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BELOW.

Victoria: April 6, 1984, I'm interviewing Evelyn Whiteford at
Scott, Saskatchewan. Where were you born, Evelyn?

Evelyn: Lac Pelletier.

Victoria: And did you live on a homestead there or did you have
any land at all?

Evelyn: Yes, my dad had a quarter of land there.

Victoria: Was it homestead?

Evelyn: Homestead, yes.

Victoria: And how long did you live there?

Evelyn: Well, I was 3 years old when we left Lac Pelletier, 1917.

Victoria: And where did you move to after that?

Evelyn: We moved to Turtle Lake.

Victoria: And what... did you buy land there, or did you have scrip or...?

Evelyn: No. No, we just moved right in there because there was nobody living around there. We just build houses there and that's where we stayed as us kids were growing up.

Victoria: Was it right in the town of Turtle Lake?

Evelyn: No, right in Turtle lake, right along the lake, quarter of a mile from the lake.

Victoria: Was it government-owned land?

Evelyn: Yes. It would be government-owned land.

Victoria: Would that be sort of like road allowance?

Evelyn: No, it wasn't a road allowance. It was just land, because there was nobody ever on there.

Victoria: Oh, so there was nobody that even settled it yet at all?

Evelyn: No, no.

Victoria: So you could just move in and...

Evelyn: We just moved in and built a house there and that's where we lived. Then the rest of the other half-breeds moved in there, like George Pritchard and them, Sangretts, Welshes, Ouellettes.

Victoria: About where all did the rest of them come from? Where had they been living before, did you know?

Evelyn: I think George Pritchard... like Sam Pritchard came from Waseca at the time and moved there. And Parenteous came from Montana. And Ouellettes, they came from Montana at that time too.

Victoria: So a lot of them had come from the States.

Evelyn: It was quite a big settlement there at that time.

Victoria: Mostly Metis people?

Evelyn: Mostly. Then the white people came later and there was about five families of them that lived there. And they lived there, well, finally they bought land, I guess, there, but they came and lived the same as we did. They just moved in and lived there at that time. So all we did was to... My mom and dad done fishing; then a guy came and set up a store there and he bought fish and that's the way we made our living.

Victoria: What did they do with the fish? Was it to sell?

Evelyn: They sell it, yeah. Like he bought the fish and then they... he'd haul it away from there and sell it.

Victoria: Is that what you dad done for a living?

Evelyn: Yes.

Victoria: What kind of houses did you have when... like you said you built houses there, what type of houses were they?

Evelyn: Logs, log houses. And the roofs were made out of logs and put hay on top and then put dirt so the dirt would... put the hay in between so the dirt wouldn't go through... and that was our roof.

Victoria: So it was sort of like a sod roof type of thing.

Evelyn: Yes. And then for a floor, to start with we just had the dirt floor, and they put water on it so it got good and hard. Then you wouldn't have to... when you sweep you throw a little bit of water and the dust didn't fly up.

Victoria: What did you use to heat the house with?

Evelyn: Just wood cook stove and a heater.

Victoria: Was there electricity or running water?

Evelyn: No electricity, no water, no.

Victoria: About how many rooms were in the houses?

Evelyn: Mostly two and three, big rooms. It's mostly what...

Victoria: So they were a fair-sized house, were they?

Evelyn: They were quite big houses, yes.

Victoria: What was your furniture like? Was it boughten or was it handmade?

Evelyn: No, they were all handmade. The beds were made out of trees that was stripped with the axe and then they were

nailed together. And then they'd get canvas and they'd fill that up with hay and that was our mattresses. That's mostly, people, is what they used.

Victoria: How did they make the table and chairs?

Evelyn: They'd cut the same thing. They use a axe and they'd cut 'em down just like they were making lumber, eh, cut 'em in squares and nail 'em together. And benches, was no chairs then; all we had was big long benches, big long tables and the benches come on each side.

Victoria: So it was a community, a Metis community in that until the white people moved in. About how many years after the Metis lived there did the white people come?

Evelyn: They came there about two years after the Metis moved, but not right where the Metis were living. The Metis were living more together and the white people more went along the lake and built houses, same as we did. They lived the same as we did. They build log houses too.

Victoria: Was their furniture about the same as what yours was?

Evelyn: Their furniture would be about the same. Some people brought some furniture from where they came from.

Victoria: How did they come, do you remember? Would they have come with, did they have cars or...?

Evelyn: No, they just come with horse, wagon and horses. That's the way they came, too, the same as the way we went in there.

Victoria: Was there any, what people call road allowance people, around where you settled there?

Evelyn: Not at the time that I know of. It was just land that we just went and built there and nobody said anything. We lived there for quite a few years.

Victoria: Do you know what they call road allowance people?

Evelyn: Well, I have an idea, yes, what is road allowance and people would move in there. And if that road was never was built, well, they could never chase you out of there, you could stay there as long as you want -- which it can be built.

Victoria: Did you have chores that you had to do when you were living at home? What type of work did you have to do when...?

Evelyn: Well, when we were growing up we mostly do the housework, because my mother worked a lot outside, like fishing and that, and cutting logs, and... So most of us kids done the housework because there was nothing else. We didn't have cattle or nothing, just horses. And we'd go and we'd pick

berries, all of us kids, and mother would do the canning. And that's about all we did when we were kids when we were living in the north.

Victoria: And how many head of horses did you have, do you remember?

Evelyn: Oh, most the time we only had four head of horses, two teams, two wagons.

Victoria: And you went berry picking. And did you go camping and hunting together?

Evelyn: Yes. Yes, we'd all go and camp and my dad would go and hunt. People didn't bother you at that time. You can go and kill any meat. We never had to buy any meat.

Victoria: Never had to hide it?

Evelyn: We never had to hide it, because nobody bother you.

Victoria: Do you know of anybody that done any storytelling back in those days? Was there someone that you knew that told stories, you know, that was a good entertainer?

