

People of the Sturgeon: Wisconsin's Love Affair with an Ancient Fish

Dave Grignon Oral History

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Interviewer: KSK – Kathleen Schmitt Kline

Transcriber: NCC

Kathleen Schmitt Kline: So, the date today is January 10th, 2007.

Dave Grignon: Right.

KSK: Dave, can you say your full name and your title here?

DG: David Grignon. My Menominee name is Nahwahquaw. I'm the tribal historic preservation officer for the Menominee tribe.

KSK: Okay. We're here at Dave's office on the reservation. So, there's so much to talk about.
[laughter]

DG: No.

KSK: I was doing research for this. I guess, can we start with some of the tribal history with sturgeon? I've read about creation stories and where sturgeon appear in tribal history and stories.

DG: Well, Menominee has always been connected to the sturgeon. It's mentioned in our creation story. Being a brother of the bear, and he was designated the keeper of the wild rice. That's time of creation. Also, to keep the history for our people. Ever since the Menominee have existed, we have lived in this area, Wisconsin. We're indigenous to what is now Wisconsin. Our origins places at the mouth of the Menominee River. I don't know. The history has been handed down for thousands of years, and it was significant for us. The sturgeon itself is clan symbol also, and it's under the Bear clan.

KSK: So, it's a clan symbol?

DG: Yes.

KSK: Okay. What does that mean exactly? A clan symbol, there are different clans in the tribe?

DG: Yes. We have five clans.

KSK: Okay.

DG: Bear, Eagle, Moose, Wolf, Crane.

KSK: Okay.

DG: But under the Bear, we have subgroupings under each one of those.

KSK: Okay.

DG: The sturgeon is under the Bear.

KSK: What are the subgroupings for –

DG: It's a direct relative to the Bear people, according to our oral history. Like I said, sturgeon has been with us for thousands of years. In the creation story, and right after that, it was said that we would always have sturgeon. Sturgeon would always be available to us. That throughout the history of our people, we lived in areas by water, of course, you know, the bay of Green Bay, certain rivers, Menominee, Oconto, Peshtigo, Wolf, Fox. We would wait for the sturgeon every spring of the year for them to come and spawn. It was here that we would know when the sturgeon came, that Menominees would have the celebration ceremonies celebrating the fact that sturgeon came back to us as it was told to us, would always be with us. The gathering, of course, after long winter months of our food supply being depleted, we would wait for the sturgeon because we got to replenish our food supply. Then after the first catch of sturgeon, we would give thanks, special prayers, offerings of tobacco and certain things we had to do. Then we would have a big feast, feast of Sturgeon, and once again thank the creator for letting us have that fish again. But after hundreds of years, after the first European camp, we did this. It was told to us that Lake Winnebago was one of the main sources of sturgeon. That as Menominee has always been in this area, we know of the Sturgeon migration from Lake Winnebago to Keshena Falls. So, we knew this area and that it was always a portion of our Tribe that lived here for thousands of years and would follow that migration or wait for the sturgeon to come up to both river to this area. So, after the first landing of the Europeans, then things started to change for us. The way of life, of getting things from the environment and only taking what we needed, we could now trade for some of those items through the fur trade with the Europeans. After the Europeans came, of course, there was an influx of settlers coming into the Great Lakes. Of course, they wanted land. Menominees had occupied over 10 million acres of land in this area. Through agreements with the federal government called treaties, we gave up a lot of this. We were forced to give up land in these treaties. Our chiefs at the time tried to make the best of the situation. We know we have oral history accounts of these chiefs saying, "If we don't negotiate, they're going to take it from us." So, they did the best they could.

KSK: It was Chief Oshkosh?

DG: No. Chief Oshkosh was the head negotiator during the treaty period. Again, other ones made sure that Menominees were always taken care of, even though that we got a minor fraction of what the land was worth. We always seemed to stay in this area. But in the meantime, following the certain seasonal things that we've done, of course, spring would bring the sturgeons. Summer we would hunt and fish and make small gardens and follow, of course, was wild rice. That's our name as omãqnomenēwak, our people of the wild rice, that's Menominees. That's who we are. Some of the main gifts that were given to us at the time of creation were wild rice and maple trees. The creator said we would always have those gifts, and we still have those today. At the time of creation, at the Menominee river, the creator told the first Menominees, those first five clans that were transformed into human form by the creator. He told them that you'll have this river and all those fish that live in here, especially those sturgeon, will always be with you. But after the Europeans came, it became threatened that we would lose some of these areas, land by the Menominees. We did start to Peshtigo River, Oconto, Fox, down by Lake Winnebago that was being lost. But it wasn't until the treaty, one of the last treaties of 1848, that they wanted to move us out of Wisconsin. Chief Oshkosh and another chief said, we don't want

