songs different than they are now?

MP: Yes. Quite a difference now. It's not the way it should be, you know. I think it still AIM pow wow that we're having but at this time they didn't have any AIM pow wow. You know. American Indian Movement. Not Indian. It's...I don't know what they call it. American Movement. That's a white man's movement now. Years ago...I don't know how long...how old that is. There's a lot of difference now between regular Indian pow wows or anything. I don't care what it is. Indian culture and stuff like that. Funerals. Now funerals is white way. Gotta wait and wait. Ten, fifteen minutes. Their spirit. They want to go too, you know. They want to leave right away. Here we sit down and wait. I don't know what they're waiting for. See the spirit don't like that now. Sit that fifteen, twenty minutes and then start again. Just waiting. Just like we do. We want to go place. We want to go honor our dead. We do. But the spirit's different at a funeral? Different? I don't like that either. Now just wait ten, fifteen minutes. Twenty minutes. That's different culture. It seems to be like white people's stuff and all. That's how they did it right now all over the reservation. All over any place.

KW: Do you think that's because of schools? Like when you were little did you go to school?

MP: When I went to school?

KW: Yes.

MP: Yes. I went to school. Yes. They sent me to school when I was eight years old.

KW: And they taught you white ways there?

MP: Indian ways?

KW: White ways.

MP: Oh, I don't know. I suppose. Yes.

KW: Did you grow up speaking Ojibway?

MP: When I was little?

KW: Yes.

MP: No.

KW: No. You had to speak English?

MP: Well, Indian or English. Both ways now.

KW: Yes. In the school did they punish you if you spoke Indian?

MP: No. I don't know. I don't know how it is now.

KW: But when you were little....

MP: No. We....she's better to talk Indian now. In school. But when I went to school, no. No difference. If we want to talk English, all right. Nobody said anything but rather talk Indian. Now I don't know how it is now. I think it's...I think they are teaching how to talk Indian on the reservations. Not a lower school. Mostly, you know, people think it's better way. Better not allow to talk Indian. They teach you how to talk Indian.

KW: What do you think of that? The schools now. They teach you how to talk Indian. Do you think that's good?

MP: I think it's good. They rather talk Indian than English. The way I understand around here. I think it's really good that the young people, young generation talk Indian. Don't you ever lose Indian language. Keep it to yourself. Keep it to myself. And give it to herself. Can't lose our Indian language. Indian culture. Stuff like that. A lot of that stuff we're losing now. Getting to white ways. It's not good. It's not good. Some places there's Indian words. It's good. I like to see that. Me, eighty years old, maybe it don't make no difference, you know, for anybody. I been thinking about it too, you know. I ain't got very far to go yet now. So I been thinking about this. So I don't know. I been thinking about this too. I hope we will never lose our Indian language, culture, Indian language, stuff like that. Indian ways. You know. There's a lot of stuff we lost. Look at this Indian pow wow now. Once a year. We lose that too. Indian pow wow. But the ...we losing...AIM pow wow too. We're losing that. Then the old pow wow. Indians don't want...they don't like that. Chimokeman pow wow. That's AIM. Now this pow wow we had, the last pow wow we had, didn't have no flags or anything. Well, I liked that. Oh, boy! Yes. I liked...

KW: So it was like when you were little? So it was kind of like when you were little?

MP: I don't know.

KW: Not that far.

MP: It seems to me...a little. Not much. But I don't like the flags. Nobody does I guess. Nobody does like them flags. That ain't the way... pow wow ways. Our pow wow. Our own pow wow. You know? No. Entry is good. No? The pow wow entry. Good? No, no. No flags or anything. Boy, I was happy. I really was happy myself. I was talking to a middle aged doctor (unclear). Then he come over to talk to me. Doctor tell me. Sure, sure, sure. Pow wow getting back to Indian ways. I don't know how long that's going to be. I hope they keep them flags out of there in all the Indian pow wows. Entry. Absolutely no good. No. That's not for us.

KW: So they didn't have an entry when you were ...

MP: No. No. They had their own like crane. I don't know how you say that crane. The head of ...

EA: Head dancer.

