

Note: Highlights show where Margaret has made changes and corrections to the transcript.

Vanessa Smart (01:02):

This is Vanessa Smart interviewing Margaret Gidgup. And [brother] Russell Gidgup [in Preston Beach]. Today's date is , Thursday the 28th May 2020. Margaret, would you be able to just tell us about yourself and your family?

Margaret Gidgup (01:31):

Um well we, our family have a like a traditional Aboriginal name Gidgup. We grew up, my dad took, my dad was taken **to** Bruce Rock when he was a little boy by his parents who, they (his parents) used to live in camps around the upper Guilford area of Perth prior to going up North to get work because the welfare and the police were after all the Aboriginal families. So our family on the Gidgup side, dad's side evaded the welfare because **they** were on the move working all the time. And there were a lot of Wadjula's that helped them as well in that process. So yeah, when dad was very young, he was fortunate enough for his parents had taken him up to the wheat wheat belt and that's where we were all born and raised in the wheat belt.

Margaret Gidgup (02:22):

And we've, we've often wondered where do the Gidgups come from? What does that name mean? Because it's a traditional name and it's never been changed by **Colonisation**, you know, the laws and rules that are applied there. So I started looking into that about 20 something years ago and thinking, I want to find out more about the Gidgup family and being the only girl. And I had eight brothers. That's why our name has lasted, Gidgup name. So it's predominantly been males that have carried the name through **its** so strong. And I think the for that, because when I looked into our family history, we come from a long line of **Maabaan** men, clever men and tricksters so, and that's passed on. Believe it or not, it's passed through the generations. So we still have that in our family if we want it. And it's mainly the brothers, but none of the brothers want to take it on. Having said that, however, I've got one brother who does do some healing stuff, but he hasn't fully taken on the Gidgup **Maabaan** thing. Yes.

Vanessa Smart (03:34):

It's **Maabaan** that you're open to explain today?

Margaret Gidgup (03:37):

You can talk about a little bit. Well, a lot of them, a lot of them are, **are** afraid of it. We're not because we were raised with it, we **were** told the stories, we were told our connection. And I have some really strong photographs of some of the Maabaan Men who were related to my grandfather's father. He was a **Maabaan Man**. And then he's **Brother, which is Johnny** was a Maabaan Man. And then my grandfather, Jim, he had two brothers, Norman and Harold, and they were Maabaan Men and that's our uncles and that's, that was supposed to be passed onto, you know, mine and my brother's generation. And yeah, it's not to say that they don't know it's there because they do get tormented with that. That being around.

Vanessa Smart (04:30):

Sorry to interrupt for people who don't know what Maabaan means. Yeah. What does that mean?

Margaret Gidgup (04:43):

It's a, it's a, it's a clever man. It's a doctor. It's a man of high degree, a healer **and they have the ability to heal**, but also they can do the opposite. But in our family **we were healers, so we were like that**. But the interesting thing about our family, the Gidgup family **and** my mom's father was a **Maabaan Man** too. So we have it both sides, Mum and Dad. So we have the **Littles** and we have the Gidgups. So we have very powerful combination and people often look at me and go, you shouldn't be talking about that. I said, why? It's part of my family and I'm not afraid of it because I grew up with that and I saw things and I know things. I've been told the stories and I've experienced the story. So it does not frighten me, because I respect it.

Margaret Gidgup (05:30):

And I know that you know, that's it's my brother's thing, not mine, but I'm sort of like the big boss in talking about this and getting the brothers to get more involved and make them feel more comfortable, confident and comfortable with it because it's like we were told, Oh yeah, you know, **well** our family was this and that, but we don't talk about it. But I can because it's it's something that if you don't talk about it and let people know, it's forgotten, it's lost. So it's important to know that families that have that in their history, you know, people should know about it. Hmm. We've still got it if, if my brothers want to, but you know, we've, we've, we've lived in, you know, civilization. You know how we were, grew up after the stolen **generations** and

my mum was raised in Roeland's Mission, so she was pretty traumatized by that. So we grew up with that trauma. But we also grew up with the trauma of dad talking about how he would run away from school and he would run into the Bush with his kangaroo, dog and his goat and everything else. Yeah. He had all these pets. He loved them and they used to run with him and soon as a Monarch (Police) come, he was off into the Bush with his goat and his dog and they couldn't catch him. So he seems a bit like that still now still running and hard to catch.

