

Old Joe and the Song in his Heart: (TRANSCRIPT)

(MATTHEW) I've known Joe Deschamps all of my life. His grandsons are good friends of mine and I would go over to visit them at Joe and Elvina's house. They were living there with their mom at their grandparents. There was always a pot of tea on, we'd sit around the kitchen and eat soup and bannock. Joe would be keeping himself busy. Cleaning up the yard, he was always humming. As long as I've known Joe he has always been humming. (Hummm, hmm). Joe spent most of his life hunting and trapping. That was way before my time. But now I'm beginning to learn more about him. (hmm, hmm). When he was 13, Joe started to sneak away from school to hunt and trap with his older brother Fred. Being on the land was where he wanted to be, where he felt most at home. He would fish, hunt, trap all summer, fall and winter. In the spring, he would go around to the local farms and get work. Fish, hunt, trap, farm, year after year after year. This was his way of life.

(JOE) Yah, I used to do quite a bit of fishing, yep. Setting nets, do up hooks. I used to like huntin', huntin' moose, and trappin', I don't mind trappin'.... I never used to mind it. (Hummm, hummm).

(MATTHEW) He knew Elvina all of his life. By the 1960's she was joining him in the bush. Not only was she cooking and helping set up camp, she would join him on the trap lines.

(JOE) One time, we were travellin' there, huh? Wasn't so long ago...those traplines, huh? I was along with Elvina, huh? Along on these islands, uh? I told her I had beaver traps across on the little pond on the lake, this is where I had beaver traps across, and I told Elvina make a fire here on the island 'dere and wait for me here. So I was setting traps and she started hollering, huh, she started hollering: I wasn't too far -- she started hollering at me, Wolves! Wolves! She said, huh? So I looked where it comes from [Missing piece - and, woah, I got so scared, I jumped out of my boots]. Then along come two dog sleds ...Joe Calliou used to live Prairie Lakes, not too far, huh, these dogs were coming, coming for me huh. I shot one there, but I didn't hit him, uh? He took off.

(MATTHEW) He tried to teach the youth about being on the land, but he says every time he took them out they would just run around the bush like they didn't care to learn. I think this was disappointing to him. That the younger generation wasn't interested in his passion, his traditional way of life. Old Joe no longer goes out on the land, but if he could, I know he would.