MP: Yes. A woman? Yes. The cane like I have but they got the...what do you call it? The beadwork and all. On the other end like that. Got a feather. Eagle feather. Two of them. That's a woman dancer. Entry. And a man. A man entry and carry his own...what do you call it? I know exactly what it is. What he carries.

KW: Staff? Is it a staff?

MP: I don't know. I've forgotten what it is. That's what he carries now. Indian man dance ahead and a woman behind. No? Pow wow. About a couple times. That's it. That's the entry. And then they can dance. Everybody can dance. Everybody can dance. That's the way it was.

KW: Did they have one drum or more drums?

MP: One or two drums allowed. I don't care whether it's reservations or not. But over here right now we've got seven drums. I don't know where they come from. There's queen drum and a king drum. I don't know how to say it in Indian. No? That's all we had. We had in our own pow wow. (speaking Indian) That's women drum. (speaks Indian)

KW: So that's all they had when you were growing up?

MP: Yes. I can remember. That's all we had.

KW: When your mother died who took care of you then?

MP: Her name is Jenny. Is my aunt. Took care of me. Grandma. Grandpa. They took care of me then. So I don't know what kind of time. I got married when I was too young. I was nineteen or twenty years old.

KW: That's when you got married?

MP: Yes. Nineteen years old.

KW: Before that were you still in school or did you work?

MP: No. I went to school. But when the school was out I go to farm work. Machinery like that. Plow. Disc and all stuff like that. When the school was out. When school starts again and they let me come home. A dollar a day in them days. I worked thirty days. Two or three months, you know. The teacher was...they belonged to his dad and his mom but he was a teacher. Mr. Harding. He's the one that took me to his farm and worked there during the vacation. That's what I did. Ever since fifteen years old. Every year I go down there and work. Machine or something like that. That's why I like machinery.

KW: Did you like school?

MP: Well, I don't know. I didn't like it very much because I got working out there and come back again start going to school.

KW: You'd rather work.

MP: Yes. Well, that's thirty days a month. Thirty dollars.

KW: What did you do with your money?

MP: I think my dad took some. Give me some money. He worked too, you know. During the summer. (unclear)

KW: Was your dad in the CCC? The WPA programs. Was he in the CCC or were you?

MP: Yes. That. I remember that too. My dad worked and my brother, George. On WPA. Yes. I remember that too. Way back. I don't know what year was that.

KW: '30s?

MP: I don't know. 1935. Someplace around there. 1935. '40. WPA. Yes. I remember that. Sure.

KW: So you worked in the farms and then you got married when you were nineteen. So you were ...1938.

MP: Yes. It was about...yes, about '38. Nineteen years old. Eighteen years old.

EA: He was born in 1921.

KW: 1921. So. 1940 you got married.

MP: Someplace along there. Yes. 1940. Got married. I work on the...Aitken. Left before she was born. I was working at a garage.

KW: In a garage?

MP: Yes. In Aitken.

KW: How did you get that job?

MP: Well, you see, mother-in-law, father-in-law when I was going with mom and all...(unclear) work anyplace, in a garage or anything in Aitken. I think they got me that job. Work in the garage. That's where I met mom. That's where I met her.

KW: Was she from Aitken? Your wife?

MP: No. They from....

EA: Not White Earth. Bagley.

MP: Bagley. Bagley, Minnesota. Yes.

KW: So she is Leech Lake?

MP: Leech Lake?

EA: White Earth.

KW: Oh, White Earth. So your wife was White Earth? No?

MP: No.

EA: She's from here.

KW: Oh, she's from here. Okay.

EA: But she lived in ...

MP: They all come from someplace now.

KW: Yes. It's true. Yes. What was I going to ask? Oh. How did you meet your wife then? Did you know her?

MP: Yes. I was in there. No?

KW: You knew everybody.

MP: Wait now. I think...I worked there when we were living together I think. 1940. Yes.

KW: What was your wife's name?

MP: Teresa.

KW: Teresa. What was her maiden name?

MP: Shingobe.

KW: Shingobe. Okay. (spelling) Shingobe. Okay. Then the war was going on. Did you know much about the war?

