

# Louie Goose

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MMS – Tell me when you were born and sort of early community kind of life and then how music came into your life as a young person. I guess sort of going back to like earliest memories because those seem to be sometimes the most important ones the ones that stick and hold.

LG – Yes, my real name actually is Anikshuak which is a name traditionally given to a grandchild. That came from my great Grandfather who was known as a great hunter, a great walker. He walked everywhere. Just to give you an idea of what kind of walks he would take, right from Alaska, Point Hope, all the way across Alaska into the Yukon, the Yukon into the Northwest Territories and right into a place we would now know as Ulukhaktok, back then known as Holman. Holman Island and that's located on a bigger island called Victoria, Victoria Island. So he was a great person, he was great hunter, a great athlete. He did a lot of long distance running.

We didn't have things equivalent to the Boston Marathon. Actually we had distances that you'd have to camp three days, three nights in order to complete a run and so I don't have any idea how many kilometers that would be but it was definitely at least two or three times longer than a Boston Marathon and that was done during the dark day celebrations when the sun went down and it would not come up for at least a month or so and even much more so in the higher parts of the arctic. They would have to build two igloos for athletes to camp in and they would have two or three dog teams run ahead and build those igloos before the runners arrived and then they would carry on.

These were the types of games that my great Grandfather would take part in. So, his name was Anikshuak. I believe the meaning of that name was "little brother." "Anik" as in "Anik satellite brother." A little brother likes to play outside and he definitely did. Apparently he was quite a runner because when he arrived at the destination, he would clean up as best as he could in an igloo and change his clothes because his mukluks would be all full of holes and he would dress up and have something to eat. We think at least two or three hours before the first dog team arrived and of course the runners, other runners behind that. So that's my name and I am so proud of that.

The name Louie came from his first name, his first English name and later on I was really fortunate to get some of those traits from him. I did a lot of running as well in school, playing basketball. I stayed away from those long marathon runs but I had a good chance in running in

my life. Later on, my Grandfather... he lost his Mother when he was very young and at age 12 he became a cabin boy upon a merchant ship that was owned by Captain *Peterson* and Captain *Peterson* at the time was supplying goods to the whalers in the late 1800s. They would land at Herschel Island which was a place where they would stop and rest and take care of anything that they needed to take care of and go out hunting again. It was sort of like a staging area.

So my Grandfather was a cabin boy on that ship. On that same boat, he became good friends with another cabin boy but this fellow was from Norway and his name was *Henry Larsen*, who later became the skipper on the "Saint Roch" years later. The other coincidental thing that happened was my Grandfather was by then in the RCMP as a special constable and he was in Coppermine (Kugluktuk) when the "Saint Roch" went through and those two met again and *Henry Larsen* was the skipper on that boat, the "Saint Roch". So that's part of my heritage.

To get the music started many years earlier when my great Grandfather was part of any celebrations that would take place at the end of big, huge hunting trips or at events or during the dark days where we had a whole month of celebration because it was too darn cold to do anything else. There was no sun, nothing and people would agree to gather at a certain place and they would bring berries that they would have picked from the summer and dried fish and all kinds of other goodies. Beluga whale muktuk and they would just party. No booze, of course but they would just party for a whole month and a lot of marriages that were arranged ahead of time took place then. My family was all a part of it.

As in any story, there's always tragedies involved. My Grandfather, his name was *Tom Goose*, at one point decided to take a year or so off and become a trader, a fur trader and they were stationed not far from Baillie Island. He was located at Tom Cod Bay. When my Grandmother, her name was Constance, wanted to see some relatives at Baillie Island but it was in the fall time, early winter and the bay wasn't solid enough but kept bugging my Grandfather and loaded up my Mother, who, she was only maybe two or three, bundled her up in caribou skins and tied her up to a basket sled, (uniapiak) because my Grandfather's from Alaska, so they had basket sleds. He never used a qamutiik at that time anyways and he had a team of dogs.

My Grandmother was in the back. My Grandfather was profiling the ice to see if it was safe enough. He was ahead with the leader and all of a sudden the back end of the sled went through and my Grandmother tried to hang on. She actually hung on for quite a while. When that happened, the whole sled went into the water including the dogs and they were still several hundred meters from the shore. There were people at Baillie Island were watching because they had seen them coming from a long ways. They were anticipating their arrival, so they were all there helplessly watching as the currents were moving very strongly and my Grandfather did his best to make it to shore.

My Grandmother couldn't hang on any longer so she surrendered and my uncle was a newborn, was in the back of my Mother's ... Mother Hubbard parka and they both went to meet their maker. Grandfather safely made it to shore. He was a strong swimmer. We don't know how cold that water was but it had to be pretty cold because it was probably late October, early November. Actually the person that told me that story was *Eddie Gruben* from "Eddie Gruben's Transport".

A great elder. He witnessed the whole thing. He was 12 years old at the time and just a few years ago he told me that story because none of my family would talk about it and that is really sad.

The good thing about this whole story is that my Mother survived because she was covered in caribou skins. My Grandfather got the dogs out and my Mother landed safely but she was all of a sudden an orphan. As it was tradition in those days, someone would take my Mother and she was given away. My Grandfather, he was so full of grief that he grieved for quite a while and during that grieving period, he wrote a lot of ... One would say "write." No one literally wrote anything down on pen and paper because our history is oral history and he made up several Inuvialuit drum dancing songs and many of them I recognize when other drummers and dancers from the Delta region, the Beaufort Delta region. When they play them, I recognize those tunes because he used to sing them to me.

So, in that cabin, he stopped trading. He just gave the stuff away. He just couldn't do anything. He didn't have the heart but he was inspired to sing a lot of these tunes. Later on when he retired, he joined the drummers and dancers here in the Inuvik area, Aklavik, Inuvik area, Tuk (Tuktoyaktuk), and he joined them all the time and taught them those songs and they're still being played in the Mackenzie Delta today. It was great for my Grandfather too because he was able to have a full complement of drummers and them playing his songs and the dancers making the motions to those songs, so that was just great.

