

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: MRS. CHASTELAINE  
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: CROSS LAKE  
INTERVIEW LOCATION:  
TRIBE/NATION:  
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH  
DATE OF INTERVIEW:  
INTERVIEWER: MARGARET STOBIE  
INTERPRETER:  
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD  
SOURCE: MARGARET STOBIE TAPE  
COLLECTION  
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COLLECTIONS  
ELIZABETH DAFOE LIBRARY  
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TAPE NUMBER: MS.006a/.009a (12 min.)  
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 42  
PAGES: 11

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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Very general account of her life.

Margaret: In the wintertime then at Norway House, most of the  
families would be out in the woods trapping in the bush?

Mrs. C.: Used to be, used to be. They used to go out, you  
know, in the fall. They'd get everything ready; grub from the  
Hudson's Bay, supplies for all winter, they'd go. Then come in  
the springtime. But now they don't do that lately, you see.  
Nobody's out trapping now. A few, just a few. Some men do, go

and trap, and come back before Christmas. That is what they do now. Because everybody is getting relief, they don't care now. Treaty people get's oh, from \$90, some \$99, \$120 some of them. All these treaty people, you see. Now they don't have to do that. They get along easy now, on women's allowance, old age pension. It seems they're all right now. There's hardly any fur now.

She can't come on the table, the little girl. Go to Mommy and take you over there where your grandfather is.

Margaret: Then in Norway House, as you were growing up, you worked at the Bay?

Mrs. C.: After I grew up, yes, I worked there. Working, the kids, wash the dishes and wait on the table for the white men and woman that stays there. The lady and I worked for them. That is what I did. And my father was working there too at that store, as storekeeper, you know. And we used to get along all right. And he buys the rabbits and the partridges and the meat from the store. They always used to have meat in the store set out. They buy from the people and then they would sell it. We used to get along fine. Very fine. And the stuff was cheaper. Then everybody didn't have to ask for government anything. They didn't have to worry about anything like that. But now, the people that coming to be poor, begging, begging all the time. This and that, the government has to give them this. Nothing but begging. Plus they get free money now. Cheques, these treaty people now, houses built for them which outsiders never can get. There is nobody that's going to get a house if you are an outsider or a white man, they have to build it themselves. But the treaty people just open the door and they go in after everything is finished. Now, see how well off they are. And besides rations every month. That is why they are more well off than we are. All these outsiders have a hard time to make a living.

Margaret: And your people were from Norway House too?

Mrs. C.: Yes, my people. My mother and my dad.

Margaret: Did they ever tell you the days when they were young there?

Mrs. C.: No, they never said nothing. I was running around with the kids. At last we grown up, at last I worked for the Hudson's Bay there and keep on working every summer, all winter. At last I got married then I leave the Hudson's Bay. (laughs) That is what my life is.

Margaret: Well, did you ever go with your husband out into the bush trapping?

Mrs. C.: Never, I never go out trapping. He never used to go out trapping. Sometimes he would go out and fish and then I would go with him, you see. We would take the canoe and go out

fishing, at Whiskey Jack side. (Inaudible) Never out in the winter, trapping, never.

Margaret: That's too hard.

Mrs. C.: It's too hard. He used to get a job here at the Norway House at the school, engineer there, you know. So many years he worked there. And that's where we got along.

Margaret: Well, in the spring when the supply boats would come in, there would be quite a celebration then, wouldn't there?

Mrs. C.: Yes. Lots of people there when the boats coming in. And these fellows that come in by York boat, they used to make fire and fry bacon and all that for themselves. The people used to go around all the Hudson's Bay all around, go and visit. That's what. But anything like that to be... There's one time I remember at the Hudson's Bay, give out lunch, you know, give out feast. One summer here. That's all.

Margaret: Well, at New Year's the people used to come in for celebrations, didn't they?

Mrs. C.: Yes.

Margaret: Do you remember?

Mrs. C.: Yes. They used to come in. And then Hudson's Bay used to give some lunch too, you know. Give them out feast. Some women cook cookies for him and all that and stir it up and oh, lots of stuff on the table there. A long table and people eat there, that's for Christmas. New Year's, Hudson's Bay give out grub again. To feast for New Year's but they are way up, the Indian people houses there, that is where they have these things, dancing and this and that.

Margaret: There would be some good gay times.

Mrs. C.: Yes. That's the way it was going on. Yet, I think it is that way, even at Cross Lake here. They take out from the store and people give them some and they cook here and then they make a feast. They go, all the people that can come and eat, you see. All day New Year's, not Christmas but New Year's.

Margaret: Well, it must have been quite a sight when they all came with dogteams and rabbit robes and...?