Vanessa Smart (07:03):

Yeah. When was the first time you heard of the history of Wadjemup?

Margaret Gidgup (07:11):

Oh look, I heard about the true full history of Wadjemup back in 1996/7 when I was studying at Curtin Uni and one of our trips, our student excursions was to go over to Wadjemup. So all the students and I, you know, we were, we went over there and we were told the Aboriginal history and perspective, what Wadjemup was, oh my God, I didn't even know that, you know, because we were, we grew up, we were sheltered and we weren't told a lot about the history because our families were living with trauma and fear and a lot of things they didn't talk about. And it was hard to talk about because of what they had happened to them. So I started to understand why some of this history had never been told.

Margaret Gidgup (08:05):

And so, yeah, we've, we've since well since then I've just had this fascination with Wadjemup? And then lo and behold, 20 years ago, I found out about one of my ancestors Cudgel, and his big connection to Rottnest, which made me go, Oh my goodness. So, you know, the men and the young men and the boys that were sent over there and many of them dying. You know, they even haven't really recorded the true number of men and boys that died on that Island. But they didn't record the fact that there were clever men, men of high degree, Maabaan Men that were there and Johnny 'Cudgel' was one of them. Yeah. So there's a big history with Wadjemup.

Vanessa Smart (08:52):

Would you like to tell us a story?

New Speaker (08:54):

Oh look, he, he, yeah. 'Cudgel' as you can see from that picture that I showed you, he loved to paint ships and I think he did three that we know of - in existence. I think the Maritime Museum has them. We'd like to get them, if we can, you know, try and get that as we are the family, and we should have them, you know, but you know, I'll approach them and ask them about it, but they said they don't know where they are, but every now and then they emerge and they're on display, you know, so it's really weird. But anyway, he knows how to paint and some people say who taught him? and I don't know if anybody taught him. I know that he would have had access to things on Wadjemup because he had a good relationship with one of the wardens on the Island. I don't know who that was? I want to find out a little bit more. But he had a good relationship with one of the bosses on the Island who loved painting.

Margaret Gidgup (09:50):

So he may have watched and learned from that because, and the reason I say that is my family, we're all artists, but none of us have been to Uni to learn how to paint. We just paint, you know, I've got that painting there and I've got paintings in my room and I'm doing one over there. I haven't finished it yet that's his son, did that, Ashley. the one over on the left, I'm doing that one, trying to finish that when I've got time - and then I've got some from my brother. Do you want to get them to out of my room? Guy, my brother who's in jail and you know, it's a bit of a sad history behind him. He didn't know he could paint until he went to prison. And when he started to paint, he realized he had this gift.

Margaret Gidgup (10:36):

And this is two of his paintings that's ['Lionel Rose'] and that 'Spirits of Australia'. And he also did that one over there for me and my family. But Oh look, he's got so many paintings. But the strange thing about it is he calls himself the Crow and we don't know why. And when we looked into our history, and I, you know, I went and met Ken MacIntyre over 20 years ago and we had a chance meeting at some place that I was working on. He asked me who I was and I said, I'm Margaret. He says, well, what's your surname? I said, I'm a Gidgup. You're a Gidgup? Are you a real one? I said, yes, I'm a real Gidgup. Kensaid, "I have to talk to you". So that started a relationship with Ken and we found out more about Johnny 'Cudgel' Gidgup that he wanted to tell us. He's been chasing our family for years and we've never really thought about looking into it.

