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What I'm trying to do is learn about the story of the creation of Nunavut. What I have learned over the last two and a half years is that I have to go back to the times of traditional leadership, before Hudson Bay, before all of that because in the negotiations I start to see the kind of things that were done in the negotiations that come from traditional leadership practices. I am tracking who was doing what, when, and trying to learn where people learned the things they did, things that helped them in the negotiations and leadership. [I showed him my chart of leadership development and explain it and then the charts of organizational history]

It's a lot.

Yeah, I'm trying to get as much as I can, because there is no one place anyone can go to get this, so that's the work that I am doing, not just to get everyone's story and write it down, but also to find out what we can learn from this story that can benefit other Indigenous Peoples. How did you first get involved, because you are everywhere [pointing to his name listed in many places in my charts]?

I was following the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) way back in the late 1960s, but I wasn't involved, especially in the ITC, I was just supporting what they did. Actually, I started out in the Hudson Bay, then after the Hudson Bay, I became a co-op manager and then attended the Western Co-op College for about 14 months. In 1975, we formed the Kitikmeot Inuit Association (KitIA). That was fun to begin. In 1982, the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut (TFN) was formed. Before that it was the Land Claim Commission under ITC. I became a member at large representing the Kitikmeot. Due to other commitments, I didn't attend the first few meetings of TFN. I was on the verge of being replaced, but I decided I'd better go to the next meeting otherwise I might be involved as much as I should be. I became a member at large of TFN until a few years later, perhaps the mid 1980s, when I became involved at the executive level. I became secretary-treasurer to TFN, and then became heavily involved in the land claims. Of course, we had negotiators and you could look at all those names [points to notebook], like Bob Kadlun was the main instigator of the whole issue and he was a main character in negotiating, along with his staff like Paul Quassa, David Aglukark, and Thomas Suluk. Thomas Suluk became executive director of TFN, and then he became a part of the Board because he was executive director. Under TFN, we were made of three different regions – Baffin, Kivalliq and Kitikmeot. The Board of directors of TFN was made up of a member at large and the presidents of each regional association. Then I became president of the Kitikmeot Regional Association and so they had to select a new member at large. I forget who it was, Jack Kupeuna or someone. Jack Kupeuna was mainly involved on the negotiating table. Then Paul Quassa became president of TFN, and then Allen Maghagak took over as chief negotiator, and he was replaced by Paul Quassa again. I think there was back and forth amongst them. And then the negotiations took place. I think we pretty well had to start all over again at the table when we became TFN. That was the reason we kept the Land Claims Commission. I remember the wildlife article took a long time, even

though there was a meeting between the two organizations, TFN and the federal government.

Yeah, what was it that was so hard, because everyone says that this was one of the most difficult things to negotiate?

Yeah, that's one of the backbones when you talk about land claims, wildlife and the land were mainly the issues, and then everything falls into that, like hunting rights and all that.

Was it the management Board they had problems with?

I think so. Of course the government didn't want to give up their belief, and we are saying that we are capable of managing our own wildlife. Over the years, toward the end of the negotiations, major items like the land quota selection, every community and region selected their lands, of course mostly they were selected for animal purposes, like hunting, even though we would have hunting rights in the parts of the settlement agreement. Then mineral rights were selected, subsurface, because of well-known minerals that had been staked by the various spots in the Kitikmeot region. We had to compromise. In the Baffin, there was not generally known underground, like subsurface, so they had to give their quantum to Kitikmeot, and likewise Kivalliq. It was up and down over the years, and of course we had staff up and down as well. But most of them stick right to the end. The negotiations took its toll, and we've lost a few people. I think people were burning out because the number of years it took, over 20 years. I think all of this came about, land claims, because of the Alaskan idea. Tagak was the first president of ITC, and he was the main instigator of the whole issue along with a few others. John Amagoalik and Tagak Curley, I think they did very good. There used to be frustration, a lot. I think part of that frustration was that the other side always had to go back to the government. They were not given the authority to settle. So, it took time.

And the same with the overlapping agreements?

The Dene and other Aboriginal groups, I think we settled that quite well. Of course, there is an outstanding dispute, one being the other Inuit in Northern Quebec over the Act, but that has been settled quite a bit. Manitoba and Saskatchewan Dene are still arguing, but it's not creating a problem at all. The best solution is to allow every Aboriginal group to hunt. Of course, a government might not like it, you know, because of their organizations. Likewise the Inuvialuit, they hunt quite a bit on Victoria Island for caribou. In the ITC days, there was a lot of exploration going on up in the Arctic islands for oil, there was quite a bit of exploration going on everywhere. People were asking why are so many helicopters flying around, scaring the animals.

