

**BORN:**

*October 18, 1915*

**BIRTHPLACE:**

*Dootat Gwitshik  
(down Husky River)*

**PARENTS:**

*Johnny Kay  
(Kyikavichik) and  
Beatrice Ross*

**GRANDPARENTS:**

*(Maternal) Peter Ross  
and Esther Ross*

**GWICH'IN:**

*Teetl'it Gwich'in*

**MARRIED:**

*Mary Vittrekwa, July  
10, 1939, in Fort  
McPherson*

**CHILDREN:**

*Percy, Joseph, Ellen,  
Bella, Charlie, Johnny,  
Esther (d), Edith Diane,  
Diane Lois, Suzie,  
Maureen, Peter and  
Annie*

Although he went to school in Hay River for three years, it is the lessons that his father and stepmother, Sarah (Wilson), taught him that Peter has used throughout his life.

“I sure learned the bush life. I know that life. They taught me everything I need to know. They taught me how to travel the land, work and survive on the land. They taught me all the skills like how to hunt, how to trap, how to cook for myself, butcher the kill, make drymeat, how to sew my shoes and clothes if I am alone and how to respect the land and animals.”

Most importantly Peter remembers the teaching of always giving a gift to the elders and those in need. “Today I’m too old to work yet somebody is always bringing me fresh meat. Someone brings me some thing good, our traditional food to eat for my family to enjoy like dryfish, drymeat or fish. So my father and my step-mother taught me everything I need to know; to be good to other people and to try and do my best all the time.

“From what they taught me, that’s what I did. And so, my life has been a good one. That’s how I look back on it. The kind of man they expect me to be, someone they could be proud of, someone who would use their skills to provide for his family when I had a family, for a son they would be proud of, that is good and kind, that’s what I try to be all my life.”

# *Peter Kay*

Peter recalls, “All of my life I provided for my family through hunting for caribou, trapping and living out on the land. I was not employed anywhere. I only work out on the land. For many years there was no job for anyone to have in the communities. The only work we knew was out on the land and that’s what we did.

Every year I used to trap. Most of the time I would go up the Peel River. I also trapped in other parts of the country. I hunted for

caribou and also for moose. I sold the pelts that I trapped to the Hudson’s Bay trading stores. Then I got the supplies that we needed.”

Peter has lived most of his life the way his parents did, that is, travelling the land, hunting and trapping. “We were so rich,” he recalls as he remembers how his parents survived on the land, drying meat at kill sites and making dryfish in the summer.