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INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: ROSSVILLE RESERVE,  
NORWAY HOUSE

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Margaret: And you yourself were born here?

Mrs. Balfour: Yeah.

Margaret: And you were saying your parents, both sides were Scotch?

Mrs. Balfour: Yeah, both sides were, my father's and my mother's side. And there was (inaudible). My grandparents were born in the old country. (Inaudible) her father's father traded between Selkirk and Norway House. Went to Cumberland House -- been all over: (inaudible), Cross Lake and other places. He died early so we didn't really know where he really came from. The other one, like my grandmother, my mother's mother, she was half Scotch too. (Inaudible) But I guess he was a halfbreed. And on the other side, my father's side, they were Scotch too. His father came from (inaudible) in Scotland. I think my grandmother was born here, the one I was telling you about. My grandmother's mother was from Scotland. And on the other side, like my grandfather (inaudible) he was Scotch. (Inaudible) But that's the only grandmother we ever knew. (Inaudible) She used to say for a stable, you know, she used to say byre. And my mother (inaudible). My grandmother was telling me about a broad of wood -- she meant an armful of wood, you know. And instead of coat she'd say cot, you know, or smock. And then gairl(?).

Margaret: Yes, a gairl(?).

Mrs. Balfour: I don't know, I think the accent I remember mostly. (Inaudible). Paupanakis, he was there all the time (inaudible).

Margaret: Was he around here?

Mrs. Balfour: Yeah, he works at John Lowe's.

Margaret: Oh, does he?

Mrs. Balfour: Yeah.

Margaret: Oh, well I must get hold of him then too.

Mrs. Balfour: He's the one that should know all the phrases. In fact, I think he has some himself. (laughs)

Margaret: Well, I'll certainly get in touch with him. Well, the two of you growing up here... I grew up in a small town too, and in the winter we tobogganed sometimes on pieces of tin, and we skated and so on, and we were swimming in the summertime. What sort of thing did you do here?

Mrs. Balfour: We did skating too, like that. Skating and playing ball, I guess, a few dances. But we never had anything organized for us, you know, like games and that. That's what we are trying to organize now is... Well, we started this Powwow Club, you know, just to get somebody to (inaudible) teach the high school kids mostly.

Margaret: And what do you do in that?

Mrs. Balfour: Pardon?

Margaret: What do you do in that?

Mrs. Balfour: The Powwow Club? We just have the powwow. And then we charge for admission. We just started that recently. We just have our own dance and our own costumes. It's something different from the others, I guess. We make our own costumes. We modelled them the way we thought they should be.

Margaret: Well that sounds good. Well, in the last few years, Mrs. Mackay, there's been a lot of development around here, hasn't there?

Mrs. Mackay: Yeah.

Margaret: Is there as much hunting now? Do you know anything about that? Or trapping? I suppose there's still a lot of that.

Mrs. Mackay: There's a few trappers yet. Prices have gone down so much that I think some people don't care to go trapping.

Margaret: It's a hard life too. (To Mrs. Mackay) And you, you're in on the Powwow Club too, are you?

Mrs. Mackay: No.

Margaret: Well, the store here, when did it first begin?

Mrs. Mackay: My grandfather was the one that used to...

Mrs. Balfour: Was he the first manager here?

Mrs. Mackay: No.

Mrs. Balfour: I think so. I think he was the first manager.

Mrs. Mackay: And then he went to the next post... (Inaudible) Yeah, I remember the store was very small. But I hardly remember that time. I don't remember when he was here.

Margaret: You get people here from the whole surrounding area, do you? Customers, I mean, coming in. How far away?

Mrs. Mackay: Oh, around here. Quite a ways, they come up the river. They come and shop here.

Margaret: Well, Mr. Rempel was saying that it's about half and half. There are about 1,000 customers here and 1,000 at the other store.

Mrs. Mackay: Yes. It's about half and half, eh? Do you think you have more here? Of course they have another two stores now on that side.