The famous letter from Mary Cousins...

Yes. We tried to claim all this to be coming out of the underground, the mineral rights. I think all that was negotiated to the best that we can get. That's why we started collecting royalties from the existing mines. Of course there's no mines operating in Nunavut right

now, but there is going to be one opening up pretty soon. Of course the oil explorations have slowed down quite a bit since we began. During the middle of the negotiations there was a proposed natural gas pipeline that of course, made people very concerned because it was going right through these three communities. But that never came about, I think they thought it would be too expensive. It would have created jobs, but very short-term. One year at the most. Over the years, the negotiations started taking shape, and before 1993, we settled. I think in 1991 we had our first principle meeting with the federal government. There was a big signing in Igloolik. It was a good celebration with people from all over, a good ceremony. And then the ratification, that came about okay. I forget the percentage. Of course the ratification tour that we did all across started in Kugluktuk right down to Sanikiluaq and up to Grise Fiord.

How many people traveled on that tour?

We had two crews, something like 12 on each team. I can get you the actual number. In Yellowknife, we had a workshop, mostly the Board of directors and the chief negotiators and the federal government and lawyers, and then we hit the road. It was good, but I think the time was a bit too little in each community. It was smooth running in most of the settlements. There were people who weren't too happy the way we negotiated, but I think that's normal. You see it anywhere. You see in it almost every community, those concerns. Why not settle a bigger land claim and more Inuit owned lands, but I think we tried to express that this is the best deal you can get. Otherwise, you know, you are not going to receive a good land claim. We ratified it, it's workable. That's what we campaigned. We tried to explain what is in the agreement in that ratification tour. We ran into a few obstacles, people calling us names and what not, but we didn't mind that. I mean it hurts you a little bit, but we have to explain that it's not only for you, it's for future generations. I think the whole tour took about two months.

What group, what kind of people had the most problem with it?

The younger ones, not really young, but getting to middle age, in-between, that kind of people. They had some concerns that this agreement could have been a lot better. They were not at the negotiating table. You know, it's completely different. In the beginning, we asked for the whole Nunavut area to be under the Inuit-owned land, but of course that is impossible because of the Crown lands. Some people were saying that some of the lands we selected were useless, but there is nothing new there. It's the people themselves that selected it because they had looked into the past, and that's the type of thing we'd try to explain. We were saying if we are not going to have our own territory, we're not going to ratify the Nunavut land claims. That was our message to the federal government. We were very successful that the Inuit ratification came first, and then the whole land claims ratification and the whole Nunavut issue came right after that. On May 25, we signed the Inuit land claim – that's the pen over there - that came in Igloolik.

Yes, that is interesting. I have a question that I want to ask you specifically about Igloolik.

Then we ratified the Nunavut land claim and we had a big ceremony in Kugluktuk. The weather was good. There were a lot of people. Our message was that it was going to be up and down. We are not going to have a very big claim. It's not the end. It's the beginning of the involvement with the federal government. If you want it, we're going to have to work on it. There's going to be negotiation from time to time on certain issues. Of course, the implementation will be a lot tougher than some of the negotiations. That has been our message to the people. I think we've taken the right message to the people, and now we are starting to feel that the federal government has a different interpretation than what they agreed to.

You've worked through a whole number of different federal governments.

Yes. In 1993, we had a Progressive Conservative government, but we were dealing mostly with a Liberal government. We agreed with the Progressive Conservatives who were in power those days. It was an agreement between the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND) and Mulroney.

So you came in with Trudeau and Judd Buchanan as DIAND minister right?

Right.

Every time a new DIAND minister came on board, did that mean you had to...?

The series of ministers at DIAND we had been tackling had to be educated about Nunavut and the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA). I think there was various support, some of them had support and some of them always had a little bit of question too that came with it.

Who do you remember the most fondly?

I think Jane Stewart was the most supportive of the NLCA. I think she was the most available. Tom Siddon was the minister while we were settling the land claims.

When you were in Hudson Bay, had you come from school or been before that?

