

Anishinaabe Bizindamoo Makak

Episode 24: November 16, 2023

Erik Redix (ER): Boozhoo Anishinaabedoog. Miskwaa Anang indizhinikaaz. Migizi indoodem. Odaawaa zaaga'iganing indonjibaa. Gichi-Onigamiing indaa. Ingikino'amaage Ojibwemowin Gichi-Onigamiing.

Boozhoo! My name is Erik Martin Redix. My Ojibwe name is Miskwaa Anang. I'm a member of the Eagle clan from Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe Reservation in Wisconsin. I currently live on the Grand Portage Reservation and work as the Ojibwe Language Coordinator for the Grand Portage Band. Welcome to *Anishinaabe Bizindamoo Makak*, a program featuring Ojibwe first speakers telling stories in English and Ojibwemowin, the Ojibwe language.

Inganoonaa miinawaa Maajiigwaneyaash noongom. Indazindinaamin bebezhighooganzhiig Negwaakwaani-zaaga'iganing mewinzha.

In this episode, Maajiigwaneyaash, Dr. Gordon Jourdain, recalls how long ago people used horses for logging, and shares the fate of the Lac La Croix ponies through stories told in English and Ojibwemowin.

Quite a few years back, we had this program where you talked about the Lac La Croix ponies, and I had no idea what it was. And this goes back to my wife had the Ojibwe Quiz Bowl several years back, and Dan Jones, they were talking about the word for horse, and he said, "*mishtadim*," so that was kind of like her reality for a while. But then I found this vocabulary packet that a first speaker here had put together for the Grand Portage Head Start. And it said, *bebezhighooganzhii*. But then I went back to older program. I was like, "Oh, I know Maajiigwaneyaash was talking about horses." And I was like, "Oh yeah, we started to just talk about those Lac La Croix ponies." And at that point, I think it was like the 2010's, 2015, 16. You said, "Oh, do your homework, and we'll come back to it." So we're coming back to it.

Gordon Jourdain (GJ): My grandmother used to use the word *mitadim*, *mitadim*, that word comes from what it does in the winter time. You know, of course, the horses that we had at Lac La Croix they didn't have to take care of them, because they took care of themselves. And I do believe that all the horses do this. I'm not sure I'm just making a generalization based on my understanding of how the horses were at Lac La Croix a long time ago, they would dig like this right to the ground, and you'd see these patches of grass all over the place. *Mitadimiwepishkige dash bebezhighooganzhi*, when it does that. *Mitadimiwepishkige*, that's what it does. It digs until it gets to the earth. That's what that means, *mitadim*, *mitadimiwepishkige*, you remove whatever's on top of the earth to get to the Earth is what that means. *Mitadimiwe*, *mitadimiwepishkige*, so that is what it does. So they, kind of like made that shorter and just called it *mitadim*. Just like my grandmother used to say that this is what the raccoon used to be called. It means that *awesiinh* that eats *es*, the E-S like this word right here, is a clam, it eats that. *Esibananjige*, so now they just say *esiban*.

ER (4:52): Run that by me again. So it's the being that eats clams?

GJ: Yep! It's an *awesiinh*, an animal, huh? It's the *awesiinh* that eats clams.

ER (4:52): Yeah, the *awesiinh* that eats clams, okay.

GJ: Or crabs. *Esibananjige*, it eats clams. That's what that means. *Esibananjige*, this one right here, *esibananjige*, somebody that eats clams. So instead of saying the whole thing, they say *esiban* these days. I do believe that's what *mitadimiwepishkige*, that's what the horse is. That's what the horse does, it uses its hoofs and digs and removes the snow to get to the grass at the bottom, and the grass is still pretty, pretty green there sometimes.

ER (6:06): Yeah. So would you refer to like all horses like that? Or is it just these ponies in the community?

GJ: I don't know if any other horse does that. I have no experience with other horses other than those wild ones they had in Lac La Croix.

ER: So it'd be the same word, like if you saw, I don't know, a horse on TV or something, you'd still say *mitadim*?

GJ: Yep! You would, yeah. And of course, what everybody understands is *bebezhigooganzhii*. *Bebezhigooganzhii*, *bezhig*, of course, is just one. Literally means one nail on each hoof. Hoof, it's not separated, that's what they call it, ungulate, like a deer or mouse. So when we describe that, it appears to be that it's just one claw, or one nail. And then when you say *bebezhigooganzhii*, on each of his its appendages, it only has one nail or a claw, that's what that means, *bebezhigooganzhii*.

ER (7:41): So when you were growing up those ponies, where did they come from?

