

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: PHILIP CARRIERE
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: GENERAL DELIVERY
LA RONGE, SASK.
LA RONGE
INTERVIEW LOCATION: SASKATCHEWAN
SASKATCHEWAN
TRIBE/NATION: CREE
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: AUGUST 2, 1976
INTERVIEWER: MURRAY DOBBIN
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD
SOURCE: SASK. SOUND ARCHIVES
PROGRAMME
TAPE NUMBER: IH-355
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 72
PAGES: 12
RESTRICTIONS: NONE

CARRIERE, PHILIP:

Philip Carriere was a special native constable involved in the search for Jim Brady when he disappeared at Foster Lake.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Details of the search for Brady.
- Theories on his disappearance.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Philip Carriere was a special native constable at the time of Brady's disappearance and was on the search for the two men. He talks about that search and about his personal conclusions about the fate of Brady and Halkett.

INTERVIEW:

Murray: I am speaking to Phil Carriere of La Ronge who was a special constable in 1967 when Jim Brady and Abbie Halkett disappeared. Phil, could you tell me a bit about the search that you were on, not exactly all the details but sort of give me the impression you got after the search about what happened to the men?

Phil: Well, I spent about three weeks on the search itself right from the start until they more or less called it off about the 11th of July, I guess. And we covered a big area. We came all the way down on the Foster River, along the Foster

River, Nagle Lake, Eulas Lake, and all them lakes north, all the creeks. We never seen any signs or anything other than there was one place there where we seen a raft, you know. Oh, it wasn't too far, I'd say about 25 miles northeast from the original location where we started searching.

Murray: Southeast would it be?

Phil: I think it would be some, yeah, it would be about southeast. I forget the name of that lake.

Murray: Lapointe Lake.

Phil: Point Lake?

Murray: Lapointe, do you think?

Phil: Lapointe Lake, that's it, yeah. We were searching the whole ravine in there. There is rivers and creeks all along the area there. One of our camps were just lower, about, I'd say about four or five miles below there. And you know, not seeing any signs, I didn't know what to think.

Murray: You'd been on searches before had you, for people?

Phil: Oh, I've been in a lot of searches, many searches.

Murray: Have you ever come across a mystery quite like that one?

Phil: No, this is really the first one that...

Murray: You've always found what you were looking for before?

Phil: Yeah, we've been very successful in finding people. But these people here... of course I didn't go from where they disappeared from, where we found the canoe, eh. It was tied to shore. We more or less kept that area for the dog. The dog master was searching the area in there, so he'd have good start. But we had a real bad start, you know. It was the 20th of June. I remember this was kind of an odd summer. We had snow. We had about two inches of snow the first night we were there.

Murray: So that stopped the search did it?

Phil: Well, it didn't quite stop. We had to wait until the snow more or less melted and everything. And of course it didn't take long to melt. We still searched the lake itself, the Lower Foster, the shore line and all these bays and everything in case they were in the area, you know. But after that, we still continued searching.

Murray: Now there is some controversy because I've talked to a number of people about the raft and some say it was an old raft and wasn't made by them and some say that it was pretty recent.

What was your opinion on that raft?

Phil: I'd say it was some trapper. It could have been some trapper made it you know because it didn't look recent to me.

Murray: It didn't, eh?

Phil: No.

Murray: Because Sergeant Conrad says he remembers it being a recent one.

Phil: Well, yeah, it looked recent alright but it was within the year, yeah.

Murray: Not that recent.

Phil: It was. But I doubt if these guys would just make a raft and not make a big fire so somebody would find them, eh. The raft itself was right alongside the river and if they went a little ways, they could have crossed the river anywhere because the river was down, quite a bit down. Because we went across that river several places with a raft.

Murray: So where they had made the raft there wasn't really a need for it?

Phil: No, no. There was a place there where there was a point, eh. Maybe it could have saved them about four or five miles, you know, but my way of thinking, I think it could have saved a lot of time by going around hill.

Murray: And they could see that from where they were, eh, that they...?

Phil: Yeah. Yeah, that's...

Murray: Do trappers often build rafts like that?