to leave. They offered us land in Minnesota, Crow Wing Country of 600,000 acres. The reason why the 1848 treaty came about is they wanted the remaining lands in Wisconsin, because Wisconsin was going to become a state. So, we were in the way of that. They offered us to move. The chiefs went over there and under Chief Oshkosh, they went and inspected that land. The government agents told us that it was full of wild rice, fish and (game?), and things of that sort. But on their inspection, when they got over there, they found totally different things. There wasn't wild rice. There weren't as much fish. The land that they talked about wasn't what they said. The land was between two warring tribes. Where the land was situated, the (Suwannee?) Chippewas were warring over there. It was said that the chiefs were very silent when they went over there and looked at things and just kind of talked amongst themselves, came back and reported to the Menominee people as a whole and said that "We don't want to move over there." He said, "The poorest land in Wisconsin is better than that. What's over there?" They asked President Fillmore as a delegation to Washington to ask the President if we could stay here in Wisconsin. The President listened to them and said we could live temporarily at Lake Poygan. After a year or so then Chief Oshkosh and the chiefs negotiated for this land. He said this land was a wilderness. The Europeans said nobody wanted to live here in this area where we're sitting now. He said, it's a wilderness. It's the only place where savages could live. Oshkosh said, "Let me move my people there. We know this area. We've lived here for thousands of years." An agreement was worked out so that we could stay here in Wisconsin. This is when the Menominee Reservation was established, 1854. But in all of that, another reason why this land was chosen, this reservation, was because of the Wolf River. Indirect route of sturgeon up to Keshena Falls, traditional spawning grounds for the sturgeon.

KSK: The sturgeon would come as far as Keshena Falls.

DG: Yes. Right. Again, we would wait after the establishment of the Menominee Reservation, we would wait for the sturgeon every year in the spring of the year. We held our ceremonies after the first catch, and things went on really good. The wilderness that they talked about was the trees. They didn't want no part of it. Soon after, people needed, of course, the trees to build homes and that. But our reservation was already established, so they couldn't really touch us.

KSK: That's now one of your prime assets.

DG: Oh, it is. It is. Yes. People are sick today to be answering.

KSK: [laughter]

DG: But that's one of the main reasons why this area was chosen, because of the culture. Our natural resources, the river would supply the fish and things of that sort.

KSK: Is there wild rice in this area?

DG: We still have rice beds here on the reservation, but not to the extent of prior to the treaty times. We're still harvesting the traditional way in the fall of the year. But back to that, after the establishment of the reservation in 1854, we had to move. We had bands of Menominee living in all directions. Chiefs, these bands lived in, still lived at Menominee River, Milwaukee, Green

Bay, Eau Claire. [inaudible] in between where we could gather all of those bands and bring them here to the reservation and make the best of the situation, which we did. Things went along good for a while. We learned to value of the timber. But again, it was Oshkosh that said, "If we harvest, take only the mature trees from this forest. Start at one end and go along." Cut the mature trees. By the time we get to the other end, it will be time to start again. We'll always have this resource. I think it's the foresters that followed that belief that Oshkosh had had and came in to sustain forestry. But that was kind of after the treaty. Then, of course, the sturgeon kept coming up after 1854, but it was around 1892 that all stopped. Dams were starting to be built on the Wolf. One was built at Shawano on the Wolf, and that prevented sturgeon from coming up.

KSK: Was that a logging dam, did you say?

DG: No. I think it was electrical for power.

KSK: Okay.

DG: Because it was off the reservation, the Menominees didn't have much to say about it. So, that ended the sturgeon from coming to us. A few years, maybe ten years after that, the government let us go off to, I think, Oconto River and other rivers to harvest. But soon after they said, "No, you can't –"

KSK: They let you go off the reservation?

DG: To harvest.

KSK: Okay.

DG: There was one account of wagon loads of sturgeon coming from Oconto River to the reservation.

KSK: Okay?