Evelyn: Well yes, Mrs. Briere. The Brieres had moved there too. Now Mrs. Briere used to get all the kids together in one house and she'd tell these stories years ago, and you could hear a pin drop because the kids sat still and listened to all those stories. And then at night she'd get all the kids -- there was no churches there or anything -- and she'd have catechism. And once a week we'd all go to her house and go to this catechism she'd have there for us. But to go to church anyplace, there was no churches at all at that time, because Livelong wasn't nothing there and Glaslyn wasn't there that time, just later on, you know, when we were growing up. Then, at the end, we used to come south and pick stones so that we buy enough groceries to last for the winter and go back there again every fall.

Victoria: So your house was empty in...

Evelyn: Oh yeah, we'd leave it empty and nobody bothered anything. The house was there, and if it rained sometimes the mud -- it was plastered with mud -- and if the mud come down, falls off of that walls, then they make a big fire and boil water there and dig some dirt and cut up some hay, and you put that hay, you mix it with your mud and then you plaster that house with that again. So the houses were awfully warm those days because they were plastered real good. We used to dig -- there was white dirt like calcimine at that time, certain places you could find that -- and they dig that and that's what they done the house inside with. It was just as smooth as this and it was whitewashed, and it was as white as it could be.

Victoria: It was nice I guess, eh.

Evelyn: So it didn't cost anything to make that house look clean.

Victoria: This lady that you said taught the catechism and that, did... what other kind of stories... can you remember some of the stories that she told you, what they were about?

Evelyn: Well, really, I don't. I can't really remember what she tell us about, because I forget them. I know I used to remember for a long time but now I forget. But she used to tell us about these people that turn into animals, you know. She knew a girl that lived beside her and she'd go out at night, and finally they decide to watch what was she doing going out at night, and they finally... Her and her old man would look out the window and they saw her rolled over in the ground and here was a big grey horse running away from there.

Victoria: So it was kind of scarey type at the same time, eh?

Evelyn: Yeah, kind of scarey, eh. And then they said they'd sit there and watch till towards morning. And they could see this white horse coming again and she'd roll there, went in the house.

Victoria: I'm just wondering, you know, what the purpose was. Maybe it was just to...

Evelyn: And they made us believe that, you know. We really believed that was true, because...

Victoria: Would it be because they were trying to make you think that there were spirits in people?

Evelyn: That's what they were doing. You know, when we got older then we said, well now, why do these old people tell us these things, make us believe these things which wasn't so? But there was nothing...

Victoria: Did you do that to your children when they were growing up?

Evelyn: Oh yes, yes, me and my sister Lucy, we'd get the kids... my sister Lucy especially, she'd get all of them down on the floor, spread blankets on the floor, and she'd get all these kids in there and they wouldn't even say a word, and she'd start telling them all this about these stories.

Victoria: So actually you passed down these stories then, eh?

Evelyn: To tell it to you in Cree it would sound better, eh, because this was told in Cree. And like you say, when you talk about Pat and Mike, you know, well that was (Cree) and (Cree),

you see.

Victoria: Oh, I see.

Evelyn: So these were all told in Cree, in Cree words. But kids would sit there for hours and listen to these. Even when we were grown up, when we were married already, this old lady Breyer still told us those stories up at Fairholme.

Victoria: When you were young and, you know, you thought about family, like who was your family? Did it include your aunts and uncles and your cousins, that type of thing? Were they a close bunch?

Evelyn: Pretty close, yes. It was pretty close. Because when I remember from the time... when I can remember everything from the time I was 3 years old. When we moved from one place

to Turtle Lake, I can remember that just like I do now today. That's how long I can remember. Some things, maybe, I thought, "Well, where did that happen?" Then I'd ask my brother Dave, "Now where did that happen, brother Dave?" He said, "There." You know, he'd tell me where it happened. But I still, I remember from that time.

Victoria: Did your grandparents live where your family did?

Evelyn: Yes, yes. Me and my youngest brother stayed with our grandparents pretty well all the time till we were grown up.

Victoria: Which grandparents would that be?

Evelyn: That's on my mother's side.

Victoria: Your mom's mother and dad, eh.

Evelyn: Yes. My grandmother, she died in 1925, and from there on, well, I went home and stayed at home then.

Victoria: Where did... they lived at Turtle Lake?

Evelyn: Turtle Lake, yes, they lived there too.

Victoria: What was their last names?

Evelyn: Trottier.

Victoria: They would be Trottier too, eh?

Evelyn: Yes.

Victoria: Did you have anyone, like a member of your family, an aunt or an uncle or maybe a grandparent, who you really thought a lot of, who was very special to you? You know, more special than the other ones.

Evelyn: Well, our grandmother was really special to us, my mother's mother. She was really special.

Victoria: Why was she...?

Evelyn: Because, I guess, we were more close to her. She lived close to us all the time. In my dad's side, my grandmother I just remember when we left Lac Pelletier and never got to see her very much. But my grandmother and grandfather on my mother's side, they lived with us right along till they died. I think that's why they were more special, because we were with them all the time.

Victoria: Was there very many things... like you said your father done fishing for a living, was there other jobs that he did to, you know, to earn a living?

Evelyn: Well, at one time he went to Buffalo Narrows. They went and worked with the fishing outfit up there for the winter. That's about the only thing that they ever did. And later on then, they start cutting posts. They could sell posts and they could sell cordwood and this is all they did.

Victoria: And he hunted for his own game...

Evelyn: Yes.

Victoria: Did you grow a garden when you were growing up?

Evelyn: No, not when we were kids at all, we never did. In the fall when we'd go back to settle down for the winter, there was a big gardener right close to where we settled down. And we'd stop and buy all our garden stuff there, our potatoes and stuff, and then we went on home and kept those there.

Victoria: How did you keep your vegetables?

Evelyn: Well, mostly canned, because we had no electricity. You didn't have fridges or deep freeze or anything, so everything was canned.

Victoria: How about your potatoes?

Evelyn: Potatoes, they kept really good in a dirt cellar. We just had a dirt cellar; we didn't have no basements.

Victoria: Where would the cellar be?

Evelyn: You just had a hole cut in the floor and dig a big hole, a square one, and that's where we put all our stuff, and partitioned it off for to put your potatoes in and they kept there for the winter.

Victoria: You say you picked berries and that.

