

Road Allowance Interview, Harriet Oaks-St. Pierre

Conducted by Scott Duffee

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Scott Duffee (SD): Could you please tell me your name and your home community?

Harriet Oaks-St. Pierre (HO): I was born as Harriet Pelletier in Crooked Lake, Saskatchewan. And that's where I grew up, in Crooked Lake/Marieval, Saskatchewan.

SD: Sorry, what was Marieval?

HO: Marieval, Crooked Lake. That's on the other side of Grayson in the valley.

SD: Okay and Marie Valley—

HO: Marieval-Crooked Lake.

SD: And that's the name of a town, Marieval?

HO: No, that's the name of our community there.

SD: Oh, I thought it was just Crooked Lake.

HO: That was our mailing address. It was for anybody that lived in Crooked Lake. It was Marieval-Crooked Lake, Saskatchewan.

SD: Okay, how did you spell that?

HO: M-A-R-I-E-V-A-L.

SD: All one word?

HO: Yes, Marieval-Crooked Lake, Saskatchewan.

SD: Do you know where that word came from, Marieval?

HO: No, that's what it was when I was born. Whenever we did a letter, it was always Marieval-Crooked Lake, Saskatchewan.

SD: Interesting. Your name right now is...

HO: I was Harriet Oaks. My husband passed away 22 years ago on Monday. And then I married Edwin St. Pierre. So, my name is Harriet Oaks-St. Pierre. I go by Oaks. I leave Oaks in there because that's how I'm known in Saskatoon and I worked for the school board. Like all the students know me as Mrs. Oaks. Then when I retired that's when I married Mr. St. Pierre. So, my name is Harriet Oaks-St. Pierre.

SD: So Marieval-Crooked Lake was that a road allowance community?

HO: Yes, we lived in a road allowance.

SD: Who were your parents and your grandparents?

HO: My dad was Bob, Robert Pelletier and my mother was Elizabeth Pelletier. And my grandparents, my mother's mom and dad were Laframboises. Marguerite Laframboise was her mother's name. And her dad's name was ... I can't remember her dad's name because he passed away before I remember. I think I was like two, three-years-old when he passed away so I don't remember him. And then my dad's parents were Fred Pelletier, and his mother's name was Thérèse Pelletier.

SD: Were your parents from Crooked Lake?

HO: Yes, well my dad was born and his parents, I think, were born in the States. And then when they all the Métis people migrated, they trickled into Canada and went all over the place. And some went to Manitoba. Some went to Saskatchewan. That's where his parents come from. But he was born in Marieval-Crooked Lake. And my mother was born in Frankfurt, Germany.

SD: Your mother was?

HO: Yes, you see way back then, when my mother was a little girl, she was born in Frankfurt, Germany. And when she was just a little girl there was talk about going to be a war in Germany and in Czechoslovakia, all around in that area. They said, "Well maybe we should at least save the children." So, they picked up some children and threw them into train box cars and shipped them to the United States and Canada. So, when they arrived in Winnipeg, my kooikom and mooshom, Mr. and Mrs. Laframboise, had been married for seven years and they couldn't have children. They had heard that there were children arriving in Winnipeg to be adopted. But how they heard I have no idea because they could not read and write and they had no phone. In those days, there were no phones. Nobody had phones in Crooked Lake. So, I guess maybe word of mouth somehow, I don't know. And in those days, Winnipeg was not a very big city. Now I'm talking about the '20s. And my sister was born in '31 so it must have been late 1800. So anyway, they said, "Okay, we'll hook up the horses and we'll go to Winnipeg." It's 500 miles from Crooked Lake to Winnipeg. And in those days, the highways were not paved. It was more just like grid road. Then there was nice grass ditches, and there were no fences. So that's where it would be easier for horses with their hooves in the ditch area. They'd travel for maybe about 10 or 12 miles and when the horses start getting tired, they'd stop. They'd start looking for a place to pitch their tent because they loaded their double wagon full of the things they needed, like pillows, quilts, mattress, tent, pots and pans, dishes, and blankets and extra clothing for the children that she had gathered. The Crooked Lake people had babies and had outgrown their baby clothes. She took them from those people and packed them and took them with her to Winnipeg. So, they'd start watching. Then the horses were getting tired, after about 10 miles. And they'd look for a bushy area, and they'd look for nice tall green grass with a clear water slough, a clean slough. And they'd find that they'd pull out off the road and unhook the horses. The first thing was to unhook the horses and hobble them and then turn them loose. Hobbling is tying a rope around the two front paws of a horse. That way they just jump and graze. That way they can't go far that way. So, they would graze. Eat all the grass there and drink from the slough. They'd pitch up the tent and then they'd get wood and they'd make a fire in front of their tent. And haul water from the slough and make their supper. And then when they were done their supper, they'd go to the slough and wash their pots and pans and dishes. And make the bed and go to

bed. In the morning, they'd get up and start packing. They'd eat their breakfast, coffee, and then they'd pack all their stuff back in the double wagon. Take down the tent, then hook up the horses and start over again. Yes, then they'd like pack maybe a sandwich or a can of beans or something like that to eat for lunch on the way. They wouldn't stop. The only time to stop was after traveling 10 to 12 miles. So, when they got to Winnipeg, they see this great big building. They pull the horses right to the building and tie them on the hitching post there. Tie them there, and they then go into this big building, and they see a lot of children all over: bigger ones running and little ones in cribs. One lady was taking care of a crying baby. My koohkom told me this story. So, my mooshom, he sees this little blond, blue-eyed girl there smiling at him. So, he said, "I want this little girl." He takes her by the hand and holds onto her. He was making their way out the door and my koohkom said, "Hey, I'm going to pick this little dark boy." So, they had each one by the hand walking them out, but as their going out the door, there's a little crib beside the door and a baby crying holding her arms out to grandpa. So, grandpa said, "We might as well take her too." He grabs her and away they come. That's it, to the wagon. She puts them in the wagon and they came back. No papers signed, no names, no birthdays, no nothing. My mother never had a birthday. My mooshom and koohkom, I guess they used to say, "This year, she's 4-years-old." And the next year, she's five-years-old and the little dark boy that my koohkom picked up was a little Czechoslovakian boy, Uncle Johnny Laframboise. And they gave them each plain old Michif names. So, he was John, and my mom was Elizabeth, and the little girl was Anna. But that winter they had a very vicious winter in Crooked Lake. The snow was so high, there were no roads, and the little girl got sick and the horses could not walk on the snow because it was too deep. And they would have to drive by wagon to Broadview to take this little child to the hospital. They tried to give the baby home remedy medicine, but it didn't work so she passed away that winter. So, they just had the two of them, my mom and Uncle Johnny Laframboise. Yes, and so it was a lucky thing that she had some children's clothes to take with her because on their way back, it took them about a week, by horses. So, on their way back, she was able to change their clothing. She apparently even cut up an old flannelette sheet and made diapers. Hand and square to make diapers in case they got a baby, which came in handy because the baby needed diapers. I guess she only took like 4 or 5 but then when they would stop, after they hauled their water from the slough, she'd wash the rest of the diapers that she had there and hang them to dry on branches outside. So, the next day, she had no clean diapers until they got home.

SD: So how did they know that those kids were from Germany and Czechoslovakia?

HO: You know what, she never told me that. I guess between all the Métis people and the First Nations people, the whole community of Marieval, might have recognized that she looked like a little German and he was darker and he looked like

a little Czechoslovakian. I don't know how. That's one thing my koohkom never told me: How did they know that she was German? But they say she was born in Frankfurt, Germany. So, how they found that out I have no idea.

SD: I wonder if they spoke to someone at the orphanage?

HO: It could be. They could be just to ask them what nationality, which I doubt. I doubt that because they didn't care, my mooshom and koohkom didn't care what kind of children they had, they wanted children so bad. They probably would have even taken little blackies. They didn't care. They wanted children, so they would not have asked what nationality. They might have found out later in years, I don't know.

SD: So, your mooshom and your koohkom lived in Crooked Lake?

HO: Yes.

SD: Did they always live there?

HO: No, they also come from the States. The majority of the Métis people here in Saskatchewan came from the States.

SD: In this part of Saskatchewan?

HO: Yes, some of them came to Crescent Lake, some of them to Crooked Lake. And then in Crescent Lake, where's he's from, somebody had shipped them away because they were guaranteed work up north, and so they went up north to work, all in wagons and teams, and with their belongings. Here there was nothing. And when they wanted to come back, their houses were all burned down to the ground in Crescent Lake. So yes, it was a rough life.

SD: So, your maternal and paternal koohkom and your mooshom both came from the States to Crooked Lake?

HO: Mhmm.

SD: So, both your parents always lived in Crooked Lake?

HO: Yes, both my mom and my dad grew up in Crooked Lake. My dad was born in 1900.

SD: What Métis families lived in Crooked Lake?

HO: Oh, you know ... There were a lot of them that lived in Crooked Lake, but then as they grow older, they left. And then I'm born and then I grew, and then I left. So the ones before me, I don't know. But he remembers even some his relatives lived in Crooked Lake and eventually moved to Crescent Lake. When I was growing up and going to school, there might have been about 30 families. It was not a very big road allowance community. In our place, the hills come down and then from the flats to the river, there was the road here, our road. And then this was a field. And this was where our homes were, at the foot of the hills. When I was born, we were at the bottom of a coulee. The hills and then the coulee, and then we were at the bottom there. Then there was space between those big trees and our house here. And then mom used to put in a big garden. And there was a flat with bushes of chokecherries and Saskatoon berries. There was a road, and then down below was a field. And this

is where mooshom and koohkom, my dad and my dad's mom and dad lived, along the lake. And this field here was their property. And they had animals, like horses, cattle, pigs, chickens.

SD: That was your dad's mom and dad?

HO: Dad's mom and dad.

SD: Did they own that piece of land?

HO: Yes, they owned that piece of land, and we were further up like this. We could see mooshom and koohkom's place clearly. We could see them coming out of their door and walking around from where we lived, just looking out the window. Now when mooshom and koohkom passed away, the property was given to the youngest boy—Uncle Henry Pelletier. Uncle Henry went to Regina to work, and then they started building beaches along that place. And the road that ran through their property, they should have been getting paid for the use of that property or that road running through that property. Now when Uncle Henry died, he made a will stating that all his nieces and nephews were to divide the amount of the cost of the property; what it was worth. In the mean time, they had beaches there. They're not even paying rent to him or anything like that. You know what each child got? I got three dollars and fifty cents. And all in that area, 10 dollars, four, five, six dollars. Apparently, he had used his property to pay for his stay in an old folks' hospital in Regina. Plus, his medication, which meant little spare money. But where was his old pension cheque? How come they, they must, that's what they do with everybody else. Their old age pension cheque was just about taken all away to the old folks' home except for a few, maybe two, three, four, five dollars. That's all they got out of their pension cheques. So where did his pension cheque go and why did they take from the property? And why didn't these people pay rent for plunking beaches along there while he was still alive working in Regina? I had the papers. This lawyer got a hold of every one of us and said that we had to sign this thing. I didn't even bother signing it. But they sent me a three dollar and some cheque, and I think I still have it. To heck with it. I was just sick.

SD: Did any non-Métis live in that community?

HO: Yes.

SD: Like other than your mom?

