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INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: 532 - 104TH STREET
NORTH BATTLEFORD, SK
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NORTH BATTLEFORD, SK

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INTERVIEWER: VICTORIA RACETTE
INTERPRETER:
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BELOW.

Victoria: March 17, 1984. Subject: Bert Landrie, North
Battleford, Saskatchewan. Bert, could you tell me what type of
a house you grew up in?

Herbert: Log house.

Victoria: And was there running water or electricity or
anything like that?

Herbert: No. There was nothing.

Victoria: About how many rooms did it have?

Herbert: Three.

Victoria: And what was the heating? How did you heat your
house?

Herbert: Wood.

Victoria: Did you have floors or...

Herbert: Yeah, we had, we always had a floor.

Victoria: And what, what type of furniture did you have?

Herbert: Mostly beds and benches.

Victoria: Were they store bought or...

Herbert: No they were mostly made. Beds were store bought but the benches and chairs was mostly made.

Victoria: And did you own your own houses, or did your father own his own house?

Herbert: Yes, he had his own house, yeah.

Victoria: And did you have a big yard or was it...

Herbert: Yes, we had... We lived on a farm, 160 acres, and we done lots of gardening until the dry years and we had no water then. We used to have a lake, a big slough. We used to haul water till we ran out of water back in the 1930s.

Victoria: And how far was your nearest neighbour away?

Herbert: A half a mile.

Victoria: What were they, white people or were they Metis?

Herbert: Well, they were Metis family and there are white people. We were in between.

Victoria: And the Metis family what was their name?

Herbert: Landrie.

Victoria: Oh, they were related were they?

Herbert: Yeah, my dad's brother.

Victoria: What was his name?

Herbert: Charlie.

Victoria: Charlie. Was there very much work back in those days for people?

Herbert: Well, there... the early part in the '20s there was lots of work, but in the '30s there was nothing.

Victoria: What type of jobs were there?

Herbert: Well, mostly farm labour. There was lots of farm

work -- threshing, stooking. There was all kinds of work, spring work and working in the fall. And mostly in the winter we used to trap coyotes.

Victoria: But was there a, was that a good business, this trapping?

Herbert: Well, that's the way we made our living.

Victoria: Did you have chores to do at home when you were young?

Herbert: Oh yes.

Victoria: What types were they?

Herbert: Well, I looked after the horses, and we milked cows.

Victoria: Did your brothers and sisters have work to do too?

Herbert: Yes. They, some of them, my brother Sam, the older ones, they mostly worked on the farms and they worked out. But most of the time I was at home except... In the wintertime I was at home all the time but in the spring I used to go out and work on the farms.

Victoria: Did your family do special things together like camping or hunting?

Herbert: Oh yes, we did that all together. We all did it.

Victoria: So it was sort of a family affair then?

Herbert: Yes, yes.

Victoria: How about storytelling? Was there someone in your family that did any storytelling?

Herbert: My dad was negative in that line. No, there was... he was a very calm man, he hardly ever talked.

Victoria: Anybody that you knew of, you know, like, was there very many Metis people around where you lived?

Herbert: No, there was only three families.

Victoria: Where was this where you were farming?

Herbert: At Simpson. We came from Montana when I come out of school. We moved from Montana to Simpson and Dad homesteaded there in 1924. And we were there, and we had no school. I couldn't go to school. Till later years my sisters got a little bit education. They started a new school; they built a new school for us. But I was too late. I was working out then and was too old to get in the school.

Victoria: And where were you born at?

Herbert: I was born in Dundurn, Saskatchewan.

Victoria: Was that before you moved to Simpson or...

Herbert: Yeah, well my dad and them moved. They left in 1919. They left Saskatchewan and they went to Montana. Dad used to go pick up horses in Montana and then he'd bring them south to the settlers and sell them. He came north.

Victoria: Did he do that for a living?

Herbert: Yeah, he done that for quite some time until it got so they couldn't travel around. They travelled by horses and wagons, but they wouldn't travel around because the country was getting settled and they had no place to take them horses. And that was the last time they brought horses was 1923. They brought about 60 head of horses and they brought them down to Simpson and some they took them to Turtleford to sell.

Victoria: So you grew up in Dundurn then. Do you remember much about your life there?