Margaret Gidgup (11:38):

I'm the one that's basically pushed my family into it to find out and keep his story alive, but also the significance of the things that he did particularly on Cottesloe Beach. And that connection between Wadjemup and Cottesloe. And you know, everywhere we go, we hear stories. People tell us stories. You know, Corrie Bodney would talk about Cudgel and some of the people there are, most of them are passed on now. He would talk about him coming over to Cottesloe and in the shape of a Crow. And so there then came that phrase, 'The Run of the Wardung'. And to that he really had got my interest, you know, and I've thought about my brother, Oh my goodness. He calls himself the Crow. How weird is that? Of all the names. Why'd he pick that? And I often think he must get a visit from the Crow because my dad gets a visit from a Crow, a very big one.

Margaret Gidgup (12:35):

Ken Macintyre gets visits from a crow since he started talking to our family. And every time we see one, we sort of like always take notice of what it's doing because yeah, it's a very, very powerful bird. You know, it just gives me that, Oh, when I see when I go, Ooh, look at that Crow and I'll just try and, you know, observe what he's doing. Cause it means something. Yeah. So yeah, we've heard stories of Cudgel and one of the stories that was told, and it's in this thing that Ken McIntyre wrote about Cudgel leaving, Wadjemup to visit, Mudurup Rocks. And of course the history books say that he never left the Island. So that's not true. However, we know that that it is true because we know that Aboriginal people metamorph and we've seen evidence of it. Speaker 1 (13:31):

My brother's seen evidence of metamorphing. My son has seen evidence of, he's seen it with his own eyes. Metamorphing, my brother xxxxx has seen metamorphing. He didn't believe, he doesn't believe it until he saw something. That's usually what happens in some families. You don't believe it until you see it.

Vanessa Smart (13:50):

That article that you were referring to, it explained that Cudgel was down in Albany. He was, he said he was in Albany and then moved up.

Margaret Gidgup (14:01):

No, I think that you have to go into, and there's a lot of things to look at. There's a lot of information you need to look at to prove all the stuff that you're able to collect. And I think if you listen to one source who wasn't always accurate and who didn't write things accurately as it should have been, which makes it hard for us to trace.

Margaret Gidgup (14:25):

But what I am gathering is that there were two people and when Johnny Cudgel was born, his mother, I believe, comes from Esperance. But I think his father is from up here and, and, and if you're, if you're born into a Maabaan Family, you travel because that's the nature of your business. You know, you're in demand. People need you to help here and there. And if you're a very powerful one. So I think, and the ability to travel as an animal as well that goes on all the time. And it's not just here in, in our family's history, but I've seen it in other cultures in the Eastern Goldfields in the Kimberleys, you know, the travelling, the Astral travel, the moving, the invisible moving. I've, I've experienced all that in my work and travels.

Vanessa Smart (15:22):

This is a story that you're sharing of Cudgel is actually similar through a lot of cultures there.

Margaret Gidgup (15:30):

Even the Torres Strait Islanders have it. They didn't know that we have that too. So yeah, I met a Torres Strait Islander girl, my son's girlfriend here (WA) and she experienced our family Aboriginal doctor from Jigalong way and he has done healing in our family too. My brothers, they don't really want to take that on. So we, we have this friend and he comes whenever he's in Perth, we will go and see him. I just don't think there is anyone in our family who wants to say, Yes I will take that over for you. We'll do that right now. So it's there, but it's just not something they want to tap into. I think that's sad.

Vanessa Smart (16:18):

What, what do you, what is it that, what do you think it's sad?

Margaret Gidgup (16:20):

I think there's fear of what you have to go through from their perspective. Do you think it might be for you or not?

Russell Gidgup (16:33):

It'd be too hard for me now.
Margaret Gidgup (16:33):

Margaret Gidgup

So your life has to change. Yeah. It's like a sacrifice.
Russell Gidgup Granddad was, he was, yeah.
Margaret Gidgup

He, he sacrificed. That's my mom's dad. He was one too. We grew up with that. All of that. Yeah. Very powerful. And the thing about our family is we don't have any fear. We don't have fear, because, you know, I've worked in traditional Aboriginal country in the central desert and I've worked right through the Kimberley's, right through the Pilbara in the Southwest. And I've always travelled on my own. And people go, what the hell's going on with you? Are you not scared? And I'm like, no, but it doesn't affect me.
Margaret Gidgup