DG: So, they let us use resource. Ever since 1892 to 1993, we were without that resource. So, a group of Menominees got together, including myself, and we said, "Well, that's part of our culture. It's part of our treaty rights. It's part of whatever. Let's go down and get sturgeon in Shawano in the spring."

KSK: Just from reading about this, what brought that up? Why suddenly in the [19]90s?

DG: These people just got tired of it saying, "Well, why can't we do it? Let's go see if we can do it." We know we could do it but we'd be arrested. Police officers would say, "No. You can do this, but let's make this a case." Then our tribal leadership got a hold of it and said, No. You guys better not. Well, what we'll do is if you guys want to sturgeon for ceremonies, we'll ask DNR. We'll negotiate with them, which they did, under Glenn Miller was a tribal chairman then. Let me start dialogue with the state, which they did. It came up with an agreement that they

would supply us with so many sturgeon here so we could perform our ceremonies and have our feast, which we still do today. Every year, we have our annual sturgeon feast and celebration in April of each year, and which we ask DNR. We started with ten fish, ten sturgeons, and that wasn't enough because we had so many people coming to the feast. So, we asked for five more so, we get fifteen now. They said, "Well, how come we need fifteen?" I said, "There's more people wanting to know what we used to do and how we used to perform these ceremonies." We have a dance that goes back ancient thousands of years. Probably when we were first created that, it's called fish dance, and that's where the sturgeon mimics the movements of the fish coming up to the stream to spawn. So, they perform that also.

KSK: Were there many people who still remember that dance?

DG: Oh, yes.

KSK: Okay. Because it's been quite a while though since –

DG: In fact, I'm a traditional dancer. The man that really pushed this through was (Louis Hopatas?), and he was a tribal member that. Well, he came to me and he said, "Well, we're going to have this feast and celebration. We're going to have a traditional meal. We need to have this dance performed." "Okay," I said, "we'll do it." So, we had our first celebration feast powwow and one of the dances was a fish dance, which we do every year now. The event and the ceremony have changed. It's gotten quite large. We have it at the Menominee Tribal School. It's the biggest area we can find in April because it has to be inside in their gymnasium. We get about five hundred people there. It's a celebration powwow that we have. But that week, we asked for the sturgeon a week ahead, and the DNR brings them up in their tanker truck and to an area right by Keshena Falls. We have a fenced off area where they let tribal members take them off the truck and let youth get involved. We have a ceremony right there so we can renew that. It's like a renewal to us every year. The sturgeons are back now, and it's time to have those ceremonies and that feast. We have elders involved and the school kids and a lot of tribal members come to the release of the sturgeon. We have prayers and honor songs. We have a drum group that comes and performs ceremonial songs, tobacco offerings. But the reason why we do it a week ahead is they have to be taken out so they can be processed. We have a Menominee man that processes for us. He smokes that. It takes them all week to do that, smoke those fish. After that's done, we have activities during the week. The school kids have things they do at school. The language teachers get involved, and they do things with the kids with the language culture. It's cultural week for us.

KSK: Centered on sturgeons.

DG: Yes.

KSK: Oh, wow.

DG: We have to get ready for that feast and celebration powwow and get our cooks all in order. They cook wild rice and traditional meal for us, traditional bread and corn soup and things like that. It's free. It's not only for the Menominees, it's for everyone. We send out a press release

saying, you know what we're going to do once we say everyone's invited. We get a lot of people not only from here, but from all over.

KSK: I'm sure.

DG: We invite the DNR guys to come take part in that. Every year, they come. They have a representative that comes and they do a speech doing the celebration powwow. We thank them for every year for doing that for us because it helps us renew the cycle of having sturgeon here. That's something that we had wanted to do in 1993, and we still do it today.

KSK: Would it be okay if I attended that this April?

DG: Sure. Yes.

KSK: Could I bring our photographer as well?

DG: Yes.

KSK: That'd be terrific. We'd love to get some shots. Would it be okay if we attended the ceremony?

DG: The release?

KSK: The release, okay.

DG: Well, give me your name and address and stuff.

KSK: Keep me posted.

DG: Yes.

KSK: Okay. Thanks so much. That seems like a really important event to capture.

DG: Right.

KSK: Is the surgeon prepared any other way or is it basically just smoke?

DG: No, they're basically smoked the way they used to be.

KSK; Okay. Have you ever had any females with eggs?

DG: No, they bring mostly males.