Phil: Yeah, in springtime, yeah, they will. And there was...

Murray: What would they use the raft for?

Phil: Well, like this one place there, we were searching on this river going into Lapointe Lake and well, if it was a trapper way down there or maybe he wanted to go across that point, there was a little spot there where you could use a raft. I guess if you are going to use it, to continue using, it would be good for a trapper, you know. He doesn't have to take a canoe.

Murray: Right.

Phil: Or a shortcut going to Rottenstone, across country. But I don't know why would anybody make a raft in there, in that area.

Murray: So it would seem peculiar that a trapper would make a raft there, eh?

Phil: It would, yeah.

Murray: Do you remember checking where the trees had been cut, whether there was sap flowing or anything? Was there any evidence that it was really recent? What did people think at the time when you were with the group of people that looked at the raft?

Phil: Well, the people that found this raft were definite. We had two different groups, eh. We had a group of people, like James Izbister was one of those, I think, that were on that place where they found this raft and who's this other guy - Jacob McKenzie, the old fellow.

Murray: Is he in town here?

Phil: He lives over here, yeah. And so was James Izbister.

Murray: He lives at the same place as Jimmy Izbister doesn't he?

Phil: Yeah, just in the next door. See, they were in a different group, these guys. They search an area where they found this raft. We were on the other end. We were searching a different area. We had two groups. I was with John Mathias McKenzie who was trapping in Foster at that time, Lower Foster. And Joseph Ratt, he lives in Lafarge(?). This John lives over here too. And Silas McKenzie was another guy and he trapped in the area. He was in my group. We were searching with them. We had the dog master with us.

Murray: What was the name of the dog master? Do you remember his name?

Phil: His name was Brian Baldwin. I think he's out now. He's working for some outfit in, I don't know whether it's Alberta or B.C. somewhere. Some parks or something now.

Murray: What did the Indian people with the group that found the raft, what did they think of the raft? Do you remember them talking about it? Whether they thought it was made by these two men?

Phil: No, I never had a chance to question them.

Murray: What was the assumption, what did the search as a whole conclude? It seemed from talking to Sergeant Conrad, he seems to think that, he concluded that the raft was made by Brady and Halkett.

Phil: Well, yeah, this is it. We were really happy when somebody found this raft, you know, because I thought...

Murray: You thought that would mean they were alive.

Phil: I thought we were coming closer, you know. But we were quite happy because we moved the camp way down below there, you know, where we started spreading around and searching the whole area. We had a rugged area there. But not seeing any tracks... Of course this is a lot of trails, bears and all. And there was a lot of bears in the area. But we never came out with anything, you know. No signs.

Murray: If you had to say yes or no to this, what would you say? Do you think the raft was made by those two men? Now that you look back at it?

Phil: Of course, you know, it could've, you know.

Murray: It's just a possibility.

Phil: It could've, yeah.

Murray: Nobody was really sure how recent the raft was made then, eh?

Phil: No, no.

Murray: It was hard to tell?

Phil: It was the spring of the year you know, the spring of the year. If the thing was made in the fall, you know, the trees would be still fresh, eh. Because of the frost.

Murray: They would be frozen.

Phil: Yeah, the frost would preserve them and then in the spring the sap would come just the same as a tree.

Murray: So if they were cut in late fall, the sap could be running in the spring.

Phil: Yeah, it could be still running in the spring. So this is another thing you've got to...

Murray: So it's still a complete mystery for you?

Phil: It is for me, yeah.

Murray: You must have thought about it lots because it's such a peculiar situation. What kinds of things did you imagine might have happened to them when you think back about it? What could have happened? I mean, they wouldn't just sit down and die, something must've...?

Phil: Yeah, this is it. I've always think about this you know. Two people.

Murray: Two of them, yeah. One you could understand.

Phil: One I can understand but two just disappear like that you know, just completely. If one of them got hurt or anything, at least there was one more, eh. One to...

Murray: Light a fire or....

Phil: Yeah, light a fire or leave signs behind or blaze a trail if they had an axe or something, eh.