I am not one of those Chesterfield Inlet people. No, that's for Keewatin. I went to school in Inuvik for one year. When I going to school, I ended up in the hospital with tuberculosis. When I came back, I took a job with Hudson Bay. After that, I decided to go back to school for one more year. I went to Inuvik for one more year. I wanted to go back to Inuvik but the vice-principal told me to go to Yellowknife instead. I guess my age was kind of high and my education was a bit low, so I said to hell with it. All my friends had gone to Inuvik, and here I am going to Yellowknife and I didn't want to be there. I know people in Inuvik and I wanted to go back to Inuvik.

How old were you then?

Ah. I was 18. I should have ended up going to Yellowknife, but most of my education was self-taught. The principal told me go to Yellowknife and I said screw that. Twenty years later the same person, we went to a meeting in Yellowknife when I was involved in the local education authority and I was chairing the meeting. This guy put his hand up and I kept skipping him and I told him, "Gee, I would have had a better education if you hadn't told me to go to Yellowknife. All my friends had gone to Inuvik and I wanted to go to Inuvik too."

He didn't understand the importance of the support in the culture?

Yeah. All that is past now. The opportunity came up for me to go up to the Western Co-op College in Saskatoon and the territorial government and federal government were sponsoring. There was no Co-op in Taloyoak where I come from, but I took it anyway. There were three phases. I went to the first phase and the second phase and I missed the third phase, but I think you learn a lot.

What was that like?

We took bookkeeping courses and learned about the Co-op movement. I used to listen to people talking, lecturing about how the Co-op started. It started in England. It's really interesting how it started. So then I went back to Taloyoak and worked with the Co-op for about nine years. An opportunity opened up in the settlement council as secretary-treasurer and I took that. I was with the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) until about 1981. Then Taloyoak turned into a hamlet in 1981 and I was the secretary/manager until about 1989.

At the same time that you are a member of the Board at TFN and KitIA, you are doing settlement council work and Board of Education work?

All at the same time, yeah.

Like everyone else are doing a thousand things at once.

Yeah. That's right.

What did the Co-op movement mean to you? You said when you working at Hudson's Bay, you were monitoring what ITC was doing. What did you think of these guys?

Being an Inuk, there was an Inuit movement for rights and addressing them.

Even back then you felt that is what it was?

I used the term Inuk a lot in Taloyoak, regardless of ITC and RCMP and the courts and so forth. These guys have got an interest and maybe I can take part, become a part of the leadership. Whether I do it right or I do it wrong, you know you learn from mistakes.

You have different opinions than everyone once in a while, but most of the time the consensus is done by the group of people.

The thing that fascinates me more than anything else is how you deal with conflict amongst yourselves. You are in a leadership position very frequently so you had to manage that.

You have to talk to people. You have to put a message across. And you have to listen. You've got to make sure that you are not bringing your prejudice into another group or anything like that. During the beginning of ITC days, there was a lot of exploration going on and people were mad or had some concerns mainly because they are concerned that the wildlife might disappear from it. These are older people who are doing that and the younger people are for development. It was hard in those days for the older generation to see that even though there's some development, there can be balance. Technology is getting better all the time. It's hard which side you should be on. You see these people have a general concern, and these people have a development concern and are worried about their future jobs and so forth. And these were about the land, wildlife and livelihood. You have to put them together, so you have to listen for ways about how you can solve the conflict between them.

What if you can't solve the conflict?

They vote you out. It's as simple as that. I think the older generation knows that we are fighting for their rights and in the past, they know there was hardship. They didn't have too much voice under the weight of the federal government, and the territory, and at the local level, the Hudson's Bay and the missionaries, and the RCMP, and Inuit were afraid because they have power. I think some of them were overstepping their authority, overstepping their mandate in a lot of cases. I think that's how ITC came on board. People were starting to realize they had rights. We are able to make sure there's no way nobody can damage our hunting areas and the habitat. We have to have a voice. The old people were saying that.

It was their vision that kept people together?

I think the settlement councils were the beginning.

Another thing I find fascinating is that ITC is formed in 1971 and in 10 years, it goes from being one organization to over 15. Were you involved in any of these others, Inuit Cultural Institute (ICI) or Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC) or National Issues?