MP: Yes. I know quite a bit.

KW: You heard about the war that was going on.

MP: Yes. 1940-45.

KW: Did you hear about Pearl Harbor?

MP: Yes. Hear about that. I couldn't make it in the service. I couldn't make it on account of my eye.

KW: You had problems with your eye.

MP: Yes. I had one and had a scar. The physical examination. I couldn't pass it. And they call it cancer. They had a doctor. Physical examination. You can't pass that. No. He said it's a scar. Not a cancer. Make it? Never was in the service.

KW: Where were you when you heard about Pearl Harbor? What did you think?

MP: Well, I think it was awful. Sneak. Sneaking. Bomb away. I don't remember very much about that. So United States went back down and they bomb the Japanese.

KW: Yes. Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The atom bomb.

MP: Yes.

KW: Did you know anybody who was in the war?

MP: One white boy. White guy. Yes. Gordy Casper. A friend of mine. He got killed on the bombing. Bombed the place.

KW: Did you think that people supported the war?

MP: I don't know. I don't know none of that. We had war. We went bombing Japan. I tell you I don't know for sure. Thirty-five thousand people killed that time. Japanese. They asked for it anyway. So I don't know about that. They sneak on us, you know. And then they know there's anything or not. But someone trying to call the United States. We didn't pay attention to it. That's the way I heard it. So all of a sudden bombing away. That's the way I heard. I don't know for sure.

KW: Where were you working during the war? Were you doing farm work?

MP: Well, I don't know for sure.

KW: Oh, no. Mechanic. You were working in a garage. Were you working in a garage during the war?

MP: 1940-41-42.

KW: Were you a mechanic?

MP: No. I think it was a sawmill I think. Meyers Sawmill. In Malmo. I think there's where it was.

KW: Where?

EA: Malmo.

KW: Malmo?

EA: Across the...

KW: Okay. Yes. What were you doing there?

MP: Working. I was running a tractor. Yes. When they fill up lumber I had to move it. Take it down there and come back. Get that skid and back it in there so they could throw more lumber in there. That they saw. That's all I do.

KW: Did you like it?

MP: Oh, yes. It was easy. Just driving tractor. Caterpillar.

KW: How long did you work there?

MP: Oh, a couple years. Three years.

KW: What did you do after that?

MP: Moved to Aitken. I've been working there since. Then I worked for O'Neal. Scott O'Neal. He's a sawmill gang too, you know. I worked for him for a little while.

KW: When did you have your first child? What year was your first child born?

MP: She's got my face. She was born in Cloquet. I can't remember those things.

EA: '44.

KW: 1944. Okay.

MP: 1940-41. Something like that.

KW: How many kids did you have then? Total.

MP: Three...six. Lost two or three of them.

KW: When you were a kid did you rice or...did you go ricing?

MP: Yes. We went. Teresa's mom, she know how so we just go ricing then.

KW: When you were little did you go with your grandparents?

MP: No.

KW: No. Did they have a garden?

MP: No. Oh, my mom and dad?

KW: Yes.

MP: Yes. They had a garden. Potatoes. Corn. That's it.

KW: Did that help you during the Depression? You know, they had that Great Depression in the '20s and '30s?

MP: Yes. Depression?

KW: Yes.

MP: Yes. They was in that. I don't know what that Depression...I can remember we didn't have a hard time. No.

KW: Because you had a garden?

MP: Yes. We had a garden. Potatoes and corn. Stuff like that. That's all we had. We lived by the lake, you know. They even had a pig. A few chickens. That's all we had.

KW: Did your dad hunt and fish? What about hunting and fishing?

MP: I was fishing when I was little. I didn't like it. My mom took me out the lake and my dad make a hole in there. They cover me up with a blanket. And a spear. I didn't like that.

KW: Ice fishing. What about hunting?

BP: Oops! We're going to switch the tape.

KW: Oh. Okay. Sorry.

[End of Tape 1, Side A.](#)

KW: Did you go hunting?

MP: Hunting? Yes. My dad. He used a twelve gauge and I used four hundred. Four hundred rifle.