GJ: A lot of the people that ended up in Lac La Croix are from different places. A lot of my relatives, well, there are actually all of my relatives there, but they come from, from Minnesota, my grandmother, my mother and her sisters, they came from Bois Forte. So they probably brought them over and I heard one of my cousins talking about that, and they used to have, from what I read about, what he said, they used to have horses in Nett Lake, like that, and there's kind of like a collaboration there, because my relatives that ended up in Lac La Croix came from Bois Forte area. Yeah, they might have brought them across. And because it was one of the last places where you couldn't get to because of the isolation there, they didn't get at us, or at the horses, and we kept a lot of our language. Also the horses kept their own way of living.

ER (9:12): And from what I've seen, the government didn't want to keep them around, right? They tried to kill them off?

GJ: Yeah, my brother, one of my older brothers there, he did a lot of history about those things. He would be an interesting person for you to talk to. He knows a lot about the history of the horse and what the government did. Because I was really much, much younger then, and I didn't realize what kind of policies the government had, but just like everything else, they wanted to destroy everything indigenous, including our indigenous

horses and pets. They didn't want any kind of semblance of self-reliance, as we all know. And how they did that the Anishinaabe were getting sick because of the different foreign diseases that were coming here. So they blamed it on the horses, made it right for the

governments and the police to come and pursue them.

I can send you some pictures of the horses that are there now. That's when Rose and I went there. They brought them back, and they're just walking around the village and stuff, just like they used to long time ago. It was really, really a powerful moment for me to go back and see that, because you see the lighter brown with the black mane? That's what my grandmother *Baashkinegaabawiikiban*, she was from Bois Forte, that's what her horse looked like. And her horse's name was Bizhiki, and Bizhiki was one of the ones that was taken away. And I think it was 74, 75 around there. I was only like 14, 15 years old back then, when they came and got the horses, it was a pretty sad moment for me, because, you know, I don't know if we I'd ever see them again. When I went back and I saw these ones, and they were having little ones too. I think they've had several births of little ones of the horses in Lac La Croix. So they made a complete turnaround at the village.

What they was used to do back then, is my father had a, and I probably told you this before, but he would cut logs in the winter for people, because he had a horse that was trained to pull logs. It wasn't part of the Indian pony or the Lac La Croix pony. It was a different kind of horse that he his father took to Lac La Croix. So he would put pull logs from the forest for people, because everybody used like wood fired furnaces or stoves back then. So he would pull logs out of the woods with that big horse. The horse's name was Barney, but the people who he would pull logs for. In turn, would go and cut or slide hay for the horses and pile it up in the bays in Lac La Croix to feed my Dad's horse. Yeah, those mounds of hay would be like fenced in so the wild horses wouldn't get at the hay. (Laughter). So they would barter that way. You know "you cut hay for my horses, now I'll pull logs to your house in the wintertime with my horse." That's how they survived those long, mean winters there, with that kind of cooperation, community living and being respectful of all life forms, I guess.

ER (13:37): And I suppose they had to go out, just like now with woodlots, had to go out further away, as you know, you cut for firewood, and then the firewood's gone. So you got to go to a different place, different years, and exhaust the supply close.

GJ: Yeah.

ER: Huh, interesting. Would you mind giving us an Ojibwe synopsis of....

GJ: What I just told you? Yeah, yeah, I can. I'll try remember what I said, but it won't be exactly the same. (Laughter).

ER (14:17): I've been noticing that, there's always like, a little bit of difference. Differences in these things, like, as I'm starting to study them a little bit more, yeah, the language part. But that's good!

GJ: I always go off on a tangent. One of the elders that I learned a lot of about *Midewiwin*, I used to listen to him speaking. And he was an amazing orator. He would stand up for a long time and speak in Ojibwe and teach. And then he would say, "Wa, giinitam dash!" He'd say, "It's your turn." And then the most powerful words he used to say to me was "*ezhi*

nisidotaman igo,” which means, as you understood it, and that, oh my gosh, that totally, totally absolved me of the wanting to say exactly what he said in Ojibwe and translated to English. Yeah. So when I talk, when I say this to you, it's not going to be exactly what I said in English.

Mewinzha iwidi gii-, gii-nitaawigiyaan he'iing Gakijiwanong, Mii idi gii-ayaawaad ing haa'aag bebezhighooganzhiig, ganage go gii-ayaa-, amanj igo gaa-tashiwaagwen. Gigazhiins gii-izhikaazo bezhig, bizhiki. Bepakaan gii-ezhinikaazowag ingi ayaa'aa bebezhighooganzhiig gii-anish-, gii-ojibwewinikaazowag eta go gaawiin ganage bezhig a gii zhaaganaashiiwinikaasosii.

Mii eta go aw indedenaaban, noosinaaban gaagii-ayaawaad bebezhighooganzhiin “Barnie” wiin a’a gii-izhinikaazo. Gii-pakaanizi dash wiin awe, gii-anokii-bebezhighooganzhiinwi. Bagwaji-bebezhighooganzhiig dash wiin ingi gaagii-ayaawaad mewinzha.

