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Interview with Lee Cremo continued

000 - Nescaouette

Maybe you'd never sen him for years and years. Mostly introduce yourself, so its no surprise, so evrybody knows everybody. They didn't stop. Nobody asked a request for it, really. They would do it if you ask, Pentecost Sunday that's the time to ask. That's the that the Grand Council makes their decision. Then it would be on their agenda. Everybody that comes, the thing is, we have a reserve here, there's what 1500 or 1800 people here. OK like if that happens like that, everybody is going to get the booklet, every family. Not only here, Whycocomaugh, Membertou. Every reserve in Nova Scotia, probably New brunswick too. The Grand Council has that power, they have that power right to Quebec. If they send out, we call it bulletins in the English language. But spelling in Micmac. If that Nescaouette thing comes on. nobody asked for it for years. Its still there everybody knows it in their head. (it wouldn't be correct to dance it out of that situation). Lets say that if I knew that that was going to happen, maybe I could have round up the Council, we have a Band Council and one Grand Chief. Maybe he could have done that. But you see how many visitors are coming. Nobody knows whats going on. If two people are standing at that end, other people are standing at that end. They are coming in by boat, everywhere now. But at that island there is only one way to come in. By boat. That's why they know they will ask you where are you from. If you say that I'm from Toronto, at this moment maybe hthere is five or six of us and maybe you have to pick the person, the best person you have. its just like you are voting for congeniality or something like that. The best person to talk to, the best person to be with. The best one you know, that is the one that goes to dance with the group. Then that person introduces the person on the right hand of you. you never introduce anybody on your left side. Always on the right side. When you shake hands you naver shake hands with the left hand cause that's troublt, to Micmacs anyway. That's a Greek dance. it could be the same word as ON GUARD too. Like simple way to do it, any time you'll meet, (he speaks about enfants being able to sense the good or bad vibrations of a person).

155 - Children learning dances

Well not really, my uncle was a step-dancer, a champion step-dancer. That's years ago. He is dead now. And so in our family, my mother's family, they were dancers. And it happened that my father was a fiddler. And they got married some how, I don't know how it happened. Its a coincidence really, one family was step-dancers and the other was musicians. So I use to go with my father selling baskets. I was only young. Just for me to go on a crowd. The thing was I was never shy. I went in a crowd and danced, do anything. Another thing about an Indian, don't dare an Indian anything. (he speaks about daring, about children,

about woman, about fighting)

234 - Chief of dance and differences in arm positions for dancing

I would say so. I would say this fellow sitting right here now. A chief for step-dancing and chief for. There is two types of Bouguia you can call it. There is the movements. One moves the arms more than the other, the other one is less, more of a. Well the thing is when you loosen up. Lets say the person in the red hat there. We were the fish people, their grand-father was a fisherman, my father was a fisherman, and you had no motorboats at that time. So the arms were going. The boxer if you see the boxer going into the ring you also see them, loose cause he is going to be using more arms today then his arms. That's the one who is hard labour. (they show the difference in th two types of movements, Lee sings for Kenny to dance)

267 - Fish type person

This would be more of a, the fishing type person, or the person who uses arms today than the other part of the body. Now the other one you will notice he will use he will be stiff, the legs will be going, but he has a stiffer upper body. I don't know if you can notice.

270 - Stiffer upper Body (Lee sings while Richard dances)

Now you notice this person, stiff back, they don't even notice themselves. Even in dancing you can pick out who is a hard labourer, who uses their hands more than their back. Its all there. I would say. I never met this man but I would say that in his time he probably cut alot of pulp. Anything with hard work. The other fellow has more of a fishing type guy, fisherman, even though in todays' world it might be more bicycling. But still he is using arms whatever he is doing. Cause the arms are still going. While the othter one is more of a, she has got music in her hips. That's why her footsteps trying to follow, she can probably play the fiddle a little bit, maybeSnothtoean extent, but she knows all about it. She is learning by looking and that's how Indian people use to learn, look and listen. Best thing. If one of these days anywhere in North America and put a complicated thing and talk about it. if you can talk about it once, three times. They will not say anything, they will listen and that's how they learn, listening. if you ask questions to you learn something. its your eyes that can see and ears that listening. Her part in her life she listen, she heard what is going on. I almost dare her to take and play the fiddle, any tune. (Vivian plays a tune) See what I mean, her father is a fiddler. All her life listening and hearing. I told you long time ago if you want to develop your child as a musician, when he is in your stomach, put a tape recorder on, whatever music you want your child to learn. And that child will come out, hear that and will attract to that. That's a real good start.