Then my Mother, *Carrie Goose*, I affectionately call her Mother Goose and she, being in residential school and being away from her Father all those years being adopted out, somehow was drawn to country music. Country music is sort of the poor man's blues. She was drawn to *Hank Williams*. She was drawn to *Patsy Cline*. She was drawn to *Kitty Wells* and all the people with that real sad, haunting type of music. I would watch her for hours wishing I would be able to play guitar like her. The guitars were too big for me when I was four. My recollection was her putting a mandolin on my lap and I would play with it for days. I'm not sure what I was doing and later on when I was nine years old, she knew that I wanted to play and she taught me how to do the first few chords. I credit my Mother for giving me the gift of music.

That gift was given to her by my Grandfather and my great Grandfather who instilled lots of love into our family. He showed it by walking all the way from Point Hope to Victoria Island to see us before he passed. He was well in his years when he did that. I don't think he ever had a dog team. He traveled with one dog pulling a small little tiny sled with just enough stuff to survive and he gave us a legacy to pass on. When I got that gift of music, I passed it on to my daughter, *Leanne (Goose)* but my Mother also had a hand in *Leanne's* taste for the kind of music she plays because my Mother would look after her in *Leanne's* early years and the only repertoire my Mother had was those songs. *Hank Williams, Kitty Wells*. You know, all that and you could hear that in my daughter, *Leanne's*, voice. You know, that really sad, haunting sound of her voice. It all goes way back.

So, that's, like I say, her gift of music to us. My Mother was a powerful singer and when I watch *Leanne*, wow. Where did she get that? Because that's not quite the way I taught her. I think that's just sort of naturally came into her because my Mother sang the same way as *Leanne* did and so did I too. When I think about it, I did get that gift. So that's basically it. Prior to that at age five

years old, I had to go to the hospital much like many people in the north back in the '50s. Tuberculosis came into the north. We're not quite sure how that happened, whether that was intentional or not. I doubt it but they had a big x-ray survey that went around the north. Some say that perhaps maybe that's how the TB spread because a lot of the communities were isolated and everything was fine in many communities and all of a sudden after the x-ray surveys came, as if by magic, people were called to go down south to many sanatoriums.

One of the main ones was Charles Camsell Hospital where I went and I nervously see that in the news these days and it brings back not very good memories because I was stationary for two years, just laying there. And days ... early before I left, I was a healthy young boy who ran around up and down snowbanks and sliding and running around and everything and all of a sudden a few weeks later I'm laying in a sanatorium and not allowed to move.

MMS - What years would those have been, Louie?

LG - I think that might have been 1956 maybe. '56, '57. I didn't get reunited until the fall of 1958. Laying in that hospital, I had prior to that, when I was maybe in Holman Island, now called Ulukhaktok, through a short wave we would hear *Johnny Cash* on the radio and I knew my mom was really excited about that. We heard *Elvis* but not all the time. We definitely heard *Patsy Cline*. When I got to the Charles Camsell hospital, I heard it all the time. I couldn't speak English. I couldn't understand English but I sure could understand the music. When I heard *Johnny Cash, Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, Elvis Presley, even Jerry Lee Lewis*, I knew that's what I wanted to do. I just didn't understand the language and laying there for two years, that's all I heard was music and that's where the music, contemporary music of the time, came into my body.

I couldn't play an instrument. I couldn't sing in the language because in my mind I was still in my traditional language and eventually the nurses and doctors, I finally got a hang of what they were saying. I could mimic pretty well, English. I never knew what it meant but eventually I learned to speak English and then the music started to make sense. When I got back to the north, my folks had moved from Holman Island to Aklavik because they did not want me to go to residential school because my Mothers had a really difficult time at residential school. I think they made that sacrifice to bring me up. I was so lucky I missed out on all the horror stories you heard of how students were treated.

MMS -This was in Grollier Hall?

LG - No, this was ... Grollier Hall was not built yet. This was residential schools in the Roman Catholic and the Anglican school, an Anglican school. I think it was called the All Saints Anglican Mission School, Residential School and the Immaculate Conception Catholic School. Then there was a day school, a federal day school which I went to. So, I missed all that. The sad part about it was when I landed in Aklavik, the communications, if anything was subject to short wave radio in those days. There was no telephone service and you had mail which came by dog team prior to my arrival and then finally by an aircraft, every so many months.

The announcement that I was coming home didn't make it to Aklavik. My mom didn't know, so I landed first of all in Inuvik at the airport. Inuvik hadn't been named yet. The airport was not named as well. It was called East Four. The town was East Three, it wasn't Inuvik yet. My wait didn't seem very long. I was taken off an armed forces aircraft and transferred to *Mike Zubko's* Aklavik Flying Service, a twin Beech 18 and it seemed to be loaded with people. I later found out that the capacity was 18 and we got off in Aklavik and it was sometime in the early afternoon.

No one was there to meet me. All I had was a duffle bag and all these tunes in my head. That's all I had and I waited and waited and finally ... I think it may have been mid-August because it was starting to get dark a little bit around 7:00 when finally a real tall gentleman with a large handlebar mustache came down from the All Saints Anglican Mission School, came to greet me and asked who I was and I didn't know my last name because when I went into the Charles Camsell hospital I was unilingual and when I came out I was unilingual as well too but in English.

But I knew my first name was Louie. Since no one was around to pick me up, he put me into the All Saints Anglican Mission School and by the time my Mother found out, they didn't know where I was. Finally the RCMP, who always get their man, didn't get me for about another three months and the rumor turned out that I may be at the All Saints Anglican Mission and here I was, a Roman Catholic boy, singing, "Onward, Christian Soldiers" and other tunes like that. Then one day my mom came by and took me home.