"I've always felt that I was protected and looked after. And I've seen signs of that when I've gone into traditional and semi traditional country. And I've actually been told by a traditional Ngangkari in the central desert. He threatened me because I did his pay wrong and he threatened me, but then he came back and he apologized because he said, you've got something that I've got, very powerful person and it's all around you. So when he said that I knew what he was talking about. So it's very powerful, very powerful. Yeah. No. Benny Benny, his name was, he was the one in the central desert. He took the last desert people, from the desert. They were taken to Papunya and then they were taken from there and developed their own community called Kintore (because they got introduced to alcohol they were starting to kill one another and dying from this stuff. So he (Benny) led them back into the desert".
Vanessa Smart

Leading up to Cudgel being on Rottnest. What's the story of him going to Rottnest?
Margaret Gidgup

Well, he was down in Albany at the time. He he actually worked for the Hassell family who lived in Albany and they're still there and got their farm since the 1800s, when he was about maybe, I don't know he was in his middle 30s I think. When, the, the Hassell guy, and I don't know his first name, but he, lost some livestock and he wanted to know if there was someone out there that could get them back and 'Cudgel' volunteered to get them back because there was a reward and he would do it for the reward. So he went and got the livestock back, I don't know, might've been about six, seven or eight, I don't know whether it was sheep or whatever it was, but he went and got them back and took them to Hassell and instead of Hassell, giving him the reward, he told him to get off his property and starting shooting at him. So he had to run off. So later on, as is with the Aboriginal way payback, so he goes back and he kills the livestock and he got imprisoned for that. And I think he was held down in Albany and I'm not sure, can't remember the name of the prison? Yeah, the prison of Albany. What was it, that Breaksea Island off the coast of Albany, he was imprisoned there, but he escaped from it. And so the police, they hunted him and they got him and that's when they sent him to Rottnest. So he was in Rottnest for how long? My goodness, I think he was there for a long time and I'm not sure but I think it was fourteen years?
Margaret Gidgup

But so while he was over on Rottnest, he would visit Mudurup Rocks. When people needed help or there was starvation, he knew things because you know, he had a Crow and that Crow would travel for him.
Vanessa Smart

And for the record Mudurup Rocks is?
Margaret Gidgup

Um where you, when you go to, so there's the Indiana Tea House and next door to this Cottlesloe Surf Club. Below that is Mudurup rocks. I've got a photo of it? There's a good one there. That's a view from Indiana Tea house, but there is an up to date one there.
Margaret Gidgup

Might be in that part should have been a, I'm sure they will say Hey. Right, so that's . Now that's the Groyne. Yeah, it's interesting. You know it's really interesting because I mean you'd look at that, it doesn't look like that now, because they (Local Govt) years ago tried to detonate the

bloody thing. They wanted to get rid of it and I think that Twiggy forest is trying to do that right now. I think he wants to blow the bloody thing up and he wants to build some big resorts in there. But this is why we're really pushing to get our tours started so that we can stop that because it is heritage listed, but it's also protected under the fisheries and wildlife Act. Because what Cudgel did when he went over to Mudurup, he would do ceremonies in the cave and there was a bit of beach sand at the time he was flying over there **he would land**, you know, on the beach area. And people knew he was **there** because **they'd see the camp fire smoke when** he would do his ceremony. He would make it rain and bring the fish to the shore. So Aboriginal people could just catch them really easy, probably using a Gidgie (that's named after us). And so yeah, catching all the fish. And you know what, that reef today is very rare. It's a very rare reef because it has that abundance of fish there and the Marine life under it. And not a lot of people know about that, huh?

Margaret Gidgup

Yeah. On one side, the South side, the surfers, yeah, they're surfing over that side. And at the moment they're building a big walkway in Cottesloe and we're **going to** take advantage of that because that's where I want to start the tour. Talking about the rock.

Russell Gidgup

He was a media star.