Margaret: Oh, have they?

Mrs. Mackay: (Inaudible) John Lowe, the grocery and... Three, four stores.

Margaret: Do you have... Do you remember any particular New Year's or Christmases or anything of that sort?

Mrs. Mackay: We used to have feasts. We still do but not as good. (Inaudible) The last was on New Year's, not Christmas, just New Year's. Big dance.

Mrs. Balfour: We used to have these, these tables used to be set up so nice. You know, with starched tablecloths and silverware and all that. (Inaudible). It's dying out, you know. (Inaudible). Just a few people doing it.

Margaret: It's as if there's some... They go out more, back and forth more? I noticed there were quite a number of young people coming back from school on the boat yesterday. Is that what it is? That...?

Mrs. Mackay: I don't know what it is. I don't think we have (inaudible).

Margaret: Of course, this really is the same in most places. When I was a small girl... As I say, I grew up in a small town and there were great feasts and celebrations, but now there isn't the same sort of feeling.

Mrs. Mackay: Ever since Eliza Mackay quit (inaudible) those old ladies. They were such good workers. (Inaudible)

Mrs. Balfour: Those were the two women that were really active, you know, when they were younger. They are all crippled now. (Inaudible)

Margaret: I met Mrs. Eliza Mackay yesterday. And she has that lovely little girl with her, bringing her up. She was saying that she had done a lot for young people and had given it up. And I said to her, "But you're still doing things for young people!" This little girl is just a lovely looking little child.

Mrs. Mackay: She sure did a lot. I guess we're just trying to do a little bit ourselves now but it's not the same as the banquets used to be. (Inaudible)

Margaret: Well, after all, you people are the leaders now and this is the thing that always startles you, when you suddenly realize that you're now of the age that you're responsible for the... Have you been in this store long Mrs. Mackay?

Mrs. Mackay: Almost 16 years.

Margaret: You're well acquainted with it then.

Mrs. Mackay: I quit a year, account of health. Fourteen years, I guess, steady. Thirteen and a half years steady for sure.

Mrs. Balfour: She gets along well with the customers. They like her very much.

Margaret: I noticed that. I was noticing that. There was a very pretty blue material that someone was buying this morning.

Mrs. Mackay: Yes, her daughter's getting married this Friday and she wants a dress, a nice dress. That's her last daughter, the youngest one, Georgina.

Margaret: How many were in the family?

Mrs. Mackay: About eight, I think. (Inaudible) The trouble is I don't get along with other people, you know. It's the same way yesterday. I just (inaudible).

Mrs. Balfour: I just felt so out of place, you know. I couldn't associate with them, you know. I liked what they're talking about but I felt so scared. I just didn't fit in there, you know.

Margaret: Oh well, everyone, I think, chooses. You'll always choose your own friends.

Mrs. Mackay: You have to find your... It's hard when you have to find your own friends here. Like here at Rossville too, I feel sorry about it. There's a lot of times I go visiting and they will come to the door and ask you, "What do you want?" And the only place I visit is Catherine's -- that's the only place I feel I'm welcome. If I go other places, they likely say, well, "Do you want something?" So I feel out of place here too. I don't know what it is. You just have to find your place, I guess. Like when I go up there, around like, the outsiders, you know, they'll be in the store and say, "Be sure and come," you know. Sometimes I'll go, pass them on the road and they'll call me and say, "Come in." I'll go in for a while and they'll say, "You come back and visit."

Margaret: And you do?

Mrs. Mackay: And I do, yeah. But somehow I feel so out of place here. I guess it's just the way you're raised, I guess. But when I go to Catherine's I'm always welcome there so I go there once in a while. And to my mother-in-law's, but I don't think there's any place else I go besides that. Because I know I'm not welcome.

Margaret: So what about the Powwow Club?

Mrs. Balfour: Well, we can get along with everyone up there mostly.