HO: Yes, there were Gregoires and there were Criddles. Like Sunset Beach was owned by Criddle. And you know like I said the hills are here, and then our, road was here, and at first, this is where we lived. There was a lake here. We lived along the lake. Once we lived over here. We moved here and there, and then we moved here one more time and then the government built new houses. We were living in log houses, and the government built new homes all in this area. Here's our road and then there's the bridge and then there's the Indian reserve, the river ran here, and then the lake. And all this area was the Indian reserve.

SD: Which reserve?

HO: Cowessess and then out this way was ... and then there's ... And then further up this way too was Round Lake. And we were all related. Everybody who lived in here were all relatives. And then the Gregoires, they lived right here. You see our first school was built on the reserve. This is where the bridge was, and this now is the reserve. From the bridge this way is the reserve. And then my koohkom, my koohkom Laframboise and her husband lived here in the reserve. And then they had an old house that they turned into a school here. They called it "Bannock School," and for us kids we would have to walk down to the road and walk across the bridge to the one-room school. And this over here was the mission. This was the residential school. The church. And this was the store, Mr. Lays' store. And the road went this way again, and then across the store was their house. That's where they lived because I remember they had two children. They had Margaret Lays and they had Henry Lays. And I used to, and I lived with koohkom from the time I was four years old, and I started school, grade one, from there. From my koohkom's I'd go to school. And then I used to go and play with Margaret and Henry Lays. They're white. And then they used to come to our school. The Gregoire kids used to come to our school. The Criddle kids used to come to our school. And the Biches. Armand Biche's children. They lived up the hill. They used to come to our school and that was in the reserve.

SD: Interesting. And yet, there was also residential school on the reserve.

HO: Yes, treaty Indians all went to the residential school. Métis and whites went to Bannock School. This school was heated only with a pot-bellied stove and when we come in the wintertime to school with our lunch kits, well our bannock sandwiches were frozen. And the white people's bread sandwiches were frozen. We'd fight for the pot-bellied stove to put our sandwiches in to thaw them for lunch, instead of eating frozen bannock and frozen bread. We couldn't take any fruit. They never had fruit anyway, but the white people had fruit. They could not take apples or bananas because they would freeze and they would be no good. So, it was just sandwiches. In the summertime, they used to bring beautiful fruit, but not us, we never had any.

SD: Do you remember the names of some of the Métis families that lived there?

HO: Yes, I remember Napoleon Lavallée was one of them. Albert Desjarlais, Nora Desjarlais, Auntie Yvonne, that's my dad's sister. Auntie Laura, and Auntie Lily, his, my dad's sister, lived, there's the bridge, there's the river, there's the road, she lived, they lived close to the bridge here, that's where they lived. Auntie Lily and her husband and they had three boys: Francis, Viner, and Joseph.

SD: What was her last name?

HO: Her last name was Perreault. Yes, Auntie Lily and Uncle ____ Perreault. And they had three boys, two of them are gone. Just Joseph is alive in Regina. Then another one of dad's sisters, he come from a big family, the road was going this way and then

coming this way to the reserve. And then on the Half-breed side the hills right from where the road is Auntie Alice and Uncle Mike Flammont had quite a large family, too. They lived way out over here. That's where their children were born and that's where their children grew up until they started leaving home. And they had 7 or 8 children. And there's only two left. One lives in Regina, and one lives in Calgary; Marie and Lucy. Yes, and I don't know if you have ever heard of Roland Crow. He was the provincial First Nations chief. He was their grandson, Roland Crow. So, he's my first cousin. Then there was Napoleon Lavalley, Albert Desjarlais, Nora Desjarlais, Auntie Lily and uncle ___ Perreault, Mike and Alice Flammont, and Uncle John Pelletier who was my dad's brother. They had quite a family, too. They lived along the lake. Here is where mooshom and them lived, and their property. And Auntie Celina and Uncle John Pelletier, they lived along the lake further out because we used to watch them walk from there to go to koohkom and your mooshom's. We used to watch them from up there. Oh, up the hill there was a grade that went to Grayson. Okay, there's the bridge and right across this road going up a very steep hill, out here lived Clara and Caspar (Gaspard) Pelletier. They had two kids, Mildred and Mike. They came to our school, too. They come down the grade, so it was quite a ways. Let's see who else: Jimmy Lavalley, and his wife, Stella. They lived here too...Gladys Lavalley, and Helen Lavalley, they all lived in that area. I can't remember any more.

SD: That's quite a few. And Perreault, was he Métis?

HO: Uncle ___Perreault? Yes, they lived right by the bridge on the Métis side. So, when I was staying at my Koohkom Laframboise, they spoke French. And every night my koohkom and I would say the Holy Rosary in French. But she would sit on the bed, and I'd have to kneel on the hard floor. And my knees would be so sore. I said, "Koohkom you're cheating. You got a soft seat to sit on and my knees are sore." "You're young. You got to suffer a little bit. You stay there." This was all in French. I didn't know English when I started school, just French. And yet, Sister ___was the one that taught there. She came from the mission and walked down to teach us. And she spoke French. She understood French, but we were not allowed to speak our mother tongue. We were only allowed to speak English and at recess time, we had outhouses for the boys and for the girls. There was an upstairs on this house, and sister had her slop pail up there. She used to go, and at recess time, she would come outside and just walk around while we played around. And apparently, she said, "Recess time is when you go to the outhouse, nobody leaves the classroom to go to the outhouse." I didn't understand what she was saying. I'm just a little girl, six-years-old. So, we go in, and then I put my hand up. I know that because my older sister was in the back of the room with the older children, grade 8s, grade 7s, grades 6, 4, 5 and the little ones were in the front by the sister's desk. And my older sister was in the back because she's older than I am. I'm in the front: I'm just a new grade 1. So, I held my hand up, and she said, "What do you want?" I said in French that I

had to go to pee. And she said ... I don't know what she was saying. So, my sister pipes up, "She's just telling you that she has to go to the washroom." And sister said, "No, because I said to you all use it only at recess time." Well good grief, I'm just a little girl. What the heck. And there were double desks that high, and we had to a wide desk with the pole here for the ink bottle. And I remember Germain Gregoire sitting with me, she was pretty. She was sitting with me. And I'm wearing a little skirt, so I peed myself. And it's trickling down onto the floor and going "klush, klush." And everybody was looking at me. And Germain jumps up you know. And she came at me; the sister just came at me. And she was great for grabbing me on the ears, just one spot. And that's why I have that.

SD: Really?

HO: Yes, I was just a little girl when she started and my skin—

SD: She actually created that extra lobe on the top of your ear like that?

HO: Yes, yes.

SD: From that? That's what that extra lobe is? Wow.

HO: Yes, and she comes running to me and grabs me and tells me, "You go and get the mop, and you clean that up." I'm just six-years-old, I go get the rag and I'm all wet, and I'm supposed to clean it up here. Clean up the seat so she can sit. "Now you go and stand in front of the classroom facing the class." So, I'm standing in front of the whole class, my little dress is still dripping, and I got to face them all. And they're all, like that, hey? How do you think I felt as a little girl? So, she hated me for some reason. And these people over here, Napoleon Lavallee, who used to live in Round Lake, had children that come to school, but it was so far, like 5 miles. These kids can't walk that far every day. So, they used to come in a little buggy and a horse. And then when they get to the school, they'd hobble the horse like my koohkom did. And let the horse graze around the schoolyard and everything. But if the horse shit in the schoolyard, they were forced to pick that up. And I was terrified of horses. And so, the horses are all around here, and the nun is by the bridle and she's petting it. And she said, "Harriet, come see the horsey," and I said, "No." She said, "You, come see." She said, "Are you more scared of the horse or the strap?" So, I thought, "Holy bang." She strapped me so many times with the strap that I thought I'll try to go pet the horse. It was summertime, we Métis people could go to school barefooted. So, I'm barefooted, and I go and I'm scared of this horse. She pulls the horse, and it takes a step, and the horse steps right on my foot.

SD: Oh jeez.

HO: Barefoot, and it just about opened the skin of its hoof. And it just swelled right up like this. And she sent me home, and I got to walk all the way to my home, and in pain, once in a while, I'd kind of crawl. And kind of hop on one foot, and finally I got home. My parents never said anything. The Métis people never protected their children in anyway. If anything happened, like the way she used to pull on me. I told

my parents about this many times. And they said, "Listen to what the teacher has to say." "How can I when I don't understand what she's saying to me?" I used to speak in French here, and then once in a while, I'd go home and stay for a month or two, three weeks. Over there, they spoke Michif. So here I am speaking Michif, French.

SD: So, French at your grandpa's, and you lived at your grandparents' most of the year?

HO: I went to school until I was in grade 7. So, I went to that school for 7 years. And then they built a new school. Let's see, the mission is here. The residential school, the river, the road, and right there was a little hill coming down this way too. And there are big hills here, where all the Métis lived. And right here, they built a big school for the Métis kids and a teacherage, that's where Mr. Saleski was our teacher there. And then we had at least we had electricity, heat.

SD: What grade were you in there?

HO: Seven. I left here and I started grade 8 there, but we still had outhouses.

SD: (43:05?) live on the reserve?

HO: I have no idea. I think maybe because my koohkom, Mrs. Laframboise was treaty Indian. Her name was Helen LaRocque and she belonged to the ____ Reserve. Or the Cowessess Reserve, that's where she belonged. And so, she was living in Cowessess Reserve you see. That was after my mooshom was not there, when I stayed with her. I guess that's when he passed away. She may have gotten back her treaty rights.

SD: Okay.

HO: And you know, they probably let her stay in that house because where else was she going to live?

SD: Did you ever live on any other road allowance communities?

HO: No, that was the only area because we moved from along the coulee to along the lake, and then we moved up this river. Helen Lavallee moved there. And then they built the new homes for the Métis people. I was 16 I left home, and I worked for a farmer up here, Zack Novack. I worked for the farmer, manuring the barn, watering the bull, and everything like that. And then I came back home. This is where our home was at that time. No, we were along the lake at that time when I was working for the farmer. And then I'd come home on weekends, and the farmer took his wife and his daughter to Grayson. They were German people. And he picked me up after I just got home. I didn't work on weekends, and he came on a Saturday, and he said, "We're going to do some butchering." I said, "I don't work weekends." He said, "Well we're going to do some butchering, make some German sausage, blah blah." So, I came with him by truck and here when we come in, he brought in a six-pack of beer. And I said, "Where's...?" I forget the name of the daughter and the wife. "Oh, they're going to spend the night in Grayson." He said, "Come on sit down and have a beer with me." I said, "I don't drink. I never drank in my life." Well, he tried to attack me.

There was a stove, their bedroom, my room was over here, and the girl's room was here. And I ran around the stove. He was chasing me. I ran into their bedroom and jumped over the bed this way, and finally, I made it into my bedroom. Quickly, I shut the door and locked it. And then I pulled the bed, the dresser, a chair, they fit right to the wall so that way if he tried to push the door, all this furniture was blocking the door. I was so scared. So, I stayed in that room. I thought that if I have to go to the bathroom, I'm going to pee right here on the floor. Darned if I was coming out of there because he might be outside of there. The next morning, he came to my door and he said, "I'm going to Grayson to pick up my wife and my daughter. I want you out before we get back." I said, "When are you going to pay me?" because he never paid me for the three months that I worked for him. He said, "We gave you some second-hand clothes. That's good enough payment for you." I said, "Okay." So, as he was driving his truck down the road. I looked out the window, and I saw him driving away, so then I took off for home. I told my mom and dad, "I can't go to work for that man. He's trying to make me drink beer and trying to grab me and I had to run all the time." I said, "Well okay. I stayed there." And so, one time, this friend of mine, Albert Desjarlais, it was ____, his sister, or her sister. Mrs. Albert Desjarlais, Julien's sister, Elizabeth ____ and her son Jack lived with them there on the Half-breed side. Originally, they're from Keeseekoose Reserve in Kamsack. But her husband died, so it was just her and her son. Her other two sons were gone and her daughter was gone. Just Jack ____ . Well, he came over to our house along the lake, and he said to my dad and my uncle ____ across the river, this was in the wintertime, across the river he's got a big house and they're making a dance, he said; "Can I take Harriet to the dance over there?" And my dad said, "You and who? because you're not going by yourselves." And Jackie said, "Oh no, look at they're all outside." They were all hiding behind the buildings, so they all come out when they heard my dad saying that. And he said, "Oh okay." So, there was a bunch of my cousins like Peter Pelletier, Frank Pelletier, Verna, Marie, and all them. And he said, "Okay but make sure you have her home no later than by 1 o'clock." Well, we all walked down this road, and then we passed the bridge because that was his Uncle Freddie's big house. So, we come across the bridge and the river continued past the bridge, down this way. So here we're making a human chain. We're all holding our hands and Jack is the leader. He's got a big stick and he's checking the ice as we're trying to cross the river to see if the ice was hard, strong enough. He's checking the ice and he fell in once, about this deep! We pulled him out. So, we walked along the shore again a little further and we tried there. We could see Freddie Wilson's house where the dance was. We could see the light at the window, across the field. So finally, we made it across. And it was so funny: Jackie was walking stiff legged because his pants were frozen. So, we finally get to this house, and they had moved upstairs. The kids had already moved upstairs. They had a heater upstairs, so he went up there. Jack went up there. He'd sit by the

wood heater to try and dry his pants. And so, we started dancing. He was a fiddler. Jackie was a fiddler.

...

SD: Did any of the people in your road allowance community own their own property?

HO: No. Gregoire had his own property. He owned his own property and like I said, mooshom and kooikom, Alfred Pelletier, but gave his property to Henry Pelletier, their youngest son.

SD: They owned some property?

HO: They owned it, but then when the lawyer made us all, sent everybody and they had to sign so we lost that land.

SD: How about anyone else who lived in Crooked Lake? Did they own their property, any of the other Métis families?

HO: No.

SD: So how did your family and other Métis families make a living when they were living in the road allowance?

HO: They had a community farm. I can't remember where they had that community farm. They would butcher pigs in the late fall because no one had electricity, so we did not have freezers. We depended on renters for our meat storages. They would butcher a whole bunch of pigs and divide them with all the families. They had wheat fields which they took and turned into flour. They took it to Grayson and, the Grayson mill and turned it into flour. All the families used to get two or three hundred pounds of flour. As for necessary things, like in the summertime, we'd get fish and the young fellas used to hook fish from that bridge. They had big, long poles, the young guys. When he was staying at ____Desjarlais, Jack Kakakaway and then Uncle Johnny Laframboise also lived there. I forgot about that. On the Half-breed side, Uncle Johnny Laframboise had a family of three kids, two boys and a girl. The boys, Frank and Peter Pelletier, they'd all go to the bridge a certain time of the year, and they'd have a big, long pole, and at the thinner part of the pole, they'd put up snare wire. And like you're going to snare rabbits. You know, that's how they would make it. And they'd stand up on the bridge and watch the water, and they'd see fish and they'd put their pole down there with the wire snare and would hook the fish in the snare and pull them up.

SD: They snared fish?

HO: Yes, and that's how they'd spend their days, when the fish were travelling down the river to go to the lake. They'd keep fishing, and they'd divide the fish among all the families, maybe two fish a piece. The fish that they used to get were big fish, and

then maybe two or three, depending on the size of the family. If it was a large family, maybe they'd give them two or three. And another thing was ducks. We had a dog. His name was Sleepy. He loved water. When we were living along the lake, mooshom and kooikom's son, Uncle Henry would take his gun, and you could hear him shooting all these ducks in the lake. And as soon as Sleepy hears that boy, he's gone. Down this little trail that my dad made. He used to go back and forth along the river along the lake to go to his mom and dad's, and then back home to our place. So, it was a thick little path along the lake and bush. Here Sleepy would take off and the next thing we see him swimming up the lake going to pick up ducks. And then Uncle Henry would come and pay the dog by giving us a couple ducks. And then rabbits in the winter and deer. Métis people were not allowed to hunt. Treaty Indians were allowed to hunt, but not Métis. My mother would put in a great big garden and every day after school, as soon as we get home, we'd go to the garden, weed it, hill the potatoes and whatever. Me and my two younger sisters, Isabelle and Madeline. I come from a family of 10. There were 8 girls and two boys, but they had already gone. As soon as you were 17 or 18 to leave home and get to work. There was only the three of us home then, and we used to work on this garden. As soon as we're done there, we had to haul wood for the stove. We had to haul water from the lake and fill up the reservoir on the stove for mom to use the next day. By then, it's getting dark, so we go in for supper and then we have to do our school work with a coal oil lamp. We'd have to sit at the table and do our home work and went to bed as soon as we're done that. We didn't have much summer holidays. During our summer holidays, we'd play house and we made little houses outside in the bush. We used to take sheets and hang them from tree to tree to make our houses. We never had dolls because they were too expensive, and a waste of money when they could be buying something else. Really, the only things that they ever had to buy were tea, tobacco, baking powder, salt, and sugar. That's about the only things they really had to buy because the meat came from the land. We had such a big garden, lots of carrots, and potatoes and turnips, and corn and stuff. We'd get a gunny sack full of carrots, and we'd trade with First Nations across the river for a deer. Or else we'd give them a 100-pound gunny sack full of potatoes, and they'd bring us a load a wood because it was getting to the point that the bush was close too home and they had no more dry wood for us to pick. For years and years, we'd been picking at it. It was all fresh trees. We had to start going further out up the hill which was really hard. Then my brothers would go out hunting rabbits. I remember one day my mom was in Yorkton hospital. She had had a thistle in her hand, and it went right in and infected it. She never did pick it out. Her hand was huge, so she went to the hospital. They kept her in here in Yorkton. And so now, there's me and my two little sisters and dad. My two brothers, Charlie and George were gone hunting rabbits, and they come home. It was dark already. Three gunny sacks full of rabbits they brought. Now me

and my little sisters, we had to clean these things. We got pretty good at it. Being winter, we used lard pails. They were not very big. They were red, and had a handle, and had "LARD" written on them with a lid. Every time my mom would buy lard, which wasn't too often because when they killed pigs, they'd get lard. You know, they call them, they call them lii gortons, which was like piggy puffs. Like pork rind and fry it, oh boy. So anyway, we had quite a few of those little pails. In fact, we used them for our lunch kits to go to school. For the rabbits, we used to do skin them, and then we'd keep the head, and chop off the paws. And then clean the guts. Now we'd have to chop the head off, but we already took the skin off, so the head was bare with the eyes. So, we'd chop the head off and we'd cut the arms, and then we'd cut the legs. And then we'd cut the body in half, threw the meat in these little pails. We'd go out in the snow and throw them in the snow. And then when it snowed, the snow would cover it or else if they didn't sink into the snow. We'd have to go sink them because that was our freezer. We didn't want the sun shining on them because it would spoil the meat. So, all winter, we had pails. In the spring, we'd have a big rabbit feast. We'd invite the whole village, and when it started to melt, we'd bring in every little pail we could find. Now there we are frying rabbit. People would come for Sunday dinner to help us eat all this rabbit because it might spoil. It was no good to us all by ourselves. So, my two little sisters and I, we did that. We cleaned these three bags. My poor little sister was small. Madeline was small then. And she had to help. So, then my dad came home, and he said, "Oh man, I'm so hungry." He used to have a word there and I used to laugh. When I was in BC, I used to say that word, in Michif to myself because I didn't want to forget my Michif language. I would have because our friends were all white people. My dad and I used to love that word. He used to say, "_____." Now to translate that into English, it means, "I am so hungry, my neck is broken off." So, when he come home, he said, "_____." And I said, "Well, I'll throw some rabbit in a pot. I'll boil some rabbit up for you." So, I just dug out of this little pail, we already cleaned the rabbit and cut it up. Of course, I just chucked it into boiling water with salt on the stove. And boiled it for a while, and when it was done, I said, "Well it's done, dad!" So, he come and sat down. I gave him the rabbit meat. With the first mouthful, I saw him go [makes crunching noise]. He's going like that. And I said, "What's wrong?" "Tastes green," he said. He said, "One of you kids didn't clean the rabbit very good. You left the shit bag in there!" So, after that, he went around telling the whole bloody village what we had done, and everybody would laugh and laugh at us. I said it had to be my little sisters because she's too small to clean it good. This was a big funny thing after. It was the talk of the town. So that's what we lived on: rabbits, deer, and in the fall, ducks and geese. And then at certain times, it was fish.

SD: What time of year was that?

HO: I guess that's when they'd spawn or something. That's like salmon: salmon go and spawn where they were born. Maybe that's what these ones were doing. But we were too young to understand that, but the boys knew what time, like coming home from church, and they would stop at the bridge. They'd just sit around and then see that they're starting to run. Then they'd make their poles with their snare wire. I remember one time, I set a snare for a rabbit, and that's when we were living along the coulee. I was maybe 10-yearsold. I set a snare right behind the house in the wintertime. Then early in the morning, I had to go to the outhouse. I went down this way, and I hear what sounded like a baby crying. My snare was over there. I went running over there, and here was this rabbit caught. I said, "Oh baby." I picked it up and it was scratching the heck out of me all over. I wouldn't let it go. I go running into the house, and I said to mom, "I caught a rabbit in my snare." She said, "Look at the blood." So, she grabbed it and rung its neck. I said, "Why you do that?" "Well, that's our food." I didn't want to hurt this poor thing, but it was hurting me. I remember that so well. How stupid of me not to let it go or just let it scratch me. Oh man.

SD: Of course. And your mom just knew what to do? Just wring its neck?

HO: You know, mothers back in those days, they may not have been educated, but I tell you, they were smart when it came to living. If any one of those old ladies, who lived with no electricity and no stores where you couldn't go and buy material to sew, if they were to come back and tangle with somebody now, let's see who could make a better living! Bring them. The people here today would not know what to do. I always say that, "What if sometime, one of these days the electricity completely dies?" In this world, a lot of people would die. Not me because I know how to live.

SD: Hey how did you guys preserve all that fish that they caught?

HO: They used to can them in jars.

SD: What kind of fish that was?

HO: They looked like suckers.

SD: Okay.

HO: Ed, what kind of fish did the guys catch along the river with a big, long pole a snare wire? Suckers?

Ed St. Pierre (ESP): Yes. That was the only thing you could ever see, and the bones, Holy Christ.

HO: But big, their bones were big. Not like these jackfish. They have small bones. These ones have big. They would can them in jars.

SD: That would last for quite a while, canned fish?

HO: Yes, and when they went shopping, another thing they used to buy was peanut butter and porridge. Man, you'd get so sick and tired having porridge every morning. Porridge, porridge, porridge, porridge. Some people, though, were lucky, they had a couple of chickens, and they used to get fresh eggs.

SD: Did you ever harvest duck eggs when you lived in the community?

HO: We went, yes. We went looking for duck eggs, and we'd cook them and eat them. Duck eggs and geese eggs. They used to eat mudhen eggs in Crescent Lake, but not us, in Crooked Lake. We never ate them.

SD: You just didn't like that kind?

HO: I don't know. Maybe the Crooked Lake parents didn't know that they were edible. Where as these ones in Crescent Lake were smarter and they knew. The mothers knew. They were so poor. And the mothers would know what to do to feed their children, they knew that. He was telling me that even his mother, because he came from a family of eight children, four boys and four girls, would make soup with some kind of weeds from the ground. I never went through that. Like he says, in his home, they had no floor, just dirt. Well, we never had that. We always had a board floor in the house. So, they lived different, Crescent Lake and Crooked Lake, although they were not that far apart. Even in their language, they had a little more French in Crescent Lake than we did in Crooked Lake. For instance, for a moose, he would say "____." That's French. And for us in Crooked Lake, we say, "____." Things like that. Or we would say "____" and they would say, "____."

SD: For your bum?

HO: Yes, somethings were quite different, and we lived not that far apart.

SD: Was there ever another name for Crooked Lake? I heard this term, "____."

HO: Oh, yes. Those were these people here in Crescent Lake who used to call it the, "____."

SD: I wonder what that is?

HO: What else was that they used to say when Michif were going to go to Crooked Lake? In the Michif way, what did they say? Crescent Lake people when they were going to go to Crooked Lake?

ESP: "____," they'd say.

HO: Yes, and then another thing too, the 89:10 or something.

ESP: "____", yes.

HO: Yes. "____" that means going down because them they're up here and it's a valley where we were living.

SD: Was there anything different that you noticed about Métis gardening from other types of gardening?

HO: Well, you know my mother canned or planted stuff that would keep through the winter in the cellar. That was where we would keep our vegetables. And the things that kept for a long time in the cellar, during the winter, were carrots, potatoes, onions, cabbage, and turnips. They never grew zucchini or melons. One time my mother planted

something that she didn't even know what it was. She didn't even know how to cook it and she just left it. I think she did that because we used to steal those things and

make dolls out of them. They were shaped like that, a little bit bigger one side, one way, and they have green skin and they're heavy. We'd steal her melons and we'd make some eyes, a nose, and a mouth. That was our doll. We would see the white people, the Criddles at the beach. They used to give us boxes of clothes. And because they also had cabins, and I guess sometimes when the Americans would come and rent the cabins, there were lots of times that they would leave clothes in the cabins. My mother worked cleaning cabins, but it was not much money and not year-round. Just after the season, then she cleansed them up and closed them for the winter. That was one way of working. My dad worked for the community farm butchering and working in the field, stoking and thrashing. We kids used to pick up beer bottles. In those days when you picked up beer bottles off the side of the road, you had to wash them. Nobody would buy them dirty like they do today. And with us being so poor for water, no running water in the house. We'd have to take them to the lake and wash them over there. We used to pick strawberries, wild raspberries, and Saskatoon berries. We used to use those little ice cream pails. I was talking about little lard pails. We used those to pick and sell them to the white people at the beach who were renting the cabins. They would buy the Saskatoons and raspberries. That helped get us through the summer. And by then, we started using our garden. Our potatoes would be ready to cook and for us to eat. So, we managed.

SD: What would you do with cabbage?

HO: Cabbage, you cook them, you make cabbage rolls.

SD: Michifs made that?

HO: Yes.

SD: What would you put in there?

HO: Meat, onion, and rice.

SD: They do that.

HO: Yes. And another thing was meatballs, lii boolets. You should have seen New Year's Day for the Michifs. They'd come to this house and this house. They'd get the table set and were cooking food like crazy. If you come in you'd say in Michif, "Happy New Year! Happy New Year!" And then you'd sit down and they'd serve your food. You eat, and wish a "Happy New Year," and away we go to the next house, and the same thing, again. Sit down and eat again, and you'd walk and go to the next house again. "Happy New Year! Happy New Year!" Every Michif home had lii boolets. When you were walking out in the December cold, surrounded by hills and snow, the whole valley smelled of meatballs. I'm not lying. When we were walking from house to house you could smell the meatballs.

SD: In the whole valley?

HO: The whole valley would smell. Yes, for sure. And so, you asked about the cabbage, so and then another way was just, I still do it today, just boil it. Cut the, slice

the cabbage, boil it, drain it, put butter on it. And a substitute instead of potatoes and rice or macaroni or spaghetti. Cabbage. With our meat and our vegetables, you know.

SD: How much were you at your grandparents? Did you live with them until you were in grade 7?

HO: Yes.

SD: And then, you'd just go and visit your parents for a couple weeks at a time?

HO: Yes, yes.

SD: And they lived on the reserve right beside the school?

HO: Yes, they lived on the reserve right beside Bannock School.

SD: The other question I wanted to ask, you used the word the "Half-breed"?

Nowadays, we use the word Métis. What would you call yourselves back then?

HO: Half-breeds. That's why I can't seem to get it out of my vocabulary.

SD: But yet, you spoke Michif. Would you refer to yourself as Michif people or Half Breed people?

HO: We're Half-breeds. We speak Michif. But today that's a no-no word. There's no such thing as a Half-breed. That's the word we used to use all the time. I can't seem to get it out of my vocabulary. Every now and again I slip and say "Half-breed" instead of saying "Métis."

SD: Métis is the new word.

HO: Yes, Métis is the new word. That's like buffalo, today they call them bison. The new word is bison, which is kind of crazy. I don't know why. It's the same thing, buffalo and bison.

SD: Did any of the men ever get in trouble for hunting, fishing and harvesting?

HO: No, no.

SD: They just didn't hunt deer then or what?

HO: They could not hunt because we had a game warden. Kenny Criddle at the beach was the game warden.

SD: Kenny Criddle, how do you spell that?

HO: K-E-N-N-Y. Criddle, C-R-I-D-D-L-E. Criddle. He was the game warden. He owned Sunset Beach. One time, we were living along the lake and my brother George, and I were going to go to the mission. There was a dam by Sunset Beach. There's Sunset Beach and there was a dam here. We could go across that way to come to the mission, too. It's a little closer than walking way around like this. Mom and dad weren't home, just my two little sisters, and George and I. So, we're getting ready to go to a picture show on a Sunday afternoon. It just so happened that my brother George looked at the lake, and he saw a pelican floating on the lake. The idiot grabs his gun, and he shoots it and kills it, and of course Sleepy our dog jumps and goes and gets it. And there were two pelicans, and the other one was flying around pecking at the dog on the head, but the dog won't let go. I said to George, "Oh my God, Kenny Criddle is down on the lake there." He can see our place clearly,

and I said, "Maybe we're going to get in trouble shooting for that thing." Sleepy is bringing the one pelican to shore already. The other one is still flying above over there. So, we're scared. So, George grabs it from Sleepy and runs to the house, opened the cellar door and threw it down there. And we take off, and he told my two little sisters, "When mom comes home, you tell her about that. Don't tell nobody else, just mom." George and I took off for the mission to the picture show. And after the picture show, we went home. It was dark. Well first, we set up bowling pins. We used to get 5 cents a game. The bowlers would pay us 5 cents for each game they played. So, we would set pins for maybe 5 or 6 games, and then we'd have enough money to go to the picture show, and then maybe buy popcorn and a pop or something. But this time, we couldn't. We didn't make enough to get popcorn, just enough for the picture show. After the picture show, we went home. It's dark already, of course, and they're sleeping. Here's a frying pan on the wood stove, a big frying pan. We opened the lid and there's sliced meat in there. And we're hungry so we take the sliced meat and some dishes, and we're eating. Mmm, tasted kind of like liver. Put salt and pepper and away we ate. And then the next morning we get up, and mom said, "Did you have something to eat when you got home last night?" "What did you think of that meal?" We said that it tasted like liver. And she said, "That's the pelican that George killed." We used to eat everything. My mother even ate a skunk one time. I don't know how she did it because a skunk has got that stinky stuff. How in the world did she know where to find it and take it off, so the meat doesn't smell? The thing that tasted the best though was porcupine. Porcupine tastes like pork. My most favourite wild meat was muskrat. We'd see muskrat right there in the lake, and George would shoot them, and my mother would clean them and roast them in the oven. Fill the cavity with onion and chopped up celery, salt and pepper and she'd roast it in the oven. My, that used to taste good. One time, my dad was in the hospital in Melville and these German people said, "Gee I wonder how these Indian and these Half-breeds can eat beaver and muskrat?" So, my dad said to them, "Well beaver and muskrat eat clean food. They wash their food before they eat it. But look at pork. A pig turns around and eats his own." They shut up right away. Yes, and everybody knew that we just loved roast. These were my godparents, Mike and Alice Flammont. Way out here. When their son, John would get some muskrat, she'd, she'd let me know somehow. In fact, I used to go and stay with them a lot, too, many weekends.

SD: Were they a part of Crooked Lake?

HO: Yes, Alice my dad's sister, and somehow, she would let me know that _____ "wants to see you." So, I'd go walking a long way, and I'd walk into the house. I'd smell onion and then the table was set. She even had sliced raw onion in a dish on the table. And I said, "You wanted to see me?" She said, "Yes look!" She opened the oven just in time. "They're all ready. Here are three muskrats in the roasting pan." I

would just pig out and we'd all eat, and then I'd go home after I'd helped her with the dishes.

SD: Your brother wouldn't get into trouble for hunting muskrats?

HO: No.

SD: You wouldn't get in trouble for hunting muskrats, but you would for deer?

HO: Yes, for deer.

SD: But the warden never bothered him for hunting muskrat or for snaring rabbits?

HO: No, either the game warden didn't know or didn't see, or he may have thought, "They're poor. What the heck." They knew us really good. My mom used to clean their cabins. He likely said, "I'll make like I didn't see this."

SD: Did he hassle other Métis for trying to do that?

HO: No, like even Uncle Henry would shoot ducks over there and the dog would go way out. Well definitely, he would see from way out at the end of the lake. He would see the dog way across. It never ever bothered him.

SD: The men didn't try to go out and hunt deer?

HO: No.

SD: They knew they weren't allowed?

HO: Yes, and they were afraid. They were so scared that if they ever got caught that they would have to pay a fine. And they have no money, and they would be put in jail, and their little families would starve. They were so terrified of that. They were terrified of the law.

SD: Can you think of any other resources that your family harvested like berries or anything else?

HO: Well, there's another story there. One time, I went to help my mother clean cabins, and I found a great big coin. I didn't know what it was, and I kept it. I never told anybody. I hid it. I kept it. Then this one time, we did not put a garden in, and my mom was sitting at the table, and she said, "Boy, I would sure like to eat potatoes." In those days, children were not like they are today. It hurt me to hear my mother wish for potatoes to eat. So as much as I thought of this coin, I was going to part with it to satisfy my mother's wishes. So, I thought, "I'm going to go to Criddle's store at the beach to buy some potatoes." So, I went in there and I said to Kenny Criddle, "I'd like to buy potatoes with this? How many potatoes can I get out of this?" He took a brown paper bag and brought out two potatoes. I said, "Are you serious? That's all I can get, just two big potatoes out of this money?" And there's two American men standing there, and they said, "Oh, I'll buy this from her. You give her two bags of potatoes. I'll pay for them myself." Then this other one said, "No, no, I'll give her three bags." They're both arguing. So finally, I said, "I don't care who has it, as long as I get potatoes." I took home two bags of potatoes. I was so happy to give them to my mom. I was so proud. She right away started peeling and cooking potatoes.

SD: What sort of traditional medicines were used in your community?

HO: You know it's really weird, in the valley the younger generation did not have traditional medicines. The old ones, like my dad's mom and dad, my koohkom and mooshom, knew these plants and had them in their homes. If necessary, the younger folks, my mother's generation, would go to the in-laws or to her mom and dad's or to the older people's places, and would say, "Look it. This is what's happening. My little girl is throwing up" or "has a stomach ache." And the old people would say. "Take this home and give it to them to have a drink." The only thing I remember is my mother using red wood. They still grow all over in little bushes; some of them are even big. They're little red sticks. And when I got haunted after my mooshom, my dad's dad, died. I thought I saw my horse that he had willed to me when he died. He willed me a horse. Mom and I were standing outside in the evening talking, and I saw my horse running. I said, "My horse is out of the pasture." So, I went running, and my mother wondering, "What the heck?" So, I was chasing this horse and across this road over here, because we lived in the coulee. We lived here and this is where I saw my horse. This was where koohkom and mooshom lived. My horse was running across the road and there was a gate and there was the pasture. I thought it was a pretty old horse. So, I saw him running. I was chasing him and I then picked up a rock from the road to throw at hit him. He goes further away from the gate, and that bloody gate was closed. My horse went right through the gate, and the gate was closed. I was nine years old, and the barbed wire cut me all to smithereens I fell on my back and the gate fell open, and one of those pins was stuck right here. So here I am lying on the ground, and it's getting evening dark. I'm trying to pull it and get it out of there, and it was bleeding. So I went into the house, and mom said, "What the heck?" all in Michif. I told her, "Didn't you see my horse?" And there's no horse. She was cleaning me up. She managed to clean these scratches, but that one wouldn't stop bleeding. I remember her running outside and quickly running to the red wood. She brought in a piece of red wood, and she skinned the bark and threw it in her mouth. She chewed it on until it was like a paste, and she put it on there. It quit bleeding right away. I remember that part. So that's the only home remedy that I have ever seen. The rest were looked after by koohkoms and mooshoms.

SD: Basically, all the koohkom and mooshom had that sort of medicine?

HO: Yes, they knew the herbs. The other adults didn't do this. I don't know if it's because the koohkoms and mooshoms didn't pass this knowledge on to their children. I don't know why the young folks didn't know. By younger folks, I mean my mom and dad's generation.

SD: Whatever became of the haunting? It just happened once?

HO: Oh no, we've been haunted lots of times in Crooked Lake. My Auntie Celina and Uncle Johny lived along the lake, and we lived at that coulee. Remember, I told you we could look down along the lake? Well auntie Selina had sent one of her children to come up to our house to borrow some sugar because they needed it for their

porridge the next morning. So, this young fella come up, and it was getting to be evening, and he said, "Come on, let's play hide and go seek." So, we're playing hide and go seek and it's getting dark. We're having so much fun. He's forgetting to go home. So, another one of the kids, Dominic, is sent up to come and call Gilbert to get home with that sugar: "We got to go to bed we have school tomorrow." We said, "Come on Dominic ____ and play." "Let's play, not very long, just for a while." So, then we started playing, the bigger fella this time come, Auntie Selina sent Peter. "You kids get the heck home with the sugar." So okay, they went home. Well, the next morning, we get up, mom said, "Get ready for school." And then mom said, "I wonder what's going on over there? Look the ambulance is down by Uncle John and Auntie Selina's house." We could see a couple cars by their house. And mom said, "Hurry up, you kids and go to school because I'm going to go down there." "Oh, can we go? To heck with school." "No, you go to school." So we went to school, and man it was bothering us all day at school to know what happened over there. But we had to wait until we got home. So, when we got home mom told us that Gilbert, the young boy, the first boy that was sent, died in his sleep. He was sleeping with his brother Frank, and I guess Auntie Selina said, "Come on kids get up. You've got to have breakfast and school, hurry up." And Frank said, "Mom, Gilbert doesn't want to get up. He's not getting up that lazy little bugger." So, she comes in after a while because she's busy making breakfast, and she said, "Gilbert, quite being so damn lazy and get the heck up." She shakes him and he was stiff.

SD: Oh gosh.

HO: He had died through the night. I don't know what it was. We had the funeral at the mission. He's buried at the cemetery at the mission. The school kids all went because he was going to school with us. Then a couple weeks later, it was time for us to go to bed, it was dark, and we've done our homework with a coal oil lamp. We now have to go pee and come in and go to bed. So, I went running outside, but I was scared to go to the outhouse. It's too far into the bush and it's dark. I thought, "I better squat right here on the road. I don't want to go that far. It's too dark." So, I'm squatting peeing and I'm looking around. Here I see a white figure way off on the ground by the outhouse over there. When we were playing hide and go seek, that's where Gilbert went and hide. Oh my God, it was moving, just like a white sheet in the wind. I was so scared I didn't even pull up my panties. I ran like a son of a gun to the house. I pulled them up when I got in the house. I said mom, "I think I saw something outside by the toilet." And she said, "That's Gilbert. He's just fooling around." A couple days later, my mom was working and she was hilling her potatoes along the bush. She could hear somebody go [whistles]. He used to do that to her many times when he'd come up to our house from his place. He'd come through the bush, and he'd whistle at my mom [whistles] like that. "Ah be quiet," she'd tell him.

Yes, we used to have a lot of that. I also have another, but it's a long story that one. I'm not going to say that one. It's too much of a long story. But maybe I should.

SD: It's up to you. Do you want to take another break?

HO: Okay. There were a few words we used to use in Crooked Lake that our parents always said to us. "Don't ever say that." We wouldn't even know what we're saying, and they wouldn't let us know what that meant. For instance, ____ we used to say, "Well, we don't know what that means."

SD: It's a swear word?

HO: It must be a swear word because they used to say, "Don't you ever let me hear you say that." At one time, the word "pregnant" was not allowed to be said in the house. We're supposed to say, "in a family way." My sister Martha, my dad and my mom were standing there, and Martha said, "You know mom, I think Auntie Laura is pregnant again." Oh, my dad gave her a backhand, split her lip. She said, "What did you do that for?" Mom said, "Don't say that. You're supposed to say in the family way." And then we're never supposed to laugh at old people or mock them. Well, there was a lady that lived across the river from us, and I don't really know her by name. But she had a nickname and it was _____. And we Métis girls used to tease each other. If we said something rather than saying "naahh," rather than saying that we'd say, "_____." Our parents said, "Don't you ever say that. That poor old lady will haunt you one of these days the way you keep using her name like that." But we didn't listen, every time my parents were not around, we'd walk around, and we'd still say, "_____." So, one time we went to the beach where koohkom and mooshom used to live. It was called Green Spot Beach. We went there one time. We were pretty big already. There was me, Erma, Joseph, and Francis. We were all cousins. Francis was a Perreault, and Joseph was Uncle Zach Flammont and Auntie Rosie's son and my cousin Erma, was Auntie Yvonne's daughter. Well, we went to Green Spot. We're so busy fooling around on Green Spot beach. It got so very dark, and when it's dark in Crooked Lake, I tell you it was dark. If it's cloudy, it's very, very dark. So, we said, "Oh my goodness, it's so dark. Let's get the heck home." So, we're coming down this road. You have to be careful or you're going to miss the road, and you'll fall down the embankment to the lake. So, we're coming down the road and there's a hill here, Thompson hill, and there's the road. And Auntie____, Rosie. A lot of people in Crooked Lake had nicknames. Auntie Rosie's nickname was Dodot _____. So, Auntie Dodot and Uncle Zack lived right here. They were Joseph's mom and dad. There's "____," we called it, Thompson hill. So, we're walking and it's so dark, and we're hollering and doing all kinds of things because you could hear your echo in the hills. So, we're saying, "Ah _____," because we're walking here. Holy man, we see up top the hill, a small little light. Brighter than anything you've ever seen, and it's kind of blue. It's so white that it's kind of blue. As we're walking, we all see this, and we all shut up with this _____. So, we start to walk fast, and there was the gate to Auntie

Dodot's house. And the door was here and there's the gate, and we start to walk fast, and this thing is coming down the hill and is bigger and bigger, and bigger. And the light was flashing more. It lit up the whole valley. We ran so damn fast. Thank God Auntie Dodot didn't have her house door locked. We jumped on her step, which was a stone boat. We jumped on this stone boat and turned the knob and ran right into, into the house and behind us was Francis Perreault, the one that lived by the bridge over here. Francis Perreault was at the back because he didn't run as fast as we could. By then, this thing was all lit, and Francis just fainted. Half his body is inside. We were so scared. We pulled him in and shut the door and Auntie Dodot was just sitting there. She said, "What the hell is wrong with you kids? You look like you've seen a ghost." We were so pale white, I guess. We said, "Do you know what happened?" So, we're telling her, "You guys were told many times not to use that word. Good for you. Now get to heck home." "No, can we stay here?" "No, because then your parents will wonder where you are all night and there's no way to tell them you're going to sleep here. We got no room." "We'll sleep on the floor even with our coats." Francis said, "No way." He was not going to go home no matter what. "I'll wash the floor for you rather than you sending me home way out to the bridge there to walk all the way." So, we said, "No Auntie honest. We can't step outside, we're too scared." Well, she said, "Do what you can. You're the ones who are going to get heck in the morning for staying out all night and you have to go to school." "In the morning you have to get up, go home and have breakfast, and then go to school." So that's what we did. My dad asked me where we spent the night and we said at Auntie Dodot's. We said, in Michif, we got haunted. We got haunted, and that's what happened. We were so scared. "If you don't believe me. Ask your sister, Auntie Dodot. But that's what happened." He said, "Well you guys better eat your breakfast, wash the dishes. and get cracking to school." You never heard that word by anybody after that. I've never seen anything like that. The light was so bright. It was blue and it was piercing, and it lit up by the time we were running here already. It was quite far down. And lighting, it lit this whole place up. We could run faster than we could see what we were doing then. That was something else I'll tell you.

SD: I bet. So, did you have anyone in your family that made beaded or embroidered moccasins or other items like that?

HO: Not in Crooked Lake. The only thing my mother used to do was embroidering. She had a white bedspread. She bleached flour sacks and washed them until that Robin Hood writing would come off. Now it was plain white, clear white. She would take the bags apart and then she would sew them all together. They had sewing machines. Just about every household had sewing machines. So, she would sew these big squares together and then she had a beautiful stamp. It was like a basket like that was full of flowers and then it had a handle, with big flowers in there. She ironed that right in the middle of this big bedspread, right in the middle. Now, she

had just plain flowers with ribbon tied like a ribbon with a big bow. She ironed it on the four corners. Now she had a lot of embroidery thread. In the evening, when the days were longer, when we had already got wood, hauled our water, cleaned the garden, did our homework, had supper, washed dishes, and there was still day light, she'd bring out this bedspread, and all four of us, one kid sitting here, and even my brother George would work on it. With needles and embroidery thread, we'd embroider the flowers, the basket, the ribbon and the flowers' stem. We'd be embroidering corner to corner. My mother would do just the centre one. My mother would do that. Once it was done, it was beautiful. She used this on special occasions. For New Year's, she'd put this bedspread on her bed, and it would hang over because it was big. On the top of the bed, she'd have to bend like this and cover her pillow like that. So over here, she did some fancy design too so that it sat on top of her pillow when she has her bedspread on. She'd take it off after New Year's. At Christmastime, she'd put it on again, and would take it off, and would put it in the trunk the rest of the time. That thing was still in the trunk when she died. I don't know what became of it. It was beautiful. And George, even a man did that, and Isabelle, me and, Madeline and my mom would do just a bit.

SD: So where would she get a stamp?

HO: Oh, you could buy them. You can still get them today.

SD: So, you iron on the stamp that leaves the image and then you embroider the image?

HO: Yes. I'll look to see if I can find it. I know I have one somewhere. Like this. I know I have better ones. I make pillow slips. But this has just animals on this one. See like that pattern? Then if you iron this onto a cloth all these little lines appear.

SD: Okay, of course.

HO: So, I still have a few of them. They're really nice. They're baskets of flowers. I think I'm going to make some pillow slips because I have made them before like at the end here. I embroider and then I crochet the edge.

SD: How did your family celebrate special occasions and holidays like Christmas, Easter, and New Year's?

HO: I told you how already about New Year's. At Christmas, we would go to midnight mass. Midnight mass was always at the church over here at the mission. We'd either walk in the wintertime across the river on the bridge, or some would hook up their horses on sleighs. We'd then catch a ride with them, if it was a big double box sleigh. I remember they used to put bells on their horses so when the horses were running, the bells were [makes ringing noise] all the way to the church. Then they would tie the horses until after church, and then we would go home. When we got home, Uncle John, my dad's brother, would come to the house and they would open a gallon of wine, and they would have a few shots of wine. They had violins and guitars, and Uncle John didn't know how to play violin, but my dad did. My dad was playing

violin and Uncle John was dancing and singing in French. Uncle John was like that. He had short little arms dancing. I've never seen that. So come morning, we'd open our gifts, which were mostly just stockings that we would hang at the foot of our bed. They would be full of peanuts and oranges, maybe a pair of socks or very little things. And the boys maybe had a little car, and there was a cheap little ring for the girls on Christmas day. And then we would have our turkey dinner and that was it. Christmas was over.

SD: Any thing around Easter?

HO: On Good Friday, we went to church and on Easter Sunday, we would go to church and would wear our best dresses. On Good Friday, we would fast. Nobody was allowed to eat. When we used to go to church, no matter when, on Sundays, Easter Sunday, we were not allowed to eat because you're going take communion. We were not allowed to eat or drink. We'd have to have a clear mouth for the host when you go to communion. Today, they have communion in the afternoon, and people eat. It's not the way we used to be. And another thing, unlike today, was that women had to wear something on their heads, either a kerchief or a hat. Men were not supposed to wear anything on their head to go to church. It's so different today. On Easter Sunday, when we come home, we would hunt for Easter eggs, and on the Saturday before Easter Sunday, we would colour chicken eggs. And that's about it, nothing much really for Easter. I remember Uncle Albert Desjarlais on Good Friday because he wouldn't eat all day. He'd get up in the morning, and he'd climb the hills. We could see him up on the hill. We could see him lying down over there having a snooze. And then he'd wake up and go for a walk again. He'd go sit on some other hill, all day long. And then he would come home when it was getting dark, and that's when he would have his drink and he'd eat. We used to make penance. On Good Friday, we wouldn't eat until dark. Once the sun was down, we were able to eat.

SD: Did folks to go to church all the time in your community?

HO: Yes.

SD: Every Sunday?

HO: Yep.

SD: And no eating on Sunday until you had the host?

HO: That's right. We wouldn't eat. Nobody ate breakfast. Nobody ate or drank anything. We just started getting dressed, started for church, walked to church, took communion, and then went home starving. There's this one couple, Clara and Gaspard Pelletier who lived up the hill. They had an old car. My goodness those cars are shaped like this. That's the kind of car they had. They used to come to our house every Sunday for lunch. I had a cat, named Tommy. He was so old, and in the spring, he'd go fighting for girls. Half his ear was frozen off or bit off by other cats and half his tail was bitten off by my dog. Remember at the beach where they gave us boxes of clothes? We looked in the box one time and I found a little baby cat with a little

curl in front. I found little undershirts, baby stuff in there. I even found a baby bottle in there. I made a swing for my tom cat. We never had cribs. Our babies never had cribs. They always had swings. I made a swing and I'd dress up my tomcat with a little cap. That poor tomcat would just let me do whatever I wanted. I Put this little cap on him and a diaper with his tail sticking out on the side and give him the bottle. I put real milk in the bottle. And he would lie on his back, and he would hold the bottle here, and with his back feet, he would hold the bottle and he'd be sucking away. When he couldn't get any more milk, he'd kick the bottle higher and he'd drink all the milk. I did that many times. My mother was so used to seeing this. So when Uncle Gaspard and Auntie ____ came on a Sunday afternoon, at noon, my mom said, "Show them what your cat does." I said, "Okay," and I went and got Tommy. I dressed him up and I put a blanket on the floor and Uncle and Auntie were sitting there while they didn't know what was being readied. I gave him the bottle. They said they'd never saw anything like it, and they laughed and laughed. My poor tomcat, I kept him for so long. I was just little when he was given to me as a little kitten. We grew up together him and me. I had him for 15 years. When I was about 15, I come home one day and I asked, "How come Tommy hasn't been home? It's not like him to stay away for seven days, usually for four or five days, but seven days?" That's when my mom said, "Dad had to shoot him." I said, "Why?" "Well, he's so old he couldn't even jump on top of that apple box," mom said. "Dad took him and went and shoot him." I said, "Oh well, he was just suffering anyway mom."

SD: Did anyone in your family speak Michif?

HO: We all did.

SD: You speak Michif?

HO: Mhmm.

SD: Do you know any traditional Michif stories or songs or French songs?

HO: Oh gosh, when I was working for the school board in Saskatoon, I wrote some songs. I wrote in Cree, because I speak Cree as well. I speak French, Michif, English, Cree, and Saulteaux. Because my first husband, Jack Kakakaway's mother stayed with us all years we were married, and she never spoke a word of English. It was all Saulteaux. So, when I first married him, I didn't even know a word of Saulteaux, but being with her 24-7 every day of the year, I got to know Saulteaux really good. Even my kids when they were little, she'd potty train them, and she spoke to them in Saulteaux, but when we left to go to BC, they forgot all about it. When I was working for the school board, I took up Cree classes because I had my own class, and it was one day a week. The Cree teacher would come to her classroom and all the students from all the classes would take turns to go into that Cree class, and I took my class to listen to her in Cree. When I first started, I didn't know anything about Cree, but I do now. We were playing bingo, and she gave us each a card, and she was calling in Cree. I don't know what she was saying. I was peeking at my student's card if I had

that number. But now I do. Then I made translated "Old MacDonald had a farm" in Cree. I went around from school to school and taught the school kids how to sing "Old MacDonald had a farm" in Cree. Then I sang "O Canada" in Michif. There's another song that goes "_____." That one.

SD: That's kind of like "Old MacDonald had a farm."

HO: Kind of that way, yes.

SD: It's a little bit different.

HO: Or else, "_____." And then, "_____", four times you got to say. So, I went around teaching my students that.

SD: Do you remember hearing any stories growing up? Any traditional stories?

HO: Yes, I know about Wiishakaychaak. There's another one that I used to tell the students, especially after I retired. They used to call me to go to so many different schools because I worked for St. Mary's School and St. Michael's School. Then after I retired, they used to send me St. Joseph's School. I'd teach the kids how to make bannock, and I told them Wiishakaychaak stories, and I taught them how to sing "Old MacDonald had a farm."

SD: Do you remember any of those French songs your uncle sang?

HO: Just that one.

SD: Just that one.

HO: Just, _____. I don't know right through Uncle John, oh my gosh.

SD: I wonder where he picked up that.

HO: I don't know, maybe from his dad, because he was a French Métis. Hi dad was French and his mother was Indian. Whereas his wife, Koohkom Thérèse, her mother was Indian and so she was Treaty, but she never had her Treaty rights. Maybe he got that from Mr Laframboise. He may have had these French songs when they got together, way before I was born. Koohkom and Mooshom Laframboise, way out where my godparents lived, had a house. That was way before I was born. They had a house in the shape of a cross. Their house was made like that. On Christmas, I guess all the Métis people celebrated Christmas there. My older brother, Charlie _____. I come from a family of 10 children, and my brother Charlie is the second oldest. There's Marvin, and then there's Charlie. He's way older than I am. He had a dog, and a sleigh with the sides. He'd harness the dog onto the sleigh with jingle bells on it and pretend horns. He'd come from the village and go to koohkom and mooshom's and they would hear the bells jingling when at Christmas time at midnight, after they get home from midnight mass. His friend Charlie would go with his dog and a few little gifts for koohkom and mooshom in his sleigh. That's where I heard this from. They had a cross house. That's where the celebration was with all these people. It must have been koohkom and mooshom Laframboise who knew how to sing songs, and that's where these men learned them from, from celebrating Christmas in this cross house.

SD: Where was this cross house?

HO: It was on the Métis side. Yes, on the Métis side close to where my godparents lived. The river is here and the reserve is this way. The Half-breed side was this way and then there are the hills. And now this way is Ochapowace, and this way the Cowessess Reserve is here. And then it's Ochapowace and then the river, and the field and the Ochapowace farmers. Louson's, mostly Louson's. Uncle Frankie Louson and his sons had farms there.

SD: Would you care to share any Métis stories or songs?

HO: Well, there's the Wiishakaychaak story. It's on a CD from the Gabriel Dumont Institute. There was something going on one time, and we had professional photographers there, and all the Michif-speaking Métis people were the only the ones allowed to come into this room. And everybody had a story and had to say it all in Michif.

SD: Okay good.

HO: And the photographer took pictures all day. Maybe I can just do the "Old MacDonald" song because the kids used to just laugh at me when I first would start off, but then they would really want to try to learn after. So, I would just go in front of them and I'd say, "Old MacDonald" [sings]. And then it's the same way for everything. Like "Old MacDonald, _____ They would laugh when I would go like this. That's what they would laugh about. And then, they'd be just laughing. Then I'd sing right through, and I'd tell them there. Now, we really try to learn that. So, one day, I had to be at Batoche with my husband on Aboriginal day. I taught in Michif. I had a class in Saskatoon at the Friendship Centre. I used to teach adults to speak Michif. So I started teaching the adults how to sing "O Canada" in Michif. I said, "Well we'll do that for Aboriginal Day. We'll do that, but I couldn't be there." I had to be in Batoche. Rachel was so interested in learning Michif. She is Michif. She got pretty good at singing "O Canada" in Michif. I said, "Okay, Rachel you will be the leader with all the adult students." "So down by the river, where they celebrate Aboriginal Day," I said, "you'll be singing 'O Canada' with the rest in Michif." Apparently, it turned out so good because they also used some of my students from the school singing in sign language. Some people are signing "O Canada" in English and some in Michif, and the wee children used sign language. They said it was so good. I said "Aw." I wasn't there. I was over there. I guess a lot of people were asking, "Where did you learn to sing the national anthem in Michif?"

SD: So, what are your best memories about living in the road allowance?

HO: I guess my best memories are the fun I used to have. We would babysit my cousin Verna's siblings because she was the oldest, and she had quite a few children, and Auntie Yvonne used to go regularly to Regina. And every time she went, I would have to come and help Verna look after the children. We used to have so much fun. We'd be singing because there were no houses close by. We'd be singing all these

old songs as loud as we could, but we'd put a twist on those kinds of songs. We used to have so much fun, other than having to start preparing food to feed the kids, and get them ready for bed and that. Yes, I used to enjoy that. I used to stay at my godparents' place and only John and Marie were home, most of their kids had gone and left already. My godmother she loved me.

We used to go digging wild turnips. They'd grow all over the hill. They're called, lii navoo" in Michif. In fact, that's what we still call them, even when we're speaking English. We would just say, "Remember the time we used to go dig lii navoo?" We never used "wild turnips." So, we'd go digging lii navoo. Marie and I we'd look for the navoos and John would have the digger. So, we'd say, "Hey there's one here!" So, John would come and dig the navoos. They're all sizes, small, big, small. And one time, they took a big _____ root from me. They made me cry. I was just little. That's when I was staying at Koohkom Laframboise's. They made me cry because they took my _____ away, and I was fighting them. I guess in those days, I used to wear a little navy-blue tam all the time. They took my tam away because I was fighting with them. And they hung it on barbed wired fence up there on the hill. And I'm crying. I come down the hill all the way down the hill crying to come to my godmother's and tell on those kids for what they're doing. My godmother said in Michif, "Wait until they get here." So, when they got there, oh man was she ever mad at them. She smacked their butts. I'd be laughing, and they would just be so mad at me because I got them in trouble. And I said, "Mon tam, mon tam up there on the fence." And, she said, "You get up there and you go get her tam." So, they'd have to go get my tam. Marie's a couple years older than I am, and we still talk on the phone. She lives in Calgary. And one time, Marie was mad because I got them in so much trouble, and she said, "You know what? We have some old boxing mitts somewhere around here." "We should box." "Okay." So, we found some rope outside their house. My Maareen (godmother), Paarean (godfather). We made a square, and we went in there, and put on these boxing mitts. First, it was me and John. John was quite a bit quicker than me because he's older than Marie, and Marie is older than me. So, we're boxing like a son of a gun. I don't know what I did. I think he fell and I kicked him, and I made his nose bleed. Marie got so mad at me for bleeding her brother's nose. "Alright," she said, "my turn." So, she took the mitts off John, and John had to go clean his nose. Marie's skinny, and me, I was always fairly chubby. She put these stupid boxing mitts on. They're so old that the padding was worn thin. We started fighting, and she was hitting me on the face so many times with her boney knuckles. I could feel every hit through those mitts. My face was so red from her hitting me so many times. I'm trying. Anyway, I went in crying. My godmother asked, "How come your face is so red? Marie hit me lots of times." Marie said, "Well, she gave John a nose bleed, so she deserves it." I told Marie, "After the licken you gave me, I should give you one right now, you're older than I am." She said, "Maybe I could still beat

you?" Yes, I sure love to eat some navoos. I hadn't eaten them for years because I was in BC for 20 years.

SD: I've never had that.

HO: They're the shape of a carrot, only white. They're white, not orange. The peeling comes off as easy as a banana. The meat inside is pure white and is sweet. It tastes like a crunchy turnip and has the same texture as a turnip except they're sweet.

They're very good. My goodness, I used to think about them when I was in BC. I used to think, "Boy, when I move back to Saskatchewan someday, I'm going to make sure I go to the valley and go and dig some navoos. One time, my sister Martha, she was old and sick already. She was living here in Yorkton. And I said, "You know what, let's take a drive to the valley. I'm going to go look for navoos." took a shovel and away we went. But she was too sick already to get out of the car to come climb hills with me. So, I parked down here by the road, and she sat in there. It just so happened that I wore a long dress and a hat and it was windy. My hat kept going off, and I'm climbing up the hill. And I gotta chase this stupid hat and I'm looking for navoos. I never did find anything. I got cold just wearing a dress. I don't know why I did that. I should have worn pants. Well heck, I can't find any. So I went back to the car, and you see I had _____ about 12 years ago. They gave me a radiology surgery through my mouth, and they tipped one of my nerve endings. It hurt so much when I moved. I don't know if they clipped something else, but since that time half of my face is dead. I don't feel anything on this side. That's 12 years ago now. Here it's different now. But I got used to the dead more so than the pain that I had when I had the _____ God, that's painful that _____. It's here in an instant and then it's gone, but it's so, so excruciating. So anyway, I got in the car, and I said to my sister, "Ah it's too cold. I should have worn pants." So, I started to drive to come back to Yorkton and I happened to look in my rear-view mirror, and here's a damn wood tick walking. Here I had been talking to her, she's sitting here, and I'm talking. Quickly, I pulled to the side, and I pulled this wood tick. And I said, "How come you never told me? I talked to you and you looked at me." She said, "I didn't see it," and she said, "Well don't you feel it. Well, not my face." That's all I got out of it was a bloody wood tick. That was the last time I tried to go and get navoos. I was telling him about it, and he knows about navoos. So, he said, "We'll go. They come out in the spring, just as the crocuses." Crocuses are the first plant to come out. There's still a little bit of snow here and there, and you'll see the odd purple crocus. And then as soon as those little bits of snow are gone, then you'll see the navoos start to come out. Like the _____ are a green plant, but it has hairy leaves. You can easily tell which is _____. So, we're going to probably take a ride down there this spring, to see if we can get some navoos.

SD: So, are there any bad memories from living in the road allowance?

HO: No, no bad memories. You know for Halloween, everybody went Halloweening, even the adults. No just little children, but by gosh you would have to walk miles. The houses were not close together. You'd have to walk miles to go from house to house. Seemed to me every Halloween I was pregnant. One time, I put on my husband's long johns, and I made a big nose. Anyway, there was a car coming. There were not very many cars in Crooked Lake. There was a car coming from the reserve. We were afraid of someone in particular. I'm not going to mention names, but some particular people who lived over there. If they were drinking, we were terrified of them. So, we thought it might be them so when we saw the car coming, we ran up a big steep ditch. And up top was a barbed wire fence. I couldn't fit between the fence, so I just had to lay there. Then there were some Boudins, Fidel and Philomene Boudin. They were very stingy, stingy people. We'd go there for Halloween, trick or treat, and they'd give us one lousy sucker. How far we would go just for one sucker. So, the next year, we thought maybe they might give us more, if he doesn't, we're going to do something to this guy. The next year, we go and he gave us one chiclet. Those little gums in a little box. So, we said, "You know, he always has a nice wood pile, sawed just even for his wood stove, and it is stacked up nice and straight". We said, "Maybe, we can knock that wood pile to smithereens, if he doesn't smarten up?" But we didn't have the heart. We couldn't do it. So, we just continued with our one cent sucker and our bubble gum, the one with the little comic in it. Another time, that's what he gave us for Halloween. We used to have a lot of fun. I don't really have any bad memories.

SD: And you spent a lot of time in Crooked Lake after your children were born?

HO: When my child Beverly was born, and then Joe was born in Broadview Hospital. And Rob, Patsy was born in Melville Hospital. And then Barry was a very, very dangerous birth. We were living at Lawson farm on the reserve over here, Lawson farm. And they're talking about the weather forecast. There's going to be a large plunking of snow and that maybe the roads were going to be closed up. And my sister, Mary and her husband in Yorkton had just won a brand-new car at the bingo, and they came to Crooked Lake to see mom for New Year's. But they were late. They came about the 3rd of January. And I came from the reserve to my mom's to see my sister and her husband. So, I'm over there, and they said, "You know we're going. We're not staying long. We're afraid we might get snowed in." And I said, "You know sis, I wonder if I should get a ride with yous to Melville hospital? My baby is not due." I said, "Christmas Eve, we went to midnight mass, and I had worked hard that day at that house." Fred Lawson got a new house, and they moved into their new house, and we got their old house. I said I washed ceilings, walls, washed clothes, and my little kids are there. There's no electricity, it was a nice moonlit night. My husband said, "Well, we'll go to midnight mass. I'll go the barn and I'll hook up the horses to the sleigh." I said, "Okay. I'm done all my work, so I'll run to the

outhouse." I am in the outhouse and it being such a nice bright evening, with the snow and the moon, so when I saw blood and I'm pregnant. I'm seven months pregnant. I thought, "Oh good, I'm not pregnant now." I just let that be. I never told my doctor or anybody. I just wore pads. I told my sister Mary I had been wearing pads since Christmas Eve and it's now January the 3rd. "Maybe, I'll get a ride with you? I'm afraid," I said. "The baby's not due until February." They dropped me off in Melville, and they left, and Dr. ___ was running his car outside. He was going home, but he recognized me coming into the hospital. He came in after me. He said, "I thought I recognized you. What is it this time, Mrs Kakakaway?" I said, "What else, I come to have a baby." But there was a big epidemic going on, some kind of flu. The hospital was full. So, I said, "If the hospital is full, I'll go with them to Yorkton. They live in Yorkton. They got a brand-new car, and they can take me to Yorkton hospital. I told him about this already, and he said, "Why didn't you let me know right away?" I said, "I don't know." And then he said, "You're not going anywhere, even if we have to put you in the hallway." So, I stayed there. "It was very dangerous," he said, "the afterbirth was ahead of the baby." I had to lie still. Otherwise, I'd bleed to death. They spoon fed me, and I'm telling you it was a horrible, horrible thing. And then, he had to get somebody to sign giving permission for me to get surgery. And I said, "Maybe Auntie Philomene. She's on the second floor." "No," he said. "She went home yesterday." "Well, Auntie Seraphine..." "She went home." I said, "Nobody then." He said, "Is there anyway we can get a hold of your husband?" "He'll be going tomorrow to the mission for mail and maybe milk or something for the kids." He waited and sure as heck, the doctor came and saw me the next day. While he was talking to me, the nurse come running in, and she said, "Doctor it's Mr. Kakakaway on the phone." So, he ran to the telephone, and he tells him to get up there as fast as he can because he has to sign otherwise, we can't wait any longer and we both die. So, my poor husband, with no roads from Crooked Lake to Grayson, walked 12 miles in the snow. So, when he got to Grayson, he went to the bar, I guess to warm up. He told this young fella, "I got to try and make it to Melville my wife is having a baby, a very dangerous surgery." And this guy said, "I'm going. My wife is having a baby, too. I'm driving there right now. You can catch a ride." So, he caught a ride. Boy, they had me already in the operating room, so the minute he walked in, he signed, and they cut me. The nurse gave me a needle here to put me right out. I heard say "Start counting from 100 backwards." And so, I started, 100, 99 ... I shut my eyes. I didn't want to see anything. I was too scared. I heard her asking Dr Malek, "How old is she?" The doctor said, "Never mind how old she is. It will be a miracle if we can save them both." Boing, I went out with that

SD: Holy shoot.