Herbert: No, I didn't. I was just a little kid when we left in 1919, you see, when we went to the States and we stayed there three or four years.

Victoria: And then back to Simpson?

Herbert: Yeah, and back to Simpson in 1924 actually -- we must have been there five years, you see. And we moved to Simpson and Dad homesteaded there, and we stayed there. In 1942 when Dad left and we moved to Baljennie.

Victoria: Were your grandparents around you while you were growing up?

Herbert: No, only my grandmother. They were all, they were dead.

Victoria: How about your aunts and uncles and cousins of any kind, were they...?

Herbert: Well, I had two uncles there -- three. One was at Hanley, George; and Isadore was a mile away from us; and Uncle Charlie was only half a mile.

Victoria: So you sort of grew up around where your realtions were?

Herbert: Oh yeah.

Victoria: Is there anyone of your family, like any family member that you had, that you especially remember for some reason or another? I mean who was sort of outstanding to you, you maybe looked up to him as...

Herbert: Only my grandmother. That's... They were away. I knew them but very little when I was really young.

Victoria: What makes you think of her?

Herbert: Well, my grandmother, she stayed with us when she was really old and she died at my mother's place at Watrous.

Victoria: Is there something special that...

Victoria: Was there something special...?

Herbert: Yeah, well that's what brought... specials. Actually I didn't know the rest very much, because they lived at Hanley and they were old. I didn't have much to do with them, only my grandmother on my mother's side. She lived with us for quite some time.

Victoria: Was your family, like was there a strong family loyalty with your family? Did they stick together?

Herbert: Yes. Pretty much.

Victoria: And your father -- you said your father did horse trading for a living -- was there something else he did, too, to supplement the income, or what did he do later on in life?

Herbert: Well, labour mostly, ordinary labour, farm work quite a bit.

Victoria: Did he ever, well you said about trapping, hunting pretty much...

Herbert: Oh yeah, he did lots of that. He trapped and hunt. And he used to hunt for bounty for timber wolves and coyotes in Montana. He did lots of that. And he done lots of ranch work as well. He broke in lots of horses, and he did pretty well everything.

Victoria: Did he do quite a bit of seasonal work?

Herbert: Pardon?

Victoria: Was it quite a bit of seasonal work that he did?

Herbert: No, there was... he was pretty well occupied all the time except when he started to get old.

Victoria: Your parents had a garden?

Herbert: Oh yeah, they always had a garden.

Victoria: Was it, how was it, a big garden or...

Herbert: Oh yes, it was a big garden and we grew lots of potatoes, and carrots, and turnips, and everything.

Victoria: And you had livestock?

Herbert: Livestock we had, yeah, cows. We used to have a lot of cattle. Well, I say a lot, well, we had maybe 35, 40 head at times, and times right down to nothing and then laid by and sell, see.

Victoria: Is there a time that you can ever remember when your father was unemployed and he didn't have any work at all?

Herbert: Well, yes, in the '30s.

Victoria: How was it then? How was it for your family then?

Herbert: It was very tough, it was hard to describe. He was getting old and he couldn't do much work, so we got the idea of hunting coyotes. We used hounds and we sold and we got anywhere from \$5 to \$10 for a coyote that time.

Victoria: That was good money then?

Herbert: Yes. That was the... you made better wages than working on a farm. I worked on a farm for \$5 a month. Yeah, that was in the '30s, \$5 a month, and the government gave \$5 a month to the farmer for my board.

Victoria: Sort of supplement.

Herbert: Yeah. And I, the least I got was \$7.50 a month. I worked six months on that government scheme and then if I stayed six months I got \$2.50 bonus.

Victoria: How old were you at that time?

Herbert: I was about 17 or 18 years old.

Victoria: When your father was unemployed, how did it affect the family? Was there anything special that you can remember of how it affected your family while he was not working?

Herbert: Well, we kinda strayed away to look for work. It was, we had to do that, We couldn't all stick together because there was nothing to do. There was no work to be done. So my sister worked for \$5 a month too, my sister Marian. Well, Bernice was pretty young that time, but my brother Sam also working for \$5 a month. But we hunt coyotes in the meantime and we, that's where we made a dollar or two.

Victoria: Did that times, the living in that time did it effect your relatives the same way as it did your family?

Herbert: Well, pretty much.