Mrs. Mackay: It's hard, you know, to explain all this. It's the same thing, same thing happens when, supposing I hear a

white man saying something nasty against the Indian, you know. I get real mad.

Margaret: I don't blame you.

Mrs. Mackay: And I say, well, "You have no right to say that about the Indian." And the next thing I know, I hear an Indian saying something to the white man and I'll get real mad again, and I say, "Shame on you." So you just feel, you know, you have no place and you're right in the middle, sort of.

Margaret: This reminds me a bit of feelings I've had. I was over in England at one time and heard people saying very stupid things about people on this continent, you see, and I would feel just the same way. And then we went down to the States for a little while and I would hear them saying stupid things about English people and I would feel just the same way. But I suppose it's that sort of bringing people together and really knowing the just and right things about both of them. Just being impatient with silly things said about both of them.

Mrs. Mackay: You just missed that powwow. (To Mrs. Balfour) When did you have it? You have it at the church now?

Mrs. Balfour: (Inaudible) bead work and feathers. (Inaudible).

Margaret: You did all the work yourselves?

Mrs. Balfour: Oh, we did all of the work ourselves. My husband and I made a war bonnet, you know. (Inaudible). It was fun doing it.

Margaret: How many would be there at the powwow?

Mrs. Balfour: You mean how many members?

Margaret: Yes, how many people came?

Mrs. Balfour: Oh, there was quite a few. We had it twice there and once down (inaudible). Most of the people are on the lake now, fishing. (Inaudible) back in September.

Margaret: Are they having a sort of big festival then?

(Inaudible)

Mrs. Balfour: (Inaudible) never danced a square dance or anything. He doesn't even smoke, he doesn't drink or anything. It would be like that in the powwow. (laughs)

Margaret: Is it easier to get around in the wintertime than in the summertime? When it freezes up, is it easier to...?

Mrs. Mackay: It's easier in the summer, I suppose.

Mrs. Balfour: We haven't any way of transportation in winter

except Bombardier. It costs a lot of money.

Margaret: Oh yes, it would.

Mrs. Balfour: And then there's not that many. Ther's only about four, four or five, I guess. Two Lappers and two Grand Prix's. And then (inaudible) has a couple but he doesn't have them running. It's pretty hard to get around in the winter. It's a lot easier now since we have these phones, you know. It used to be harder.

Margaret: When people come in the store, you would by now know pretty well the kind of thing they would like. You know, your customers?

Mrs. Mackay: Yes.

Margaret: Are there any particular ones that stand out? Are there particular ones that you're interested in or...?

Mrs. Mackay: No. They are all the same. (Inaudible) Stiff-going people. The people are all nice here, they're nice people but they're so, you know, I don't know. They're shy, you know. Maybe that's the trouble making friends. Somebody goes to them and they don't like that because they're shy. Not all of them but just about. But they're nice to talk with, I mean, when you meet them in the store in outside or anything like that, they're really good people. But they don't talk to white people very much because they're shy. A lot of them haven't been out of here, that's why. Just for doctors and things like that.

Margaret: Well, two or three weeks ago I met -- he's an old man, he is 89. He's in the hospital in Winnipeg just now but he's from Grand Beach. And his people were Icelandic but they were killed or at least they died in a smallpox epidemic when he was just a baby. And he was adopted by an Indian by the name of Edward Thomas who was an Anglican clergyman. And he was adopted by this man and his wife and brought up by them. And he was saying that the people down there, around Grand Beach, Fort Alexander, around there, they always want you to speak first, to tell you about them, and he said, "You know, that's right!" And he said they had this timid way with them. They always want you to speak first, to tell them about you. I was interested yesterday, Mr. Remple took me over to, oh, he has a billiard hall over here. And a little store beside it. And at first he said he couldn't speak English, he'd have to use an interpreter. Mr. Remple said he could, but after we talked for a little while then he... (Laughs).