KSK: Male, okay. I guess they probably would. Yes. I was looking through – what's the name, Alanson Skinner's account.

DG: Oh, Alanson Skinner.

KSK: Alanson. He wrote some of the ways that sturgeon was prepared.

DG: Yes. They boil it in –

KSK: Dumplings and cakes. Then it seemed like they did a lot with the roe, different recipes with the eggs. But then I've heard that smoked is the tastiest.

DG: Yes. In the older days too. They had certain medicines taken from the sturgeon. The oil was used for certain things. We still take the oil today, and some people still take it. They say they use it for, I don't know, a number of things.

KSK: Historically, were sturgeon used for anything else? Were their fins used for things or tools or no? Just pretty much eating?

DG: No. Because it's mostly cartilage.

KSK: Yes. Okay. But the oil was probably –

DG: Yes. The oil was probably the most important medicinal part of it.

KSK: Was there a historical story about two clans that –

DG: Oh, the sturgeon war. Yes.

KSK: Could you tell me a little bit about that?

DG: Yes. That was probably when the tribe, sometime after creation, I don't know how many years after that. But the tribe was living by the Menominee river, and there was one clan living by the mouth. There was one upstream on the Menominee river. It came spring of the year, and sturgeon started coming up. The bend by the mouth of the river, they dammed the river. For what reason? I don't know. They won't let the sturgeon up. So, the bend up the river [inaudible] wave runner. The chief sent his son from the upper bend down to his relative, who was the head of the main bend, or the bend by the mouth of the river, and asked, "Why aren't the sturgeon coming up?" They [inaudible], the boy has seen that. He said it was his uncle, said that, "My father wants to know why the sturgeon aren't coming up." The uncle said, "Well, this is the reason." He had a [inaudible] and he grabbed his skin like that and poked that through there. This is the answer. Go back to your dad and tell him." The boy went back kind of trying to hide that from his dad. The dad seen that, and he knew the answer. That started the sturgeon war, which upper bend went down and killed a lot of the ones that put the dam up and open it up.

KSK: Yes. [laughter] That's a good story.

DG: The sturgeon war.

KSK: You said that sturgeon not only were considered the keeper of wild rice, but also the keeper of the tribe's history. So, how do you feel about sturgeon since that's your role right now?

DG: Prior to taking this job seventeen years ago, I was always wondering why we didn't have those fish here. I always was amazed of our culture. After graduating from college, I said, "Well, I'm going to try to get a job with the tribe preserving some of this stuff." I speak the language, I'm still learning, but I speak. Culture, I was always interested in religion. So, this job came up as historic preservation director. I got the job, and soon after that, that's when the guy said, "Well, let's go down and get those sturgeon." I said, "Well, let's go." Of course, the chairman is my boss. I said, "(Glenn?), I'm going to go down with these guys." That's our right to have those. He said, "I know." I said, "I would go too, but I'm going to [inaudible] can do that. Let's do it diplomatically." That's what happened and that wasn't my feeling for years to get those back. It just came to be that I was probably one of the ones that help do it, we're going to try and continue to do it every year.

KSK: Was that difficult before that happened before you worked on arrangement?

DG: Oh, yeah.

KSK: Was it difficult to see stories like all of these experience happen?

DG: Yes. Every year, you'd go down and see that, and it was like something lost in you. Those are ours. They should be coming up to Keshena Falls, and they're not. Why aren't they? We couldn't do nothing about it. In your heart, it's just that feeling that you had. Their ours and they should be coming up that river. Since we started that in 1993, the tribe has been working with DNR in a number of fish and wildlife to get fish ladders or [inaudible] to get them around. There's another dam right below the reservation, the Balsam Row Dam. So, they'd have to get up to –

KSK: Oh, that one still is?

DG: Yeah.

KSK: Okay. I didn't realize that.

DG: I just heard from our environmental people that they worked on an agreement with the Balsam Row one, but not the Shawano one that he's finding difficulty with –

KSK: Is that a hydroelectric dam as well?

DG: Well, (Little Wolf?) paper mills. I don't know if it was –

KSK: Okay.

DG: They said they don't even use it.

KSK: So, they're going to –

DG: They if said they took the dam out, the water in Shawano Lake would go down several feet.

KSK: So, you've worked out an agreement for a fish ladder at that one?

DG: Well, I think the environmental people of the tribe that are working out there.

KSK: Okay.