By then, nothing surprised me. Nothing really surprises me that much anymore because when you go through experiences like that, you learn to be calm and cool and collective and although that's pretty much baptism by fire, in some ways it works well in the emergency but one thing that I did have was I was so happy to see my Mother. So happy to be reunited and she was so ecstatic. When she came to pick me up, I recognized her. Not as a Mother but I recognized her as that nice lady I had been buying chocolate bars off for every Saturday because she was so nice.

She had been working at a place called the "Peffer's Café" and every Saturday the Anglican Church gave us a dime to go shopping. If you went to the Hudson's Bay Company you got two chocolate bars. They were five cents each. You went to "Peffer's" and you only could get one chocolate bar for a dime but I went there anyways because I really liked the service and it turned out to be my Mother. I don't know for how many weeks I had been buying off her. She didn't recognize me and I did not recognize her but that day when she came to pick me up, I did recognize her.

MMS - Wow, man, that's heartbreaking.

LG – So, We were united and like I say, I didn't really feel the impact of residential school until I was 16 but by then, there was a lot of abuse going on everywhere in Canada. Everywhere. Not just in the North. There was a lot of substance abuse going on everywhere and Aklavik was no exception. Parents were still young. When it was time for me to go to Inuvik to further my education to get my grade 9, 10, 11 and 12, I landed at Grollier Hall which now has been torn down because a lot of negative things occurred there.

Some of us were very lucky because we were ... I guess we put something about us that was ... How can I put it? We were together like ... My Mother and my Grandfather, they all made us very confident, you know? For my age, I was extremely confident. I started working ... I got a part-time job when I was 11. By the time I was 12, I made enough money to buy my Mother a new sewing machine. This is how much love my Mother gave me that you just wanted to give it back and I had all this confidence when I went to Grollier Hall and no one dared bother me.

In stature I was, I looked bigger than my age. All my life I had been working in the bush. Practically in the summer I'm raised by the Gwich'in because my Mother, a lot of her friends were Gwich'in and all of the Inuvialuit elders were in Shingle Point hunting whales, so in the summer, all of the Inuvialuit elders were gone. The only ones left were Gwich'in and every summer I would spend at least a month to a month and a half out in the bush with the Gwich'in.

I never knew any different whether they were Gwich'in or Inuvialuit. My mom said, "You go and learn." She encouraged me because at that time they weren't thinking lawyers and doctors, they were thinking of good hunters, you know? Back in those days with the North having ... especially the Mackenzie Delta having a million lakes with fur prices so high, you made a good living. People from Europe, Southern Canada, they spend millions of dollars every year just to go out into the wilderness, to breathe that fresh air, you know? We get it for free, so it made sense that you learned to make a good living being a muskrat hunter, being a good fur bearing animal harvester. You're happy and you've got millions of miles of no one being there and that's so good for your mind.

The Gwich'in people gave me that. They didn't care that I was Inuvialuk. I was another child to them and to this day I'm so, so happy. They taught me a lot of bush skills that I would not have learned anywhere else. I learned lots from my Grandfather, my Father, my Mother. I didn't know my great Grandfather. All the elders that I knew from my ethnic group were from the coast. Holman, Ulukhaktok. When I went to Aklavik, a lot of the elders were Gwich'in to me. So, I was so lucky.

Later on I got to spend a lot of time with the Inuvialuit and of course all of that stuff that they taught me was a given. A lot of it was ... My mom had already told me a lot but they reinforced it and both groups were very strong at that time and I think the government sensed that. I'll give you an idea. You know, with items like, I don't know, a pack of ... Well, they didn't have packs. They didn't have tailor made cigarettes in the old days but let's say back in the '50s, they did. A pack of cigarettes would cost maybe 30 cents, 40 cents. Well, one blue fox would ... If you're lucky to catch a blue fox, that's worth \$1,000.

Hunters and trappers, you know, some of them would get 10, 15 blue foxes, you know? They would think nothing of ordering a schooner, you know? A lot of schooners came on top of the decks of ships that Captain *Peterson* had and they would pay cash. And that must have been scary to the government, you know? A group of people who didn't need the assistance of the government. They didn't need any of them and yet the government took pride in coming here and giving us welfare.

Well, before they gave us welfare, they gave us alcohol as well too which was the same old boring story, you know? Some of our elders saw it coming a mile away and that's what destroyed our people. You started with alcohol. Then you come in with welfare. We now call it social assistance. It sounds beautiful now but it's the same thing and what it does really is it doesn't give much of an incentive for people to go out and take pride in the work that they do. I think my grandparents, my Mother, Father, they saw that coming and they made sure I had that in me and so I had been very fortunate.

Then all of a sudden it was an edict that all students under 16 had to be pulled out of the bush and moved into town and if you didn't have a home in town and they knew it, you had to move into the residential school. They were torn apart, literally ripped apart, just like I was ripped apart from my Mother when I had to go to Charles Camsell hospital. And how sad, you know? How predictable. They should have just said, "Gee whiz, we want your land." Should have been just honest about it. They didn't have to go and hurt us but they did.

MMS - What year, sort of in the ballpark, would that have been when that edict came down and you were 16?

LG - Well, I'll give you an idea. I know that both the Anglican and the Roman Catholic missions were without any notice, in some cases just a few hours, maybe a few days' notice. If they came by boat, you had a little more time to get ready, to say goodbye. I have a cousin who left because he couldn't stay apart from his older brother. He left at five years old, with few hours' notice. Like I say, the only communication at that time was short wave radio and telegraph. For Holman, beautiful people out at Reed Island and other pods of Inuiaktuk (Inuit) had to move into Holman, otherwise the same thing would have happened to them. They had to move into the community of Holman at the time which was later changed to Ulukhaktok.