KW: Four hundred rifle?

MP: Four hundred. Went out hunting, you know. That's all I can do. Hunt deer. Indians used to have set net and all but I never went. Set net. No.

KW: You said your daughter Elisse was born in Cloquet. Were you living there at the time?

MP: No. I was on the mother-in-law. That in-law. What do you call them? We lived all together. With them when she was born. Work Meyers at that time.

KW: Meyers?

MP: Meyers Lumber Company.

KW: Did you go to pow wows? Did you continue to go to pow wows there?

MP: Oh, yes. Pow wow. Right here. Yes. Pow wows. Beautiful. Wonderful pow wow.

KW: Red Lake?

EA: We used to go to Red Lake too. Big pow wow. Remember that, Dad? Remember Red Lake pow wows?

MP: Red Lake?

EA: He used to go up there all that time.

MP: Yes. No. I didn't go that far. No. Cass Lake. Yes. When I was a little boy though, five, six years old, we went to pow wow every place they have a pow wow. We had a old Model T, you know. That's what we had. We went to Wisconsin. Danbury, Wisconsin and Cloquet, Cass Lake. Stuff like that. We would travel. Remember that. My mom and dad. Our Model T.

KW: Did you ever go to any towns and did you ever experience racism or did anyone tease you because you're Indian?

MP: Not that I know of. No. No. I don't think so.

KW: Did you live in Minneapolis at all?

MP: Yes. We lived down there about thirty years. That's where I got my Social Security. Thirty years on the job. (unclear) don't like it because I'm making too much money. But I can't help it. I work thirty years on the job. I earned that Social Security. Yes.

KW: When did you move there?

MP: When?

KW: Yes. What year?

MP: I don't remember.

KW: '50s? Was it 1950s?

MP: 1950. I don't know. Let me see. Didn't have no war at all at that time. I just worked there. No?

KW: Where did you work down there?

MP: Lakeland Door Company. Minneapolis. St. Louis Park.

KW: Door Company?

MP: Yes.

KW: What did you do? Did you make doors?

MP: Yes. These kind of doors right there. Vinyl. Solid core.

KW: Did they pay good?

MP: Yes. They make quite a few.

KW: Where did you live down there?

EA: Did you make good money at there? At Lakeland Door Company.

MP: Yes. Yes. Thirty years on job. Get vacation pay. And we even went to Las Vegas. We went there when I had my vacation. Vegas.

KW: Was that in the '50s or '60s? No? Later? Where did you live in Minneapolis?

MP: Apartment. Minneapolis.

KW: Was that on Portland? Did you live on Portland?

MP: Yes. 600 Portland Avenue South. Yes. That's where we lived. We had a house. No. Not our house. Rent. Rent a house.

KW: Were there lots of other Indians there?

MP: Yes. There was a few Indians there around the block. The whole darn place, you know. All of them. I don't know if they work or not. So they were around. Friends.

KW: Were they looking for jobs?

MP: I don't know. I don't know whether they looking job or not. Some were. Some not. Maybe. Yes.

KW: So when did you move back here then?

MP: Not too long ago. Six, seven years. There's six, seven...yes. There's my own house. Yes. About that. 1995 I think I moved back here. Yes. I saw this. Building up, you know. There was to be a greenhouse. That little old house down there where I live now. Come over and see them guys working. Yes. This house about five, six years old. Maybe more. I don't know.

KW: Did the reservation change a lot since you left?

MP: What?

KW: When you moved back in '95 did you notice the reservation changed a lot?

MP: Well, I didn't even notice anything. But I don't know with the...

KW: Casino?

MP: No. We didn't have anything like that. Casino. Probably had it. Yes. Casino. Yes. 1935...1995.

KW: 1995.

MP: I don't know how to remember things, you know.

KW: Did the reservation here change with the casino?

MP: No. What?

KW: You know when they put the casino up? Did you notice a lot of changes here?

MP: Well...I was retired that time then. 1986.

KW: Where were you living when you retired?