Mrs. C.: Yeah, but not the women, not the kids. The family stays out in the camp. It's only a man that comes with the train of dogs, you know, for that, for New Year's like, you know, for Christmas. But not the family, they stay there all winter. They can't come. It takes a lot of team of dogs to bring all the family, some of them, you know. So they can't come. Now it is a different thing. They go at Wacka Lake here, they can use a bombardier to go and get them. You see

now? Everything is changing now. Everything is better than it used to be.

Margaret: Well, the women used to make rabbit robes and...

Mrs. C.: Yes, they used to.

Margaret: Did you ever do anything like that?

Mrs. C.: No, I never did it. I never made no rabbit skin robes, what you call it, you know. I never made it. And bead work, I never worked on beads or silk. My eyes wasn't very good yet that time, you know, and I didn't want to force my eyes. I sew all right, you know, for myself but I, for beads. It's very hard beading, steady like that, you ruin your eyes, the beads. And so does the different colors, you know. A lot of these women now they can't see. You have to have glasses, the ones that do bead work, the ones that do silk work. Their eyes are getting poor. They made a living on that, you know, silk work, selling. Yet some women sell mukluks and all that stuff and I think they are getting \$15 a pair to get just a little bit of silk here, up top here, you know, and the upper and around there. So, with a cloth, they make a cloth that is red or black, or blue with black and a little fur around it too, here. This much apiece for just above your knees. But that is too much, I think me, anyway, \$15 a pair for anybody to say that. It's all right if there was a lot of work in it but it's not. I see them making it. They're not working at it very hard, you know. But certainly costs a lot of money to get these. Even moccasins, \$6. My, they sell them dear, very

dear. Moccasins like this too, you see, they sell them for \$6, you see. Now, there is no silk work here, you see yourself. Just this upper. Just because they pin it on. You see, that is what I say, too much.

Margaret: They are nice though.

Mrs. C.: They are nice all right. But you see, there is not much skin here on a big upper like that. And then just to sew it up here and the little piece hung over. But they won't sell them less than 6 or 5 dollars. That's just the way it is. It is hard to get work here, bead work or silk work. Not like long ago. Everything is so high now. The treaty people too, you know, their stuff they're getting high, their stuff too. They say to Hudson's Bay, "Why should we sell them cheap?" Hudson's Bay -- look at the price he has in the store. That's all right enough, you know. That is what they say now.

Margaret: Well, of course before, they all had to make everything, didn't they? All their own.

Mrs. C.: Yes.

Margaret: Do you ever remember seeing York boats coming up?

Mrs. C.: Yes, I remember. Coming up from Nelson House to

Hudson's Bay over there at Norway House. I see them coming in. You know I am 77 years old now. I am 77 years. I am old enough now. But still I keep my age. They say to me, you know, you keep your age -- these two ladies I've seen they are (inaudible). So they say, "You're not old." But I keep my age because I look after myself good. I get all the fresh air, in the night I have the windows open, and all the fresh air I could get, you see. And not working hard, not cut wood. Carry water, all these big jobs, you know. Easy time I had, that's why I keep my age. But some of these old people yet, cutting wood, pull things, carry water for themselves and worry about wood all the time. Well, that's them that's going down, you know. That is what I told them ladies yesterday. A person has got to look after themselves. That's the only way.

Margaret: Well when you come from Norway House and around here, do you come by plane or do you come by boat?

Mrs. C.: I came by Whiskey Jack. You know, the boat lands at Whiskey Jack? I get in at Norway House. All my stuff and everything with the barge and then we landed at Whiskey Jack. All right, we all had to take out stuff out of the barge and then the truck, put it on the truck and by here, this side. Then from there again we come to the barge and come to stay.

We got to rent a house from the reserve, we stayed right there at the reserve. Because there was no rent this side, nobody has that home to rent but that's where I stayed. Mostly there at the reserve. But I didn't know nothing. I didn't do anything to make the people mad. Everybody's my friend and they all like me now. Don't make no trouble so I get along in the reserve. If I make trouble like that, they would send me out. They send the person out that goes and make trouble at the reserve. It's a different place, the reserve. And white man or halfbreed, they can't do what they like. There is law against that. Treaty people, I know what they are like. Drinking and swearing in the reserve, it is all right for them. That's their own place. But we have to look out, outsiders. Can't say nothing wrong or they send us out. That's a funny law they have there. I don't see why they can swear themselves. (laughs) Oh, lot's of drinking business now. People, women drink here now and the men. No wonder some of them sometimes drown, you know, they are drinking too much. But the Indian constables here, but they don't even seem to chase them or, they don't seem to care for it. But if the policeman comes here, even tonight everything is quiet. They're scared of a Mountie. So I was wishing myself, a Mountie should stay right here, in this place. It is big enough. There is a lot of drinking going around. He should stay here and then it would be quiet. There would be no trouble then. But they don't seem, just once in a while they come when there is anything around. Or they have this code, ten dollars fine, some of them eighty, some of them like that, you know. And some of them go in jail, a month.