Evelyn: Yes. And those days you could... sugar, there was lots of sugar but you couldn't afford to buy sugar, so most of the stuff we canned we canned it without sugar but it kept real good. We'd pick rhubarb, and we'd get a stick and we'd pound it down in a crock, and it got it's own juice. And then we'd fill our sealers with that, pack it right down so it's got its own juice there, and just seal 'em -- it's just like getting 'em out of the garden, after you get them out of the garden.

Victoria: And your meat, how did you manage to keep your meat?

Evelyn: Well, our meat, as I say we canned it. We canned our meat. We canned pretty well everything. If we want fresh meat we just go to the bush and go and shoot partridge, or go and get a deer. Nobody ever said nothing, because even the white people done that because there was nobody there to come and tell you, well, you done this, you know.

Victoria: How about did you dry any meat at all?

Evelyn: Yes, mostly if we didn't can it, it was mostly dry meat. You buy a whole...

Victoria: How did you dry it?

Evelyn: You... We used to buy a beef and my dad would make a... just like a clothes rack you would make, sticks tied all along in there. And then my mom would slice all this meat. She just had a great big... just like blankets. And then you put salt and pepper on it. You hang it over these trees there. Then you make a big fire underneath there, but you don't let the fire burn. It's just the smoke and you smoke it. And it takes about three days, four days, and your meat is all ready to go. And put it in a flour sack and tie the flour sack up and that's it. That meat is going to keep there all summer. We would never have to worry about it.

Victoria: Did you do any chokecherries? Did you make pemmican when you were young?

Evelyn: A lot, yeah, a lot of that.

Victoria: How did you do it? Did you... was it... did you just dry the chokecherries or did you mix it with the meat?

Evelyn: No. You dry your chokecherries; you dry them out. We dry 'em different now than we did in those days. We'd put 'em out and we'd make it just like a stook, as you were stooking sheaves and that. And you just take 'em with your hands and you stook 'em about two inches apart. Then they get good and dry and then you put 'em in a bag. So whenever you wanted pemmican, well, they'd have a canvas bag, and they would put this meat in there, and you hit it with a stick until it's really fine. Then you mix your berries in there and your sugar and there's your pemmican.

Victoria: And you put a little flour in too?

Evelyn: No, not in pemmican. To cook chokecherries like that...

Victoria: Oh yeah. That's when you're cooking them, right?

Evelyn: You're cooking chokecherries, you put them in a frying pan. You put a bit of sugar and you put a bit of lard in there and just let them boil. And after they boil you thicken them with flour.

Victoria: Yeah. I knew there was two different ways that they used to do it.

Evelyn: Yes.

Victoria: Can you ever remember a time when your dad didn't work at all or wasn't working? Like, was there ever a time when things were really poor for your family, like there was no income coming in and things were pretty bad?

Evelyn: Yeah. It was pretty bad, but we never did go hungry. We always had flour and we always managed to get meat and that.

Victoria: Where did they get the flour from then? Did you have to buy it in the stores?

Evelyn: You had to buy it in the store. There was Turtleford. That was the closest town there was there at that time. So they'd get flour from there and haul it.

Victoria: So then he was always... there was always somehow that you managed to have, you know, enough to eat and that.

Evelyn: Yes. Yeah. We always managed that.

Victoria: What did other people in your community, like the other Metis people, do? What did they do, you know, for a living?

Evelyn: They done the same thing as we did. Everybody done pretty well everything the same.

Victoria: There was no steady jobs in the...

Evelyn: No, no steady jobs.

Victoria: So it was more like seasonal work all the time, eh?

Evelyn: Yes, mostly, yes. Just in the winter was fishing.

Victoria: What was your first paying job, the job you went to that you got paid money for.

Evelyn: My first paying job -- in 1927 I worked... We moved down south here and we lived in what they call Baljennie now. And there was a farmer lived just on the outskirts of the bush there. I came and worked for them for the summer, I worked there. I got 50 cents a day and I walked four miles every morning and every night I walked home. And I worked there all summer for 50 cents a day.

Victoria: Was that considered good wages back in those days?

Evelyn: Oh! you could buy more with that 50 cents what you can do today for \$10.

Victoria: How old were you then?

Evelyn: I was 15. That was my first job.

Victoria: What did you do after that? What are some of the other... some work that you've done since that first job?

Evelyn: Well, that's when I went to work on the farm. I worked on the farm, I looked after five kids and I got \$8 a month. Then the next farm I work for, at Maymont, I got \$12 a month, but I fed 70 pigs and I looked after 4 children and I milked 5 cows, and I worked there all summer. And I got \$12 a month, and I bought more out of the \$12 than I would today for \$100.

Victoria: Was these jobs seasonal? Did you stay for a varied length of time at each one?

Evelyn: No, it was just mostly for the summer because Mom always told me, "Well, it's time to come home. You come home," and that was it. We were told to come home, well, we went home. That was it.

Victoria: Was there very many other Metis girls that went out to work like you did?

Evelyn: There was some. There was three of us that went to Maymont: my cousin Albert Trottier's sister, and Dan Amyotte's oldest sister. Three of us went to work in three farms all close together.

Victoria: What language did your parents speak while you were growing up?

Evelyn: It's mostly Cree and French mixed.

Victoria: What did you learn to speak first?

Evelyn: Cree and French mixed.

Victoria: Did your parents and the other people, like in the community, did they talk of themselves as being Metis? Were they aware that there was a difference between, you know, being

white and being Metis?

Evelyn: Well, they know the white people that was there, but to us everybody was Metis.

Victoria: So they were never ashamed of what they were or...

Evelyn: No, nobody.

Victoria: And do you think they were proud of being Metis people?

Evelyn: I think so, I think they were proud of being Metis.

Victoria: Do you know if there is your grandparents or, like, even anyone that you might have known, did they tell any stories about Metis history, you know, about what the other Metis people did in, you know, older days?

Evelyn: Well, like in my grandfather's day they was still buffalos, eh, so they done buffalo hunting, eh. And they done the same thing with their meat, they dried it for the winter. They'd kill enough so that they would have enough meat for the winter, but they dried it and they built little shacks and that's where they kept their meat for the winter.

Victoria: What about... did they ever tell stories about their, about hunting and that type of stuff, you know, things that they did or where they may have travelled or something?