ITC was its own organization until about 1973 or 1974. Then you had the regional organizations form. I think ITC was supporting it because the whole thing was too much work. And then a few other organizations came about, the Inuit Cultural Institute and the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC). When you are a member of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) or TFN, you have to be part of those organizations at the executive level. For a certain term, I was involved in ICC during the TFN days and ITC days. We tried to be as

united as much as we can. Over the years, there might be conflict over duplicating certain issues, environment issues, Inuit rights issues and such. You have to be very careful not to duplicate and when we do, when we both try to tackle the same issues in different organizations, that we all get along. You have to decide who is best at what.

Does ITK still hold its general assemblies like they used to?

No. It's very small now. In the beginning, every corner of Canada was represented, every community. ITC, their work sort of wound down after the land claims, the Inuvialuit. It's made of representative of each region. It's really smaller. Now, it's mostly an advocate group working on certain rights. They don't have many programs.

It's kind of like a parent who gave birth to all of these children, organizations and now is semi-retired, but it's still a place you can come home for Sunday dinner?

Yeah. That's good. When we still have a problem, we still go to Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) (formerly ITC), but we don't do that so often.

What was it like when you first got involved? What do you remember from those days? What was the energy like?

It used to be fun, the gatherings and seeing people, how they act, or how they would react. We'd try to be proactive as we can. In the big conference like that, the summit, it's hard to do anything, you'd always have to go to the back rooms. We were working to represent some people, we were working together, we are going to be seeing each other. It was never easy. There might be hard times in talking to each other. We don't have to take it home, but work within the regions. It's up and down.

I was going to ask you about that because I know ITC in 1974 when Tagak got out and then the ITC went into land claims, there were some real shaky times between 1974 and 1978. There were all kinds of leadership changes, things were dissolved and there was infighting. How aware were you of that?

Yeah, that's right. They were not really consistent, changes were happening. I think it was a very, very down time. Some of the people in the higher offices, I cannot say totally that they were burned out. I think some people, but not others. And I think that the land claims were getting much closer. People stick to the job as much as they can. It was a crucial time. At that time, whether we were going to achieve it or not, that was the question that we were asking. Some were saying that we were taking too long.

So some wanted to settle with that 1976 proposal and some were saying no.

Yeah, even us. You know we wanted to settle, but now looking back at it, it was not a good agreement. We were going to settle for a few things.

So that was part of what was going on?

Yes, and of course the federal government was changing all the time.

How did you get through that time, because eventually it shakes out and you have a leadership and people agree to disagree.

Well you know what the Inuit say, we have to agree at each meeting and we have to know what we're going to do with it. Let's stick together, let's negotiate together. The three regional areas, Baffin and Kitikmeot and Keewatin, we have to stick together and make sure we are not split. That's why we have the presidents of each region involved at the Board level of TFN, so we can keep the unity. That was hard sometimes because some of the regional associations had problems, the same kind of problems ITC had, lack of support, lack of staff were a major issue in some of the organizations. But we stuck it out.

Was there also some kind of tension between those who wanted to keep spending money and those who did not?

Oh yeah, that was hard in a lot of ways. Of course we borrowed money from the government for the negotiations and there were organizations also giving us some funding support and there were those who would like to give it away. But we tried to say that this money was for the negotiations, we have to settle first. We have to settle our current negotiations. There is more coming after victory.

Some people wanted to pool that into a development fund and investment?

Yes, we were kind of split on that. There were two loan guarantees that the people were looking after. Nunasi was the major one and then there were the Arctic co-ops. They were really split amongst the Board of Directors because some of them didn't want to sign a loan guarantee against the settlement of land claims. Some were for it. I think we were very risky on that issue because if we didn't get a land claim then the Board of Directors would have been liable. In case those two organizations didn't pay for it and in case the TFN didn't pay for it, we would have been liable.

But you did sign the loan guarantee?

Yeah we did.

How did that decision get made?

More people were agreeing to it. We were advised by our legal people that, "You don't have a land claim," and that we were going to be liable, but most of us were optimistic. Part of the deal with the loan guarantee with the bank is that it was their part to make mistakes. The bank accepted the loan guarantee from TFN. They should have never done that. The bank should have known that TFN did not have a land claim. The manager of that organization did a real good job in getting the bank to let us out over a million dollars, and the company paid off the loan guarantee. The TFN Board, all kinds of

organizations wanted to be a part of it. There was ICI, ITC and the Co-op and then there was the women's organization.

Pauktuutit?