Margaret: In the older days, how many boats would come in at a time?

Mrs. C.: Oh, the olden days, there would be this big barge, I don't now how many feet long. The barge would come with the supplies, everything for all winter. No boats coming in after that. That's a long time ago, you know. But when the fishing started opening at Ward's Landing, then the boat every week. It's different thing, you see. Then sometimes at Norway House, bringing the mail and this and that, and now it is the plane brings the mail from Winnipeg to Norway House now, see. And from Norway House to here, you see, our mail we get.

Margaret: So it's quick now.

Mrs. C.: It's quick now. Long ago it was a different thing. But they never used to be short of stuff, you know -- sometimes sugar. But anything, flour, like that, anyways they never get... And the flour wasn't white flour either. We had to eat this dark Four X flour like, dark, very dark. And bacon

grease, no lard. And lump sugar, all kinds of lump sugar. So that is what we were living on long ago, you know.

Margaret: Did you make bannock?

Mrs. C.: Yes, bannock with our dark flour, and put the bacon grease on it and baked it. But now bread by loads coming in now to here. We buy bread now. Of course lots of them make bread all right enough but they buy it too. They see it in the store here. So everything is changing now. It is different, everything is different now. We can get along now, not like long ago.

Margaret: Well, over at Norway House did they have cattle and things?

Mrs. C.: Lots of cattle they used to have. My mother used to have lots of cattle and milk the cows and make butter. Big garden, used to have nice potatoes.

Margaret: And they would shelter their cattle in byres? What would they build for the cattle?

Mrs. C.: A log house just like this one, stable. They made a stable, log house. That is where the cattle stayed for the winter. The summer it was outside. And they start to make hay now. And the hay stacks like this one, you see. That is for all winter for a horse or a cow to eat, you see. That is the way it is now. At the priest's here they used to have all kinds of cattle, loads of cattle. They used to kill some of them in the fall so they would get meat all winter. They kill them all but now there is no more cows or horse with the priest. No more of that now. Farmers here, all these tractors what he has got now. Don't worry about making hay. They know this, this water is going to come up some day. Now it is come up now. The horses will have a hard time now.

Margaret: It is high this year.

Mrs. C.: Oh yes! It is hard for the grass to cut. But I don't know how. I guess they can manage it. They won't starve, I guess, the horses in the winter.

Margaret: They will have to bring it in.

Mrs. C.: Yes, bring it in, I guess, from Winnipeg or some place like that. That is what they got to do.

Margaret: Well, do you remember your wedding?

Mrs. C.: Yes, I remember. I got married seven o'clock at the Anglican Church. That is where I got married.

Margaret: And a big party?

Mrs. C.: No, there was no party on my wedding, nothing, nothing. It was too late, you see. If you marry at seven o'clock and nothing to be ready so we didn't bother anything. Nowadays they are making all kinds of feasts, beer, they are drinking and fighting now, these weddings. That is the way they are. Long ago I remember Reverend Edward Paupanakis, the minister, he used to go and sing. They get married at ten o'clock and after they have dinner and then they start to sing. Pray and sing all the time, they all went home. That is the wedding long ago. No nothing, these wreckages now what they have. See, that is the way they did it. Now everybody going out to get married, right away home brew, right away, right away. Everybody's got home brew. When the night comes they are drinking it and fighting -- bad now these weddings are. They should just marry quiet and that's all. Then nobody would go wrong.

Margaret: I met Mr. Max Paupanakis.

Mrs. C.: I know him well. He is a nice man. He works at Joe Lowe's store. He is a very nice Christian man too. I know him good. He is well?

Margaret: Very well. And his wife too. Well, you've seen a great deal of this country.

Mrs. C.: Oh yes, I've seen the poorliness of it and I've seen it and how it went off. And all the people really poor, oh very poor. But now we get along very fine. Free for everything now. It's time too, I think, to get free houses. Some badly they were off. Now they deserve to get these things what they are getting. Old age pension, they are all happy. When we meet together at the Hudson's Bay store to go for our mail, we are all happy. Because we knew we get something. Of course we had to pay our debt too, you know. But still, we run up again. If we used all this cheque, okay, we start another one again. So we never be poor, you see, like that. The Hudson's Bay allows us to keep debts like that in the store here. Some kind people in the store here. Very nice. They

treat us good. I can't see for myself my account or anything but they look after it for me. So they are the people that you can trust, they won't cheat. Nice people, you see. That is the way with Hudson's Bay anyway. From when I was a kid, I was with the Hudson's Bay all the time. My father was with the Hudson's Bay. You might as well say the Hudson's Bay feed us