Evelyn: Well, yeah, they travelled from Fort Qu'Appelle, you know. They travelled from Fort Qu'Appelle and they'd go to the States and then back to Fort Qu'Appelle, because my grandmother, well the Fishers, they were around Fort Qu'Appelle. That's where they were really raised. So mostly that's where they stayed, my grandparents, around Fort Qu'Appelle.

Victoria: Did they ever talk about the Rebellion and of anybody that took part in the Rebellion there?

Evelyn: Well, my grandfather didn't take part, but he used to tell us about the things that happened there, and where it happened in Frog Lake. He used to tell us about these things.

Victoria: Frog Lake, that was in Alberta, wasn't it?

Evelyn: I think so, yes.

Victoria: So at the same time as this Rebellion was going on here, they were also rebelling in Frog Lake?

Evelyn: Yes, because that's where they found out that priests were... The priests used to stay with the Metis people a lot in their camp. Wherever they're camping, there was always a priest. Then when Frog Lake, they found out that these priests were spies. And my grandpa said that's when the one they call

Little Bear, they used to call him... He's the one; he walked from Frog Lake to Batoche to go and let them know what was going on up here so that they would be watching.

Victoria: So this Little Bear lived in Frog Lake?

Evelyn: In Frog Lake. But he brought the news down what was going to come up with the white people.

Victoria: Did your grandpa ever say what did happen? What did they do with the priests?

Evelyn: That's where they killed the priests, up there in Frog Lake.

Victoria: So they killed them there, eh?

Evelyn: They killed them there.

Victoria: Was there any other kind of stories that you knew of that they told? Did he talk much about what the Rebellion... See, we know a lot about what the Rebellion was like in Duck Lake and Batoche, eh, but... and I've heard a lot of people mention Frog Lake there. I've also heard them mention that there was also a sort of an uprising at Fort Qu'Appelle. But as far as history goes, I haven't read too much about it.

Evelyn: Yeah. I haven't heard too much about Fort Qu'Appelle, what went on there, but I know my grandpa used to tell us about this here at Frog Lake.

Victoria: Was there an awful lot of fighting that was going on there too?

Evelyn: I don't think it was too much, not as what it was in Batoche. They just got rid of those priests when they found out what they were doing.

Victoria: Would there have been people from Frog Lake that joined them in Duck Lake and Batoche?

Evelyn: Now, I wouldn't know that. I couldn't say if they did or not.

Victoria: What did the Metis people in your community, where you grew up, do at social events? Did they have very many, you know, parties or weddings?

Evelyn: They had a lot of dances. They had a lot of dances, because the houses were big when they built them. And they'd go from house to house and they'd have dances there. And they'd have jigging contests and that in different houses, all the Metis that lived there.

Victoria: Did they do much step dancing and...?

Evelyn: They did a lot of that, yeah. I had two brothers, they were hard to beat.

Victoria: How many of them played the fiddle in your family?

Evelyn: In my family? Well, four boys, four boys played the fiddle and one sister.

Victoria: What was Christmas and New Year's like?

Evelyn: Well, those days New Year's was a big day for the Metis people. As far as Christmas, it was for the kids. (Inaudible) say, "Well, Santa Claus is going to bring this for the kids at Christmas Day," so they didn't have no "do" or anything. There was just stuff brought for the kids. But New Year's, it was a big day. And they cook all night New Year's Eve, because sometime there wasn't enough money. They had to go and maybe take a load of posts or something into town, and by the time you go with a team 35 miles, it's late when you get back in the evening, so then the women would have to start to cook. Well, by 12 o'clock then, you hear shots already with the rifle because it's New Year's, so you expect somebody...

Victoria: Was that a tradition?

Evelyn: That's a tradition, that the first one is up a little after 12. Then the shooting. Well, you know that the people are going to start to come around. And that's when they start was a little after 12 from house to house.

Victoria: What all different kinds of food did they have?

Evelyn: Oh, they'd have roast meat, and these meat balls. Like I say, we never could cook them at any time of the year. That was only once a year that you could eat those meat balls.

Victoria: Is that what they call boulettes now?

Evelyn: Yeah. Only once a year and that was New Year's. We couldn't cook any after that or before, and that day comes everybody just look forward to those...

Victoria: There was a tradition, eh?

Evelyn: It was a tradition. And we weren't allowed to cook them and nobody ever did try to make them only that day of New Year's Day.

Victoria: And Christmas was just for the kids, eh?

Evelyn: Just for the kids.

Victoria: Could they have afforded very many gifts or anything back then?

Evelyn: Oh they managed to buy each a present and candies and

that for the kids. And they always managed to get enough for those kids to get that stuff.

Victoria: Did your father or your grandfathers, anyone in your family for that matter, did they wear any, what they call a Metis sash?

Evelyn: My grandfather did all the time. My grandfather and his brothers, old Isadore, and old Frank, that's Mugware. They all wore them till they died, so as my grandfather.

Victoria: What about the moccasins, did they wear them too?

Evelyn: Quite a bit.

Victoria: What were they like? Were they the short ones or...?

Evelyn: Yeah. Yeah, mostly the short ones. And then they had what they call a moccasin rubber. They used to wear them over the top.

Victoria: Did they wear the wrap arounds? Like you... with your... to hold your pant leg down, I think they wrapped it round and round.

Evelyn: Yeah. Yeah, but they weren't too high, eh. They weren't too high.

Victoria: How about your mom? Did she dress in the sort of traditional Metis style?

Evelyn: When my four older -- two sisters and two brothers -- when they were small, my mother dressed with a long dress and great big puff sleeves, but long sleeve. But they used to put yards of stuff in here to fluff out. And she dressed like that for quite a few years that I can remember she was still dressing like that. And my grandmother dressed like that till she died.

Victoria: How about their shoes? What type of shoes did they wear?

Evelyn: They were shoes that they were high tops on them. They were laced, or either buttons. Or either... they were button in the side and they had these button hooks that they hooked the button on with. That's mostly what... I've never could remember of anybody wearing a slipper -- of women. They all had these long...

Victoria: And do you know if your mom or your grandmother, either one of your grandmothers, done any beadwork?