Mii dash ako he’ii gaa-izhichigewaad haa’aa noosiban, ogii-aawanaa’ ako haa’aa mitigoo’. Gii-awaadamaage ji-aabajitoowaad ingi anishinaabeg iwidi eyaawad he’iing Gakijiwanong. He’ii ogii-aabajitoonaawaa mitig ji-boodawaadamowaad ini endaawaad. Ge-onji giizhooziwaad, he’ii sa go gaye ge-onji-giizizekwewaad awiya.

Mii ako geniinawind dinawa gaa-aabajitood indedenaaban gii-kiizizekwed he’ii bizaan igo he’ii gizhaapikizihanish ogii-aabajitoon, mii eta go gii-pezhigong i’i gizhaapikiziganish. Mii dash wiin imaa meshkod ingi gaa-manisawindwaa gabe-biboon gaa-izhi-ayaawaad enh, gaa-izhi-mashkosiikewaad, indizhinikaadaanaawaaban ako.

Mashkosiikewag ezhi-babikosidowaad ini mashkosiwan idi ezhi-maajiigingin ezhi wiikwe’ayaag. Nikiiwidishiishing izhinikaade bezhig iwidi i mikwendamaan ezhi waawiyegamaansiwan imaa. Mii dash imaa zaakakiigin ini mashkosiwan, oshpakiiwan aapiji.

Mii dash iwe babaa-gishkizhamowaagwen. Ezhi-okosidoowaad ani-dagwaagininig. Ojiikinaakobidoonaawaa dash gaye, mii dash imaa ji-ondizisigwaa ingi bagwaji bebezhighooganzhiig ji-gimootisigwaa wiidog. Ji-gimoodishkosiwewaad.

Mii dash imaa ako gaa-odaminoywaan. Waahay, wiinge mino-giizhoo’ayaa i mashkosi oshpisin. Maagizhaa ge naanozid, maagizhaa ge ingodwaasozid, ishwaasozid apii apiichaa. Wenjidoo ezhi-baateg, gizhoo-ayaa dash. Mii dash imaa gaa-izhi-bimaadiziwaad ingi anishinaabeg mewinzha iwidi gii-naadamaadiwag gegoo.

Mi ako ge-iwe nakake bebezhighooganzhi’ weweni ogii-ayaawaa-, gii-naadamaadiwag gii izhichigewaad. Niminjimenimaag dash ingi haa’aa, haa’aa nookomisiban Baashkinagaabowiikweban gii-izhinikaazo a mindimoowenh.

Mii go imaa gaapi-onji-ayaad he’iing onamano-zaaga’iganing izhikaade ishkoniigan imaa agaame’ii Zhaaganaashiiwakiing, Mii imaa gaapi-onji-ayaawaad kakina ingiwe haa’aa nimaamaanaaban minawaa odawemaa’. Aanind igo ge ingi-anishinaabeg mii imaa gaa-ini onji-goziwaagobanen mewinzha.

Mii dash iwe gaa-gagwejimiyyin, aandi gaapi-onji-ayaawaagwen ingi bebezhighooganzhiig. Ingii-noondawaa dash imaa bezhig a indinawemaagan gaagiigidod. Ingii-agindaan imaa nakake indanawii-ikid, ingii-agindamowaan iwe nakake gaa-ikidod.

Ogii-ayaawaadogwena' ingi-dinawa imaa bebezhighooganzhii' he'iing goda asabiikonaye zaaga'igan izhinikaade imaa beshiw agaame'ii imaa ayaag i'iw Kijiwanong, asabiikonaye zaaga'igan. Mii imaa gaapi-onji-ayaawaad ge-ingi-indinawemaaganag.

Baataniinowag sa go geyaabi imaa indinawemaaganag. Mii imaa dazhindang awe indinawemaagan bezhig gii-ayaawaagwen mewinzha ingi-dinawa bebezhighooganzhiig, bagwaji-bebezhighooganzhiig.

Shke dash gawejimiyyin aandi gaapi-onji-ayaawaagwen ongo. Mii iwe bezhig enendamaam mii maawiin gii-aazhwiwinaawaagwen ingi nookomisiban miinawaa odinawemaaganiwaa' gii-maajiinaawaad bebezhighooganzhii' gii-izhiwinaawaad iwidi Gakijiwanong.

Nashke dash imaa ingoji go gii aa gii-ashi-niiyo-biboonaagiziyaan mewinzha go iwe apii mii iw giipi-naasikawindwaa ingi bebezhighooganzhiig. Da-jaaginewag ogii-inenimaawaa' iidog anishinaabeg amanj gaa-inendamowaagwen gaagiipi-onji-naadinaawaad.