Margaret Gidgup

Oh, look. Yeah, no, he was well known. This is why we know a lot about him because he was written about a lot and I think that **he was well respected, Yeah**. He just, well, it's a bit like us isn't it? Grew up with wadjulas too and spoke good English. Could read and write, you know, like the times we grew up in **we all had a good education.**

Vanessa Smart

So when he was on Rotto, on Wadjemup was that like what year?

Margaret Gidgup

Well, it was in the 1890s, I think.

Russell Gidgup

1892.

Margaret Gidgup

He was actually in his 30s when he went to Wadjemup. But he was a clever kid, which led into being a clever man.

Russell Gidgup

He was about 34?

Margaret Gidgup

So at 34 years, he was sent to Rottneest. If he was there for 14 years, apparently he gets out in 1917. How many years is that?

Vanessa Smart

Longer.

Margaret Gidgup

Yeah. And then what's interesting about that, when he gets off, out of Rottneest, he goes to Moore river and he's one of the black trackers on Moore river before he dies. And I don't know about what he died of or how he died, but he died young. **He would have been 55 or something, you know.**

Russell Gidgup

He was a black bushranger

Margaret Gidgup

Well they liken him to an Aboriginal Ned Kelly, but one thing he never did...he never killed anyone. He never killed anybody. Yeah.

Vanessa Smart

Cause you said like he'd be on Rotto and then he would fly to Mudurup to help people.

Margaret Gidgup

He had a responsibility to help his people. And I think that's where the crow comes into it. The crow **was** a messenger. And I think when the crow would go to him, he would know things. He would know what was happening on the mainland. And then when it was time for him to fly over,

he would fly over because he probably had relatives living on the, in the camps. And there were a lot of camps around Swanbourne and Cottesloe, and it's interesting because not far from Mudurup rocks. And I think going up toward the Victoria train station, probably somewhere near the golf course...

Speaker 1

Fanny Balbuk had a camp and her son's name is Jimmy Gidgup. And not a lot of people know that either it's **why you have got to do your own research**. So, you know, I see pictures of Fanny and I recognize her. We've got a big photo of her at Curtin Uni and I know her because she dressed in a particular way. I thought, Oh, that's Fanny there. And but she used to write to her son, he used to go down to Albany a lot. So I don't know if he was a **Maabaan Man** too, but you know, they traveled around a lot because **they had** these connections between the country and there was this intermarriage..marrying from one country to another. **So Jimmy, the son was a Gidgup and she camped, yeah, she did camp not far from Cottesloe Beach. And I kind of think maybe he was getting something from Cudgel, but it's interesting, I don't know a lot about Jimmy, like to find out a bit more, but it's a very interesting history.**

Vanessa Smart

Have you been on the Island?

Margaret Gidgup

I have once. I don't want to go back. I feel, I feel despair, you know, and I feel a lot of hurt. I went to the Roundhouse [Fremantle] and I walked into the first cell and I nearly fell on my knees, so I had to get out because I couldn't breathe. I just think that's probably where Cudgel was, you know, and when they took **him** over to Rottnest so I felt that spirit and it was very despairing.

Vanessa Smart

And yourself Russell?

Margaret Gidgup

Oh, it'd be horrible.

Russell Gidgup

Yeah. Yeah. I've only been once. Yeah.

Margaret Gidgup

He didn't like that and we don't, even our family today, but we have to live with that and it's hard to have this inheritance and knowledge and, but people are saying, Oh, you have to live like this, you must be like this. And we know something else. How do you share that with people? You know? So we want to share it in a way that is not going to make people afraid with our tour and to tell them about Cudgel and why that place is so important now. Right now.

Margaret Gidgup

Well I know that he went into a cave. We had an experience down there with my dad and the two crows that came there. Ken McEntire **saw it** as well. And one of the crows went into the cave and the other one was a lookout. He was looking out for him and we were just like spinning out about that. We **were** like, "Oh my goodness, can you feel the presence of Cudgel"? "That's my Crow now". So people all trying to claim that Crow. But then Ken Macintyre said "this is this my crow now you Gidgups just lost the Crow". It was funny that, because it follows him too. So he had an experience with the Crow. Yeah. And my Dad **has had** a lot of experiences with the Crow.

Vanessa Smart

And still to this day?