Evelyn: Yes, my grandmother done a lot of beadwork and my mother done a lot of beadwork. And my mother's trade too, she make nets, fishing nets, for... that's... she'd get paid for making those. Right from the scratch, start she'd make all

these big nets in the house -- the house was long -- she tied there, they're four, four, five feet wide and she hook all those nets up. She made those nets. That's all she did in the wintertime.

Victoria: That's the great big huge ones that they used to throw in the lake?

Evelyn: Yes, that's the ones. That's what she made.

Victoria: How long would it take her to make one, do you know?

Evelyn: No. It didn't take her too long when I could remember. She worked right at it, and it might take her about two or three days and she was done with maybe a 25 foot one.

Victoria: What did she make them out of?

Evelyn: They had this, what they call net thread, it was a heavy thread that wouldn't break. And then there was two little ropes, one bigger one and one smaller one on each side, and she start hooking them on there. And she'd make them four inch... if it's a four inch she would make it a four inch square, Like you'd be doing crochet, it's about the same thing. And that's the way she did them.

Victoria: How about tanning hides? Did she do any?

Evelyn: Yes, my mother done a lot of tanning hides. She done a lot of it till about, till the, oh I'd say, close to the '50s she'd tan hides.

Victoria: Did you ever help her do it?

Evelyn: Oh yeah, we helped a lot.

Victoria: Do you know how to do it yourself?

Evelyn: Well, if I want to I know how to do it, because we used to soak them. First we used to cut the hair off first. Then you soak them for a day or two and then all that hair comes off. And, of course, you had some irons like a chisel that you scrape all that fur off. And then you'd grease them after that on both sides and you stretch them out on the wall till they are dry. They are just as stiff as they can be. Then they're ready to tan. Then you put them in a tub of water and you soak, and they're really soaked in there! Then we used to have these... off these wooden barrels. There used to be a tin, a circle, goes around these barrels and they'd get that...

Victoria: Sort of like a clamp, eh?

Evelyn: Yes. And when she takes it out of the tub she's got a stick there. She put it in there and she'd roll it there and squeeze all the water out, as much as she can. When she's finished that, then she'd go on this iron. It's nailed on two

ends and then she'd pull on that, pull on it, turn it the other way, pull on it until it's dry. Then it's just as soft as anything. It's ready to use for moccasins.

Victoria: Did she make quite a few moccasins?

Evelyn: Oh yes, she made quite a bit of moccasins. She done a lot of that. So has my grandmother.

Victoria: What other things do you know that she made?

Evelyn: Well, she made these rabbit robes, braided rabbit robes.

Victoria: How do you do that?

Evelyn: Well, they just dry the rabbit hide, eh. And then you cut it with the sissors all around and around till about an inch wide. And then you get a piece of canvas and you make holes in there. That's your start. You roll it in there.

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Victoria: For heaven's sake! Did your parents get along good, or your family get along good with the white people in your community?

Evelyn: Yes. The white people that lived around there, they were very nice people.

Victoria: They would have been probably poor white people, eh?

Evelyn: Yes, they didn't have much when they come there too. And they all died now, but they all lived there all that time and they were very best friends of ours.

Victoria: Do you now of anybody, you know, like the elders in the family, did they use any Indian medicine?

Evelyn: Yes, my mother used to use it, my grandmother too, for Indian medicine.

Victoria: Do you remember any of the things that they used?

Evelyn: I know lots of it. I dig it myself now. In the summertime I pick...

Victoria: What do you use it for?

Evelyn: Well, you use it for pretty well for everything, for kidneys, or womans have trouble with their wombs. There's medicine for that to heal that without going to see a doctor. My mother had medicine she cured T.B.

Victoria: Did you see, you know, the things that she used for it?

Evelyn: Well now, when she was getting older she told us the medicine, what medicine was that for, and that for, so we know all the medicine that she knew.

Victoria: Did you ever see a sweat lodge?

Evelyn: Not really, no, I can't remember. I hear my grandpa talk about it but I never did really see one.

Victoria: Did you know of any real serious illnesses they used to have back in, you know, back in the old days, or did you hear any of your parents or your grandparents talk of it?

Evelyn: Oh, not really that much. I don't think people were sick that much in those days.

Victoria: Was there very much T.B. around then though?

Evelyn: Not that I could remember, there wasn't. I tell people today they're crazy. They said they had cancer at that time but mostly it was open cancer, eh, it would break a hole. And my grandpa said -- maybe you'll laugh -- but they used... they take the liver out of a dog and they'd slice that and they'd put that in that open wound and they just keep the place

quiet, no noise, and all that cancer went in there. And then they'd get some herbs and that and they wash it off and it all healed up, believe it or not!

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Victoria: You went to school, how long did you attend school?

Evelyn: Only about two years, that's all.

Victoria: What kind of things did they teach you at the school where you went?

Evelyn: Oh...

Victoria: Was it the ordinary school work?

Evelyn: Yeah, mostly ordinary school work we had.

Victoria: And what were the schools like? Were they just one big school, one big room, or were there lots of rooms?

Evelyn: Yeah. Where I went in Montana, yes, there was just one big room.

Victoria: And was it just an ordinary teacher or did they have nuns?

Evelyn: No, they had teacher.

Victoria: Were you allowed to talk Cree or French or anything like that at school?

Evelyn: Yes, because they were mostly Metis kids that went there, so they talk Cree and French mixed.

Victoria: Did you like going to school?

Evelyn: Yes, I did.

Victoria: Did your parents want you to go to school?

Evelyn: They would have liked to, but then we didn't stay one place long enough to go to school. We kept moving around, work here and work there, so there was no place. And when we lived up in the north, there was no schools there at all.

Victoria: Was there all different kinds of, you know, students that went to school, you know, to the same school, or was there just Metis kids?

Evelyn: No, there'd... well, in Poplar was just Metis kids,

eh. It was more like a convent, eh. We went and stayed in this convent.

Victoria: Oh, it was a convent where you went then?

Evelyn: Yes. Yeah.

Victoria: And where was that at?

Evelyn: Poplar, Montana.

Victoria: And that's where you lived before you moved to...

Evelyn: Oh no. This was in 1923 when we moved to Montana.

Victoria: Oh, you were...

Evelyn: Yes.

Victoria: Montana then. Well, where... Did you move from Turtleford to...?

Evelyn: Yeah, from Turtle Lake, and then we came back there again.

Victoria: What did your dad do when he was in Montana? What type of work was he doing?

Evelyn: There wasn't too much work.

Victoria: Did they just move like that? Was there any reason why they up and left?

Evelyn: Well, I think that's the way Metis people were living. They go from place to place and come back whenever they were ready to come back to their place. They come back there and stay for the winter and then go again in the summer.

Victoria: Just wandering around.

Evelyn: Yeah.

Victoria: Do you remember if they ever taught any Metis or Indian history when you went to school?

Evelyn: Not that I know of.

Victoria: Were you treated well by the white kids that went to school?

Evelyn: Oh yes.

Victoria: No problems?

Evelyn: We had no problems.

Victoria: No discrimination of any kind?

Evelyn: Nothing, no.

Victoria: So, you liked going to school and that. Do you think your experience in school was positive or negative?

Evelyn: Well, it was positive, I guess. But only thing, we didn't stay there long enough that I could go to school so we had to leave.

Victoria: When you were growing up and that, were you ever denied a job because you were Metis?

Evelyn: No, not that I know of.

Victoria: Did the white kids ever call you names, you know, referring to your background, because you were Metis?

Evelyn: No, not that I know of. Because, you know, I worked for a lot of white people and I never was called down or even mentioned that I was Metis.

Victoria: What about job discrimination? Have you ever heard of any time when there was, you know, a Metis person and a white person doing the same job and the Metis person got paid less for it?

Evelyn: Not that I know of, because those days the wages were the same. If I got 25 cents an hour, so did the white person got 25 cents an hour.

Victoria: Were you ever uncomfortable around, you know, white people like judges, or police, or, you know, just going into businesses or towns?

Evelyn: No, I always figured I was as good as they are, and it never dawned on me to even think that I was lower than they were. It never bothered me.

Victoria: Were you always treated fairly by... you know, like in the towns and communities where you lived, if they had town councils and that, was your family always treated fairly by them?

Evelyn: As far as us, we've always been treated the same.

Victoria: When you had functions, like school functions and that, and dances and that, did the white people attend those with you?

Evelyn: Oh yes.

Victoria: And everybody got along real well?

Evelyn: We all got along, yes. Yes.

Victoria: You never heard about a town trying to force Metis people to move from the town or from the community?

Evelyn: Not that I know of.

Victoria: Have you ever had any bad dealings with the government, or welfare agencies, the police, or even just a business, you know, where there was some type of discrimination?

Evelyn: No.

Victoria: None at all, eh.

Evelyn: No.

Victoria: When you were young -- you had mentioned earlier that there was no church where you lived -- did the priest used to come around visiting...

Evelyn: Yes.

Victoria: ...you know, in the old days?

Evelyn: Those days the priest used to come around visiting, which they don't do today, but those days the priest always managed to come around to the villages.

Victoria: Do you think that the church was really important to your family? Was it important to your family?

Evelyn: Yes, it was. It was. They were... my grandmother was very religious about her...

Victoria: And to you, how was it to you? Is it an important part of your life?

Evelyn: It was. It was till about, I'd say, 1930. I had my baby. I had a baby -- that's after I was married -- and I lost it when it was 6 months old. And my mother said, my mother was a good Catholic, and my mother said to me, "You must have done something wrong that God would punish you." So I said then, "If God has a heart like that, then I'm finished. I'm not praying no more." This is what I told my mother. So I kind of quit the church.

Victoria: So you really... Yeah. It would make your commitment to the church quite a bit weaker, you know.

Evelyn: Yes, yeah.

Victoria: Do you remember what the priest talked about when he came, you know, to visit at the home when you were young?

Evelyn: Oh, he tell us how to be good and how to work with God, and things would go all right if you believe in the things that they would do.

Victoria: Did they ever try to bully you, sort of thing, or kind of threaten or something if you weren't good?

Evelyn: No not that I know of.

Victoria: Do you think that the church had more influence over the people back in those days than it does now?

Evelyn: I think so. I think they did. They more attend regularly and believe in it more than what the people do today.

Victoria: Do you think that the church helped Metis people face problems and difficulties?

Evelyn: In those days they did, they did help them.

Victoria: How did they...? Did they help them with money or, you know, anything...?

Evelyn: No, not really with money, just to talk to them and tell them, you know, advice how to live and that.

Victoria: Did your parents vote back in the old days?

Evelyn: Yes.

Victoria: Was there voting polls and that type of thing set up?

Evelyn: Yes.

Victoria: So you know what party they voted for?

Evelyn: All the Metis people were Liberals. As far as way back I can remember, they were all Liberals.

Victoria: Do you know if they were involved in party politics? Did they campaign a lot or, you know, talk to the people about what party to vote for?

Evelyn: Not really. I think they just knew that that's all they were voting for and that's all they did, they vote. They didn't talk about it too much.

Victoria: Do you think they were influenced to vote the way they did? Why do you think they just voted for Liberal?

Evelyn: Well, because my grandpa used to say all Catholics vote Liberal. And they would not change to a different...

Victoria: Do you think the church was involved in politics at all?

Evelyn: I think it had a lot to do with it, yes.

Victoria: So, in other words, government and churches were involved, so they influenced the people to vote for the Liberals, eh?

Evelyn: Yes.

Victoria: Did the politicians ever come and visit at your home?

Evelyn: Well, at election time. When time for election, yes, somebody would come down and they'd tell you, well, they'd even pay you to vote. (Laughter)

Victoria: How much did they pay?

Evelyn: They'd pay you... those days money was,,, was,,, a \$10 bill was a lot of money in those days. They'd give 'em a \$10 bill and then they'd buy, feed 'em, buy... These store-keepers would come and they'd put out the food for them to eat, and they'd eat that. And that went on until in the '40s. And then all of a sudden they quit. They don't care who they vote for because... I think because they've got the power it didn't matter to them who vote or not.

Victoria: So their votes were bought then.

Evelyn: They were bought at that time, as I can remember. I was 21 years old the first time I voted -- you couldn't vote until you were 21 -- so I got paid to vote at that time.

Victoria: How much did you get paid to vote?

Evelyn: I got \$10.