Mii awe bezhig nisayenh Meminwaategoneb ezhinikaazod mii awe gekendang gegoo iwidi aapiji. Ogii-naanaagaji'aa' iw bebezhighooganzhii' weweni, mii awe ge-ganoonadiban giishpiin awshime wii-kikendaman.

Mii dash imaa giipi-naasikawaawaad o'o, ongo bebezhighooganzhii' wiinge sa naa ingii maanendam, Mii sa go gaawiin miinawaa inga-waabamaasiig ingii-inendam dash ingi bebezhighooganzhiig. Geget gaawiin ingii-waabamaasiig amanj igo gaa-ezhiwebiziwaagwen.

Mii dash iwe bezhig mazinaakizon gaa-izhinizha'amawinaan mii ezhinaagozid bezhig a nookomisiban Baashkinegaabowiikweban odayan, bizhiki gii-izhinikaazowan. Nawaj igo gii-ozaawizi awe bebezhighooganzhii.

Mii awe bezhig gaa-maajijigaazod miinawaa awe googazhiins gii-izhinikaazo. Niiwe'enyiban ganabaj wiin ini haa'aa Wezha'oobinensiban ganabj wiin iniw odayan. Amanj igo minik gaa-maajiinaanwindwaawen ganabaj niiwin, naanan.

Mii dash imaa wiibaa go noomaya go ingii-izhaa miinawaa iwidi Kijiwanong ingii-ando babaa, babaamiwinaa aw indooshki-wiiw Waasegiizhigookwe izhinikaazo ingii-izhiwinaa iwidi ji-babaa-mootisaad indinawemaaga na'.

Mii sa imaa bimibizoyaang imaa miikana, waahaay! Giibiidaawanidiwag ingi bebezhighooganzhiig niibiwa imaa ganage go ishwaachiwag maagizhaa ge awashime. Mii dash ezhinaagozid bezhig awe aa'aa bebezhighooganzhii indigo naa haa'aan mii awe nookomisiban odayan.

Wiinge sa go ingii-minwendam. Indigo gegoo gaabi-azhegiweshkaamagak imaa inde'ing,

gaa-apiichi-minwendamaan waabamagwaa miinawaa bebezhighooganzhiig babaamosewaaad iwidi gaagii-tazhi-imbigi'iwaad ingi niigi'igoog. Gaagii-tazhi-nitaawigi'iwaad ingi kakina iwidi anishinaabeg eyaawaad.

Aapiji gii-kizhewaadiziwag kakina ongo anishinaabeg iwidi mewinzha.

ER (22:32): Miigwech!

GJ: This right here. When you look at those two words right there, *gaandakii'ige* and *gaandakii'o*, it depends on who is receiving, who is it that you're referring to, *gaandakii'ige*, is that pole that you use, the you're referring to the pole, and how you're using that. See, you've got that pole, and you're pushing it like this. *Gaandakii'o*, is you're referring to the person, and not the pole. You see? That's where that difference is, right there. Which one are you referring to? I don't know what's that called, but I, I think it's voice, whoever is the one that's being referred to or voiced. So when you talk about that pole itself, it would be a *gaandakii'iganaak* or *gaandakii'iganaatig*. *Gaanda-* is push right? You're using that stick and you're using the Earth. Your force is pushing up against the Earth, and that is what puts you into motion. There's an equal force that comes from the Earth, and that's what makes you go into motion. That's *gaandakii'ige*. *Gaanjwebin* is like, push somebody, *gaanjwebinan*. So that's why that *gaandakii'ige* is in reference to that tool that you're using to push up against the earth to propel yourself. Yeah, really good physics words there.

(This segment originally aired in Episode 20)

Yeah, I like, I like being able to put things on for the record, you know, in different kinds of media. Initially, as a first language speaker, I didn't want to get recorded, but as the years went on, I didn't know why I had that notion in my head, but when I came out of Lac La Croix and started to see like the condition of Ojibwemowin language and also the effort that younger people were putting into acquiring language, I found it comforting to be able to do that. The conundrum that I experienced in my life, in my own mental processes, all those people that allowed to be themselves to be recorded, already made that decision, that it was okay to do that, and I didn't realize that until later on in my in my life, that, hey, somebody already set the precedent. I don't have to worry about doing it now.

So I feel comfortable with that. Of course, that's not to say that there are some things that shouldn't be like ceremonial things. There's a place for those kind of things to happen that those are normally within the sacred lodges. So I'm really happy to be able to participate what we're doing. And over the years, I've seen my evolution as a contributing person to the shared knowledge of our people.

ER: No, that's wonderful. Miigwech miinawaa! Miigwech for tuning into *Anishinaabe Bizindamoo Makak*. Support for the series comes from the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe and the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Our producer is Staci Drouillard. The theme song is performed by the Stonebridge Singers. Until next time, this is Erik Redix. Giga-waabamin!

Ojibwe Transcription by Gordon Jourdain