Margaret Gidgup

To this day, **the Crow** seems to hang around him. You know, I even filmed it and I lost that film cause of my mobile, I had a mobile phone and I took a video of my dad in my backyard in Leda and he had this, he was reading it and he was getting really emotional when he's reading, and he's looking at the photo **of 'Cudgel', the photo, because I've got a brother who is a dead** ringer to Cudgel. Yeah, I've got a brother who looks just like 'Cudgel' and my dad's looking at it at my home and he's sitting there getting real emotional and this bloody Crow came into the backyard and started yelling and it flew over his head. He said, "Oh my God, I know you're there mate". And it's landed on the tree next minute "caw" and he's going, "Oh my goodness, this is a spinout cause this Crow was really spinning me out. So yeah, it was just letting him know. Yeah, yeah. With Ken. Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, we have **these** strange experiences. And this is with Ken as well.

He's experienced it **too**. Yeah. Yeah. It's kind of down in that area. Mm. Mm. So, yeah, it's very interesting. It's very strong. **Xxxxxxx.**

Margaret Gidgup

I've seen the Crow. Yeah. I've had I've seen the Crow around and I've always taken notice of it. And it's just sort of something that, it gets stronger when you see things and you think, Oh, I wonder what that means. And the Cottosloe one and my dad. So when we saw the crow when I was filming, that was really a spinout that, so I do see things, even though you know our family, it's mainly **the Gidgup men**. I'd like to know more about our history to find out if there were women that were doing it because there are women doctors and healers and they're very strong as well. It'd be interesting to find that out.

Vanessa Smart

People who, with our exhibitions **there** is going to be people here who view it, who don't know Aboriginal culture, Nyoongar culture. Yeah, so when it comes to that connection to land, would you like to explain that?

Margaret Gidgup

I could, yes. Well, we have a very strong connection now to what we know all about Cudgel. We have a strong connection and there's, the strange thing is it is a, it is a spiritual connection and you feel it. Because when I go into other country, I feel something, whether that's, it's not about that country belonging to me, it's about whether I should be there or not and the signs that I'm given.

Margaret Gidgup

So I feel that when I go to other country always there's always something will come, something will, a barrier, something will tell me you can't go any further. And then there'll be a sound and I have to leave. So I get all those messages. And it's like when we, when I left Bruce Rock and I came to live in Perth, I never, I used to think about where do the Gidgups come from, but I've never felt that we are connected to Esperance. I don't have a connection to Esperance and I've been there. My soul, I don't feel a connection there. However, when I travel around Perth, I feel very connected in the upper Guilford area. There's just things that make me feel like this is home, you know? And I don't know **whether** the brothers feel that. Yeah, there was history there.

Vanessa Smart

When it comes to, you know, how we had a yarn about the exhibition like 'always was, always will be'. What does always was always will be mean to you.

Margaret Gidgup

What it means to me is this is our country, this is our history, this is our culture and that will never change. And it doesn't matter what, you know, colonisation does. If they destroy the land and they get rid of those sacred sites, that's going to be devastating for Aboriginal people. And I'm starting to see that now. So it's very important to me that we bring these stories and the history alive and keep it going. Because if we let it go, people think there's nothing there. There's no culture, there's nothing, there's no customs or anything that people even know about. That's what they want us to believe. So it's okay for governments and you know, corporations to blow up and bulldoze those sites that exist. I know I've seen some devastating things happen in the last 10 years.

Margaret Gidgup (

You know, the airport, one of the most sacred areas in Perth. And look what they did with the freeway **to** the airport. Goodness me, there's one big major site and that's Kings Park. Oh my goodness. But Fiona Stanley, the Beelair was also a really important site. All these places are being destroyed and built on and that's why, yeah, you know, they're destroying it. But I don't know what we're going to do when it's all gone cause it looks like that's what's going to happen.

Well we want to save Mudurup Rocks and it's very important.

Vanessa Smart

Do you think it's changed, you know, that when I say changed, like that there's more people like yourselves that are stepping up to initiate change.