From what I understand, it would have been shortly after my folks left Holman. I know that at age five I attended one day of school. All my friends were going to school, so I thought, "I'd better go to school too, check it out." I went in the morning and I quit in the afternoon. This would have been 1955, '56, and just prior to me leaving. It turned out in Holman where I was born there are two bays in that area. One's called the King's Bay and the other, Queen's Bay. King's Bay was too small because ... It wasn't too small but there was rocks all over the place, much like here in Yellowknife but these were jagged boulders all over the place and if you found a green spot, you were lucky and chances are a house is already there, so there was no room there.

So, they moved the town across the bay into Queen's Bay and that's where the community is. It's real beautiful, beautiful home. Beautiful people from all those places came there and they set up the schools and I think they are doing well. A lot of them after grade nine for a while had to move to other centers like Yellowknife maybe and to Inuvik but it was terrible. I hear lots of horror stories from families just pulled apart. Sometimes the whole group of kids, you know? Some toddlers. In some cases it was great because some were orphaned. Something happened, a tragedy, so they end up in residential schools all their lives. There's people my age who have been in a residential school for over a dozen years.

And now we have jails full of people who are incarcerated because their upbringing was so harsh. They were beaten up as children, you know? Not necessarily by the missionary but by their parents who were in residential school years earlier, who thought the way they were taught was the way they should raise their children. In our culture, we're taught not to give corporal punishment to children because they believe that if you do that, they will end up being wicked as well.

MMS - Makes sense, yeah.

LG - It's exhausting to teach your children, to talk to them, to raise them right that way. It's so much easier to go and grab a strap, but no. My family has taught me that you raise a child, you've got to be there, you've got to listen to them, you have to talk to them and you have to teach them right and wrong and you can punish them in a different way but you don't have to. You don't have to hit them and that's the problem with our generation. I'm sort of digressing away from the spirit of what is happening here.

MMS - No, you paint a historical basis there. A couple of quick questions.

LG - Sure.

MMS - I'm not gonna say that I've studied it, but I sort of pay attention to things and in river deltas all over the world, whether it's in the South America or Africa or anywhere, it's a meeting place of all these different cultures because it's a place of commerce and trade, right? And ports and stuff like that and I've always been intrigued by the area that you're talking about. Not specifically Inuvik but the Beaufort Delta and that whole area. So, your ancestry goes all the way back to your Grandfather or great Grandfather? Grandfather who was working as a cabin boy, right?

LG - Yes.

MMS - For the whalers and stuff, so for me and correct me if I'm wrong but there was the whalers coming over and bringing their music and I'm not sure quite what that music would be because this predates even the Hudson Bay Company. And so even later on, the Hudson Bay Company came over and they brought over all their Scottish tunes, right? But was there sort of the Metis, sort of French stuff making its way up the rivers through that time? I'm sort of trying to take a look at that Mackenzie River sort of area and just kind of go, "Okay, there must have been a merging of cultures or a convergence of cultures there but I'm just not sure what it was. Can you enlighten me on that?"

LG - Okay, the North was hit in many ways, okay? In the early years Nunavut in the eastern part was hit by the Vikings, as we know about and they brought some stuff there. There's evidence from the satellites that the Vikings were here. We were also hit not only from the west with the whalers through the Beaufort that way but like you said, we were hit by the Hudson's Bay Company who came from the south, north through the Mackenzie River which was the obvious way to hit all the arteries along the route.

I'll give you an example of how they were hit. Not only just by Scottish fiddlers vis a vis Hudson's Bay Company but also by fur traders like the Northwest Trading Company. They were Francophones. As a matter of fact, if I could just use Teet'it Zehh, Fort McPherson as an example, they were hit twice. The Northwest Trading Company first settled in the old site. We now call it the Eight Mile. That's where the ferry crossing goes through now. It's the lowest part of that area. This is in the 1800s. They brought the French style of playing and with that, the Roman Catholic Church.

And so, there's where the French and the Scottish influence on one group of people happening in just a few decades. Must have been a little bit confusing in some ways. I remember elders like *old Pascal. Pascal Baptiste*, speaking French fluently to the priests.

And Fort McPherson with its unique Delta-ese, you know, you could hear (*sometimes*) Scottish slipping from their tongues sometimes, you know? What time it is. You use your imagination, it's not that they don't know how to speak English. It's just that's the way the Scottish fur traders spoke to them and that's how they learned their English. It took me a few years to figure that one out. (*sounds nice to me*)

MMS - Like you say, it was such a short period of time and the whole time that you're painting here, it sort of really sets the tone for the musics because the musics would be...the different instruments, the different songs that were coming in and being incorporated and adapted. Your ancestors, your Grandfathers, do they talk about any of those kinds of things? Like the celebrations where the music would happen or where the instruments came from?

LG - I just want to carry on ... When our people and when I say "our people," I don't just mean Inuvialuit. When I say "our people," I include the Gwich'in, the Slavey, people from the Sahtu, all as one because don't forget, when we settled in Grollier Hall, all those groups of people became one. When I meet anybody from the Sahtu, they know exactly what I'm talking about or anyone from Fort McPherson or from Tsiigehtchic because we all blended all of the cultures that we had learned from early fur traders and stuff. We had one common denominator and that was, it was instilled in us if we could find a better way of doing something, let's do it that way.

Give you an example. Up until the whalers came, we were lugging around ... Especially just before spring came, we were lugging around tons ... I mean, collectively as a group of people, of caribou skins and seal skins and stuff because those were the homes we were gonna stay in when the snow melts, okay? When canvas came, all that changed. That technology. It wasn't so much technology. It's just that, you know, cotton and canvas changed the way we traveled and we embraced that right away.

Bannock was not in our culture but we embraced it because it was a quick way to feed someone when we're in a hurry and we're stopping for a short period of time and this great treat for not only the adults but for the kids ... Bannock changed things. The Primus stove changed things. We didn't have to light a kudlik and wait hours before it got hot enough to cook our food. So, we were very happy for a lot of the changes from the outside world but we used it in a way that no one else in the world used it. Canvas, for example, we made boots out of it because we didn't have to spend hours scraping it and so on.