MP: I was still living at the high rise. High rise where retired people are. Now that's where I was. Is 16th Avenue South. Yes. There supposed to be my...I don't know. I suppose...Art Cabo. Do you know him? R. T. Cabo? My aunt's son. He's going to find me a place. I don't know. There was one in the reservation. Reservation Mille Lacs. Couldn't help me anything.

EA: There's a lack of housing back then. Dad wanted to come back.

KW: Oh, in the '80s.

EA: Yes. He wanted to come back but there was no housing. That was before the casino.

MP: Yes.

KW: When did the casino...

EA: '91.

KW: '91. Okay.

MP: I ask them for a...I ask him to get me a house. I'm getting retired in 1986. Do that. I don't know why he won't help me. Because I live in Minneapolis. He told me...anybody live in Minneapolis, I don't help anybody in Minneapolis because they stay down there. We make a house down there. The house standing down there for two years or a year. Don't even move back. That's what he told me. I didn't say anything. I just gotta walk away. My own nephew. You know? That was way back. 1983 or '84. Someplace like that. Before I got retired and all. He won't do anything for me. Still live in Minneapolis. I don't know.

KW: Do you like living here now?

MP: Yes. But I don't like the way they talk about me. Yes. Everybody around here. But some...my relatives, my own relatives. They do believe it. Some people believe it. I'm ...what do you call that? Deserter. Yes.

EA: Oh. Some people call dad a deserter.

MP: Yes. That's what they say. I didn't make it in the service. I never was in the service. That's what they don't like. Deserter. And you're making too much money. You can't have that. See? That commodity. I went down there.

KW: Commodities.

MP: Making too much money. Yes. I earned that money for Christ sakes. You know? Yes. But they won't give me a commodity. Now they come here every month. The whole box. Now I think they're falling up. They're falling down. The commodity. A building up there. (unclear) I think it falling out. That's the way I think. Nobody up there knows. That's why they come and give me some. Stuff that I can't have. I can't drink. It's too sweet. Can't drink anything sweet. I can take care of myself. You know? Yes. The only thing that I really like...I like (unclear). Sometime and...I don't know...it's a year ago last summer or last winter, I had a hard time. No sleeping. Can't control myself. Wouldn't even...(unclear) My daughter was inside. Yell at them and all and they didn't hear me. All of a sudden I went out. Black out. I don't know time. I think it was eleven o'clock. You know that? So that's why my kids want to ...should be with me during the night. They want to go someplace during the day, it's okay with me. They come back again and stay with me at night. You know? I'm afraid of that night. I do. Old. Too old. I don't know exactly what happened. Can't understand.

KW: What are you thinking about the most lately? What kinds of things are ...what are you thinking about the most lately? What's on your mind?

MP: On my mind?

KW: Yes.

MP: Well, that's the only thing I can think of. Somebody gotta stay with me during the night. Otherwise I'll be laying there, you know. Nobody knows. I like all my garage stuff and stuff. Yard. Lawn mower. I got my own snowplow. I plow. They don't plow my place. You know that?

KW: They should.

MP: Plow. Road work. They don't come here and plow. We're all done plowing. Here they come. You know? Here they come. They're going to plow. Oh, hell. I didn't say anything to them. They didn't plow. If they want to plow on the side that's all right with me. Yes. I heard about this about myself and oh, I don't like it. And some people don't like it and some people like it. You know? I don't know.

BH: What do you say to them?

MP: I don't like ...to stop being a deserter. Where they got that from?

KW: Yes.

MP: Did somebody...it's...give me a bad time. You know, even early...what do you call that? Working commissioner down here. Trying to get a hold of him. He's not there. He just walked out. I'd like to speak to him. Person to person. But I never could get a hold of him. I think he's the one that started trouble. Send the trouble on me. You know? Deserted? Where he got that? Anybody want to believe it? I don't believe it. Get the papers. Prove it. I want to see the papers. I want to see the paper that says deserter. Now I'm not going to see any papers like that. No. That's what I'd like to see too. Deserting papers, something like that. What year? What month? That's impossible. No. I don't think it's true. You can put it true or false. There's a lot of people believe it. A lot of people don't. My relatives, my relations, they believe that. Never was in the service. How come it's deserter? You got me by the neck. I don't know. I think there's a worker commissioner. I don't know where he got that stuff. Get the papers. Show me the papers says desertion. How is that possible to believe? Believe it or not.