Yeah. We decided these people have no interest in the land claims, so we booted them out. The only members of the Board of Directors were the regional presidents along with the members at large. They all had to be Beneficiaries of the land claim. It was worked out and from there on we focused on the land claim negotiations.

So, like ITC, you felt that you had gotten too big?

Yeah, that's right. TFN was taking on too many directors from various organizations and we decided that everyone should really have a direct interest in the land claims. It was better being smaller. It was fun a lot of times.

What were the best times?

During the negotiations, there were ups and downs and when we signed off, initialed every article, it gives you a good feeling. Then when the agreement was signed, and we agreed to it, that was a good feeling. Right before the AIP [Agreement in Principle], the last negotiation was about compensation. It was long, and took us quite late in the evening. The finance minister was involved, I forget who it was, and there was Tom Siddon, and we couldn't come to a term. The other side was walking out and Louis Pilakapsi, who was a good friend of mine, said, "Just hold on, we've got to make a move here." They ended up staying. They were walking out, they stood up to walk out and he said, "Have a seat, we can move a bit here." That night we settled the compensation.

Tell me more about Louis.

Louis was the guy, he was the father of all the Board of Directors, and he wasn't scared to tackle anything. His goal was to see that people benefited, improve on their lives.

Was he actually physically older than everybody, or was it just that his spirit was?

Well, not much older than us, but he was not going to take no for an answer. If you say no, he had to know the reasons. Over the years, Louis' personal life was tearing apart, but his work was still very beneficial at the local level, at the regional level. Louis always tried to make sure he understood before he would agree to anything. There are people who would agree to anything and understand later. He wasn't like that. For him, understanding came first. I think he kept us going a lot.

He was at almost all of the negotiations wasn't he?

Yeah.

He is never mentioned but he is there.

He was at the Board level for a long time. He was president of the Nunasi Corporation and he was part of our ratification tour. He was good at explaining things. When we were heckled, he would listen and then answer back. If somebody asks a stupid question, he would say how would you do it. He'd know how to handle it. He was not afraid to raise anything whether to the president of a big multi-national corporation, or the prime minister or somebody who is just a hunter. He got out of NTI when he was not elected to the regional association, but he was involved in local politics. He became a mayor in Rankin Inlet. There was a lot of tragedy in his life. But he was getting back into politics, working his way up again when the tragedy came along and ended his life.

That seems to be true for a lot of people who would get into trouble or get booted out and then go and straighten out their lives and come back into it.

There were a lot of people like that, come back and who were booted out and who would come back.

It's unusual to find a group of people who accept them.

Some of them have a problem coming back over the years. I think we try to treat everybody equal. I always believed that when people were bad that they can turn back into a good person again. We were told not to condemn anyone. Some of our leaders have an alcohol problem. That's the biggest problem that I've seen. If there was no alcohol, some of them got into drugs big time. Now that there's Nunavut, I think there was a lot of appreciation of who we are today and I think that we try to help.

Yeah. Louis did it, Bobby did it.

Yeah, Louis did it, Bobby did it and Bobby almost ended his life. Paul Quassa did it. There are a few others. John Amagoalik had a drinking problem and there are others that I just don't know about.

I just found out from the Government of Nunavut (GN) that John Amagoalik was offered a job again. [The elections for the new government had taken place in February. John ran for MLA and lost.]

John talked a lot. John was in a government that he didn't agree with. That is his attitude and that is his problem. A lot of people say we're not going to have a person like that. John is a good friend of mine.

That is just the kind of thing that serves you very well when you are in a movement, but when you are in government...

Yes. That's it. People can bring up problems with government, but they are problems that they don't have solutions to. We always have to look for solutions. We have to realize that all of us can bring up a problem, but not all of us can look to solve it.

In the very early days, did people really believe that there was going to be a land claim, a Nunavut?