all our life. Till today, I still hanging on at the Hudson's Bay store. Because that is where I can trust everything. You see a price and you don't have to ask, "What's the price, this?" You see it for yourself. All right, if you want to take it, you take it, see? Everything like that priced on the store. Now that is really not cheat. It is different thing here with this trader. He don't price nothing, he just tell you what he want to sell it for. The people say that there are deals there but I don't believe them. But that is what they say. But I deal where I can trust. Everybody nearly treats here. Oh, everybody is getting the stuff from Hudson's Bay. Lots of people going in that store and when old age pension you see, crowded with people they are taking up stuff. And so this children allowance, baskets and baskets full of grub. So they are happy as anything. Nobody mad or anything. So that's really nice of the government to look after the people. Anyway, he has got big expenses all right now. But he manages to look after everybody -- the children never used to get nothing. Not even five cents when they were little small things. Now they get an allowance. They get lots of allowance and they get meat and grub from there and clothing. So they are all right now, the kids. And hospitals, free for them too. When anything goes wrong the plane comes along get them without a cent. Fly them up to the hospital. Now see how well they are? Schools, free schools like that. They are very well off. They should be satisfied. Nobody on earth will look after them the way the government will. I always watch things and find out and everything like that, you know. I just know later every day what has been wrong.

Margaret: The store makes a good gathering place doesn't it?

Mrs. C.: Oh yes, because everybody is dealing there, allowance, women cheques and ration cheques and old age pension cheques. They do big business, the store here. And you won't see anybody get mad. Everybody is happy in the store. Everybody is happy.

Margaret: You can sit and chat with each other.

Mrs. C.: Oh yes. You can sit even outside and up. Lots of fun. I call that fun when anybody's happy anyway. So there you are. We got nothing to pick about. Only me, no home. I asked the government to build a little shack for me, a little log house like this one. Put a bed to be in and a table and one chair. Not much, eh? (laughs) So I can be happy there and lock my stuff in there and sleep when I want to sleep. When you stay with somebody you can't sleep, in and out, late at night. But an old person have to sleep soon and then get up in the morning. That is what I am anyways. Because I can't



travel like these young people, it is a different thing. An old woman has no business to go and stay with young people because they want to travel. They don't want to go to bed like me, you see. That is what I find it hard, you see. I got to lie awake until everybody is in. Some of them comes in two, two o'clock. That is why I would like to get a home. But if I ask the government to give me a little house, I don't know whether he'll do it or not. I don't know how that is. I don't know how he... Like these treaty people, even these old women, they got a house built for them. You see? I don't see why, these outsiders, they can't do that.

Margaret: Well, where have you been this summer?

Mrs. C.: This summer I've been here now, all spring I've been here. Of course I was at Norway House quite a while when I got sick at Wabowden. And I stayed two months before I got sick, you know. Well, after that I come back here and then I stayed with my daughter and then I stayed with this girl. A couple of months and then I go back to my daughter's again. And here I come again. And now I am to go home again to my daughter. You see? I am going to go today to go and stay with my daughter. Her husband might come any time, you see. For a while, to quit working for a while.

Margaret: Well, are they using this building at all now?

Mrs. C.: They used this building, this end, but they don't use that end, you see. But they used this. Of course this man, his father lends him this house. This man has got more say in this house, this Charlie McLeod, than that other one over there at Wabowden. Why, they pay taxes on it then. That is why I don't pay no taxes. That's where they can own a house any place too, these people, you see.

Margaret: And they don't use this for a meeting place or anything like that?

Mrs. C.: No, I guess if anybody wants to have a meeting they should have it, sure, that big end, any meeting like that. Anybody calls if they can come there and have lots of room. This house, they got lots of room, they can use it like that. They can use a meeting place here, you see.

Margaret: It is a lovely house.

Mrs. C.: Oh, it's a lovely house. And a warm one because it's a log house. It's a warm place too. Everything and people living at Wabowden they belong this furniture. That's all their furniture.

(Break in Tape)

And this Winston McLeod, that's her husband, my girl here, Winston McLeod, Charlie McLeod's boy. Now they are going to have a house built themselves too, you see. So they will have

a home of their own.

That's Charlie McLeod's first house before he had this one. And he gave that old house to his son. That's where that man stays now. And the other one built his house away in the Creek -- Allan McLeod. Now normally Winston will have a new home, you see. Other sons of his, or if his daughters marry out in different places, he won't have to worry about his daughters, and his sons. He won't bother his sons and they don't bother him. They got a home of their own. Only this Winston got no home yet. He had to stay here until he gets a home, I guess.

Margaret: Well, this large tent here, what is that?

Mrs. C.: That's Shakers. They come there and that is where they sleep, the green one. And they have meetings there, them old people. People full up there yesterday. Oh, lots of people singing and praying. That is what this minister comes here for, to make the people good.

(End of Interview)

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