Victoria: And the Metis people in the community, was it sort of all the same for all of you?

Herbert: Yes. They were all having a tough time. And they got relief -- they called it them days -- and they got so much wood and so much coal, and they gave the farmers a little bit of grain to put the crops in. But that's all you done; you

didn't have to take it off because there was nothing grew except the Russian thistle.

Victoria: What language did they speak in the home as you were growing up?

Herbert: Well, it was mixed. There was a little bit of French. My dad could talk real good French. My mother didn't talk real good French but my dad could talk all that to the French people like Charbonneau. That's the only thing my dad ever talked was French. But he talked Cree, he talked good Cree, he could even read and write it. And he talked English but he wasn't educated in English but he learned it. He read and write in Cree.

Victoria: What did you learn to speak first?

Herbert: I just picked up. I picked up the English and the mix... as well as the Cree and the French. Because when my dad got mad it was usually French because I didn't use that language. (both laugh)

Victoria: Did your folks think of themselves as being Metis?

Herbert: Yes.

Victoria: All the time?

Herbert: Yes, yeah.

Victoria: And what about you? When were you first ever aware of being Metis?

Herbert: From the day I can remember. They didn't call us Metis at that time, they called us half-breeds, but in the French language, les Metis, that was.

Victoria: Were, were they proud, did they seem to be proud to you of being Metis?

Herbert: Oh yeah, they were very proud. They were very proud people.

Victoria: The other people around you, the other families, were they also proud of being Metis?

Herbert: Yeah. We got along fine with the outsiders. We got along fine.

Victoria: There was, yeah, you said there was whites...

Herbert: Yeah. Our neighbours were good neighbours. They were white people, Mr. Beck and... son-of-a-gun, I can't talk about it.

Victoria: I heard about that. There's a lot of, you say there was quite a few Metis that did live around you, eh, and they

were also very proud of their nationality.

Herbert: Oh yes. They weren't ashamed a bit at all. We went to dances all winter long -- there used to be dances every week -- and we got along fine with the people.

Victoria: Did you ever get together for weddings, or New Year's, Christmas? What, what were they like for you?

Herbert: Well we had, we always had a good New Year's. There was always a big feast New Year's. My dad was the oldest and they all come to my dad's place the first day. And then the second day we'd go to Uncle Isadore's place. And Charlie's, he had the biggest house and that's where we used to have the dance.

Victoria: This was at New Year's time?

Herbert: Yeah, New Year's time.

Victoria: And what would you do when you went from place to place?

Herbert: Well we'd, we'd have a, there was meals all ready. Like, they'd have breakfast at my dad's place early in the morning, and they'd have drinks, they'd get some wine and they pass a drink around. And they'd have breakfast there, then move to my Uncle Isadore's place and then we'd go..., they'd have dinner there and supper at my Uncle Charlie's place and they cleared the place out and have the dance. And I played and my brother Sam played and we had...

Victoria: It must have been fun.

Herbert: Yes, it was lots of fun. There was lots of other people come. There was all our neighbours and lots of people who used to come for the dance.

Victoria: How about Christmas time? What was it like for you?

Herbert: Well, we didn't celebrate too much for Christmas. Mostly we stayed at home. We didn't visit around Christmas time.

Victoria: Did you have gifts or anything at that time?

Herbert: Not too much but we'd have oranges and things like that, and nuts and candy, but we mostly stayed at home.

Victoria: During these holidays, especially on New Year's, was there anybody that told stories during that time, or talk about any type of Metis history, or the old days?

Herbert: Not that I know of.

Victoria: Nothing that you can remember, eh?

Herbert: No, I can't remember anything that...

Victoria: Did your father...? Can you remember him or any of your uncles or, in fact anyone that was Metis, do you ever remember them wearing a sash, or the women wearing, you know, traditional Metis clothing?

Herbert: My grandmother.

Victoria: What, how did she dress?

Herbert: Well, well she used to wear a shawl and different things, and moccasins and my mother never wore them. She, she didn't like the moccasins. My dad sometimes he used to wear them, although my mother used to tan deer hides and stuff. She made lots of deer hides. She made gloves, buckskin coats for other people, but we never used them.

Victoria: Did she do beadwork too?

