

## **Mali Keating - Northwoods**

My family came from the village and the reservation of Odanak in Canada. My grandfather lived in that village and was born in the year of 1848. The only way that he could make a reasonable living was hunting and trapping for the Hudson's Bay Company. And that entailed his going up into the north woods quite a distance, to the hunting territory that was assigned to our family. And he went there, and he was there for the entire winter by himself. He took with him woolen underwear. He wore a woolen suit over that. He had a, what was called a tippet, which it is my understanding, was a long woolen scarf about eight feet long. And how that was worn was it was started around your neck the way you would a scarf. But then the long ends were then wrapped around the chest area and finished up around the waist so that you had it wound around and it kept the body heat inside.

He had one woolen cap, he had two pairs of woolen socks, two pairs of moccasins. He carried one blanket, a knife, his hatchet, a large ax, his flintlock rifle and tea, sugar. Anything he ate besides that he caught. The last year that he went. He came back after having spent the entire winter up there by himself, and was unaware of anything that had happened to the family. And unbeknownst to him my grandmother and my oldest aunt and uncle and my next oldest uncle, came down with typhoid fever, which was very common in those days. And one of my uncles died. So when my grandfather arrived, he had found in the course of his winter, two naturally black minks that he had very carefully tanned, because he brought them back from my grandmother as a gift. So he had them over his arm as he came into the house, and the doctor was just leaving, and he saw those beautiful black minks, and he said, "Oh, that will just cover my fee." And he grabbed them off my grandfather's arms and took them away with him at his fee. And so my grandfather had nothing to give my grandmother as a gift. And he was really very perturbed about that.