DG: Maybe we should talk with the environmental expert.

KSK: Is that Doug?

DG: Doug. He's with the sawmill. [inaudible] Tribal Enterprises.

KSK: Okay. All right.

DG: (Gary Schuettpelz?) says he is the director over there. I'm not sure how far they got with the agreements.

KSK: But the Shawano one really hasn't been going anywhere.

DG: That's what I hear now and that you should talk to Gary.

KSK: Yes. I should check on that. Okay.

DG: [inaudible] they're saying that.

KSK: Okay. Yes. I'll talk to Gary.

DG: But it would be nice to have. Oh, and then they reintroduced some in the Wolf River here and up in the [inaudible] also, and Legend Lake and there's a few other lakes that there can be Sturgeon there.

KSK: That was part of what I saw.

DG: Yes, in Legend Lake.

KSK: In October.

DG: Oh, no. You were at?

KSK: At Sullivan Falls.

DG: Yes. They released an amount of fingerlings in Legend Lake right after [19]93, probably

[19]94. They've gotten pretty big now. They do shackings over there. They're growing. They have a season out there for Menominees to go spearing now. That's just getting started too.

KSK: Was last year the first or the year before?

DG: Two years ago.

KSK: 2005.

DG: Now he's got to relearn how to do that because we haven't done that.

KSK: That's what I read in a couple newspaper stories, that that's kind of a problem right now.

DG: Yes. I can't figure out how we did that for centuries. Now, we learn that.

KSK: So, what have people been saying since that season started? Is there interest?

DG: Oh, yes. There's interest. It's just getting the right equipment to do it. I think somebody's going to do a class on that, I know it. I think Doug was working on that when he was in environmental.

KSK: Traditionally, it has been the Menominee did spear fish, right?

DG: Oh, yes.

KSK: Was it kind of a trident? Sort of much like what they use today down in Winnebago, is the tool relatively the same?

DG: Yes. Actually, we have an exhibit that we don't have up until now. But we have on the actual spears from bone to wood to metal.

KSK: You have examples of all of those?

DG: Yes.

KSK: Oh, that's great.

DG: At some point, you can get pictures of it.

KSK: Could I arrange with you sometime to come back with our photographer?

DG: Sure. Yes.

KSK: That'd be great.

DG: Because when they did the new Highway 29, when they made it to four lane just below

Shawano, they have to go, of course, over the Wolf. Then they have our archaeological studies were done. Archaeologists found an amazing Sturgeon rearing site that was Menominee. We monitored that and we had a memorandum of agreement with DOT that that should be protected and that only qualified archaeologists be there when construction was going on. They violated that agreement and destroyed some of that site.

KSK: It was a sturgeon rearing.

DG: Yes. Like pretty processed, caught them and –

KSK: Smoked them.

DG: Yes. You should speak to him about that.

KSK: Who's that?

DG: David Overstreet.

KSK: Overstreet?

DG: Yes. He's with the College of Menominee Nation now. But I could give his phone number.

KSK: That'd be terrific. Yes.

DG: It's a 414-221-9065.

KSK: So, he's the official tribal archaeologist.

DG: Well, he's going to be. We're working on that in the college right now. But he was an archaeologist that DOT had hired to do the work at the site below Shawano when they were going to build that bridge.

KSK: What year was that?

DG: It goes way back [19]94, [19]95.

KSK: All right. Okay. All right, [19]94, [19]95. That's where the spheres were found.

DG: Well, as a result of that, we did the mitigation in DOT. Part of that was they did a made an exhibit, which we have three panels of history. Then we have replicas of those spear points. It's in that exhibit.

KSK: Are there any decoys still in existence?

DG: No. Not that we have. Probably in a museum.

KSK: Okay. Those were used, though?

DG: Yes. They would dangle wooden –

KSK: The wooden decoys.

DG: The wooden decoys down in the spear.

KSK: Would you put a blanket over your head?

DG: Yes.

KSK: Okay.

DG: We did a historical writing of all of that. I don't have it. I'll give that to you.

KSK: I think I might saved it. Let me see if it's the same thing you're talking about.

DG: Well, it was father –

KSK: Well, I have some.

DG: –One of the missionaries on Lake Winnebago, he wrote down all the Menominees who used to spear sturgeon in Lake Winnebago. He got the big hole and he had that covered.