Herbert: No. She never done beadwork. She done embroidery work for buckskin jackets and so on, but she didn't learn to do beadwork. My auntie, Mrs. Isadore Landrie -- that was a sister to my mother -- she done the beadwork. She was really good at it.

Victoria: And did you ever watch them do the tanning of hides?

Herbert: Yes. I've helped them lots of times.

Victoria: Do you know how to do it yourself?

Herbert: Yes, I can do it too. I haven't done it in a long time, but my brother Jim is doing it right now.

Victoria: You had, obviously you had a real good time at New Year's. Did your parents know how to jig?

Herbert: Oh yes. My dad was a very good jigger and so was my brother-in-law, Mark Short. I done a little myself but I never was good at it.

Victoria: Did they always do that during the local dances?

Herbert: Oh yes, yes. There was waltzes, and square dances, and they had the Red River jig, and drops of brandy, all old time dances. And they'd have fox trots and one steps, and two steps, and different types. But the older folks, they'd have that special square dances, and all the old time dances like drops of brandy, and...

Victoria: Were there fiddle players in your family?

Herbert: Yeah, yes. My brother Sam was a fiddler and so was I.

Victoria: But any of your aunts or uncles?

Herbert: No.

Victoria: Your dad?

Herbert: No, my dad never, never played.

Victoria: Do you remember if they ever sang any kind of Metis songs or French songs?

Herbert: Yes. Yes, my dad was, was good at singing French songs and Cree songs as well, and my Uncle Charlie was good.

Victoria: What would they be about? Did you know what they were about?

Herbert: Oh it's about... by gosh, it's hard for me to say it... it's a long... about travelling and moving around, they was...

Victoria: Sort of their history stuff?

Herbert: Yeah, several songs my Uncle Charlie knew. My brother Jim learned them songs, they were French songs. Lots of time they would, my Uncle Charlie was hauled up to sing French songs because there was a good size French settlement around Simpson and they liked him to sing songs.

Victoria: And the Cree songs, do you remember anything about what they were about?

Herbert: Yeah, mostly my dad sang Cree songs for the powwows and round dances. He used to go and...

Victoria: There was a reserve close by there?

Herbert: Yeah. He used... he used to go up around Turtleford and sing in powwows and round dances.

Victoria: What, what reserve? Do you remember which one it was?

Herbert: Well it was Thunderchild. That was it. We stayed in Turtleford...

Victoria: What type of Indians live on it?

Herbert: They were Cree Indian.

Victoria: Cree.

Herbert: Yeah. We lived in... in... one winter we lived in Turtleford and my dad brought a bunch of horses there. That's when he took up the homestead. Then we moved from Turtleford. We started farming. We only had a small farm but we made a living till the country dried up.

Victoria: Did you know of anyone that used Indian medicine, or

if anybody in your family ever used it?

Herbert: Well, my mother used to have minor things. Like, she used to have stuff that... well, kidney trouble and she had some... She used to use from clam shells for high fever.

Victoria: What did she do with them?

Herbert: She'd grind them up and pour them on lukewarm water and you drink that. It was really good, just a drop and get your fever down.

Victoria: Do you remember anything else, any other kind of things she used to use?

Herbert: Well she... well, I don't know. They used that joint grass and them briar bushes for kidney troubles and that was very good. She had a lot of other kind of medicines but I didn't know anything about them.

Victoria: Were they sort of roots or herbs?

Herbert: Yeah, roots and different things.

Victoria: Do you remember if any kind of types of illnesses that they, you know, the people had around where you lived?

Herbert: No, nothing in particular. My dad had pneumonia and I had it a couple'a times, but other than that there was nothing.

Victoria: How about tuberculosis? Was it, was it a very common thing around where you lived?

Herbert: No. No, there was nothing around there. My aunt had T.B. She had it for years, finally died with it, my Uncle Charlie's wife.

Victoria: Did she, did she have to go to the sanitorium or anything?

Herbert: Yes, she went to the sanitorium for two or three years in Saskatoon.

Victoria: How old were you when you got your first paying job?

Herbert: Thirteen.

Victoria: And what was that doing?

Herbert: I was stooking.

Victoria: What's, what do you do when you stook?

Herbert: Well, you set up grain to dry. The farmers had binders and they tied them, that grain, in bundles and you set them up with the heads down [sic up] so it would dry.