KW: That's too bad that they say that.

MP: Well, that's why...why (unclear). There's other people like me. People do like me. Some like that. They got a reason. Believe or don't believe it. See the papers if it's...you know.

KW: Yes. It's true. They need proof.

MP: I think I believe that worker, worker commissioner. He just stay in trouble on me. See if anybody helps me, you know, anybody want to help me, anything like that, he didn't want to do it. Because he didn't want to loss his job. That's the way they put it. Worker commissioner. I don't know who it is. That's what he told them people that

work on that. Casino. I don't play down there. To come and help me. You're going to lose your job. Yes. I heard about this too. Been telling me. And now I like to help you, Mike. I don't want to lose my job. Doggone! They want to help in telling this one. A lot of people don't want to lose their job say they want to help me. I have to call housing to come in and clean that out. Around my house there. Trees are growing up. I don't like that. I can do it my self. I used to do everything. Now I can't. I can stand up bent over but I can't stand up straight. That is the only thing I'm worried about. Being deserter.

KW: Being a deserter and being alone. You don't want to be alone. Right?

MP: Yes.

BP: What are you looking forward to?

KW: What are you looking forward to in the future? Anything?

MP: Looking forward?

KW: Yes. Are you looking forward to anything in your future?

MP: Yes. Well, not anything to look for. No. I still can do it. I can do myself anything, you know. Machining. Machine. Well, I don't know. It's...another thing I'm thinking about to get a new plow. This one is getting old, you know. My snowplow. I don't know. It's got to be automatic. That's what I got. Automatic. Don't have to step on anything because I ain't got no (unclear). Hand operated. That's what I'm looking for. I don't know how much they are. I got a magazine advertise about the snowplow. But I don't know how much. I don't know. There's a lot of things I'm thinking about get but I can't do it. Really. On account of my legs. You know. Another thing I like to add. What do you call that little vans?

KW: Minivan?

MP: Yes. Minivan. Yes. That's what I like to get.

BP: Me too.

MP: But I can't step on the gas pedal. But I can step on the brake. But the gas pedal. See? Now that's a good one I got now. But doggone. I kinda change my mind. I can make (unclear). I can make anything. I can make that. Just push that in there. The gas pedal and all. How fast you want to go. Yes. I can do that.

KW: With your hands. A rod with your hands.

MP: A gas handle.

KW: A gas handle.

MP: Yes. I can use my foot braking. You know? See? But the gas pedal I can't control that. That's why I get by hand...anything. All the machinery I got down there. Hand operated. I change my mind sometimes. Oh, boy. I wish I didn't get this. I change my mind. The minivan. They're small. Did you ever see it?

KW: Yes.

MP: Yes. But I don't know. There's a lot of things I like to have. Can't get them. I can get them but...it's up to me. I change my mind. No. No. I held myself back sometimes. No. That's impossible for me. No.

BP: What advice would you give to the younger people?

KW: What kind of advice would you give to younger people?

MP: What?

KW: What kind of advice, you know, things that you'd like to tell the younger kids? Lessons you learned.

MP: Well, I don't know. Young people. No. They won't believe anything. Pretty hard to believe what I say. No. It's impossible to do something like that. No. What happened to him? Yes. When I work on the farm that's all I do is machine work. You know? Plow. Disc. Cut corn. That's all I do. That's why I like machinery. I like that. All the things I learn when I was little.

BP: Who taught you those things mostly? Your father?

MP: Can't hear you. I can hear you talking but I can't understand you.

EA: Who taught you all that machinery stuff? Yourself?

MP: Didn't know anything on machinery. That's my mind. (chuckles) Yes.

EA: Who taught you that?