These were time saving things for us because we were a group of people that, especially in the short days, time was of value to us. Even though we weren't in a hurry to get really anywhere, anything that could save us time gave us more time to go and hunt. So, that was a common denominator in all of our indigenous groups in the part of the area that I have. I just want to reiterate and I don't want to say anything too bad about the government too because the government gave us education. In some ways if we knew about it, we could have dispensed that a little bit better but they gave us that. They gave us medications because it was inevitable that people from the South were gonna come here with their diseases and we would have to be immune to that somehow and that was great.

In a way, finally, we got the common cold. We never had it before. The first few of our people got wiped out because of the common cold. We didn't know how to deal with that. When ships came ashore to get more water and buy meat from us, they would give us sometimes contaminated things that perhaps maybe it wasn't intentional but at one point it wiped out hundreds of people in our area and whether it was intentional or not, that's in the past. There were a lot of good things. I don't think in my lifetime but hopefully someday that we'll be on an even keel with everyone else in the world. Right now we're still trying to figure out how we're gonna work around the alcohol that was brought in.

It made me sad when I was a young announcer in Inuvik and I would read about some parts of the country getting a DC-3 plane load of beer and the beer still costs the same as it would in Edmonton. You know, it was subsidized and then I would find out that a liter of milk was 10 bucks. That is sad. And I didn't realize this really fully until *Neil Colin*, "the Mouth of the Peel," who passed away, one of my bestest friends in the Mackenzie Delta, such a character. But when I started digging into his life, his Father was *Christopher Colin*. *Christopher Colin* was ... I don't know whether he was an ordained minister but for sure he was a deacon. In the springtime when it was too treacherous to make a trip into Fort McPherson or to Teetl'it Zheh as it's traditional name, people from the surrounding area from the mouth of the Peel would gather there and they would have Sunday service.

Why? Because people at that time didn't have to take their kids to residential school. It wasn't a law yet and people would gather and they would have their Sunday service. They would have a rat Sunday at the end of the season and they would make donations to the Anglican Church for home improvements and stuff and they were self-sufficient. They did not need the government. When someone got hurt, there was always an RCMP person and they were good people. They weren't people we were afraid of. I mean they're still the same way except now they've gotten a bad rap but in those days, they were beautiful human beings who told us about the law, who protected us when someone went crazy or whatever or someone needed a tooth pulled. They were great people.

That's all they were. Everybody was self-sufficient. Everybody helped each other. The Mounties went from camp to camp to make sure ... Not to look for anything that someone might be doing wrong. No, they were just going to see how people were doing, inoculating a few dogs along the way. That was the kind of life it was back then in *Neil Colin's* time. I don't know. I really don't know but it was a sad day because you brought all these kids. You tore them away from their parents and once they got educated, they were strangers to their own parents when they came

back and that's what broke up the fabric of indigenous people in the North. It may not have been intentional. Some people swear that it was. I think if you had to go and argue about it in court, it would be an interesting session to watch because every group likes to think that they feel they have to impose their ways of life on us.

And out of all this, though, we'll get back to the topic of music... sprung up people like *Leanne Goose*, who is expressing my sorrow, my Mother's sorrow, my Grandfather's sorrow. Also their celebration of life, their ways of expressing because at some part we're told as children, "At some point even you have something sad, you have to come out with something that is good," and music is such a great way of doing that. Growing up, I wanted to learn guitar so bad. My Mother had no patience. Absolutely no patience with me, especially when I was starting.

I think she'd call me, "Oh, my earache." I think she called me that once or twice. "Oh, you're my earache." "Oh, how nice." She was just lovely with words. She said, "Oh, I'm gonna go and jiggle for some fish. You go ahead and play." So I had to find someone else to teach me how to play. So across the river from Aklavik, about maybe a mile and a half away was a family of 18. Mother and Father and 18 children. The children were my cousins because my Mother, when she was adopted, was adopted to their Father's parents. Out of those 18, at least about half a dozen of them played guitar and sang and I knew it. The only problem was, it was a mile and a half away. So two years earlier, my Mother gave me two dogs and she made harnesses for me. I had a little Hudson's Bay Company sled. Didn't have a guitar case but we had honey bags. The plastic, heavy duty and I would cover my guitar with that and tie it up with some twine and off I'd go.

I would arrive about after supper, so it would be about 7:00 I would arrive. They got so used to me, the older siblings would tie my two dogs up because they knew I was gonna be there for four or five hours and there I go. I'd be jamming and everything and then half the time I'm playing around with everybody else because I was maybe 10 years old. My aunt would wake me up around midnight. "Anikshuak, It's midnight." And I would get up and she would give me a cup of cocoa or something and a piece of ... She made beautiful bread. I remember that and she knew it too. She had to bake bread every day because she had 18 kids.

I'd go outside. *David* or *Gilbert* or *Charlie Kasook*, my cousins, would have hitched up my dogs already and I was like a king. They'd hand me my guitar and I'm still half groggy and down the bank, off onto the trail. Most of the time I'm asleep when I arrive at my destination. My Mother would open the door and there I am. She'd open the door and there I am right there. My dogs learned how to park. Sometimes she would unhitch the dogs but most times she would say, "You have to learn to come here early. Untie your dogs and don't forget to feed them."

Oh God, so it's 1:00 in the morning. I'm in bed asleep, finally and I'm up for school the next day and I would do it again. I did that until I was, I don't know, 13 maybe and that's how anxious I was about the guitar. Sometimes we'd break a string and *David* was the one that would repair it. If he couldn't repair it, he'd grab a piece of snare wire.

MMS – Good old snare wire. How did you get guitars? How did you get instruments?

