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HIGHLIGHTS:

- General reminiscences of her life.

Alex: The following is an interview with Clara Pratt of Gordon Reserve. The interview is being conducted in the home of her daughter, Rose McInnis, in Mississauga on July 4, 1983, by Alex Cywink. As opposed to Tape One, this one took place entirely within the livingroom, and therefore external noises were diminished.

Clara: I've been over there about, over thirty years.

Alex: So you worked right in Churchill?

Clara: Pardon?

Alex: You worked right in Churchill?

Clara: My husband was a carpenter, a saw filer, a cabinet maker, a glazier. He was master of about four or five different trades. And he got around \$11., \$12. an hour. Eight hours.

Alex: Did he work eight hours a day? So you took all the

kids with you when you moved there, then?

Clara: Well, I had to, I had to look after them -- they were all small. And he used to tell me, "My, Clara. I can't but admire you," he says. "You have reams and reams and reams of stuff that you could put into a book," he said. "And I think your book would sell for more than \$15. a book," he said. "Easy, that," he said. "Your book should be better than mine," he said. He said, "You've lived what you tell me." But I never bought me a tape recorder; I'm thinking about it, though. I may be old but I think I can still remember a lot.

Alex: What did you usually do in Churchill when you lived there?

Clara: Boy, I had plenty to do! I had grandchildren to look after, and... Oh, my goodness gracious! Let's stop talking, okay?" (tape stops)

Alex: You were going to tell me how busy you were in Churchill. You were talking about Churchill. Like what did you do while you lived there?

Clara: All my housework. I had a lot of help though. My daughters all helped me. And I did practically all the cooking at our house. And I had a number of children, grandchildren. And my place used to be chosen for children coming in from the Indian reserves up this way, like, Gordon's, Day Star, Muskowekwan, up that way, all the children from there. You know, those just came so far. The children from north of where we were, up in the, way up in the Arctic Circle, some of the kids came from. And some of them came from all along the Hudson Bay they came down to Gordon School. And when they were brought down, they would be picked up all the way on the shore, you know, children would be sent down to Gordon School. When they'd get down to Churchill, they were always brought to my place for me to put them up at night, because we had a big house, big upstairs. And we had another house on one of our other quarters. And I used to go and sleep in that one with the younger, or the older boys and girls. I slept in -- there was two rooms in it, and I slept right in the middle, at the door, and I watched. (laughs) And the little ones were in the house with my grandchildren, my younger children. And I made good money housing kids that went back and forth from school.

Going out to the holidays and going down to school in Saskatchewan.

One time I had about twenty-eight kids that were going back up north for their holidays, and I had to make beds for all those kids. My girls had to have a lot of girls in their bedrooms, and the boys slept on the floor down in the living room. The army lent mattresses -- I never had enough mattresses for those kids. The army lent me both mattresses and blankets and things. And cook! I used pretty well all... well, I made cream of wheat and rolled oats cereal for breakfast, and a lot of these dry cereals for whoever wanted it. I got my supper

done by that, quickly, you know. I had them all have supper by... and I got the men's supper for, breakfast ready first, for my husband and my son. To go and work in the army, I got up and got their breakfast, they had breakfast about 6:30, 7:30 and then they went out at 7:30 to the work, they got started work at 8 o'clock. And I had to have lunch for them, too. You know, they came from camp. I gave all the people, working men their lunch first, and then after I got school children. I had school children for about a week, because there would be a storm and you couldn't go on the water in big storms. High, high, waves -- canoes and boats would easily be capsized. And some, they had beautiful boats, those boats just riding on the waves. They'd go down and they'd go up, up and the waves would go like that, you know, and then they would follow the wave down and when it come down they'd keep on going. My, I didn't think they'd ever reach the other side, big waves. I kept them fed and I made two or three big boxes of lunch for them to take on the boats going up north. I spent a lot of money but I made a lot of money. And I used to do a lot of bead work. I used to sell bead work. Make Indian parkas, make embroidered parkas.

Is that a man holding a little child? This statuette. It looks like it. This one here, that's the one, the big one, yeah.

Alex: It's one man carrying another.

Clara: Holding another.

Alex: Yeah, carrying another on his back.

Clara: A child. A child, I guess, eh?

Alex: Maybe.

Clara: Yeah, I sewed and sewed a lot when I was in Churchill. I made dresses for my girls, blouses, and skirts, and everything. And for my boys, I bought all their pants and shirts. I had two washers, I had to -- I had such a lot of washing.

Alex: Did you have all like running water and electricity?

Clara: No. We had to have water hauled, barrels filled, and I had to heat that water on the stove. So it was a lot of work.

Alex: What kind of stove?

Clara: Eh?

Alex: What kind of stove?