We were told a lot of times that we were wasting our time, even during the ratification tour. We were told that we were wasting time, wasting money, but we kept on going. It's part of our job. It's our job to see the whole thing through. I think we did that. I don't know how many people said no. I think it was mostly from the lack of information. It was hard from the beginning to tell everybody. We tried our best to keep the people informed. Some of the people told us you are wasting our time, you should be out hunting. Some of our members were told that. Some of the people who told us that then don't mind benefiting personally from the land claim today, you see those kind of things. As I look back, I know there were a lot of times that we were being called names, but most of them were supporting the land claim once we gave a talk. During the ratification, we had a lot of influence. If we are working on it, never give up. We have to make sure that it is implemented properly. Don't duplicate things, talk to everyone who is going to be involved in the implementation of the land claim. These are the kind of things that we were trying to do. We tried to express our side. We would try to negotiate this way, and the government would try to negotiate that way, and if they said no to what we put on the table, we would try a different avenue. This is the message that we tried to give to the people. I think we had a map with us. It would have been a lot better to show people if we didn't have a land claim, if we don't ratify the NLCA, it would have been all white with no pink and no red dots on it. If we didn't ratify the NLCA, we would have had to do it region by region and it would have been a whole lot weaker, settling each land claim by region.

What about this little piece here? Bobby was telling me about the difficulty negotiating there.

That was because of the Dene. The Dene thought that it was cutting into their traditional areas too much because of hunting in the past. The only land we have outside the Nunavut Settlement Area is there in that area. There is a burial grounds of the Kugluktuk people of long ago. There is land that belongs to the Inuit that KitIA owns. We compromised with the Dene people over the line, except that we claim two parcels of land as Inuit owned lands.

As I understand it, if you hadn't given that away, the whole thing would have fallen through, the land claims.

I think so, yes. The boundary line would have been gone. I think that people of Kugluktuk and KitIA did a very good job of negotiating that.

Other than that, what were the most difficult times?

The most difficult time was selecting Inuit owned lands, especially the subsurface. The government didn't want to give away their areas that were rich in minerals. That's why we have less areas in the Baffin Island than we do elsewhere, because in Baffin we compromised quite a bit more than in the Kitikmeot.

Have you read McPhearson's book?

Yeah, he was part of our advisory on the land quantum.

Is he pretty accurate?

Yes I think so. The land quantum selection was pretty tight. I know that Kugluktuk, we would negotiate all night right up until the plane's departure, 24 hour negotiations.

I heard that you would have them up here and you made them stay up all night in the summer, not realizing the time.

Yeah. We were not going to do it in Ottawa. They had to come up and actually see the land. Tom Molloy would rarely get mad during the negotiations. He's a steady guy. Some people you could tell from their body language, but this guy you had to watch. Body language tells a lot. Some of them from the other side were very good people. One tried to complain that he was being kicked by Bobby. I don't think that was true. Now that guy is working for us again. Some of them would say stupid things to make us mad I guess.

Yet even Tom Molloy had the Tomato scale, because of his turning red.

Tom Molloy was still learning a lot. Tom Molloy treats you differently once you get to know him. I get along with him very well. I respect him and he respected me quite well, too. During the ratification tour, we would all stay in the same hotels. He was not on my team, but I heard that at his hotel, which was very limited, that the sound man, we had to take along a sound man, took a bed which Tom Molloy was going to use, and Tom Molloy gave him heck or made him give up half the bed or something like that! It took a toll that ratification tour because of the limited spaces. That sound man was a parachuter and he wanted to jump from the airplane all the time. I told him one day, why don't you go to the tallest building with your stuff and jump. "Too low!" he said, "Too low." If you jump upwards maybe its high enough. There were a lot of funny things about it too, that a guy can remember if you think about it.

Do you remember the story of the silly string?

No, I wasn't there, but I heard about it. I was acting president of TFN, and sometimes they took me out for meetings. It was during the negotiations when we had settled something and one of our lawyers brought the silly string and sprayed it on everyone.

Thinking back on it now, can you see things that you might have learned from your parents or from your family or from early childhood?

My parents were from the southern part of Baffin Island. They were transported by the Hudson Bay up to the Devon Island to do some crafting in the early 1930s. I learned from my mother to treat everything equally, not to instigate things, telling me, don't deal too much with other people. But my father was different. He was a leader among his group. He helped quite a few people. Takolik was his name, from the Cape Dorset area, and his people came from Northern Quebec. His uncle was a leader from the Cape Dorset area, Peter Pitseolak.

I am interested in tracing the people that your generation is descended from [show him chart of leaders and their parents and grandparents].

My mother's parents and I think my father's too, came from Northern Quebec long ago by a skin boat from the Sanikiluaq area, some of the islands that are close to each other.

I think that almost everyone here who has been involved in a major way is somehow descended from leadership families. Perhaps that is what other Indigenous Peoples are missing. They have traditional and Western educations, can move in both worlds, but lack that exposure to leadership, that experience.