LG - My first guitar, I call it the \$15 guitar or sometimes I call it the bootleg guitar. The reason I called it that was in those days, like I told you about money and the difference of prices now and then ... A bootleg bottle in the Mackenzie Delta, somewhere it goes from anywhere from \$100 to \$150 to \$300, depending where you are but back then it was 15 bucks and the bottle you could actually buy for maybe \$4, you know? Anyways, this friend comes around and really needed to buy a bottle and so my Father gave him \$15 which was the price of a bootleg bottle.

My Father says, "Okay," you know? The guy, Kevin, says, "Okay, it's only for 30 days. I'll be back. I'm getting my check," whatever. Well, six months later, never showed up, so that's how I got my first guitar. It was a *Roy Smeck* "Harmony" guitar. It was beautiful. It was black and the rims on it ... It must have been built for parties because the rim had an aluminum rim around it. It was a great guitar and then my next guitar was another "Harmony" but it was a jumbo dreadnought guitar and I played with that for probably about 10 years. It was just a three piece band so I wanted to sound like a big band, so I would put two pickups in it, put one pickup to another amp and I would set it in a different tone and then the other pickup was my lead tone. The head broke off it at least three times and I would glue it back on. That was a great guitar.

The next guitar I had was a "Fender Telecaster" and you have a CD of one of our first recordings with our lead guitar player, *Jerome Tochor*. I'd bugged them for this guitar for about three years and finally he gave in one day and sold it to me. It was a 1952 "Telecaster". I ended up losing that. Someone borrowed it. One of the big bands that came here to Yellowknife borrowed it one day and left town with it. I hope to get it back someday, so the person knows who knows who it is. If he's hearing this, please give me my Tele back but that was a beautiful "Telecaster" guitar. I mourn for it. Every time I see something similar like it on TV, I mourn for that guitar because that guitar, I cut my teeth on, on just about every genre of music that I played and I played quite a bit of my time for the old folks' homes everywhere. Seniors' homes. Played for I don't know how many funerals, weddings... A friend of mine felt so bad that I had lost it, he bought me another "Telecaster" one day which I've been using for 20 years. It's great, but it's not like the first guitar that you ever had and a 1952 one at that.

MMS - One of the first ones.

LG - Yes.

MMS - How would you get guitars? Would you order them or go down South or what was ...

LG - Well, the first ones were brought in by other people and I would give them a handsome ransom for them. When I eventually was able to go down South, I would hand pick them myself, yes. I once missed two aircrafts flying from Ottawa to Edmonton trying out this one guitar. The others I've tried out and mostly probably from around the Edmonton area.

MMS - Strings, amplifiers...

LG - Strings, yes.

MMS - Was the stores carrying them?

LG - Yeah. They were actually pretty good. The music store here in Yellowknife are excellent. They're comparable to any music store in the South. Great service. I think one of them started out in Inuvik so that's special to me too and great service. I try not to experiment too much because I get used to one type of a string and I pretty much try and stick with it so I could get to know it and at least I know what I have. Having said that, on this trip, I'm experimenting now with yet another kind and I really enjoy it too.

My daughter, *Leanne (Goose)*, picked a real nice guitar for me and I still have and in a way she knows what I want anyways and she's surrounded by other musicians who give her good tips too, so I trust her a lot. She also shops for me too in clothing, so ... That's one of the things I do hate but she does a great job of that.

MMS - As a young boy with your first guitar in your hand and going to the *Kasook* family's house and stuff like that and you were jamming, what songs, what kind of music would you be jamming on?

LG - There was *Chuck Berry* of course but by then it would have been someone else's version of his songs. *The Beatles* hadn't really quite hit yet because this would have been 1961, '62. But *Buck Owens* was around. *Johnny Cash* was a given because he was so easy to learn to play and lots of fun and there were tunes that my *Aunt Ruby* and *Stringer Kasook* loved to do, loved to hear, so I would play all the songs they loved to hear first then we... that way they won't complain too much when we're doing *Chuck Berry*. I got to know my aunt quite well. *Johnny Rivers*. I was starting to getting into ... *Johnny Rivers* was starting to become quite big back then, too.

Later on I was starting to hear about *The Rolling Stones* but maybe I only heard some of the old blues stuff that they were starting out ... *The Beatles*. I really liked them but more as a listener. But the Rolling Stones were a group that I really liked and I really liked doing their stuff because I felt ... The earlier *Beatles* stuff was a lot of commercial stuff to them and then later they got really too complicated for me.

MMS - I was gonna say the Beatles lyrically and musically, it's almost like a chord study if you start to go through their catalog and how they write songs and the chords get pretty , pretty complex as opposed to, say, the Rolling Stones is a groove. It's a groove thing and it's a riff thing and Keith's...

LG - They're really honest about their sound. The thing I liked about the Rolling Stones was they were simple but the way they played it. Because simple is good, but you've got to play it well, you know? They managed to do that.

MMS - Another question that I ask is, okay, so you're in these remote communities. How are you getting your music?

LG - A lot of it was through radio. We've always had a radio station since growing up. When I got to Aklavik, the radio station was called CHAK. "Your friendly voice of the arctic." That was put together by a handful of Army corps signals who were bored one day and they said, "Hey,

let's start a radio station," and that's how it started. It was only 50 watts of power, I understand, at the time but through skip, they got cards from a submarine ship just off the coast of New York one time. Then when Inuvik started, they took the radio station to Inuvik and CBC took over.

Now of course back in the early '50s, as you can appreciate, there wasn't really that much music, really, but it was played over and over again and there was a lineup at places like "Sun Records" for people to record. And a lot of them were black musicians until *Sam Phillips* decided he wanted to get a European person who sounds like an African American. That's when things really took off. Then with it the rest of the black musicians, artists finally came into the spotlight and it was *Elvis* that kind of did that, so that was a good thing. *Johnny Cash* was a part of it. *Carl Perkins* was a part of it. *Jerry Lee Lewis*, *Pitney*, *Gene Pitney*.