Murray: They were supposed to have had axes with them. What is your opinion of the possibility that they were killed by a bear or attacked by a bear and left injured?

Phil: Well, if that happened, of all the places we've searched and the area we covered, we should have come across something. Even the ravens would be... we'd be able to see ravens if there was a...

Murray: Because they would be picking on them, on the bodies.

Phil: Picking on them. And clothing, where animals would be spreading pieces of clothing here and there and...

Murray: You'd pick that up.

Phil: Yeah, we'd pick that up. And then the dog, if they were in the area, because the dog covered quite a large area in there. He would've...

Murray: He would smell raw, a body or meat or anything like that.

Phil: During that time when we searched shortly after the snowstorm, it was real warm because it wouldn't take long to... If there was a body in the bush, a dog would pick that up at quite a distance.

Murray: So you searched the area enough that... how many days say, do you think would a body attract ravens and animals? For quite a while I suppose, eh?

Phil: Well, in the month of June, it wouldn't take long.

Murray: Is it possible that you might have missed it then, if they had been killed? I mean the ravens might only fly around for a couple of days, eh?

Phil: Oh, in the immediate area there where we started at Foster, from the camp, we covered quite a big area there.

Murray: Pretty quickly?

Phil: Yeah. And the dog was more or less working in there you know.

Murray: How long did the dog man uh...?

Phil: Well, he was with us till, when we finally called it off.

Murray: For three weeks then, eh?

Phil: Three weeks yeah, in Nagle Lake and... See, we used to have camps and we'd spread out, eh. Searched the areas. All the creeks, lakes and all over.

Murray: Did you recall seeing a post with their initials on it?

Phil: Well, this was a different group. That was another group that worked in there. I think some guy said they did see posts and markers.

Murray: You don't know where they saw that, eh?

Phil: I think it's on the east side of where the camp was. You know, where they went lost, missing.

Murray: Right.

Phil: It's only a little ways from there.

Murray: So it's not far from their camp?

Phil: No. I believe another guy, I'm not too sure, I think Art Sjolander was on that. He stays right across here.

Murray: I'm wondering - there were two men on the lake at the time, on Foster Lake - Ben McKenzie and another man with them.

Phil: Yeah, Gary Thompson has got a camp in there, a tourist camp. And he had this one guide there, Norman. Yeah, Norman McKenzie I think his name was.

Murray: Ben McKenzie?

Phil: Ben McKenzie, yeah, and his wife.

Murray: So the family was there, eh?

Phil: There was a family in there, yeah.

Murray: Did he have another man with him, a cook or something? Or just the one man?

Phil: Gee, I don't know. I don't know.

Murray: Did you stay at their camp at all?

Phil: No. We camped right where these guys went missing from. We had a tent in there and searched the area.

Murray: There is a lot of rumor, of course, going around all the time when someone disappears like that and one of the

rumors was that the men were murdered.

Phil: Well, we heard quite a bit of that and every time something happens like that, it's always...

Murray: A murder. Somebody always says it's murder.

Phil: Always.

Murray: Did you feel at all during the time that there was any reason for investigating that sort of charge that the men had been killed? Did you ever feel that it should have been investigated or did you ever think there was anything to that theory?

Phil: Well, I couldn't think of any reason why this guy would, anybody for that matter, would try to kill these fellows. They were really nice guys. They were well liked, you know. At the time, I didn't know anybody that was after them. As a matter of fact, one of them guys I think just came into La Ronge. He was away in some hospital. Of course, we had a lot of stories about this other guy, the guy that was there, you know. Nobody knew anything about it.

Murray: They were just stories. There was no...

Phil: They were just stories, yeah.

Murray: There was no evidence of any kind?

Phil: No. As a matter of fact, one guy dragged the area. They dragged more or less the whole lake, the whole north part and the lower part of the lake.

Murray: And nothing?

Phil: Nothing.

Murray: Foster is a fairly deep lake, is it?

Phil: It is quite deep, yeah. And it's a long narrow lake.

Murray: Was there any dragging done of any of the other lakes like Lapointe Lake?

Phil: No, there was not. But if anybody drowned in that Lapointe lake, you know, it runs down into the river and we searched the whole river.