324 - Different styles of fiddling for dancing

You'll know this one, I think so. (he plays a french tune) That's a French tune. The same speed if you say to Irish (he plays an irish tune) Same speed again. Like I said the tempo. I mentioned it to you the other day, that from north, south, east, west. Like the Inuit thing is (he gives an example), if you go to South America (he gives an example), if you go to the east Africa (he gives an example), if you go to the west (he gives an example), same beat but different tempo. Then if you want to learn to get your Phd or your doctorate, the only letters that you are using is ABCDEF, the most complicated instrument is the fiddle. The neck part is only four inches long, plus here but you wouldn't believe there is 1800 chords here. AND you have to be very careful where you pput your fingers. That's the main thing for a musician I would say so, to be accurate on your notes. I would say so, cause if you are not accurate on your notes, you'll be what they call in music sharp or flat. You have to be accurate on that. The more practise on the fiddle you are going to get, the better. The more you put in the more you are going to get out of it. For example when we were doing the hand tricks a little while ago, if i get you a plate now, if I put something on plate and put something on it, a little potato, a little carrot, and give you a fork, you wouldn't miss your mouth, garantee, because you have been pratising since you were little. AND that is the same thing with anything, music or anything you want to accomplish. If you put your mind to it. The thing is if you want to learn the fiddle yourself, buy a fiddle and lock yourself in a room for three weeks. You'll come out some kind of fiddler. Hard to believe but that is true.

380 - Other dances

Oh ya there are other dances. Well Nescaouette is kind of a welcoming dance. That's why an Indian phrase, ... yes Micmac phrase "As long as you set your feet on this ground you are welcome as a brother or sister". That's sounds good, I have no limit. I'm not bragging about it. But that's waht we use it....

398 - Language

The language is very strong here in Eskasoni. Even my wife, not indain but she knows every word.

402 - Dance tradition kept up

Oh ya. Like the story been going on maybe they will tell their children. I would say that Andrew Gould of Whcocomagh would be the number one gougua there> He kept the traditon. He got every one of his kids to dance. Wilfred is the same. He might not show it, but see the results today, two of them. Not only these two families, but other families.

410 - Ocassion for dancing

Any celebration going on. Like, the only thing, lets say if my mother had a birthday party, Indains don't like birthday parties, I never had my birthday party until I was thirty. If you don't have a birthday party you don't know how old you are. Its better, you only feel better mental wise too. you don't know how old you are.

422 - Play for what type of dance

Mostly I play round and square dancing, but if I'm on Indian Reserve I mix it in with this kind of stuff. I played three weeks ago. They had the Eskasoni fest. We played the square dance music all night, nobody got up. His brother started singing, They all got up. maybe they were tered of hearing fiddle music. So they started singing and everybody got up. So after when i took up the fiddle i didn't go to square dance music I went right to Indian music. I think everybody got up that night. Not only the young but the old. Everybody got into it. People from elsewhere got into it.

438 - Indian tunes on fiddle

About, popular, about six.

END OF SIDE A

Side B

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Like I said this one we have now, they don't do that, they do a different slow type thing. Once you get off of Cape Breton. I don't know, its just like, they don't have, their feet don't go the same way. More of a, well i can give a sample. Mainland Micamc. (he gives a sample) Not only mainland from mainland right to British Columbia. They have a Prarie Dancers, they do a chicken thing. They do a hoop dance.

024 - Eagle Dance

No, you don't try to imitate somebody if you respect them. You don't do that her, or you'll get a backhand in the face or somewhere. That's the thing, the respect we have, the highest thing up there. The eagle is something that the Indian respects everywhere. Not only here but all through the west too.

039 - Feather dance

That's more of a game, there is nothing traditional about it. its just a game that they made themself.

046 - Traditional dance

(circular dance with that type of movement) Exactly. Different songs for different things they do. Like I said there is a way of like you might meet a dancer, I don't know anybody in Eskasoni who can do the fishing dance, they call it.

055 - Fishing Dance

There was a fishing dance, night dancing, the only way you had to have a pool, we call today torting eels, not torturing, torting. You have a light in front, and you do it in nighttime in a canoe and it is not easy standing in a canoe. So the balance has to be perfect. The same thing that little was standing on, we were watching that karate kick. Same type of thing. You have to have a good balance. You have a pole maybe to balance you. There is an eel coming in and if you to hit him, you have to take that eel out of the water, put it on your boat without you falling or tipping it over. So there is such a thing as that. I tried it a few times but I never succeeded. I'm always in the water. You can't dance it on the land. You have to have a boat or canoe. Standing right in the bow.

076 - Singing to this dance

Well mostly, not if you can help it. when you are fishing you have to be very quite. You hear a hum to it.

083 - Lullaby

He sings a lullaby and explains about putting a baby to sleep.

111 - Traditional Instrument for Micmac dancing

That Indian thing. Well this thing is called a gigcamaha spelling?. We didn't have to many choices of instruments. So we called this gigcamaha. Its made of black ash and if you strip it and you pound it then this will come even. You can see the grain of wood if you look closely. But the more you pound on it, lets say this is a block, you pound anything heavier this end then eventually it will come the way you want it. You cut it and make a soft handle. Not only its good, its can do double as a snare drum would do. And its easy to carry. And you can hit the flies with it. Very useful instrument. (did he make it) No. Peter Paulet (made it). He lives about two miles from here. Other people makes them too. John M. Paul makes them too.

134 - Other traditional instruments

The drum. You hold in your hands. It looks the same as an Irish one. Like that one you can chnage tone by grabbing, tighten it (sings the notes of the scale). You change the pressure. (he as one) I loaned it to Sarah Deny.