Not many people know about but he was very big at that time. Inuvik, there were no rules back then. You could play all the American music you want. Today there are some rules where you have to play quite a bit of Canadian, so that's where I got a lot of my music. Now, you've got to remember, back in those days though, radio stations were coming in from the states, all over. (*North Pole*) Alaska. Where was that place? Anyways, out of Fairbanks there was another radio station. I can't remember what it is but people from Alaska who had relatives in Inuvik and the area, they would have request shows and people would pick it up, and so there was radio stations coming in from Germany and all over because the airwaves were clear. Especially you get it on a night when it was cloudy, you could get all kinds of radio stations. All kinds.

So, it just hit us all, you know? We learned about *Fats Domino*. Now, here's the thing though. In those days we had 45 records with a big hole in the middle and we would have dances every Friday and someone would get a new record and they would play it. We had a thing called "Teen Town" where kids from 12 and over were able to go and dance every Friday night. All they had was a little turntable with an eight inch speaker. That was it and a 45 gallon barrel stove blaring out. That had to be started two days before by the way. That's where we got a lot of our music that happened.

I was so lucky. I had a grade five teacher who was a piano player and this is where my *Jerry Lee Lewis* bones cut in. He would do "Great Balls of Fire" and we would just go absolutely crazy and then he would do stuff by *The Beach Boys* that were starting out. "Little Deuce Coupe" was the first song we learned in music class and it was meant to be, you know? This was a new music teacher that we got.

MMS - Do you remember his name?

LG - I can't remember his name. I wish I could remember his name.

MMS - He's a saint.

LG - Oh my God. "Little Deuce Coupe," "Sloop John B." He would blare out "Great Balls of Fire" and oh my God, the whole class would just be a-rockin' and the principal would come down and see what the hell's going on. I'll never forget that. We would have talent shows at Christmas and at Easter time and so that gave us lots of time and kept us busy to practice for

those talent shows. You've got to remember, we didn't have TV so we had to fill in two or three hours a night, for kids ... The town of Aklavik at the time with maybe only two Mounties kept the town peaceful because one of those Mounties was there teaching us how to make model airplanes and he had a class of about 30 of us building model airplanes out of balsa wood. We built the "Spirit of St. Louis", we built all kinds of other World War II planes, World War I.

The other Mountie taught us how to be crack shots. We belonged to the .22 Rifle Club. I was the youngest one in that group and for three or four springs my Mother was the only one that had time to take me out muskrat hunting so I had to be the shooter, so I got really good at shooting. When the season was over, we had a shootout where we had to shoot a carton of .22 shells but we did it over a period of I think two or three months. We had to finish at 500 rounds and I got 440 ... No, 480 bull's eyes out of 500 with a peephole shot. This is how good the teachers were, the RCMP. They weren't our enemies back then.

Of course, my Grandfather and my other great Grandfather on my Father's side was in the RCMP as well too, so the RCMP were normal to us, you know? They were good people but in Aklavik at that time they were special because they took the time out to go and teach us and the kids were never afraid of them. They respected them, so big difference now where it's sad for me to hear ... Maybe in some cases it could be true but most cases it's not right. It disturbs me to hear that they're getting such a bum rap but the world is not the same world...

MMS - So, radio ... because I mean, even the other part of it is, do you remember when you got electricity into your communities? Because that seems to be ... you know, you talk about the technologies of canvas and those kinds of things, talking with musicians in the South Slave, they grew up and it was like there was no road and there was no electricity and like you say, no television. You might have an electric guitar but if you can't plug it in...

LG - Yeah, I was really lucky in the way because my Grandfather, being well traveled ... Like at 18 when he was in San Francisco and that probably could have been his 10th, 12th, maybe 20th time there because he would travel to resupply. At 18 he was taken into the merchant marines because it was near the end of the First World War. When he went through his basic training the war ended days before he was ready to sail. So, he was so glad, he breathed a sigh of relief and he jumped back on that boat and went north.

He took his family, a young family. My uncle, just a newborn and my Mother, two or three years old into Canada and he became a Canadian citizen. In those days you didn't have to because you could travel freely between the borders because Canada and the USA and the Yukon which really didn't pay attention to what was north of Dawson, understood free travel but in order to get into the RCMP, though, you had to be a Canadian. So my Grandfather got his naturalization papers which I found just last year. I found amongst things that my Father left me and I saw his papers. He became a Canadian citizen.

Like I say, he's been used to electricity since the day he jumped aboard Captain *Peterson's* boat at age 12. When he retired, he set up a windmill in Holman and he had a series of batteries. We've always had electricity in our home. The only dwelling in Holman right now that's left behind is the house I was born in and we had a windmill for our electricity So I was born

knowing electricity and then later on in Aklavik when I first arrived there and when my mom finally found me, it was just a few days afterwards my Grandfather was friends with a priest there and with a brother. And the brother says, "I'll give you electricity," and hooked up electricity into our house.

The power line is just from here to across the road so just hooked it up and so bang. Sunday my mom is ordering stuff on the catalog like an electrical alarm clock radio and something that could make coffee in the morning when you wake up with a timer. I remember all that, so with electricity, suddenly you didn't have to prepare the gas lamp before it starts to get dark. If you didn't like the stove, you could use a little hotplate and you could make hot water, you know? So it was lots of things that really turned out to be convenient and made your life a lot easier, right?

MMS - Yeah, yeah, sure.

LG - Electric drills, that kind of thing. Before that, it was hand tools. A lot of labor saving things.

MMS - Coming from up here and again, just even talking about instruments and the progression and getting up into that time that we're talking about, the '50s and '60s. You know, electric guitar was just sort of freshly invented but when that came up here, how much that changed, so you're getting the musics from radio stations that are bouncing off of clouds and you're going down to the Hudson Bay Store and buying 45s or going down South and coming back with this new music that is changing incredibly fast that way. My thought on it anyways is that that whole electrical guitar, it was sort of the weapon of this revolution that was coming up in the '60s that was really sort of global. The whole planet was exploding... It gave a voice to especially the post-Second World War youth that was the conduit for their rage or their happiness or their joy or their bliss or whatever it was, was that whole ... The electric guitar and how it changed the music.