Otherwise they would lay it on the ground, they wouldn't dry and if it got wet they start to sprout again.

Victoria: So that would be seasonal work?

Herbert: Yeah. And then I started threshing that same fall.

Victoria: And did you, were there quite a few years that was just seasonal work?

Herbert: Yeah. That's... farming was mostly seasonal work. You started... like later on when I got a little older I started early in the spring where you're planting seed -- wheat, oats, barley, flax, some of them grew flax. And when you had a hay you put up hay for the stock. And then it come harvest time you start cutting the grain, and then after that the stooking and when that was finished they haul bundles, use as a... They had threshing machines. You had three, or four, (inaudible) four, six teams and you took your turn every round. You put a load on and you pull it up to the machine, and it's always running, and you pitch the bundles into the feeder to thresh grain.

Victoria: But how many, how many summers did you do this?

Herbert: Oh, the combine started. That was in the '40s, began in the '40s. There was still quite a bit of threshing up in Alberta side. We done lots of stooking and threshing there. But they started the combines, well they, there was no more of that threshing.

Victoria: What did you do, what did you do later on then in your life?

Herbert: Well, we ran... we used trucks and I run a combine. I ran a threshing machine for Pat Barker for about eight seasons and then the combines came in, well, I started using the combine. And I hauled grain as well from, from the farmer's place to the elevator, and we had no more room in the elevators we put 'em in granaries.

Victoria: Did you eventually leave Simpson then?

Herbert: Yeah, we left. When my dad sold the place he moved. That was in 1942, and he moved to Baljennie and he stayed there until we went to Big River.

Victoria: And what did you do there?

Herbert: Well, we... I started loggin'. I worked in a loggin' camp. And then my dad died that fall. The next year I got a job driving cat. I was hauling...

Victoria: What was your job when you were working at the logging camp? What did you... what was your specific job?

Herbert: I was a sawer.

Victoria: What does that... what do you when you're a sawer?

Herbert: Well, you saw logs down, two men and sometimes three. You chop... knock them big trees down and you cut 'em up at certain length from eight to sixteen feet. It all depends what that various tree would come out. You try to avoid all the bends and everything. If it's too much of a bend well, you have trouble tryin' to... you waste a lot of timber, but if you watch you get wise to that. You cut it say ten feet, or if a little bend, fourteen feet or shorter, anywhere from eight to sixteen was the longest we made.

Victoria: And where was this done in the bush or...

Herbert: Yeah, all in the bush. And there was the horses skiddin' and they pile the logs up and they were taken...

Victoria: What do they mean by skidding?

Herbert: Well, they use one horse...

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Herbert: ...well they used one horse and sometimes the trees were too big, the logs were too big, they'd have to double up. They have to use two horses, one horse couldn't pull them, and the deep snow and other sticks. And sometimes they took the logs down to the lake on the ice and they make a boom in the spring.

Victoria: What's a boom?

Herbert: Big, big heavy timbers, big ones, big as you could find and they were all chained together, one individual chain. You made a hole with an auger, a wood auger, and you drill a hole through there and you drop that and the chain too there and it crossed itself when it's down in the water, see. When you fell, fall a tree through there you double it up and when it drops through that hole it goes across so they don't pull apart. When the boats come, well, they were taken, oh, the farthest we went was about, I'd say, 25 miles and we travelled about half a mile an hour. With a skidway we'd have maybe 2,000 logs. And we had a motor boat, a big boat, and we always had a small boat and we used pipe poles in case one log went under the boom or over the top. You wasn't allowed to leave logs in the water because there was planes flying all through that country and landing on the water. So you had to pick up all the spare logs, extra logs that fell through the boom. And when you got there to the landing you unhooked your boom as they want. They keep shortening, the boom gets smaller, so it pulls in right to where the mill is and that's where they sawed the logs at the sawmill. And they made lumber out of that and

it was sold to lots of people, local people bought lots of lumber but there was a market for it all at anytime.

Victoria: How long did you work there?

Herbert: Well, I worked for... three, four seasons I worked for Anderson.

Victoria: And then you said you drove cat. What, what did you do when you were driving cat?

Herbert: I was hauling fish and groceries.

Victoria: From, from where?

Herbert: Well when the ice got strong enough we start fishing. There was lots of guys fishing up north -- