

IRON RANGE RESEARCH CENTER

Oral History Interview

NAME: Annie Pete

OF TAPES: 1

INTERVIEWER: Tracy Dagen

DATE:

PLACE:

ACCESSION #:

Tape 1/Side 1

Interviewer: 19th, 1996 and I'm talking with Annie Pete. And, who are your parents are? First, let's start out with you. What's your name and who are your parents?

Annie Pete: My parents? Alan Joe Strong and Rosie Beargrease Strong.

TD: And how many children are there in your family?

AP: There was 10 of us I think. Yeah. 10. There was Ruby, Albert, I have a brother there - Joe - but he died, then Herbert, Johnny, and Me, and Billy, and Louie and Spud. Harry....

TD: Okay, where did you mainly grow up at?

AP: Where did I grow up?

TD: Yeah. Where were you living when you were a kid?

AP: Yeah. Nett Lake.

TD: You mainly stayed up in Nett Lake?

AP: Um hmmm. That's where I was born, I guess. Nett Lake.

TD: Did you travel when you were kids? Did you go to other areas? Or did you mainly stay in Nett Lake?

AP: No. We used to go pick blueberries and we go across the lake. Nett Lake.

TD: Well, at ricing, I know we went ricing quite a bit all over.

AP: Yeah. Um hmmm. Yeah. Since I could remember, we rice. Ricing. Course, we used to go cut hay. First it was blueberries. Picking blueberries. Then, cut hay and then they had rice. Yeah. They had rice. Oh, we had gardens, too. Grandpa had a garden.

TD: And everyone pitched in and helped? Cause that's a lot of kids...

AP: Yeah, they used to help, yeah. They'd make, cut hay and that and put some hay away for the winter. For the horses.

TD: How many horses did you have?

AP: Oh, one time we had 4 horses and another time we had 5 horses. We had a lot of horses.

TD: Did you get to ride them? Or were they just mainly for horses?

AP: Yeah, used to riding them or him. I never did. I was scared of horses.

TD: Where did you go to school?

AP: Nett Lake School. That old building right by um... right by where Reggie lives.

TD: About how many kids were there, going to school?

AP: In school? Oh, I don't know. There's been lot of them went out there. I don't know. Must've been about... about 100 anyway. Or more. Yeah. Probably about 200 kids. First graders. First through the 8th grade. Went to the 8th grade.

TD: Well, can we get back now to Rosie Beargrease. Do you know where they came from?

AP: Oh, from... from uh, Ely. Ely is where they come from. That's where they went to school. Oh they went to school here then, you know. When they were young.

TD: At that Indian school?

AP: Um hmm. Yeah. Indian school.

TD: And then John Beargrease was one of her kids, or....

AP: No, John Beargrease? He wasn't..... in Ely then.... In Grand Portage. That's when he was the mail carrier. Took the mail, you know, to Duluth with his dog team. I think he had 4 dogs.

TD: Did you have dog sleds?

AP: Hmmm?

TD: Did you have dog sleds in Nett Lake there?

AP: Oh, yeah. We had a lot of dogs. All the time. I even had a dog. We had to have one, I guess.

TD: For what?

AP: Had to have dogs, cats. Yeah. Horses. another time we had cow. Two cows. Yeah. in Kabetogama. Kabetogama, yeah. And I think that's where my dad was born too. In that Black Bay. We called it Black Bay. I don't know where they lived. That's where he was born.

TD: And that's your dad.

AP: Um hmm. Yeah. My dad's dad was a white man.

TD: How many brothers and sisters did your dad have?

AP: Did he have?

TD: Yeah.

AP: I... Three and a sister. Four of them, I think. Three, four, five. Five. Cause two of them died, I guess. So then that's sisters. Two sisters I think it is. Yeah.

TD: Can you remember the names?

AP: I don't even remember (Robert's?) sister's name. Seems like the name was Rose. Charlie and Bob, (Robert?) Strong.

TD: How were the Pow-wow's back then? What's different about them from the way we do it now? And then....

AP: They're about the same way. You know when they have a pow-wow they also have a ... have a pow-wow building too, they have...

TD: They had a main singer?

AP: Big round building. Yeah. Great big round building. They had at Nett Lake. That's where they have pow-wows.

TD: Were there other tribes there, or...

AP: Hmmm?

TD: Other tribes there at the pow-wows? Or just mainly from Nett Lake?

AP: Nett Lake. Yeah. Nett Lake. They always had pow-wows here too.

TD: In Vermilion?

AP: Um hmm.

TD: Did you get to those ones?

AP: Hardly ever. That's too far, you know, and hardly anybody had cars. ... To come to pow-wow. Tower people used to go and rice. Nett Lake. And move, you know, to Nett Lake.

TD: And then would they move back? Right after ricing?

AP: Yeah. They'd stay. Yeah, they'd stay. I don't know how they got over there. Somebody... I suppose they had someone take them. I don't know.

TD: And my mom can remember riding on the train from Orr to Ely.

AP: Orr to Ely. Ely. Yeah. They used to ride on the train. Yeah. To Ely.

TD: And how many kids do you have?

AP: Two.

TD: How many grandchildren, now. You have lots of grandchildren.

AP: Oh, I have lots of grandchildren. And great grandchildren. Lots of them. I don't know. Hmmm.

TD: Okay, that's gonna stop.

End of tape.

The Vermillion Lake People:
Vermillion Lake Bois Forte Oral History Project
Minnesota Historical Society