Clara: Cook stoves. And cook stoves, I'd put big pots of water there for the washer, and get the washers all were started. I had three big pots and I'd get my boys to empty

them into the washer -- I couldn't never lift very well, because I've always had a lame arm. Day before yesterday I was bad with that arm. I had to lift wherever I put it. And it would start paining from up here. Oh, and this finger and this thumb were the ones that got the worst. Gee, they pained.

Alex:       So how long did you stay in Churchill?

Clara:       We worked there about thirty years, twenty-four, twenty-five years. Twenty-five years I guess we were there.

Alex:       My husband worked in the army camp there until he was retired. He was retired at sixty-five, and he couldn't stand it. "Hell, this damn lazy life," he'd say, "no work to do, damn lazy life." He says, "I'm going to go and sign up for work again. See if they'll take me." And they asked him all kinds of questions and they gave him a thorough check-up. And they said he had the stamina and vigor of an eighteen year old man. They said he was sound. He had absolutely... his heart was like a heart of a young man, sixteen years old. He had a thorough cardiograph, x-rayed on his heart and tested, and everything. And they sent the results to Winnipeg; they came back "A-1+". He's always lived a clean life, always lived a clean life. He drank a little, but not much, though. He didn't take it every night; but some nights he'd take a little shot glass before he went to bed. He'd take that again in the morning -- it acted like a tonic I guess. He was always healthy. Always ran long distances -- five miles, sometimes ten miles. An hour and I don't know how many minutes it took to run ten miles, and five miles around between twenty-seven

and twenty-eight minutes to go five miles. Good, eh? Of course, the world's record was (inaudible name). He ran five miles in four and a half minutes, a little better than half the time my husband took. My husband was a good runner.

And he never got up in the morning without having a darn good wash, no, yeah, he washed in the morning before... Then he'd outside with the kids, and they'd do breathing exercises. I can remember every time I looked outside the door my kids, all my girls, were doing the exercises, especially deep breaths. I can remember some of the deep breaths, and hold your breath, punching your lungs. He said that opens the cells in your lungs and your lungs are healthy. And the doctor said all his callisthenics and work and things that he did like running, and boxing, and wresting, and that, all helped with his lungs every day of life. He had a long life. He's eighty, now, he'll be eighty-one on the 29th of October. Another three or four months, if he's allowed to live that long, he'll be eighty-one, same age as I am. I was eighty on the 19th of April. Is that running?

Alex:       Yeah.

Clara:       Well, I suppose every person has a hobby. A lot of you boys have running for hobbies, wrestling. That helps your long life. If we didn't do those things we wouldn't live

nearly as long as we do. I used to work like a man many a time when my husband was overseas. I used to milk my cows, and I used to make hay, feed my cows, and water my cattle. I used to have to go and pull water out of well with a rope to give my cattle and horses water. Boy, that was tiring. I used to have muscles in those days. Now I have nothing, all loose flab. I've been so sick, you know, and tired, and played out, many

times, last four or five months. I thought I was going to die before my husband, several times.

Well, I guess my time wasn't up, I didn't die. Everyone of us have a certain time that we're going to live. When the big boy up above says, "Come, it's time for you to come up", we can't say no, we've got to go. We're all slated when to go. You believe that, too? I used to think I'd only live till I was forty-five. There used to be a story going around when I was a kid. I'd hear the women talking, "Well, you know I don't expect to live more than forty-five." All the old people used to say that the mother lived as long as her mother lived, so I thought I'd go when I was forty-five. Look -- I'm still here. Life is a great thing if you don't weaken, and you hold your courage. I used to be a, what do you call them, a practical nurse, on our Indian reserve. And whenever there was any sickness, or the doctor needed help, they'd come and get me and I'd go. Especially with the women. I worked with the women a lot. I brought into the world about, over eighty, between eighty and ninety infants into the world. Most of them were Indian; there were some Germans, there were some Hungarians. And the Hungarians and the Germans paid me the best. The doctor that used to come and get me to go and look after anybody, all those people, over sixty people I looked after on the reserve, women. And those poor people trying to scrape up something to give me for working for them, for nine days -- I never asked my patients till nine days after. And one woman gave me a sewing machine. Oh, I hated to take it. I said, "You need it too. You have a lot of children, grandchildren, and grandsons, and your own daughters." I said, "I can't take this sewing machine." "Well, that's the best we have in the house to give you. Something that's the best thing. It's a good one mind

you." "Oh, definitely," I said. "It's (inaudible) stuff it's made with." But I said, "It would be nice of you to keep it, because you have lots to do with your children. And you have your husband's overalls and stuff to patch on the machine, and you're working all the time, you can't... You cook the meals, too, for all your big family." So I went away without it. Good gracious, about a week after, two weeks after, they came to the house, her husband, and he bring in this sewing machine.

Alex:       And what did you do?

Clara:       What could I do? I couldn't make them take it home again. They wouldn't listen. They would unload and they'd leave it on the ground right there. So the man asked my husband to come and help me with the machine, to bring it in the house. So I had it for years. Every time the doctor would

come to me, when he'd leave, I'd look at him, hoping and hoping he'd give me a few dollars, you know, for my work on the reserve. I worked that thirty years without one red cent from the Department of Indian Affairs. And the people noticed it -- they tried hard to give me things. One man gave me a horse, another man gave me a wagon, somebody else gave me a set of bobsleighs. They gave me a lot of valuable things when I worked with their women. But not the Department of Indian Affairs, mark you. One of the professors in the big universities once said, "The biggest underworld in this world is the Department of Indian Affairs." And you could see that it was, too.

Alex: Well, how exactly could you see it?

Clara: Pardon?

Alex: How exactly could you see that that it was that way? Like, what were the conditions on the reserve?

Clara: It was plain to see. Everybody could see that we didn't get what we were supposed to get. Now, these new houses that are going up. As well as a new house going up, they get a grant for furniture and things to use in the house -- I never got that. And this is the first new house that I'm getting. I've had other houses, two new houses, but my husband and I cut the logs, my uncle hewed the logs, and my husband and uncle erected the logs, lumber. And then they got lumber from the Department of Indian Affairs, and windows -- that was it! They had to make their buildings... And our house on the reserve was very well built. My husband and my uncle used to, you know, when the logs were dovied-in, they are called it like that -- certain way they were cutting there. And see how they meet? And then there was not many seams to fill up with cement and that, mortar. Most Indians used mud and they said it was much warmer than the concrete that they wanted to put in.

Alex: Did a lot of people build their houses that way?

Clara: Yes, all of them. Well, some had just, I don't know, just hewed out one, I guess, and just like that. But my husband cut his all out. See? See how it touches each place? That was cut, and this here was cut, and the one on this other thing, that was cut too, so that they fitted, and that was called dovetail. All my uncles were good at building houses, log houses. And my own dad used to be the carpenter, to put the window facings in, and the window sills, everything, fit in the window sills. We had no, well, my dad used to, if there was a broken window, he always fixed it. Took the broken one

out and measured it and got more panes to put in, he always fixed that. But my hubby here, he made the whole frame for the army huts. All the frames, he and my son made, and they bought glasses to fit. And where they were smaller windows, they cut the pieces that broke into the right size, and they saved the government a lot by doing that. They could do it -- my husband could cut glass and so can my son. He learned everything, my

son did. And only my son was a quicker worker than my dad, and my hubby. My hubby was quick, mind you. He could do work, and he did thoroughly, and so did my son. My son nearly killed himself working. Any time at all he would go up to where my son was working and sawing, you know. And the water would be dripping right off his face, and no shirt on, and it was running down his body -- he really worked, that boy. Everybody that come, "Why do you work so hard?" "Heck, I'm paid for this." "They don't know if you're working." "But I know," he'd say. That gave them a good answer. He was honest in his work, he killed no time. A lot of men used to smoke a lot while they were working -- not my hubby and not my son. They used to take ten minutes sometimes to smoke, and that was it for maybe two or three hours.

Alex:       What did you do after Churchill?

Clara:       After Churchill, when he was retired, he couldn't stay up there and not do nothing. So he was lying one day on the couch, and he heard a request from way up in the Circle -- Arctic Circle. They wanted carpenters; they were going to build a church, and they were going to build a school. He just jumped up, he was just excited. He told us, "I'm going to the camp." He says, "First thing in the morning I'm going with the car that picks up the men. I'm going to go and put my name in

for the Arctic Circle." And he did and he had already quit two years ago, working, when he was retired. He went up there and that's the time that he got a thorough examination. He went eight o'clock in the morning and he didn't come back till in the afternoon about four o'clock. And he was busy all that time, going from room to room, x-rays and all that, and everything, getting a real check-up. And he got his cardiograph done there, too. His heart and everything x-rayed, and everything he got. And they sent the results to Regina -- they didn't have the things to use to test the cardiograph machinery, pictures that it took, you know. They didn't have that to examine, so they sent all that to Regina. About ten days after the results come back. "Mr. Pratt has the heart of a young man seventeen years old. He's got a strong, strong heart." And that was what we were scared of -- that he might have heart trouble. Sometimes he's (huffs), you know, and we thought he had heart trouble. But it never affected him after, unless this is after effects were what they were. But I think this stroke that he got the end of June, my son and I all thought that he had sun stroke. And he had that stroke in the night between ten and eleven o'clock, and you would swear that somebody picked him out of bed and threw him onto the floor. He could talk for a while. But when he's, you know, when he had all the muscles tightened and pulled and everything, he couldn't talk, he still can't talk. But they all say that he's going to talk some day.

Alex:       Did he get accepted to go to the Arctic Circle?

Clara:       Pardon?

Alex: Did he get accepted to go to the Arctic Circle?

Clara: Oh yes, he got accepted and he worked up there for seven months at \$14. an hour. He had to come home, some fool dropped a log on his foot. He couldn't stand on it, he had to be sent home. Oh he was mad, oh he was mad. He always said, "I hope I never see that so and so." He says, "He'll get a fist full of fist," he says, "and he'll feel it for a while." Oh, he was mad. That quit his work. And then he made little sewing cabinets. The first one was made for me; the second one was made for my oldest daughter; the third one was made for my daughter that had the radio program, "Our Native Land" -- she got one. Poor Rose didn't get any, neither did Margie. And he always said, "I'll make you one before I go away, before I go." Now he can't, but when I told my son that, I said, "Your dad promised Margie and Rose and Dolly he'd make cabinets for them, too." "Never mind, Mom," he says, "I'll make them. There's a pattern here in the house," he said. "My sister's cabinet. I'll follow the measurements of that and I'll make one just like it," he says, "for Rosie and for Margie." He sold those little cabinets -- they were only about eighteen inches by sixteen. He sold those little cabinets for \$60, and he didn't ask for \$60, that's what people came and... And one man wouldn't take less than \$100, wouldn't let him take back any money. But he got good work for anything that he made. And he made another thing. He made, he just made it -- not for himself, just made it. And he had a good friend that always invited him Saturday afternoons, go and have a drink with him. He made him a beautiful cabinet, whiskey cabinet, a place to put all kinds of whiskey in, and another place to put all the tumblers, the big tumblers, and the medium size tumblers, and the shot glasses. Boy, it was a beauty! That man lives here in Toronto that he made that for. Rosie? Rosie?

Rose: What?

Clara: Has Wayne there still got his liquor cabinet?

Rose: It's not really a liquor cabinet, it's a safety cabinet. To keep all his precious things in there. Yeah, he uses it to keep his precious things in there.

Clara: I'm talking to him.

Rose: Well, that's what you're supposed to be doing.

Clara: I'm telling it like it is.

Rose: Well, okay.

Clara: Okay, bye-bye.

Alex: Did he do that as a hobby afterwards, make cabinets?

Clara: Yes, that was his hobby. That's why he could give

them away to anybody. Nobody supplied him with any material or anything. He made so many little things. He sawed my butcher knives all around where I was working, you know, cooking meals. He never said a word, took off. Two or three hours he came with a big board -- it was shaped like that, tapered it down. It was a knife rack to put your knives. Boy, was I proud of that. And he made all kinds of cabinets, he made cupboards, and cabinets, and everything, and they were all perfectly made, well made. And he made beds, double-deck beds. He made about nine double beds like that in the Toronto Friendship Centre.

I sure haven't got the idea of putting all of my, what I'm saying, into paragraphs, have I. You'll sure have to do some sorting out.

Alex: Oh yeah.

Clara: But you can get it straightened out and that.

Alex: I'm lucky I get to hear this all again.

Clara: Yes, that's right.

Alex: Did you stay in Churchill much longer after that, after his accident?

Clara: After, we stayed in there about thirty, over thirty years in Churchill. Then we left, and where did we go first -- we went to Victoria.

Alex: Oh, out in Vancouver?

Clara: Went to Vancouver and we stayed there for six or seven years. And from there we came back, and we moved to Toronto, we worked there a lot, too. We'd do things for people, repairing things for them. We always had something to do. And the last -- ten years ago, when we were in Toronto, he had a birthday. It was the 9th of October, so I wondered what I'd give him. And I keep hearing him saying, "Gee, if I had a power machine I could work much quicker," he'd keep saying, you know. "That's what I'll buy him." (Whispers) So I saved some of my money from my Senior Citizen's cheque, I saved up to a \$190. And at that time I was playing bingo quite a bit. I

went to bingo and what do you think? I won \$350! That would buy a nice big power machine. So one Saturday morning he says, "You know, I'd like to drive around a bit today." He said, "I'll go and hire a taxi, and we'll go for a drive." I says, "What for, honey?" "Well, window shopping," he said. "We'll go driving around, looking around." And I said, "Where are we going to?" "I think we should go to Simpson-Sears first," he says, "to see what's there." That's where I bought that saw. That man wasn't asleep. I think he knew I was saving money. But he took me to Simpson-Sears. And I was looking at other things, you know, that I thought I might buy -- dress goods and that, you know, I was looking there. And he says, "Come with

me, I'm going down in the basement." "What you going for?" "I don't know," he said, "I'm just going down to look around." And we came down the stairs, and what do you think we saw first? Carpenter's tools of every description. He says, "There must be some saws down here!" he says. We went a little further, we turned a corner and there was a long string of saws from a small saw right up to the biggest. I bought the biggest -- it was five hundred and some odd dollars. I always had money in my purse because I always won bingos. I used to win bingos, \$900, \$1,000 -- three times I won \$1,000, and three times I won \$1,500, and from \$900 down every number -- seven, eight, nine, ten, right up -- I won jackpots. So I always had money in my pocket. And I bought this saw. It was \$550, plus the tax, plus delivering it to my house. So it was about \$700 or \$800, you know, for the tax and that. And I said, "Let me have a look at your list. Mark them all, what each is." And he marked them, tax, income tax. And I started to put a stroke through, over the tax, you know -- on the provincial tax. I marked right across. I says, "I.D. -- Indian Department, no tax, Indian status." That was the first thing I was really

thankful I could talk for myself. And he says, "But you have some tax to pay." "Pardon me," I said, "but we do not pay any tax." I says, "That came in the first Treaties." And I said, "You cannot seize anything from us, we're exempt from seizure." Oh, I just quoted the Treaty all along, you know, because my husband's grandfather interpreted the treaties, so I was pretty well read on that. I kept quoting all the way down. I got that saw delivered to my door for \$500. It took off all these extra things they were tacking on. And he said, "Overtime, I have to pay overtime, too." I says, "To heck with you!" I said, "I wanted the price you said that you were going to take." I counted out my money, I said, "Give me a receipt, please." He gave me a receipt. Boy, his face was just beet red! My husband just grabbed a hold of me and kissed me, he was so happy.

(END OF SIDE A)

Clara: Here I am in Toronto and I see so much native art. It makes me fell really proud that the Indian is coming up in his rightful place now. There has been artists for years and years, way back in the 1700s there were artists. When did they ever get publicized? Never! Never! My husband has a sister and she has three artists, men, in her family -- three sons, and she had two who carve. And they can carve anything, and they're always cut down away. It's shameful how much they'll cut down when they try to sell something. It's just the same old story over again. Sometimes ridiculed, you know, they laugh at the Indians playing with sticks and cutting them up and that. But that same stick turns up into something beautiful -- an animal, a person. I had one little piece that was carved by my nephew. It was an Indian dancer and it had

feathers, real feathers in the top of his head and the beads painted onto his head. It was a beautiful little piece.

Naturally, I lost it. Everybody that came into my house had an eye on it, and admired the different pieces of handicrafts that I had in there made by my nephews. I lost it.

There was only one thing that my husband bought. We went over there and visit our nephews and one of the boys said, "Uncle," he said, "I want to sell you something, cheap," he says, "I won't charge you a lot." "What do you want to sell me? Show me," he said. And he brought a carving, of what? A buffalo head. It was out like this, that buffalo head, and it was on a flat piece at the back. And then he said, "Here, uncle," he says, "give me \$5." A buffalo head! You could just see where the hair was lying on the buffalo head right down to its neck, and over the end of the piece of log that he was carving. And we took it up north. And an artist up there who appraises art, prices them and grades them, he saw that. "Mr. Pratt," he said, "could you sell me that?" "Oh, I don't know," he says, "I don't know what to charge." "Would you like me to appraise it?" "Yes," my husband said. He looked in his pocket and he pulled out \$75. "Leave it there," he said, "this is mine." "By golly," he said, "you'd give me a lot for it." "It's worth a lot," he said. "Look at this," he said. He started pointed out the fine parts in its head. You could see the hair, you know, the neck and the way a buffalo looks on is something like a moose. Pointed everything out, and the shape of the body. The shape of the buffalo is large at the top, his rib cage is large and he gets smaller as he gets to the back, and a little short tail. And all these things were pointed out by the artist, because we had other things there. I had a small buffalo full size like, you know, the body, whole body. And he held that one and he held this big buffalo head that we had.

It was about that size, I guess, that buffalo head. And he looked at it. "Oh," he says, "oh, that will never go out of my office," he said. "That's mine," he says. He has it yet. I forget his name now, but he appraised it and that's what he said it was worth, because we only \$5 for it. And we told my nephew, "That's too little," he said. "You don't know how to price your work." And my nephew says, "No, uncle, I don't." He says, "I don't know how to price work." "Well, why don't you put half a decent price on it?" "Uncle," he said, "I never paid to learn how to carve, I was taught, I guess, by somebody from up above," he said. Now wasn't that a nice answer? "I didn't pay a cent for what I know," he said. "That's why I don't feel like charging too much for anything that I make," he said. Now that I thought was really Christian. He knew his help came from above. And he said he dreamt about certain, lot of pieces, part he dreamt about. And he'd get up in the morning, he'd start looking around for some satisfactory piece of lumber that he could use and he'd carve. That fellow would sit there from before breakfast right till he couldn't see at sundown, carving. And he nearly always finished a piece a day, that's how good he was at carving.

Alex:       And your husband?

Clara:       I would if I had the money to turn out. I'd go home

and I'd just... With the way he prices stuff, I could take \$1,000 and buy stuff that would sell for about \$5,000 or \$6,000. There's money in that. Especially for me, because I would get exceptionally low prices from my nephew. I would put my arm around him, "Gee, Sanford, that's too cheap." "No auntie," he said, "you know my work, I don't. All I can be is thankful for what I can do," he said. "And I am," he said.

"When we get hungry," he said, "I sit down and carve something and go for groceries in town. The stores are glad to take it from me," he said. "Because they get good prices for my work." And I said, "Only when you get hungry?" "Well, no," and he laughed. "I know," I said, "You're in the beer parlor, too, after you sell a piece of carving." "That's right, auntie," he said, "but I feel I earned it when I made something."

Alex:       What did you do when you were out in Vancouver, out in Victoria?

Clara:       My husband worked.

Alex:       Still worked?

Clara:       Yeah, he worked till the day that he dropped from the stroke. I'm telling you, my man worked like a forty-five, fifty old man. That day that he died, he walked two miles, him and his son, and they went and dig a garden. And in the morning -- they went in the afternoon -- in the morning they tried to set up an outhouse, because the chief wouldn't buy us facilities for our bathroom. And they finished that little outhouse. It was made by the carpenter at the shop and it was brought to our house, and they had to dig the hole and put it up solidly. They put that up in the morning -- that's quite a lot of work. And before they started digging themselves, it was dug about a foot deep. And this fellow that dug it had never done any manual labour, any heavy work, and he took a heck of a long time to dig a foot deep for the outhouse to go over. So my husband and my son dug by turns all morning. By noon, when I called them in to come and have lunch, they both came in breathing hard, hot, sweating, and everything, you know, tired. And I said, "My lord, what have you people been

doing?" He said, "Well, have a look out of the window at the head of the basement," he said. "Look out of the window and see what you see." And there was the outhouse put up out there. "At least we have something decent to go to," I said. "Since the chief won't give us anything that we're supposed to have," I said. We were entitled to it, you know. My husband and I, senior citizens, new houses, we were entitled to good facilities for a bathroom. And a few days before he took that stroke he came and he took out the pail, to go empty it out in the toilet. "You know what, old girl," he said to me. "No, honey. What's wrong?" He said, "I wish they'd give us an outhouse, toilet facilities for the bathroom." He says, "I'm beginning to feel the weight of that pail. I have to rest a couple of times before I get to the outhouse," he said. "Oh, honey, don't say that," I said. "It's true," he said. "I'm

beginning that I can't carry those big pails of water out." Because we emptied our wash water in there too. And they were pretty heavy -- five gallon pails. Oh dear. There's a lot to life. Maybe that's meant to be like that. (laughs) You know I wouldn't, I'd cut a round piece of board and I'd put a screw in the centre and put it there and it would keep this round at the end, one of these (inaudible) at the end of that. That would be nice, you know. I've got a creative mind, too. (laughs) What time is it?

Alex: Four o'clock.

Clara: What?

Alex: Four o'clock. Were you busy this afternoon?

Clara: No. I'm sitting still having my hair done. But it costs \$40.

Alex: It looks really good. I think it was worth it.

Clara: And I didn't have to pay for it, my kids gave me for a present. Tom gave Rosie money to pay for my Toni, my...

Alex: Perm?

Clara: Paid \$40. for it, paid for the taxi down and back. They've done so much for me and it never cost me a cent. I'm begging Rosie every day to take me home. She finally gave me an answer this morning, she says, "I'll take you home on Wednesday." And she said, "On Wednesday, I can only stay Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday," she said. "Maybe Saturday morning I'll come home," she said. "I'll pay your way home, too." And talk about things that she has given me, and she's not done yet. She's going to give me some large beads that I can make these collars with, you know, on different things. And she's going to give me thread -- I pay \$9 for those big cones of thread, seven, eight, nine thousand yards. I used to do a lot of needle work.

Alex: What did you usually do with the stuff you made?

Clara: Pardon?

Alex: What did you do with the stuff you made, your bead work?

Clara: I sold it all. That was my money. My husband and son didn't have to give me money when I sewed a lot, including

for my kids, I didn't have to buy it in the store, just the material. Oh, I helped a lot in the making of the home. I made quilts. And one of my daughters, two of them at home, made thirty of these last winter. And they get up to \$300. and \$600 for one of them. She made one that she got about \$1,200. for -- a set, for a chesterfield. Not this kind a (inaudible).

When she measured it around it was twelve feet -- that's how long they wanted, twelve, thirteen, fourteen feet long, because they wanted to put (inaudible) down on each end, and to touch nearly the floor -- that's a lot of crocheting. She got that one made and she got two of these made for chairs, and she got two, four, six cushions made -- she got \$500. just for making them; she never bought the material. The material that she got -- dollars, and dollars, and dollars worth of yarn -- a lady in Saskatoon bought it, the colors she wanted her... she wanted variegated -- that's all colors. Here is variegated -- that is all one skein of wool. It starts with a dark, feeds down into the pink, then finally white. All these colors are like that. Look. You know, blue, yellow, and turquoise. And this one is done with two colors -- blue, and white, and red.

But, you know, it's nice when you teach your kids to do things. When my kids were little things -- the girls were four, six, eight -- they were stringing beads and trying hard to make necklaces, and they worked at it until they succeeded. Those girls have made a lot of money with bead work -- Rose, Margie, Dolly, and Bernelda. And they all do bead work. And Dolly, the oldest one, made a wedding dress for some people in Victoria. She made the wedding dress for the girl under her slip, and she made \$500. on that dress. And she did it in satin and then an overlace, and that lace is all beaded with about 15,000 beads on it. My, they say she made a beautiful

job of the wedding dress. And she never asked for how much, see, they just handed her the money. That's good, eh? So I always tell young mothers, "When you have little girls, don't throw away or burn up pieces that are cut off. Just cut these stringy pieces off and give them to the little girls. They'll learn to make patterns, three cornered patterns, or something. Let them make a little doll quilt."

I did that all my life to my girls, and everyone of them can bead work and dressmake, and make men's beautiful shirts, they make. All out of all these scraps and stuff -- I'd make a pattern for them, you know. And they'd use, they'd cut things out, they'd start to make it. They did beautiful sewing when they were small. They'd see who could do the smallest sewing and that's the sewing. Like sewing that is always commented on -- how tiny and neat their sewing was. But as I say, it pays to help the kids along, no matter how small they are. If they want you to tell them something, don't turn them away. Explain it to them and show them. And boy, first thing you know they're doing things like that themselves.

And it comes useful when they're in their older years. They can dressmake for people, they can earn money by dressmaking and that, making fancy cowboy shirts and that. My girls used to get \$25. for shirts. They'd buy the material -- it only takes three yards for a man's shirt -- and they always made them two-toned, like cowboy shirts, you know. They always looked beautiful. And my two little boys always had nice shirts on, the ones that I raised. One is still living, he's a

grown man now, and one I lost when he was twelve years old -- they always had nice shirts. And we made them.

There's nothing like trying to do something at home, that you don't have to pay somebody else to show you how, and everything

like that. It's best for them to learn under their mother's tutorship. And when mother teaches her little girls like that, she's proud of them in later years. "Who made your blouse?" "I made it myself." And they made pretty blouses for themselves. Pretty skirts, dresses. And they make things that are worth something. They are well made, and they buy good material, and you couldn't buy things like that in the store. They'd probably charge you \$2, or \$3 for making a shirt or something, somebody, or \$5 if you got a good price. And that's saving money, beautiful clothing for very little, just the cost of the material and the sewing. They didn't have to pay for the cost of the sewing -- they did it themselves. I always tell every mother that. "You know, when you burn clippings from what you are making, burn them, or throw them in the garbage," I says, "you are wasting your children's stuff that they should learn on." And they just look at me, you know. But when I explain to them then they know that it is true.

Yeah I'm proud of what my daughters can do and my sons. You know my second boy here, Norman? That's my adopted son, and one other adopted son, Danny. They were coming in one time and they looked at the back door and they said, "Dad, are you going to make a porch on this?" "No," he said, "you boys are going to." "Me? I can't!" "Sure you can. If you try, you'll be able to. Go ahead now, you two." Norman and Danny, they made that porch. Dad was instructing them; they made the whole thing right till they were finished. And boy, they were proud of it. You know, everything like that, anything. If you want to learn, go to somebody that knows how, and in no time you'll be surprised at what you have learned from it. And from there you'll get creative; you'll make things yourself, you'll make up patterns and go ahead and do things, if you want to make cabinets or whatever.

Alex: Why did you move to Toronto?

Clara: Eh?

Alex: Why did you move to Toronto?

Clara: Because I had a daughter there. Rose was in Toronto, so I came to Toronto. I came to visit her and I stayed about five, six years. And when I took a stroke three years ago -- I took two strokes but not nearly as bad as my husband. And when I went to the doctor's, I was kept in the hospital for a while and I was shown therapy. They told me to keep it up now that I knew how, what I go through, exercising. And I still keep it up. Lots of times in the mornings when my husband wakes up he'll see me exercising my legs, and my arms. "Oh, hell! Hide those legs!" And away he goes. (laughs) He comes and raps the door, "Are you finished? I'm not coming in till you're

finished. I'm getting up now and I'm coming to get a meal.

Alex: What did you think of Toronto when you moved here?

Clara: Eh?

Alex: What was your impression of the city?

Clara: I liked Toronto, especially the bingos - there's lots of bingos and I wanted to go to two or three bingos since I come here. I haven't got the money, I only sent for \$100. But I got it cashed here and... I have a card in my... You know what's a M.B.B? I have one of those. I can cash a cheque in any bank. But I just don't want to, I don't think I have too

much in the bank now, because I spend a lot of money. I bought a washer and a dryer -- I paid \$800. for them. So you really can't hang onto money regardless of how hard you try. For a while we had, oh, I don't know how many thousand we had for a while. And people come and borrow money from you. "We'll pay you in such and such a time." Right now I have \$500 or \$600 with one person. And they told me they'd pay when his income tax came. When his income tax came, where did he go? Montana -- to a powwow. When I asked him for money when he came back, "By golly, I don't have that; I spent it." "Your income tax?" I said. "Yes," he said. "Boy," I said, "can you ever keep your word." "I'll pay you. Don't worry, I'll pay you." I still haven't got it -- \$700. And in, where was this now I was, in Churchill, I left about \$8,000 there. People asking us to back them up and they never paid it back to the bank, which they promised they would, they never paid it back! I'd have quite a few thousand dollars if I got back all what I loaned out. But I won't say, "I'm not the one that suffers too much. I've got a man, that I call a man." They feel that when I say that to them. "I've got a man that didn't have a lazy bone in his body." This time of the year, he was up out of bed about half past four, five o'clock, and not to bed till about eleven or twelve. That's long hours, man! And not stopping at any special thing. Whatever he can find he does, he makes his own work.

Now when we were home, before we came up here, we were living in Toronto when I was well yet, didn't take any strokes -- I've taken two as I said, I've got old. He says he, he went outside and he was looking at the house from outside. "You know what, old girl?" he says. "No, honey," I said, "what's wrong?" He says, "This house is far too small for us." He says, "Before

another summer," he says, "I'm going to enlarge it with two big bedrooms so that we can accommodate our children when we have a family gathering." I thought that was pretty nice. And he said, "When I finish that house, I'm going to make a ramp from the kitchen door out. And I'll make a ramp in front of the house, and I'll make a wide..." You know, bordered right around the house, so that I could drive around in my wheelchair -- never thinking that he would be the first one that would need it so bad.

My son says, "I'm going to build all the things that dad liked to, wanted to build," he says. When we're sitting down one morning, "Mom," he said, "you know what I'm going to do when we go home?" I said, "No, my son. What were you thinking about?" "I can remember all the things that dad wanted to do to this place," he said. "Well I'm doing it," he said. "When I get more cheques," he says, "I'll buy lumber every time I get a cheque, and I'll do it. Paint the house up nice, have a big garden someplace by ourselves." So I know he will, because he feels so bad when his dad is hurt, you know, so bad, lying... "Mom," he says, "I can't come to stay with dad very long. I just come and look at him and I go. Don't you notice me?" "Yes, my son, I notice," I said. "You come in and come and talk to dad for a while, then you stand at the head of the bed where he can't see you. But you go out," I said, "tears running down your face." "I can't stand there long, Mom," he says. "I think how he looked when he was well, energetic, working every day and now look at him on his back." He takes it hard. Although he'd never say anything to anybody -- it's only to me that he confides his feelings.

It's terrible to have your man of the house sick like that. It's the awfulest thing that can happen to anybody, to any family. But I've learned something from that. I go and see him, too, and many a time I just work in the bedroom there and turn my back to him, and I go out and I can't stand it anymore. I go out and shed a few tears. And I get a hold of myself and I quit crying; wash my face in cold water and start to pretend to sing, come back and see him. I've learned to check my tears. It's been so long that he's sick, you know. I look at his hands and I just turn away. And his foot. And he was so proud. I didn't go and see him for a week or two until he was moved from the General Hospital to the Wascana. And I went to see for the first time after he was in there a week, and then he looked at me and he smiled, pushed me on my shoulder. He got up out of bed, got into his chair, got out of his chair, walked right around on his leg, like, right into his chair, turned his chair and he went down the hall. He was showing off to me. And he came back, you know, he's expecting to face, just expecting. And I spoke up, "Honey," I said, "you're doing wonderful." And then he come and put his arms around me.

I really and truly think that I'm just about the only woman that has never got a slap, or knocked, or black-eye, or thick lips, or broken nose, or something. I've never gone through any of that. And this typhoid -- not typhoid, this stroke he had, I got some books from the doctor. All through those books it says, "A person is never, when he's sick, he's never like he was when he was well." He's absolutely different. He's left all his good points behind and he has points that aren't very good. He's got a quick temper now when he's lying in bed. And he'll look at me if he thinks I'm cross or something, you know, he'll look at me. He'll give me a whack on the arm, or

something. And then I stand there and look at him and he

watches me. Those are times I can't check my tears when he hits me and looks at me. He does that and gets it out of his system. And I'll come to him. I know he wants me. I come to him and I put my hand in his hands and he kisses my hand. And then he pulls me down and kisses me on the face -- he's sorry that he's hit me. It comes to him, you know, after he's done it. It comes to him that he has done wrong to me, and he wants me to forgive him.

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