Victoria: What do you think the Metis people, you know, in your parent's days, did politics really mean a lot to them or...

Evelyn: I don't think so. I don't think they talked about politics very much in those days, not that I know of.

Victoria: They just knew that they were going to get paid when voting time comes so they just went along with it, eh?

Evelyn: Yes, that's the time they were treated right. After that, forget it! Long as they've got your vote, that's all they wanted.

Victoria: Do you vote the same way as your parents did?

Evelyn: We had to. We had no choice.

Victoria: Now, though, it's different?

Evelyn: Yes. Yes. Different now.

Victoria: Do you ever take, like, a real active role in politics? Like, do you campaign?

Evelyn: Not really, no.

Victoria: Do your friends get active? You know, your relations or your friends, do they ever get active in politics?

Evelyn: Not in politics so much, no.

Victoria: Do you think that the Metis people see one party

as...? You know, of all the political parties that we have, is there one that they think speaks up for the Metis people?

Evelyn: Well, this is who they figure, was the Liberal was the one that always helped the Metis people.

Victoria: So that's the one that they voted for then, eh?

Evelyn: Yeah.

Victoria: Do you remember the old Saskatchewan Metis Society? That would be in the '30s and the '40s.

Evelyn: Yeah. We did have meetings and that. And, of course, there was no grants or... there was no money involved in those days. We didn't get any grants, or we didn't... We got our own money to send our people to Regina to go and fight our... We'd have basket socials, a pie social -- you got 35 cents for a pie -- so it took quite a bit of money to get those things going.

Victoria: Where were you living at this time?

Evelyn: Well, we were up in the north. We were up at Livelong at the time. I think Andrew and them were around Willowfield here those days. They'd come up there; we'd rent the hall for \$20 and then... so that we could have a meeting. But then it kinda faded away and, you know, never...

Victoria: Did you have a local, like, in your town too, in Livelong?

Evelyn: Not really. Well, you know, there was... Our whole family lived up there like, you know. But as far as to have a local like we have today, there was nothing like that.

Victoria: Like in your community, they were just part of the Metis Society then, not necessarily a local, eh?

Evelyn: Yes, right.

Victoria: When they got together, you know, the Metis people, what type of things did they talk about that they wanted for themselves?

Evelyn: Well, they were still fighting for the land that they figured that they had comin'. That's what they were fighting for in those days.

Victoria: Did the people who organized it, did they, like did they try to help the people, you know, in the communities? Did they help them with jobs, or housing, or to get welfare, you know, if they couldn't work, or whatever?

Evelyn: Not those days, no, because there wasn't too many people lived on welfare those days. People made their own

living, as I say, you know.

Victoria: Even if it was seasonal, they were employed?

Evelyn: Yes. Yes.

Victoria: Most of the time, eh?

Evelyn: Right.

Victoria: Were most of the Metis people in your community, were they involved in the Metis Society?

Evelyn: Pretty well, in the '30s. Yes, pretty well.

Victoria: Did they hold meetings very often?

Evelyn: Not really that often no. They'd only come once in awhile. But we still figured it was the right thing we were doing, is to fight for our... our land.

Victoria: Did you ever go to one of the conventions then? Like, we'll say... I know they used to hold them in Saskatoon, eh, at that time...

Evelyn: No I never got to any of those.

Victoria: About how many would you figure were members? You said they didn't really go by membership, how many of them do you think there was in your community that would have attended?

Evelyn: Well, I'd say about 30, eh, because all my brothers and their wives and everybody was interesting to it, eh. They had membership cards at that time too. So they were pretty well, everybody was involved. We were happy when somebody said well we're coming down to have a meeting with you up here.

Victoria: Do you remember if there was any Metis history that was discussed other than the... you know, talking about fighting for their land rights? Was there people who talked about, you know, what happened at the Rebellion and that stuff?

Evelyn: Not too much, no.

Victoria: Just what they thought they should do, eh?

Evelyn: Yes.

Victoria: Do you remember if Metis scrip was discussed at all during those meetings?

Evelyn: Not that I know of. But, as I say, my grandfather used to talk about the scrip to us kids when we were very young, you know.

Victoria: Do you remember any of the things he told?

Evelyn: Not too much, no

Victoria: Did they discuss discrimination at those meetings, about how they were treated and that type of thing?

Evelyn: No. No. They didn't really say too much about it.

Victoria: Do you remember the name Joe LaRocque?

Evelyn: I remember the name.

Victoria: Or Joe Ross?

Evelyn: No. Joe LaRocque, I remember the name, but not Joe Ross. No, I can't.

Victoria: Tom Major? How about Joe McKenzie?

Evelyn: No. See, it was only the ones that come and had the meetings with us, was old Sam Pritchard and his...

Victoria: I was just going to ask you, the next one was...

Evelyn: ...his son-in-law and...

Victoria: ...Solomon Pritchard.

Evelyn: Yeah, Solomon Pritchard, and Babe Bouchane.

Victoria: Uh-huh. So they really... that's the reason is that they were some of the first organizers.

Evelyn: Yes, they used to go to Regina, I guess -- I don't know if it's Ottawa -- but we were raising this money for them to go.

Victoria: So you're active in your own local now, are you?

Evelyn: Yes. Some are not too active, but I try to get them going. But I'm really interested. That's why I never miss a meeting. I never missed a meeting yet.

Victoria: Who was the president for your local here?

Evelyn: Me.

Victoria: Oh, you are?

Evelyn: I have been for... used to be Patsy, but when she moved away, then I took over.

Victoria: Patsy is your daughter, like, eh?

Evelyn: Yeah.

Victoria: And you were just at those constitutional talks in Ottawa were you?

Evelyn: Yes.

Victoria: How did you find them?

Evelyn: Well, they were pretty good as far as, you know, them talking in there. But I think they should just bring one thing at a time and ask for one thing, and then maybe they could get it sooner like that. And then ask for the other, for the self-government, if they ask for that, after.

Victoria: What do you think they should ask for first?

Evelyn: Well, as far as I would think is their land bases, you know. They should really get that going good.

Victoria: Get the land established first, and then ask for self-government.