Mrs. Mackay: He talks like that. I don't know, a lot of people are like that. Even though they can write, they'll come to you and say, "Can you write me a letter?" you know. Some of them went up to grade 8 and still they want you to write it for them. And the same thing when they go to the hospital. They can talk for themselves but they'll try and find somebody to talk for them, you know. That's why they won't talk to you

first or say hello to you unless you say hello to them. It's not that they don't want to be friendly, it's just that they feel so inferior, you know. I don't know what it is. It's because they haven't been out of here. You know, a lot of them, like they were, even the older people were born here and grew up here and they died here. They had never been out except many to Cross Lake or like that. They've never been

out, never met a lot of people and so, I think, they feel no white person is going to talk to them. When you do, they'll answer, but they won't talk to you first.

Mrs. Mackay: I mean, I think that myself. Like lots of times I find myself walking past somebody without saying hello. Well, it's just my way. I got into the habit. (Inaudible). But I think that they don't mind anyway. But I think it's more polite just to say hello first. But there's another thing, you're not sure if they're going to answer you, you know. Not always sure if they're going to talk to you. But I always find out that they're more friendly than I think they are. But I feel just out of place...

Mrs. Balfour: (Inaudible).

Mrs. Mackay: The same here sometimes, yes. So I just got to find my place.

Margaret: Well, as things like the Powwow and things like that develop, won't that bring people together more?

Mrs. Balfour: I think so, yeah.

Margaret: It should. I met one chap, his name is Roger Cave. He's just young, a young chap, he's about 20 or 21. He's down in Selkirk. And when I first went to talk with him, he said, "Well, I have no Anglo-Saxon blood." I said, "Neither have I." He said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Well, my father's people were Irish and my mother's people were Scotch." Then he thought, well, perhaps he could talk with me. But this, you know, all over the world, we're all made up of different kinds of backgrounds, different people.

Mrs. Mackay: And then you just, I guess, where you were brought up, you get that accent more or less. This Johnny Dean(?) he's an Icelander, or something, but he doesn't understand a word of Icelandic. He talks English but not confidently. He talks Cree just like a good Indian. One day I asked, "How do you feel, like a white man or an Indian?" "Oh, I'm an Indian," he says, "through and through!" (laughs) And that's the way he feels. And the same thing with the MacIvors at Cross Lake. There is Doug and that, (inaudible) he used to talk good Cree. They had sort of an accent, from his father's...

Margaret: Well, it probably is. I'm going over to meet old Mr. MacIvor at Wabowden over the weekend. Again, he's someone that...



Mrs. Balfour: You should go and visit Mr. and Mrs. Keeper down here. And Mr. and Mrs. MacIvor at Robertson Bay.

Margaret: Well, I want to but... In Robertson Bay? I didn't want to trouble the Keepers just now because of Mr. Keeper's brother [he had just died] but I thought when I come back I'll have another couple of days and then I would want very much...

Mrs. Mackay: You should go and see them.

Margaret: I've heard so much about them.

Mrs. Mackay: Yeah. And they'll show you all that (inaudible).

Margaret: Christina who? This is Mrs. Keeper?

Both: Yeah. And she lived at Cross Lake too.

Margaret: She was the one who came down to the conference last year. Yes, I heard her speak.

Mrs. Mackay: Yeah. I was supposed to go to that, I was supposed to be on the air, but somehow I forgot the time. I thought it was the next morning at eight and it was that evening so I went visiting that evening and (inaudible).

Margaret: You were down at the conference, were you?

Mrs. Mackay: Yeah.

Margaret: I was attending there too. I was fascinated with the reports from the chiefs all around. I found that a most moving morning. The things they're trying to do and the things they need. I wished I were a hundred people so that I could get out and do things.

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Margaret: I'm going over, I thought perhaps Saturday, I would fly over to Wabowden and talk with Mr. McIvor and then he may send me other places, I don't know. But I thought then I would take the railroad up to Churchill and spend at least a few days there and then come back here for a couple of days before I have to go down again.

Mrs. Mackay: You mean to Norway House?

Margaret: Yes, and get the boat here, you see. Go down there and I'm going to stop over at Berens River for a little while on the way home.

Mrs. Mackay: Where is your home?

Margaret: Well, I am living in Winnipeg. But I was born and brought up in Vermilion, Alberta which is... It is about on

the same level with this, with Norway House. About the same distance, north in Alberta. My mother and father went in there in a prairie schooner.

Mrs. Mackay: Where did they come from?

Margaret: They came from Ontario.

Mrs. Mackay: They were born there?

Margaret: Yes, but mother's people were from Scotland and my father's people were from Ireland. So, that's my mixture. They say it is a dreadful one. I usually, I can get, I can be patient but I can get angry. Sure. Can't have both Scotch and Irish and not. (laughter)

Mrs. Mackay: You don't know which is which when you get angry. I guess it is a bit of a mixed up feeling. We are all mixed too.

Margaret: Well, this is really I think the strange thing, that we all are.

Mrs. Balfour: Yeah, I think so.

Margaret: I think it is just a matter of realizing it. You know, we all are.

Mrs. Mackay: We are so mixed, we don't even know what we are.

Mrs. Balfour: Where did Indians come from? From this part of the country?

Margaret: Nobody knows. But one person, oh, this was some years ago, did a lot of work on Indian languages, said that on this continent, from Mexico up to the Arctic, there are about 37 different Indian languages.

Mrs. Balfour: That is right.

Margaret: It is not just one.

Mrs. Balfour: The way we talk here, at Cross Lake and Oxford House, Gods Lake and Island Lake, they all talk a little different. Of course we don't understand -- they talk Sioux at Island Lake. We don't understand that.

Margaret: Oh yes.

Mrs. Balfour: But Cross Lake, Gods Lake, and Oxford House, we understand them but they have a different accent.

Margaret: Well, this is what happens all over.

Mrs. Mackay: Unless, they seem (inaudible).

Mrs. Balfour: Grand Rapids is different. Oh yes, all over.

Even in Poplar River. It's just a small little reserve, you know. They still talk different.

Mrs. Mackay: They have a sort of a high-pitched tone, you know. They explain themselves better, I think.

Margaret: Well, this is the same thing in Scotland or in England. There are all kinds of different dialects all over. And as communities grew up, you know, they made their own sort of personality, really.

Mrs. Mackay: All their own words, I guess. Like that byre, it means a coffin or something?

Margaret: No, it is a barn, a shed, a byre.

Mrs. Balfour: A stable?

Margaret: A stable, yeah.

Mrs. Mackay: We say a stable out here.

Margaret: Yes, it is a Scotch word, you still hear it in Scotland. Oh yes.

Mrs. Balfour: I thought my grandmother was the only one that used that word.

Margaret: Oh no, this is a... If you were to go to Scotland today you would hear that word. And there was another one -- schlock(?), to schlock(?) the light?

Mrs. Balfour: That's what she used to say. Schlock(?) the fire.

Margaret: Put out, schlock(?) the fire, put it out.

Mrs. Balfour: We used to burn this smoke for the cows, you know. We had a lot of cattle and she used to say that. But we

used to have these pails, you know, and we had to make smoke for the cows because there was so many mosquitos and she used to say that. Have you ever heard the word "chillings?"

Margaret: Chillings?

Mrs. Balfour: Yeah. Seems to me she used that word too. And my other grandmother used that word too.

Margaret: What does that mean?

Mrs. Balfour: That was children.

Margaret: Oh yes, chillins.

Mrs. Balfour: Chillins or something like that.

Margaret: Schlock(?) is another pure Scotch word.

Mrs. Balfour: What would you say for fur?

Margaret: I'm not sure.

Mrs. Balfour: I forget but they had a funny word for that too. My grandmother used to have this word, you know, for fur. Was it ever silly. I forget what she used to call fur. My uncle Joe used to laugh at his mother. He used to repeat it after her and make fun of her behind her back with us. That word was so funny, you know. It wasn't fur, it was something else.