MP: At the farm. I worked. Ever since I was fifteen years old until eighteen, seventeen. No? Seventeen years old. The teacher was from there. The teacher. He was from that farm. Mr. Harding. He's the one that took me up there on the farm. Before I start working at farming. I was a farmer then. That's where I learned. That's where I got machines and everything and all that. Now I can't do anything now. Can't hardly. I can walk. If I'm walking I will show you. Before I got hurt last winter. I was pushing this instead of riding it. That's why I fell. Hurt myself right here. Now I can walk now a little bit. I can walk. That's the one that teach me how to walk. Sometimes I push it out

of the way and walk. That's what I did. So I don't know. I can walk a little bit. But I can push that. I can walk.

EA: Dad, what would you like to say to young children now?

MP: What to say to them?

EA: Yes.

MP: Don't lost your language. Keep your language every day where you are. Keep that in your language. That's the way I think too, you know. I don't know what the other people think. The other people. They don't want to teach his own children Indian ways or Indian language. One of the best things we can do is keep Indian language. Keep it. Rest of your life. That's what I think. That's the way I like to tell them. The mother and dad's supposed to tell the kids. His own kids. Don't you ever lose your Indian language. Right? And Indian pow wow. That's the most important. A pow wow. Let me tell you something. These Indian pow wows are very, very important. Especially on the drum. There are two drums. One, two. Man and lady drum. We're having a big problem with the white people. Years ago...I don't know when it was, what year was at...having a war between white people and Indians. So Indian won. Indian won. That chief set the drum right in there and step on. Well, them white people, they run away. They gone. So they got...there is a few Indian left and a few dead. Some people killed. So that drum...should have got that. Not only one. One stick, one drumstick here. Another drumstick. Or two drumstick. And (unclear). Singing. And so when a white soldier come along there, sneak along, see what...sound like so many guys. Sound like a lot of people in there. They run away. That's how the drum is so important for us. Because the drum save us a life. That's the main thing of the drum. It's really true. Very, very true. A lot of people don't know that and a lot of people do. They know that. That's the way it is. That's why we have a nice pow wow. Nothing else. But pow wow. With tobacco and all. All the time. Tobacco should be in there ALL the time. By the drum. That's the way it is. That's the main, main...that's why we want to have a pow wow twice a year or three times a year. Now we don't have any. Just once a year. That's not enough. The drum is very, very...they save us a life. They save us a life. The drum. That's how it was years ago. I don't know year it is. I heard about it too. A lot of time. That's why we should have a pow wow two, three times a year. Years ago we had a pow wow almost every month. John Minkenewa, he was a big chief at the pow wow once a month or every two months. Something like that. Now once a year. Not enough. There's not the drums.

KW: We're going to flip the tape over. Hold on.

MP: Yes.

End of Tape 1.

KW: Okay. You were saying about the drum...what about the drum?

MP: Drum?

KW: Yes.

MP: Oh. Was the tape...when I said...was the tape on?

KW: No. Well, just that last part that you said.

MP: The last part I said?

KW: Yes. He didn't tape that last part.

MP: Oh. Having a war. Between Indians and Chippewas.

KW: Yes. He got that. That's okay.

MP: We got that?

KW: Oh, yes. He got it.

MP: Another one is...that's what we don't like this once a year. No. We don't want that. Nobody like that once a year pow wow. But the only one we get pow wow now is AIM. That's what they call it. Getting so it's disappeared, you know? It's going away because it's AIM. That's a AIM pow wow. That's all we had down there. The museum. Ground. We used to have AIM pow wow. You know who was running that place? I know. I don't want to say it. Who run that AIM pow wow. I know who. The last name is (unclear). I don't want to say his first name. I don't want to involve anything in all that. That's the only pow wow we had. Before we had the...last pow wow we had. That's what we have once in a while. Stuff like that. I don't know what that...celebration or some...that's all we got. A lot of people didn't like that. I didn't like it either. I didn't like the entry. I don't care if the drum works. Beating drum. But I don't like the entry. Flags and stuff in that. Like carrying the flag. That's a chimoke. Yes. That's chimokemon. No. I didn't like that. I think...I spoke to a friend of mine about that. Entry. I don't like it. Nobody does out there. It's our Indian pow wow. Not the flags. We don't want no flags entry. You know what I mean. Entry?

KW: Yes. Grand entry.