Our parents were not speaking English when we went to school, but my father followed the movement of ITC. When the movement came along in the early days of ITC, a lot of older people in the Spence Bay area were speaking about how people in the settlement areas should go back where they came from. But that was a lot of the attitude in Taloyoak. My father, that didn't bother him too much because he knew that the land claims would benefit everyone, regardless of where you were from. But he was a leader quite a bit in the Taloyoak area.

When you were involved, were you aware that you were using things you had learned from him?

Yeah, I tried to treat everybody equally, that is what he taught. His knowledge about the land, what is in it, what to take, what not to take, to stay in school as much as we can. He wanted to see people get jobs. He was not really against development like some people were, but at the same time he always sought balance, to have plenty of wildlife because we hunt. He received the coronation medal from the Queen in 1953 for helping out people from this area, and helping out the RCMP, for family, and community, too. I am happy that I received the Golden Jubilee Medal. I draw a lot from my dad in being a leader, trying to be a leader. I am not saying that I am a good leader, but I listen to people, try to treat everybody well. I want to see good implementation of the land claim. I want to see revenue sharing. That is the bottom line. I am involved in land resources management. You know our goal has long been to put the Inuit owned lands into work. At the same time, we don't want to see the land destroyed, and we want to see the land cleaned up too, from past contamination.

Who else should be remembered?

Simon Taipana. He was one of our negotiators. He did a good job on our land claim. He's a guy who gets frustrated, and during the negotiations when he would get frustrated, he would go open a window and let it out and yell. Simon was crazy a lot of times, but he did good teamwork for Bobby and Paul Quassa and Jack Kupeuna. Jack Kupeuna can tell you a lot about it. Cancer took his life early.

When did he pass on?

I think it was after we signed the NLCA in 1993.

Is there anyone else who should be remembered?

I think that John Maksagak was there a long time. John was kind of quiet, but he had a lot of good ideas, too. He was the first president of KitIA. Mark Evaluardjuk was there a long time. He kept most of us straight, and Paul Quassa. Mark started out with a different view altogether, but once he came to us, he was supportive of us. He was keeping the money tight. He was good for that. During the Board meeting in Ottawa, a couple of Board members almost lost their lives. Two of them fell asleep while cooking, having been at the bar, crazy guys. One guy got run over by a car in Ottawa, Lucien Ukalianuk.

Lucien! He never told me that!

Yeah, he's got night blindness. The car stopped. He broke his leg, ankle.

Amazing fellow.

He was one of the guys I remember. There were so many.

Tell me about the women. They aren't really spoken of very much.

Yeah, we had a number of women as part of our negotiating team. They were not really outspoken or anything like that. Akasuk from Iqaluit, Meeka Kilabuk was one of them, Meeka was beneficial. I think there were one or two others that were sitting at the negotiating table. I don't know why some of them didn't last too long, even though we had people in there who could negotiate. Being a Board member, we were not sitting all the time at the negotiating table, only when we came to an agreement of some kind at the actual negotiations.

So you had a negotiating team, and then the Board would join them when each agreement was reached?

The Board was sort of behind the scenes type. At the agreement, Tagak came back to us that day, and we let him take the lead on the conversation.

Who called him back?

Us, Louis and myself.

Same thing happened with Bobby.

Yes. He had gotten into alcohol, and tried to take his life. Then his mind went a little haywire. We took him back, but I don't think that he was into it all. One of his buddies ended his life in Northern Quebec in the negotiations. His last name was Gordon, I think. Mark Gordon and Bobby tried to do the same thing I think. They worked together at the constitutional talks.

The national talks, bringing the constitution home. There are so many people who are part of this story who, if they had been born anywhere on earth, they would have been amazing people.

Maybe the length of time that the negotiations took burned some people out. That's part of my thinking. Maybe everyone's expectations to have everything settled, it doesn't really work that way you know. Even though we come to an agreement, it can burn you out. You always look to the best side of the story. There may be a side that might not be great, but it's going to be livable, and you do the best you can. You are not going to always get it right, but there is always a different avenue that you might try.

If you were going to give advice to other peoples trying to do these things, what would it be?

Seek advice. Seek advice and talk to people. Don't use anger. Don't take it out on people because you always have to look for the best side. It eventually will come. Communicate. Seek advice and talk to people. Keep hope. Keep the issue, don't give up.