Murray: It would've turned up.

Phil: Yeah, it would've turned up and it would end up in there amongst the rocks. And there is places where you can walk right across, you know.

Murray: It's really shallow.

Phil: Yeah, real shallow. And it's narrow enough that you could spot anything. We walked on both shores of that, all over.

Murray: Right.

Phil: So was the rest of the creeks and rivers and all the little lakes around. We spent a lot of time.

Murray: Do you remember what people were saying by the time the search ended? Did anybody sort of have a conclusion? Would they say, "Oh they must have drowned or this must have happened"? Was there any conclusion or were people just as confused at the end as at....?

Phil: Well, everybody was confused, you know. They didn't know what - because just about the end of the search we even got these two fellows there, the trappers from there, John Mathias McKenzie and Joe Ratt. Joseph Ratt, he lived in Lafarge(?). They came on the Foster River, searched the whole river down all the way to Churchill River. They thought if they end up in the river they'd leave signs. Oh, we pretty well covered all the...

Murray: All possible areas.

Phil: Yeah. And then I don't know how many hours we spent flying, you know. Flying the whole area. Hundreds of hours.

Murray: How long do you think people could survive like that in the bush with no food and no tent or no sleeping bag, in that particular month? How long do you think people could go just eating lichen or moss or whatever they might be able to eat?

Phil: Well, during that time...

Murray: Given that these men were in their fifties so they were older men.

Phil: Well, the first few days we were there, you know, of course they could have been missing from about a week prior to that, eh. It was real cold. This was kind of unusual for June because that two inch snowfall we had there. And we spent a few nights in the tent and even our water froze in the pails. And I couldn't see... of course they could make fires and stuff like that but...

Murray: You didn't see any.

Phil: We didn't see any, you know. This is another thing. But I think a person could survive for quite a while.

Murray: Even in those conditions, eh?

Phil: Even in the conditions, yeah. If they had - whatever

they had with them, it all depends now.

Murray: Yeah, if they expected it to be a warm day and they expected to come back to their camp, then they wouldn't have taken hardly anything with them.

Phil: That's right. They wouldn't have taken too much stuff. Of course, most of their stuff were in there, you know.

Murray: Was in their tent?

Phil: Yeah, they left everything.

Murray: So they wouldn't have even snare wire or anything to...?

Phil: No, I don't think they would have lasted too long, you know. I think if a person was lost out there, and two of them especially, they would have made a lot of signs.

Murray: Why didn't they? What explains that?

Phil: That's another thing I couldn't tell you.

Murray: Because even someone who didn't know the bush would... I mean that's what I would do... I would start a fire because you know that people are looking for fires.

Phil: Yeah, and then shelters, you know. They'd make shelters where they could sleep, eh.

Murray: Especially if it was snowing. They would try and make a lean-to or something.

Phil: Yeah. It's a mystery alright.

Murray: There was supposed to have been a lean-to of some kind at this Lapointe Lake too. Do you remember that at all?

Phil: Well, we just....

Murray: Just made of spruce bows or something?

Phil: Well, these guys that found this raft, they had a camp right there, so I don't know.

Murray: Right, they'd be the ones to talk to.

Phil: Yeah, it would be old Jacob and Izbister. These guys, you know, they'll be able to tell you more about that.

Murray: Right.

Phil: Because they were searching the whole area there. We just more or less searched the river from down below up until we came to this place.

(End of Side A)

(End of Interview)

PROPER NAME INDEX

PROPER NAME	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
BRADY, JIM	IH-355	PHILCARRIERE	72	2-12
FOSTER LAKES, SASK.	IH-355	PHILCARRIERE	72	2,3,8,10
HALKETT, ABBIE	IH-355	PHILCARRIERE	72	2-12
LAPOINTE LAKE, SASK.	IH-355	PHILCARRIERE	72	2,4,10

INDEX

INDEX TERM	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
SEARCHES				
-for lost people	IH-355	PHILCARRIERE	72	2-12
TRANSPORTATION				
-raft	IH-355	PHILCARRIERE	72	3-6