So, up here we're coming from fiddles that were probably passed down from God knows when and that was, from what I've heard from other people as well, there was two fiddles in town or there was one and when there was a dance, you had to go around and find out who had the fiddle in their house and you could take it to the hall or where did guitars come from and all the rest of that stuff too. So, that part to me is just sort of fascinating and again, the whole electricity thing, time saver, you know? All the rest of that but as well just how it really influenced that time in music.

LG - One more thing with what you're just saying, I'll tell you what an impact the electric guitar had. When I started, I had a good friend and another person that should be showcased especially is *Charlie Furlong*. *Charlie* was several months older than me. I won't tell you how many years but he was a good friend of mine and he had heard I played guitar, so I don't know how old he was. I think he might have been 12. Anyways, took me a little while to learn how to play but one thing that my mom did teach me was some of the chords that I might be able to use to back up some fiddlers. At Christmas especially the more experienced guitar players would start off the evening because they want to party too and they want to dance too.

So, *Charlie* always got asked to take over around midnight. It gets pretty lonely so he asked me one time to go and play with him. We started around midnight and it's Christmastime. It's holidays anyways, so no worries. My mom would come down because I was only 10. The first time she would sit. The next time she would just go and dance and we'd go from midnight til 8:00 in the morning. Eight hours, just *Charlie* and I. *Charlie's* Grandfather is a well-known fiddle player by the name of *Joe Greenland*. One of the top fiddle players in the Mackenzie Delta.

He was so in demand, legend has it that he may have died shortly because he was so exhausted from playing but then again, that's a legend but he did play and he was so in demand. That was sort of before my time. The next *Greenland* guy, his name was *John Greenland* and *John* was very strict with *Charlie*. I know that because *Charlie* and I are playing and he would go and scold us but he wouldn't really scold me because he didn't know me that well, but he would grab his fiddle bow and tap *Charlie* on the back. "You were supposed to go to A before you went to D."

Anyways, eight hours and we were lucky we got two bucks and we'd spend that on breakfast, go home and we'd do it again the next night. And all we could get in those days was heavy gauge strings and they were murderous on your fingers, especially if you were 10 years old. You have to play eight hours? Oh. When the electric guitar came, it changed everything. You could play even longer. You didn't have to strum loud. You could hear when the guitar's going out of tune. It was just phenomenal. The only thing was we heard about "The Ventures" too back then, so we were kind of digressing away from old time music but the electric guitar had a big change and it started to get guitar players to develop their guitar picking because suddenly they're out there and they're in the spotlight and that's where a lot of guitar players started to hone in on their guitar.

MMS - Being able to be loud enough to play lead parts as opposed to just rhythm parts or to actually...

LG - Yeah, so one more credit I have to give, not so much to Grollier Hall but to the person who ran it and his name was *Father Max Ruyant*. He was a type of administrator that when the hockey team was winning, he would go and get new uniforms or better skates or he would always improve the equipment. The soccer team, the basketball team, get new uniforms. He would make time available in the gymnasium. In the town of Inuvik, we had seven gymnasiums in the town. I think there's only one now. This is back in the '60s. We had seven. Then he'd go and build us a hockey rink and then he would go and build a swimming pool. He was just amazing.

When our Grollier Hall band started to win talent shows, he ended up getting drums, amplifiers, guitars, anything. He would come up to me and say, "Do you need anything, Louie?" We'd be afraid to ask for stuff but he'd do it anyway, where we would be comfortable to ask for things that we needed. You know, a little PA system or something and then he'd make sure that we played for our dances in our gymnasium, you know? There were some really great people who were there who really supported us. We had Toastmasters clubs to do public speaking. We had the best skiing equipment and we brought world class cross country skiers. People who have won medals at the Winter Olympics. The *Firth (Shirley and Sharon)* twins, "Kelly Express", *Fred*

*Kelly*. All those people. *Ernie Lennie*. It was there because of the way *Father Ruyant* ran the place, you know? But that's basically where I really got my music going.

There's a lot of stuff I left out. In the '60s there was a big fire in Inuvik and I fought ... The whole town was asked to fight fire ... Actually not asked, demanded. If you didn't, you were in jail and so at age 16 I was fighting fire, just 2 or 300 meters from my home and I said, "Oh my God, I'm not gonna spend the summer like this," so I got my band together. I went to Pacific Western Airlines and I said, "Would you like to sponsor a band?" "Well, that's interesting." "Yes, I would like to go to Norman Wells." She said, "Sure." "If you give me a banner or whatever, I'll mention courtesy of PWA." They said, "Sure, fine." We were on the plane the next day. Seven of us. We took off ... Norman Wells, played for two nights there. Then the boat picked us up from Tulita and we went and we played for two nights. Halfway through the second night a fire came right around the town. My whole band got picked up and I ended up because I had radio experience, I was able to go run the dispatch but the rest of my band ended up fighting fire for two or three weeks. I didn't know where the hell they were. Anyways, they almost got caught and almost got burnt. They had built a raft and it's a good thing this lake was good size. They pushed the raft out, had food, water, everything in there and they were all gonna jump into this huge raft and all of a sudden a big storm came and put the fire out. But it was so smokey no plane could pick them up for days, so they were out there for about another three or four days and they said, "Oh, we might as well try and walk." Someone said it's about 30 miles from town, so they went and started marching. Halfway through, my drummer gave up, says, "Leave me. I want to die. Just leave me." Two others picked him up and walked to town. Four or five hours later after they had their rest, they wanted to dance. They wanted to celebrate they lived. So we played for a few hours. *Abe Reuben* was in there too. He was the second drummer. We had two drummers. *Lawrence Thrasher* on lead guitar. *Moses Kalinek*, yeah.