HO: Medicine hey.

SD: Wow.

HO: I came to and they were putting me on my bed, and they tied my hands down. After, I had a baby. I couldn't lie on my back. I feel smothered. I have to lie on my side. When they're tying me, they got me on my back, and I was feeling smothered. I come to a bit, and I looked around and I saw white figures all over." I thought because that thing was still on my mind, what the doctor said. I thought, "Oh that's angels and that's clouds or whatever." I said, "Where's my baby? "The doctor said you had a fat bouncing baby boy. He's in the nursery." Boing, I went out for two days. And I couldn't see my baby for a week because I couldn't, even lift my arms. I wasn't allowed to.

SD: Jeez.

HO: So that time just before, before my husband phoned, my water broke through the night. I pressed the button, and she came in, and "I said, I think my water broke." So, she lifted the blanket and she took off out the door, and I thought, "What the heck is going on? Although I'm not supposed to move, I peek. There was blood from one end of the bed to the other. I wasn't allowed to move. That's Barry. He's living now in my house in Pike Lake. People in the hospital, white, German, farmers' wives they were saying, "You are lucky you have Dr. Malek for your doctor because he's a good surgeon. He's not very good at sicknesses, but he's a good surgeon." And so, Auntie Nancy, who was at the place, that we were living at, she told me, "You know what, the kind of birth you went through?" She said a cousin of mine in the States went through the same thing, and she died on the operating table. So it was very dangerous. But I had one more after that, Dean.

SD: How were the Métis treated in Crooked Lake by the surrounding community or non-Métis people?

HO: You know we were treated okay because the way we were brought up. We highly respected white people. We were even shy about our food. We didn't want the white people to see what kind of food we ate. One time, we were living along the lake, and we had this big garden and the road was here. My brother George came with Milton Criddle. He was the beach guy's son. They came to the house, and we saw them coming down this little trail across, across our garden. One of us kids said, "Oh here comes George. Oh, he's with Milton." We were eating. There was me, Isabelle, Madeline, mom and dad. Dad said, "They're coming here?" We said, "Yes." "Oh, hide the bannock." So, mom quickly jumped up and grabbed the bannock and hid it in the cupboard. We thought the world of white people. We thought they were something great. They were better than we were.

SD: Really?

HO: Yes, it's just recently that white people could see our bannock and our rabbits. After Dean graduated, and I left Burnaby, I went to look for a job in Williams Lake. I couldn't find one, so I went to Prince George, and I found a job working for First Nations people. I worked at the Indian Friendship Centre. There, the workers said,

"Well we have to make quite a bit of bannock, and we have to fry quite a bit of rabbit because there's quite a lot of people that come every week." There aren't that many Native people living in Prince George, I thought. So, I just happened to come downstairs from my office upstairs, and I see this white nurse and so I went in. And she said, "Where's the bannock?" I'm so shy. Holy, I've never heard that! In comes a white cop and the cop, said, "Well, I hope the bannock and rabbit are ready." I took off upstairs, I was shy. Shit, I guess they've been doing that for years. Yes, we really respected the white people that's for sure.

SD: Did your family ever encounter racism from the larger community?

HO: No, no.

SD: So, when did people leave Crooked Lake?

HO: Well, the older people, like my mother's age, their children started to grow bigger, and they were not having any more children. Their children, not like today teenagers can have babies any old time and they're well accepted, but not us. For us to have children, we would have to get married, and have a family, but we're all related. We're all related. And besides that, the boys were leaving really fast because they had to get out and go to work. They had to make their own living. Most of them used to leave and go and work for farmers to begin with. And then the majority of them went. Now all their children were gone. And they're left out there in no man's land, nothing except for the church, the hall, the residential school, and then the store. They're worried because they're getting old and sickly, and they don't have that much good transportation to go to the hospital. So, they all got ready and moved to cities; mostly, they all hit for Moose Jaw, and Regina and Calgary. That's where they all moved to. The odd one went to Winnipeg.

SD: Was your family involved in the 1885 Resistance?

HO: Not my people, no, no.

SD: Did any or does anyone in your family serve in the military?

HO: My brother, Charlie and my sister, Sandra. She left home at a young age. She got sick and so they took her to Weyburn hospital. And she was there for about 5 years. She went crazy. And she was well enough to come out, but my parents had no way of going there to get her. No money or anything, so they left her. The nurses there talked her into joining the navy. So, she joined the navy and was a nurse in the navy. She lived here, and she lost contact with all her siblings and her people. Somehow when I was living in Burnaby, BC, I found her. She was living in North Burnaby. She was living there, and I found her. I told her about our siblings over here. So, she came to visit and met everybody, all her siblings. And then about 12 years ago she came to live with my sister Martha. And then after being together for two years, they didn't get along, and so she moved out. She got a place right by the casino over here, and she rented that place and lived there for about seven years. Her kids are all in BC. She was getting pretty sickly, so she said she'd like to go back

to BC. About three years ago, she went back to BC. She is now living in Richmond where her kids live.

SD: So, she served in the military? And your brother Charlie served also?

HO: Yes.

SD: Did he just serve for a couple of years or?

HO: I think my brother Charlie served 13 years. He was fully covered when he passed away. He died in Vancouver, and I was living in Burnaby. He was a proud man. He had his own business working outside. You have to go to Sechelt, and then from Sechelt, you have to take a water taxi to go to his bush camp. His wife was a cook, and they had bunk houses for their workers. I went and visited them one time, and I took my six little kids by boat. What a beautiful place: you look out the window, and you see the ocean. And you see sea lions and whales. He bussed his workers up that mountain. That's where they were clearing lumber. He took us on his bus because it was a long weekend, and there were no workers there at all. We went and got all the mattresses. My brother George was living in Sechelt, and he had seven children, and I was living in Burnaby and I had six kids. We hired two water taxis, and we had 13 kids plus Charlie and Kay they had two. There were 15 children, little babies, all sizes. They went into the bunkhouses, went and got the mattresses, and threw them all on the floor. We had wall to wall kids sleeping on the floor and we slept there too. And he put us on the bus, and we drove way up the mountain. He said, "See over there? That's where we're working." He was such a proud man. They made such good money. They'd come to Vancouver to do their grocery shopping. And when they did, they'd shop for a couple thousand dollars worth with carts and carts and put them on the plane and went back to the bush. They had to because they had to feed the men. And then they broke up and then something went wrong, he hit the bottle, and she went her way and he hit skid row. I didn't know that because he and I quit communicating for some reason, and then somebody phoned me from Calgary. Uncle _____. His woman's dad in Calgary phoned me and told me that he heard Charlie died. And I said, "Where?" He said, "Over there in Vancouver." I said, "I'll have to find out." I got on the phone after I talked to him. I thought, "How am I going to find this out?" I told the police that I heard that my brother died. He said, "Well, did you phone the morgue to find out?" I said, "No." He said phone and find out. I phoned the morgue and sure as heck, he died, on skid row. I had to get a hold of all my siblings in Regina, and I had to put him on a plane over there and ship him to Regina. That's where he's buried in the soldier's cemetery in Regina. The army paid for everything. The only thing I paid for was the temporary cardboard box that they put him in from Vancouver to Regina.

SD: Did he go overseas at all or?

HO: I don't know. These guys they never talked about soldier life. I don't know why. Even he doesn't.

SD: And his name was Charlie Pelletier?

HO: Charlie Rollo Pelletier.

SD: Did anyone in your family, were they involved in the Métis society at all?

HO: No. No.

SD: Do you have anything else that you would like to share about growing up in your community?

HO: No, I think that the nice thing about growing up in Crooked Lake was that we used to have dances, my brother George, and not Charlie because he was away. My brother George used to take me to dances, and mostly on the Indian reserve because they had big houses. The Métis people had small houses. We borrowed a house over there and got together because we got along well with the First Nation people. The First Nation people and us Métis and the white people, we all got along like we were one big family. Some of the boys across the river, they'd talk their parents into lending the house and then they'd let us know, and then we'd go to the dance. We used to have lots of fun. I wouldn't get heck when I'd get home from the dance because I'd be with my brother, and we'd both get home at the same time like you know.

SD: Well, thank you so much.

HO: My brother George took the part of my mother's German heritage because he had blonde hair, blue eyes, and was very fair. We'd go to this one dance him, and we got there late. We walked up across the bridge, across the river, and up the hill. Where they had that dance, they're dancing. These two old ladies used to make sandwiches for the dancers. They were nice, the owners of the homes. They helped us out. These two old ladies were standing there, and we're standing at the door. These poor old ladies were saying in Michif, "What are we going to feed them? We used up all the bannock. No, we used up all the bread. There's some bannock in the cupboard over there. So now what?" This one said in Michif, "Well maybe, we'll cross the field over there and borrow some bread from her." And this bugger understood everything damn thing. Standing besides, he was not saying anything. He was just standing there. Just watching everybody dancing. I felt so sorry for those old ladies. I gave him a shove and he started laughing. He said the old people, "_____." He told them, "Don't worry about it. Me too I eat bannock. He said, "I grew up eating bannock, and I understand. We speak the same language." And they were so embarrassed, they took off. So, I said, "See what you did? We are not going to be fed."

SD: Thank you.

HO: Otherwise, it was very good living. There was no alcohol at these dances, and we still had so much fun. It was hard work, but we had to survive for the winter. We had to help mom and dad prepare. My dad was not that healthy. My dad had had polio and had a shortened leg. He limped when he walked. There was no way he could go

into the bush and haul wood or haul water. But he did his best work for the community farm like thrashing. He did a lot of that, and he did a lot of stoking. In those days, there were no bales like you have today, you had to stoke. Stoking and haying, they did all that.

SD: Square dancing at these dances?

HO: Square dancing for sure. I don't hear anybody calling square dances anymore. All the people that I knew who used to call square dances are all dead. They're all gone. I was telling Jeanne Pelletier that my sister-in-law, she was married to my brother George, they had seven children. They're the ones that were living in Sechelt, BC, and when we went by boat. Their sons are all working. They had two daughters. The rest were boys. They're all working in Regina. What handsome looking boys. Man, they're handsome. I was telling Jeanne [Pelletier], "You know Jeanne," I call her Anna. I went to school with her, and her name has been Anna all her life. The only time is when it's business, she called herself Jeanne. So, I said you know, "Anna, all the square dance callers that I've known, they are all gone now." Norman Laframboise, my first cousin, Uncle Johnny Laframboise's son from Moose Jaw, he just passed away. And so is Jackie, my first husband. And _____. They're all gone. I said, "Now, we don't have anybody left." She said, "I call square dances." And I said, "You do?" I said, "You know what, you should try and teach some young Michifs because when you're gone, then it's gone forever. The younger folks will never learn." She said that was going to talk to Karon Shmon about that. I talked to Karon already. We went and saw her last week. And I told her about square dance. I said, "The callers, they're going. They're going. The only one I know is my sister-in-law."

SD: Well, I'll turn this machine off now.