So we have to protect what's ours, what's always been there. We need to protect that and try and prevent that from being destroyed. So I've got to tell this story and share that with the world.

Vanessa Smart

Russell, what does always was always will be mean to you.

Russell Gidgup

Same thing Margaret said, I don't know how to explain it, but the country was, and it still is. Yeah. It's, I don't care what they say belongs to us. That's will always be ours. I'm the one who started that 'stand up and be counted' logo on Facebook. I got up and stated that years ago and two years ago, now they're using it all over. That's when I'd talk about countries and you know, that we got to stand and be counted and start trying to do something about what's going on. It's just bad. Pretty soon we won't even be able to hunt. Nothing. Sold the land for \$1.3 billion. We're not even allowed to go hunting there without permission.

Margaret Gidgup

That's devastating.

Russell Gidgup And I used to love doing, mine, always hunt, all of my life. Now I can't do anything. And that always was always will be starting to slowly fade away.

Vanessa Smart What would you like to see change?

Russell Gidgup Everything. Government

Margaret Gidgup Well, we need a leader. We need more than one. We need more than one because one can't do it. You know when you're one against an army, what can you do? You have to have an army. So we need more than one Aboriginal leader, men and women that are on the same page that aren't in it for the money because I think everyone can see what's happening and what's going to happen. So we need people to stand up and be counted now and start fighting because this is serious, you know,

We were talking about that responsibility to preserve.

Margaret Gidgup

"It is a big responsibility. It's part of who we are as Aboriginal people". People say, "Oh you know, but you're not real Aboriginal. You're not this and your not all that". "But we are. We still are because we have that spiritual connection and we still, you know, we might live like white people might think we're living like them, but we still think traditionally, you know what I'm saying? It's very, it's, it's hard to explain that. We still think traditionally we might not live it, but we think it so you can't explain this to non-Aboriginal people who don't value land. They don't have a spiritual connection to it because they don't even come from here of course, because they don't have a spiritual connection or you know, we've been here over 60,000 years. It could even be longer".

Russell Gidgup

80 [thousand] plus

Margaret Gidgup

Yeah. And there's all kinds of things that they're trying to say, but we came from somewhere else and they're trying to prove it, but they're finding more and more evidence that goes back probably to more than 80,000 years.

Vanessa Smart:

Well there's evidence that that's found on Wadjemup. Yes. There's Chert artefacts. Yes. yeah.

Margaret Gidgup

The interesting thing about Wadjemup too, is that Aboriginal people prior to it being made a prison, they would've walked across to Wadjemup from Garden Island because there's rocks and you know, tide and all that stuff. But at one point they would have been able to walk across there. So it's interesting, you know, there would be a lot of evidence on Rottneest Island about how long ago people were there. You know what I mean? Artefacts have been found there.

Vanessa Smart

Well that's a wonderful thing. There's been artefacts found on garden Island.

Margaret Gidgup

It's a connection. Wow. It's powerful, isn't it? Well, I believe, I believe it's the Crow, but you tell people things like that and they don't believe you. Yeah. We see, we see, we kind of know what he would have done because of our granddad, my mum's dad and things he did. So we know that

he astral travelled. We know that he yeah, we know that he would go, he would travel. And then when he got to the place where he wanted to be, he would change into his human form and he'd do his ceremony and then he would disappear. But he never left his hometown. And that I think is what happened with Cudgel. He would travel and it possibly could have been at nighttime that he would travel. So, you know, really when checking on him, they saw him asleep there, of course he was asleep, but he was also traveling and he would land and that's where the crow comes in. He would land and do his ceremony and he'd go back. And nobody knew he was gone. So it's kind of like that, you know, which other, other clever people do clever things. Oh yeah. Yes.

Vanessa Smart

Is there anything else that you'd like to add or you think needs to be told?

Margaret Gidgup

Well, I just think that **this is** what needs to be told that **this is about 'Cudgel'** and what Cudgel did it, it's kind of been passed down in the family. So Cudgel was a brother to George, who was my Grandfather's Father. My grandfather James Gidgup had two brothers Harold and Norman who were also Maabaan Men.