KSK: That's so interesting to me because now, there are all these people down in the Oshkosh area in Lake Winnebago, basically doing the same thing that the Menominee have done for ages. I mean, it's a little bit different. They have the crazy shanties and things like that, but it's basically the same process.

DG: I often wondered why they wouldn't offer a license to Menominees just to go spear down there.

KSK: Would that be something that people would be interested in?

DG: Sure. Yes.

KSK: Yes. Because that's where Europeans learned how to do it.

DG: Yes, very much.

KSK: I'm just trying to see if there's anything else.

DG: We have some couple of legends too, but I'll have to get them out and look for them for you.

FS: Sturgeon legends.

DG: Yes.

KSK: I feel like I've read through so many things. I'm kind of confused about it, but the fish stands. Is spearing the only way that sturgeons were harvested or was there any bow and arrow?

DG: We have one account of that they use bow and arrow, string or some tight on your rope.

KSK: From the shore.

DG: Yes.

KSK: Okay. So, that would have been during spawning.

DG: If you see them when they spawn, I think somehow, you just used lift the [inaudible].

KSK: [laughter] Okay.

DG: With the major one spearing out.

KSK: Okay. Spearing in the winter, but not necessarily on the ice all the time either? You might spear from the shore or not? Would it usually be the winter?

DG: No. I think after the preservation was established, there's a historical cone of the Oshkosh and [inaudible] bend on either side of the Keshena Falls spearing.

KSK: Okay. From the shore?

DG: You got that?

KSK: Yes. Okay. Do you have any other questions right now? I'm sure I'll probably have some more questions along the way.

DG: Oh, yes.

KSK: Would you be willing to serve as a reviewer for this book?

DG: Sure. Oh, yes.

KSK: Okay. That'd be terrific. Just to make sure we get all the facts straight.

DG: Yes, I'd like that.

KSK: As I said, I'm still trying to get this proposal together for UW press, but this is a very rough table of contents right now for the book. Just so you can get some sort of idea of what it

might look like. We're hoping to have this book where we'd have a lot of really engaging images and photos. Then we're hoping to work with the Oshkosh Public Museum to put together an exhibit. I've also talked to some people at the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago. Apparently, they have a local waters exhibit that's more kind of Illinois Inland fish, and they're trying to change it into a Great Lakes themed area instead. So, I talked to them about – because there's a big push right now to restore Sturgeon throughout the Great Lakes region. So, I talked to them about it just to let them know that we were doing this project and that there's a lot of history surrounding sturgeon in this area because it's been one of the best protected populations. They just were decimated everywhere else. So, they're interested in including that as well. I think it's going to take a while to put everything all together because we're talking to a lot of people and there's a lot of information out there. But I'm really happy to hear that you'd be a reviewer. That sounds great.

DG: Oh, yes. I'd be happy to do that.

KSK: Great. Is there anything else you want to add right now?

DG: No. But at some point, we should sit down again and maybe look at pictures.

KSK: Yes. That'd be great.

DG: Get our exhibit up. We're building a new museum also.

KSK: Oh, really?

DG: We just got a grant from HUD.

KSK: On these grounds right here?

DG: Yes. So, we got 600,000 from HUD and the tribe put in a 400.

KSK: So, what sort of things are you hoping to include in that?

DG: That's going to be a big one. Just a lifestyle on how Menominee people lived historically, and just – I don't know. There are so many things running through my head now.

KSK: Yeah, that will take –

DG: If I'm going to do it, wild rice, sturgeon, just a number of things.

KSK: So, out of all the reservations in Wisconsin right now, are the Menominee the only indigenous to Wisconsin?

DG: Yes.

KSK: Okay. That's what I thought.

DG: Yes, we are. We were always here.

KSK: I saw that.

DG: No migration story coming from anywhere else.

KSK: Right. Okay. The other tribes were kind of pushed here. They had to move here.

MS: The wild rice. Are you working with anybody on that?

DG: Yeah. In fact, we have some restoration projects too. We have over 80 lakes here on reservation that we're replanting, trying to get replanting done.

MS: Are you working with any colleges or universities?

DG: No. That's kind of more the environmental guys is getting that done. We kind of handled the cultural part. We'll do prayers before they do the planting and stuff because we want to start on getting more rice. We don't have that much. We have enough to get school kids out and demonstrate how we used to do it. But per se, we don't have a big abundance of it where we have it all. We got to get it from off the reservation. We want to have our own. That's who we are.