Margaret: I don't know what that would be. But you see these Scotch words are very old English words. So that we get here some of the words and phrases that were, that have disappeared in English, that were part of the original English language a long time ago. And they have been preserved here.

Mrs. Balfour: And now they're gone.

Margaret: Well, they are going. But this is one of the things that interested me at the conference. I could hear, oh, suggestions of this speech from so many different parts of the province. And that is why I wanted to come and find it. But each community here then really has its own... You could tell a person from Gods Lake from his speech.

Mrs. Mackay: Oh yeah, you can tell right away. If I had a Cross Lake customer in there, I would know where he comes from. Even how they are dressed you can tell, sometimes.

Margaret: What would be the difference in dress?

Mrs. Balfour: There is a little difference. Island Lake wear lighter colors, very bright. They wear lots of ribbon. Or silk dresses and jackets. You don't see much of that here. Gods Lake, well, I think they dress almost like that but not so bright. They wear more prints and like that. But Cross Lake and Island Lake like to wear silk. Not too much at Cross Lake. But bright colors. (Inaudible) But if you don't know where a person comes from, all you have to do is talk to them. They understand you. If you go to Island Lake, you know, you can tell. And in their hair, big bows and they still have these little patterns embroidered on their clothes. That's long gone here. Nobody uses the (inaudible) here. (Inaudible) I never saw that. The funniest part was we had to... To see a powwow we had to go to the city. (laughter) We thought that was funny. Mary and I used to like to start one of our own, you know. I really enjoyed them. There was five women dancing last time. Five women and six men and one little boy. And Mary and I. (Inaudible) and my brother Joe (inaudible).

Margaret: Well, it would take a good deal of practice, doesn't it?

Mrs. Balfour: Well, he is down at taught us, you know. I

don't now where he got it from. I'm sure they don't dance the powwow there. He went to school at Alberta, I think, or Saskatchewan. But he didn't tell us how to make our costumes. I told him, "You leave that up to us, we want to make our own." We never copied anybody's costumes, just made our own, you know, the way we felt.

Margaret: Good.

Mrs. Balfour: We don't care if it is not the way the others have. We used a lot of books. There is a school out here and they have a lot of books and you can learn about (inaudible). I think in the States it is too cold so they wear theirs in feathers, you know. I think they should keep warm. (Inaudible) We should have a powwow program. We should take pictures. It's kind of fun, you know. Mind you the step is so slick and it's so easy and just couldn't even catch on to the first step. It's just so easy. We have the Picadores and we pay only \$25 but without the Picadores they would charge us over \$50. Because the Picadores belong, there is another band you know, that they belong to. So those, we have to pay those too.

Margaret: Well, are they here?

Mrs. Balfour: (Inaudible). (Name) is the engineer at the hospital and Edgar rejoined the Picadores. I'm not sure if he did but he helps them anyways. We don't have to pay for this hall. We've been trying to get a new council (inaudible) and that's all ready, except that the windows are all, you know...

Margaret: Well last night I was really quite shocked when they told me that the old inn was coming down. But Mrs. Lowe took me in and showed me the old inn and there is a huge room there. And they are just going to tear that building down.

Mrs. Balfour: Maybe they should give us the lumber. We have a little money put away now, you know. And we figured we could build a large hall for, you know, for recreation, that sort of thing. Or Mary and I said we are going to start up a cooking club, you know. Have these girls cook and we could sell this and make money for there too. And we could organize a sewing club and we could make money that way. The boys are doing their best to organize a hobby club, you know, and use the same hall. It would help if we all use the same hall. And then with the money we get we will work on getting something better for the community. All these clubs donating this money to a good purpose, I think we could get something better or something for the people to work on to earn a living or something like that, you know. Like the Co-op store at Rat River. There was no store at Rat River and they have to go all the way in the winter and it was hard. Or something like that. And there is a lot of high school children coming up. Now they could take over, you know and we could take the money for them and, you know, sort of start things for them and they could carry on because they have education that we don't have. They can do

things better than we can, to start a town. We can't depend on them entirely, we could have helped them a little. Now I guess we have been depending on them because of their education and their schooling. There is a lot of them.