Evelyn: Yes, that's the way I would look at it. And, as I say, Trudeau hasn't got too much to say. I think he would be on the Metis side if he could talk, but he's got too many of them sitting each side of him to have too much to say, as far as the way I could see it. I don't know, maybe I see it wrong, but that's the way I see it.

Victoria: You enjoy going, do you?

Evelyn: Yes, I sure...

Victoria: You like taking part in it?

Evelyn: Yes.

Victoria: That's good. You know, people... we need, you know, people, older people to be there, you know, to help out. Do you think that... how would you describe what your life has been like, you know, while you were growing up and your life, you know, after you married and that?

Evelyn: I don't know, I figure I had a pretty good life? I work a lot, I worked hard as long as I could. It's only been about ten years since I can't work like I used to, but I never was scared of work -- didn't matter what. Men's job or women's job, it didn't matter. I work with the doctors in the north, two doctors I worked with. We used to drive way up north and delivered babies.

Victoria: So you're sort of a midwife, eh?

Evelyn: Yes.

Victoria: When was this? How old were you then?

Evelyn: I would be about going into 30 maybe.

Victoria: Where were you living at the time?

Evelyn: Livelong, that's Turtle Lake. The doctors would pick me up and I would go with them.

Victoria: How far north did you go?

Evelyn: We'd go as far as, I'd say, it'd be about 25 miles north, and we just used, sometimes we just had the team and cutter to go. And whenever the doctors come there... I delivered Muriel here; I helped the doctor deliver her. I told her...

Victoria: That's your brother's daughter, eh?

Evelyn: Yes. And I helped a lot of others, because my mother was a midwife since she was 18 years old till she was... The last one she delivered was Evelyn's baby, Rosette.

Victoria: My cousin Evelyn?

Evelyn: Yes.

Victoria: For heaven's sakes!

Evelyn: So she was in her 70s.

Victoria: For heaven's sakes! That's not too long ago either.

Evelyn: No.

Victoria: Would you say that your life has been interesting?

Evelyn: Well, yes because I always liked to get involved in things, you know, help the people do things so they can make a go of it of themselves.

Victoria: Helping to better themselves, eh?

Evelyn: Yes. Yes.

Victoria: Has your life been satisfying? You know, are you satisfied with the way your life has been?

Evelyn: Yes. Yes, I have.

Victoria: Do you think your life was better than, like, than your mom's or your grandmother's?

Evelyn: Well, I don't know. My mother had... grandmother had a pretty good life, and so has my mother. And she was a hard worker, same as I did till I couldn't work no more.

Victoria: Do you think yours was maybe made better by modern conveniences?

Evelyn: Well, it would be easier than what their days were.

Victoria: What is some of the things, well, even one of the things, that's mattered the most to you in your life, the important... you know, I mean really important to you?

Evelyn: Well, my family is awful important to me because I've never really had any trouble with my family. And now that... the things that I'm doing now, it's very important to me, and I'd just like to keep on as long as I can with the work.

Victoria: Is religion an important part in your life?

Evelyn: I'm not too much of a religious person. I do read the Bible and read things that's in the Bible. I learnt from there. I don't go to church or anything, any church, but I understand what the Bible has to say.

Victoria: What about education? Would you have liked to have had more education?

Evelyn: Yes, I would, I would've if I'd had the chance. I would have been happy if I had more education.

Victoria: It was an important thing for you?

Evelyn: It was an important thing for me.

Victoria: Do you think that it would have been... you know, life would have been different for you if you would have been a white person, or maybe a Treaty Indian?

Evelyn: No, I don't think so. I think I'm pretty well satisfied for what I am, and I never was ashamed of it. I mix up with everybody, white people and that, it doesn't bother me.

Victoria: If you had a chance to be born all over again... like, just start right off again, is there something you would do different? Would you want things to be different?

Victoria: If you had a chance to be born all over again... like, just start right off again, is there something you would do different? Would you want things to be different?

Evelyn: Well, I don't know. I never was crazy for money, so I don't think I'd want to be rich. One thing. As long as I've lived good the way I've been living, so I don't think anything else would ever be more important.

Victoria: So you think your life has been very good for you.

Evelyn: Yeah.

Victoria: You wouldn't want to be a man?

Evelyn: No, I don't think so.

Victoria: Do you think that the future is going to be better for your children and your grandchildren?

Evelyn: I don't know. If they don't get what we're fighting for, I doubt it if it will be any better. I think we've had a better life in the days back.

Victoria: So you figure if there was a way that they could be raised the way you were raised, it would be much better for them?

Evelyn: Yes.

Victoria: Do you think, in the future, that native people are going to better off, say, up in the far north, or maybe just out in the country, or in the cities? What is going to be the best place for them?

Evelyn: Well to me, I think it would be out in the country would be the best place for the Metis people, because they'd be more free to do what they want to do, not what the white man are teaching them today in the cities. This is where it spoils all the kids.

Victoria: How about the north? How do you think...?

Evelyn: Well, the north, depends how far north you go again. Because when they do give us land, they're not gonna give us land where we're gonna go and make big money: they're gonna give us the land where it's no good. Because when the prairie was good, they pushed us to the north. Now there's lots of money in the north they don't want us in those places. You've got to find these place where there is nothing, and with

nothing you're not gonna start very much there. As I say, in the days we did, lived in the north, nobody bother us. You're short of groceries, you go and cut a load of posts, take them to town, buy your groceries and go home, and you was happy. Today you can't even cut your wood to burn your wood. Before, at least, you could have got your wood to burn. Today, you go and cut some wood you want to burn, you got to pay for that, too, you got to pay for every stump you cut. Any why, I say, because the government or the white people uses the Bible for things, right? And so do we, we can read the Bible. But if they take to work and read that Bible, what God had said when He put this earth here -- I'm going to get you later on a scripture where God said he put the animals in here for the people for food. Go kill a deer if you're short of food, that's yours. You don't have to go and buy a license or anything. He never put anything there to go and buy a license to go and kill that, never did it. Just says, "Those animals that I put there for you, when you get hungry you get them." So what do we get today? You go and get one, you have to pay for it and double.

Victoria: Man-made laws.

Evelyn: Yeah.

Victoria: Well, I want to thank you very much for the interview,
Evelyn.

(END OF SIDE B)

(END OF TAPE)