KSK: That's your name.

DG: But I should mention that we had a treaty rights case too. Much like the [inaudible] has had.

KSK: So, for off reservation hunting.

DG: Gathering, hunting, gathering, yes. It got to federal court and the judge wouldn't even look at it.

KSK: He said no.

DG: Yes. But a lot of that was in there going off to spearfish and gather rice. So, hopefully someday we'll get that back on the docket, I guess?

KSK: [affirmative]

DG: I don't know if the tribe's ideas about that, but I hope they do at some point.

KSK: So, different treaties with different tribes. I mean, it was all everybody's deal was different than when treaties were being negotiated.

DG: Yes. A lot of times you had different government agents negotiating and they'd use

different language then. The Menominees had their own people that – well, we didn't pick them, but they would come to us and say, "Well, we want this." The Ojibwe then they had a different group of federal agents. Then they ranked the way they wanted. But we feel that we have the language in the treaty saying that we should be able to go off and do that.

KSK: Yes. Right.

DG: But they wouldn't hear it now. The same judge that granted the Ojibwe or Chippewa one was the one that denied ours and not even look at it.

KSK: Really? That's interesting.

DG: When that was going around too, there was a lot of, kind of, backlash from around saying, "Oh, well. Menominee are going to go out and rip the lakes." No. We don't do that. Just take what we need. Take all the deer and get a lot here. We don't have the rice and stuff. We have rice, but we don't have seeded land.

KSK: Must not be very easy to transplant or –

DG: Yes, it's hard.

KSK: – to establish wild rice.

DG: Yes, it is.

KSK: I think that would be –

DG: We had little success but we planted more this year, so we're going to see how it goes.

KSK: Oh, and just so you know, that comes from a quote of yours. [laughs]

DG: What's that?

KSK: There was a caviar book by Richard Carey, I think? That just came out a couple years ago. I wasn't working for Sea Grant then, but when there was the International Sturgeon Symposium in Oshkosh. All the attendees came up here for a dance and a ceremony. He quoted you at the introduction ceremony or whatever. You made a speech and you called the tribe, "the people of the Sturgeon."

DG: Oh, yes.

KSK: So, that's from you. [laughs] That's just the working title, but I really like that.

DG: Good. Sounds like a good book.

KSK: I've really enjoyed doing the research on this. It's been really interesting, beyond

interesting. I just feel really lucky to be working on it.

DG: But in April, you'll really like to see that released and then the events during the week, if you can stay around for that and sturgeon feast celebration powwow.

KSK: That would be terrific.

DG: We honor certain things. Last year, we honored the waters and we had the ladies that take care of that. We had their ceremonies and we had a march from Keshena Falls to the high school carried water in that place. It's renewal of life. It was really good. This year, I think we're going to do the forest.

KSK: Oh, okay.

DG: Yes. So, each year we do something like that and coincide with celebration.

KSK: Right. So, I'll just keep in touch with you then about the date when that's going to happen. That's great. I'll give you my card.

DG: Yes. Well, I got one, I can give it to you.

KSK: I do it just to break it up into different files.

DG: That's right.

KSK: So, it's not just one big, huge file. Here, I'll give you a couple, Dave.

DG: Okay.

KSK: Just in case you want to pass it around to anybody else.

DG: The e-mail has changed.

KSK: Terrific. M-I-T-W?

DG: Yes.

KSK: Okay. Great. We have an environmental radio program that we do. It's called Earthwatch radio. We just do short little two-minute scripts. Would it be okay if I wrote a story based on and used these sound?

DG: Sure.

KSK: I would send you the script before we recorded this. So, you could check it out. Okay. Great. Thanks, Dave. Okay.

DG: The people of Green Bay were keeping track of records, and then they said that the Menominee were starving that winter because the bay did freeze. The bay of Green Bay did not freeze or they could not get out to spear a sturgeon. I got that. I should have cut that out for you, but I'll get all that gathered, all that information.

KSK: That'd be great. So, yes. The same reason.

DG: Yes. It was that one year like this, there was nothing, hardly any snow and warm. So, they said that Menominees were starving because we could not get out on the bay to spearfish.

KSK: We'll see.

DG: Yes.

KSK: We'll see what happens.

MS: Some cold weather is due this week.

DG: No. I think up here, the lakes just roll.

[end of transcript]