Margaret: I noticed there were a number came up on the boat.

Mrs. Balfour: But right now, supposing you try to find somebody around here that has an education, that has grade 12 or went to University, I don't think you could find very many of them. Just two or three or four, four maybe.

Margaret: Of course you don't need that to develop something on your own. I mean, you know what to do and what is needed.

Mrs. Balfour: But you need somebody with good bookkeeping.

Margaret: Oh yes, yes.

Mrs. Balfour: You know, we could start these things and do little easy things like the Powwow Club and start a sewing club and things that we know how to do. But when it comes to bookkeeping or a lot of work like that, well, it's too heavy for our brain.

Margaret: It would be for mine too, I'm no good at arithmetic. (laughs) Do you ever, well, have you ever been involved in putting things on the boat for sale?

Mrs. Balfour: We were talking about that the other night, yeah. We were discussing that (inaudible) bringing in stuff from the boat and selling it.

Margaret: I was just wondering if there was any way of actually putting them on the boat. But then of course you would have to have someone to look after them, I suppose, unless the stewardesses could do that.

Mrs. Balfour: It's mostly old people I've noticed. It's mostly old people coming on the boat now.

Mrs. Mackay: There used to be a lot of young people and they used to buy a lot, in the store, they used to buy a lot. And these older people, they don't. They might buy a postcard, stuff like that. That's the truth because I've never seen... Like some people from the States, and they always ask for nice slippers or mukluks or beaded jackets, something like that.

Margaret: I knew there were two couples from Arkansas on the boat but they were elderly. But still I think they would have been interested in things like that. Now, the purser told me that in two weeks they are bringing up a boatload of people from Toronto. Now, this sounds like a company or a club or something of that sort. Well, if they had many boatloads of that sort of people I would think there might be possibilities.

Mrs. Mackay: I think the reason they don't come up here too much is that the Kenora isn't too big, you know. Not strong enough to come over the rapids, it must be that. But it's not that, I guess, it's just that they are afraid to go. Like there is some people here that are afraid to go on the Kenora trip on account of that, because it's too old.

Margaret: Well, there were a couple of articles in the Free Press about it just not long ago, about its having been refitted and it's under new management and so on. And I think there are quite a number of people from Winnipeg coming up just for the trip.

Mrs. Balfour: Yeah, but for a while there there was hardly anybody up for a few years.

Margaret: Well, there was... I know, I heard the story that it had been practically dry docked for a while but now it's under new management and it may pick up again. Mind you, the night before last was a rough night. Rolled and pitched all night.

Mrs. Mackay: I wonder what they think when they come to Norway House, what they think they are going to see.

Margaret: Well, if they felt as I... I left them at the inn but I was most impressed with what I saw.

Mrs. Mackay: Like, what did you expect to see?

Margaret: Well, I didn't expect, for instance, as you come here, the large building and the whole collection of large buildings. It's... no, I was brought up, you see, in a small prairie town and I would be impressed to see that anywhere.

Mrs. Balfour: But the people are spread out here. You can't see a lot of it at one time.

Margaret: Yes, that's true.

Mrs. Balfour: Like there is a (inaudible) here that people are so spread apart. (Inaudible) and they call it Norway House. And it is Rossville and still it's Norway House, they can't understand. Yeah, that get's us mixed up in the city too. They ask you where you come from and you say Rossville by mistake, you know, and they never heard of it, you know.

Margaret: It's on the map though.

Mrs. Balfour: It's on the map, yeah. Like long ago, when we were young, a tourist came. Old people used to sit all along there and they used to welcome the passengers. Everybody would come on Wednesday and they would bring their lunches and have lunch there and people would just sit all over watching these white people coming in. They don't do that any more.