They had a birch bark, it looks like a horn of birch bark. But they use the same reed, but that one looks like that you put a comb and you put a paper on front, what do you call that thing. A cusew. Spelling? Mostly women used that a long time ago because they had a higher pitched voice.

154 - Rattle

Oh that's foreign. Foreign object. No that's in more of Latin America. They think up their games, their own.

163 - Melodies on the fiddle

These ones are doing only Goguia type of thing. There is a certain people that did do ceremonial dances. Like at one time the person, the dancer, there was only certain that can do it. Like I was a man and I can't go to this woman's house and just propose right there. A messenger. We call it spelling. The person who is going to marry you, she knows who you are. But for respect, he is the one that would be going. Like today. (speaks about marriage today and yesterday, divorce). Certain people did certain dances. (speaks about marriage again).

210 - Step-dancing

OK I'm going to start with a straspey and I'll change to a reel. (the three dancers step-dance).

231 - Step-dancing

Its easier for step-dancing cause your balance, more balance is up on the ear than is on the ground. Now you do that Indian dancing, lets say if you weigh 100 pounds, there is still thirty pounds on the ground. But step-dancing that's the same you if you want to learn boxing. Just tell the person that you want to learn the steps. The real step-dancing, there is a different step-dancing. A real step-dancer, you are almost in a crouch. That's the real step-dancing. (he shows us) Less hands moving. The other part you can call it more of a tap dancing. Like the ones that use heels. Step-dancing the less heels you use the better you are. It would be the same as the ballet dancers cause the ballet dancers don't use their heels either. A lot of tip toes. If you are stepping. They have different steps and the person who has the more steps that is the best i would say. I was talking about this Burke fellow, 101 steps (Daryl Burke). I was at Port Hood and a girl from Kensington won. She had 93 steps. That's a hard thing to do. Not only from this foot but from the other foot too. OK if you put a mirror and if this foot can do it this way then the other can do it that way to. That's the way it works. The best step-dancer you see will be in the sitting position. Not straight. Its just like as if you were sitting down. You use this muscle for dancing. Not only for your toes, you use that muscle too. So when you develop them muscles, its not easy either. There's another thing, this ones never did a ceremonial dance. The only way we can do a ceremonial

dance is, the thing is.

281 - Wedding dance

X rated. Very personal thing. They had one about two years ago. They still have them. Some of them don't know nothing about it. Only the couple. At that time we use to have tents tents, wigwams. But now they can do it in thier private bedrooms. This is the thing they are not going to see each other for a week.

301 - Harvest dance

There's the harvest dance. Harvest dance is more of a, we call it harvest dance anyway, but it is a mixture with this gogua and, The harvest dance its more of a feast, like people harvesting this stuff and that stuff, they didn't have it in one area. Like they would bring what ever they grow. This one brings vegetable, the othter one is growing potatos, he brings potatos. Like the hunter gets what ever he gets and he brings the meat. Then its all cooked outdoors. There will be fiddle music, there'll be guitar music. The fiddle and the guitar came later. The drums will be there. That's mostly all chants. You'll hear it, the woman who singas that very good is Sarah Denny, like IGD. That's one of them. There's another one, his father might know. Well the thing is (he sings a bit) It sounds like more a French. I think the french picked that up. I don't know who picked up what. There's resemblance. I was in Montreal, one time ago and they were doing the same thing we do here but the only thing they were doing it in a different language. Feast. They still have a feast. They use to have a fast for the names, like John they would go to all the houses where a person named John was. Take their food. Its more of a game than a feast. That thing they still have it in Chapel Island. When I was there last year they feasted John, Peter. All the saints names that you can think of.

338 - Three kinds of dancing

There is three kinds of stuff. There is the sad dance, mourning dance. And there is a mediocre dance. If you are not happy or sad. And there is a happy dance. They were doing the happy dance. In that way if you got alot of tension you can release them through that. Certain ways for certain people. Its hard to expalin. I don't know, his father might know more than I do. He is older, he heard the older people.

356 - Indian Greetings with demonstrations

375 - Numbing body for healing purposes with demonstration, points similar to acupuncture.

387 - Shoes

Moggasins. That is the only thing that Micmac hadat one time, moggasins.

Well some of them made their own. They use to make with the splints of the maple tree, they would be woven the same way as a basket. That ones would be used for walking on the sandy areas. Them things are more of hard bottom. For dancing soft bottom moggasins.

395 - Clothing

At that time they used alot of baby deer leather cause that is the easiest to clean, lightest for summer time and you can use it for undergarment. After you got that deer part, the fur part would go inside and its warm too. The men had something like a diapper and they had leggings so that they could take it off quickly. The top part they use to have something like a jacket with sleeves, deer eather, beaver. Not that much bead work, Well bead work, Micmac they didn't. Designs yes. Micmac design, they didn't have feathers either. The woman, it use to be a dress. And there'd be something like a jacket that would go on top of it. They might have pictures in the school books.