

**BORN:**

May 5, 1908

BIRTHPLACE:

Around Blackstone River

PARENTS:

Jarvis Mitchell and Nellie (Simon) Mitchell

GWICH'IN:

Teet'it Gwich'in

MARRIED:

Paul Bonnetplume, January 2, c. 1922 in Fort McPherson

CHILDREN:

Steven, Ephraim, John, Thomas, Cornelius, Ernest, William (d), Chris, Mary Rose (d), Nellie (d), Abraham (d)

the elders did not like the new tents. They believed that without a large fire in them, they would freeze.

Sarah recalls how well she was taught to work by her elders. She learned, at a very young age, how to cut meat, make drymeat, wash clothes, sew and patch clothes and cook. At the age of 6, they started to teach her how to hunt animals and set a net under the ice. She also learned how to tan skins by watching her elders very closely.

Once she watched a few times, then she had to tan her own hides. "All my life I've tanned my own caribou skins," says Sarah. Sarah says the elders also told her many stories as she was learning how to make drymeat and dry fat. Once the drymeat was made, they would put it in a caribou leg skin bag that they made and go to Fort McPherson where it would be shared with the elders who could not travel or leave town.

In the early years of her marriage, Sarah and Paul would go to Dawson and then live in the mountains all winter. Once it was time to begin hunting muskrats, they would travel to a good place to hunt them.

Sarah sadly says, "These days, all that is gone. Hardly anyone stays in the bush anymore and even if they do, it's not the same. Those days you used to be busy all the time. Now, it seems like you have nothing to do. Sometimes I think I'm still in the mountains because I remember how happy that time was for me."

Sarah Bonnetplume Sarah (Mitchell) Bonnetplume

Raised by her grandmother, Louisa Choo, Sarah remembers that they hardly ever went to town. Town was visited only at Christmas and Easter. For the rest of the year they lived out on the land in the bush. At that time, families were always out on the land, moving on the mountains. Sarah remembers some years that there was so many berries on the mountains that they were blue with blueberries or red with nakal. In the fall and winter, they travelled the mountains hunting fat caribou. "Oh, we lived

good," exclaims Sarah. "Bone grease, drymeat, cooked caribou head to the fire, we ate good. All we ate was meat. It was hard to get white man food so our diet was only meat."

Sarah remembers that when she was a child, people were changing from the traditional houses made of caribou skin that two families lived in and where a fire could be made in the middle, to new tents with stoves that the people were purchasing in Dawson. Some of