Mrs. Mackay: One lady came to us and she said, "This is Norway

House, but where's the house?" See, we didn't know what to say. Because there was no special house to see. It's the name of this place.

Margaret: Well, I was interested in the old bell over at the other store. Mr. Remple was telling me this was, oh what time did he say -- the 1700s or something, the old bell?

Mrs. Balfour: Oh yeah, that old bell. And that same way, that man, right in there, that's the same building.

Margaret: What was that?

Mrs. Balfour: A bull. He killed a man right in... And then they had to take that bull to the island and they burned him because he killed that man, murdered him. There was blood all over the walls.

Mrs. Mackay: They say this Kirk used to tease that bull all the time. That's the same building that you see there.

Margaret: The arch.

Mrs. Balfour: My parents used to tell me, that's why they call that island the Bull Island. That is where that bull was burnt. And they say they put tar all over him and burned him alive. I wonder whose idea was that. It was cruel, I think.

Margaret: Well, of course, they do that to human beings in some parts of the south of this continent. Some people are cruel.

Mrs. Balfour: People used to be mean.

Margaret: But this would be Norway House, just as Cross Lake would have Cross House and Oxford Lake has Oxford House. Cumberland House?

Mrs. Balfour: (laughs) Cumberland House. I don't know why they have to put that 'House' in there.

Margaret: I suppose that was early forts, wasn't it?

Mrs. Balfour: (Inaudible)

Margaret: The early posts, I imagine. And then it just became the name of the place.

Mrs. Mackay: But why did they put Norway on it? It must have been a Norwegian that was there first.

Margaret: Well, they say that the Bay brought in some Norwegians who built the first building and therefore it was called Norway House. That's what they told me in Winnipeg. If you were to hear someone from Cross Lake and someone from Island Lake speaking, you would notice the difference, you would know where they were from. Can you tell me how they are different?



Mrs. Balfour: Well, Island Lake talk very fast. At Oxford House, they are very slow, I think, and drowsy language. A very low... At Cross Lake they have a... Well at Norway House it has a choppy accent like, you know.

Mrs. Mackay: And Cross Lake tends to talk just like they are so proud of the way they talk. And they are. (Inaudible) They have more nerve than normal people too, you know. They'll tell you things and insult you even if... It's just the way they are, you know. They are outspoken more than Norway House people. Norway House people keep to themselves more. They don't just tell you off, what they think of you, you know. But Cross Lakers, they'll just tell you exactly what they think of you. I was on the train last winter and this guy came up and he was drunk, of course, and he told us, "Norway House people think a log of themselves and they are so lazy. They get drunk easily and all that." I just sat there and sat there. He went away for a while and I thought to myself, "You just wait till you are sober." He came along the next morning and, "Morning," he says. And I said something in Cree to him, you know. I insulted him like, you know. I forget what it was. At Cross Lake -- what do you call these bumps on your head? Louse? Great big louse, you know. He looked at me and he wanted to laugh and he says, "What's wrong with you? What did I do wrong?" And then he started talking nicely, you know. They get soused and they don't care. That's their way of not caring. Gods Lake I think is the lowest. They are all so slow.

Margaret: I'm thinking I'd better learn Cree.

Mrs. Mackay: Do you like the way we talk? You know, in Winnipeg sometimes when we talk together like, and a person that doesn't understand French, they think that we talk French, the way we talk.

Margaret: Well, I gather...

Mrs. Mackay: They sort of put their words before they are finished, you know, and that's the way they think we are trying to talk sort of proud, you know. But the Cross Lakers finish their words and in fact they add on that long part.

Margaret: A sort of drawl.

Mrs. Mackay: Yeah, like that. Like 'misgante' 'we know', they sort of drag it. They'll say 'misganante'. They just sort of drag it out.

(End of Interview)