MP: Yes. They carry flags. They didn't have that pow wow we had. No flags. Just dance in. Yes. I like that. Oh, boy. (foot stamping) That's the way I like it. I even peeped my horn on that four wheeler.

EA: Did you dance this year?

MP: No. Not dance. But I got out my four wheeler. Stand on the side. But I dance all in that. Yes, I dance.

EA: He danced last year.

KW: Okay.

MP: I don't know. (unclear) I'm just wondering when the hell I'm going to heal up, you know. I don't even know where it hurts.

EA: It's your muscles.

MP: Muscle? I don't think so. It's someplace around there. Doctors...I had a physical examination. I'm in...what do you call that? Pictures?

EA: X rays.

MP: X ray. Yes. Three places on here. I told the doctor. They got three docs in there. I told the doctor it hurt me. So he come along going like that. No. No. Keep your hands off. Yes. He hurt me. But I can walk. But only hurts when I step on it. Step on it. I don't even know which one. Stand up. And so I don't know.

KW: Do you have any more questions? I have one last question. One. Only one this time. I have one last question, Michael. This is for a project called Minnesota's Greatest Generation that you're in, your age group. How do you feel about being called the greatest generation? Do you agree with that? Do you think your generation is great?

MP: Yes. I agree with that.

KW: How come?

MP: I'm old enough to understand everything way back but I can't remember what. Now I'm getting...looking ahead. See what's going happen to me. You never know. I want my kids...stay with me during the night. What happened the last time I was...I don't know what happened. I really didn't know. All of a sudden. Just come on. That's why I want them to stay with me. I can move but I can hardly say anything. (unclear) She didn't hear me at all. So I was just glad (unclear). Must have fell asleep or something. And I woke up in the morning and I was all right. But I didn't like that. Really. That's a very, very (unclear).

EA: Dad, do you think all the people around your age are the great generation?

MP: I think so. Myself it is. I feel great and everything like that but some old people they can't walk. Well, I hope I live to ninety. I sit and watch the TV once in a while. Holy cow. Hundred and five. They don't even look like it. I hope I'm not that

(unclear). That's the way I think. Eighty-one years old. Eighty-five. Yes. A lot of things I'm thinking ahead now. But no longer.

BP: What do you think about the things that you accomplished, things you've done?

EA: What about all the things you've done?

MP: Way back?

BP: How do you feel about that?

EA: How do you feel about things you've done?

MP: Very, very surprised. That's a surprise. What I been doing. Stop. I can do it if I want to. I can do more. But I can't do it anymore. When I working on a machine I go like this. Like this and work on that. Ten, fifteen minutes. My legs are getting tired. So I gotta back up now. That's the way it is. Can't do what I used to do. Oh, boy. Impossible for me. But I can work there for ten, fifteen minutes and that's it. So I don't know. But I hope it just...I want (unclear). Boy. Yes. That's the way I think sometimes.

BP: Are you close to any of the guys or women that you worked with at the door company?

MP: I can hear talking but I can't understand you.

KW: Do you still talk to the people you used to work with at the door company?

MP: I haven't seen them since I retired. I think I only see one. She works down there. One of these. In know them. They work down at Lakeland Door Company. What's that's woman's name down there...government center? Legal. Legal service. I know her. If you're having problems. But I had a problem. That's why I know her. Because someone took my Social Security money off. About a hundred and thirty-five, forty dollars they took off. That's why I went...that's why I know this lady. From...I know his brother. Brother. Two of them worked down at Lakeland Door Company. So I don't know.

KW: It's probably time to wrap up.

MP: I'm still thinking ahead.

KW: Good.

MP: I'm not moving along like a young person. I can still work on something.

BP: When we come back we're going to have to get you off the snowblower instead of the lawn mower.

EA: He's always out there.

KW: All right. Well, we've just got to get some forms signed and then....

BP: Thank you.

KW: Mii gwetch, Michael, for the interview. It was good to meet you.

MP: Yes. Okay.

[End of Interview.](#)

Minnesota's Greatest Generation Oral History Project:
Minnesota Native American Interviews
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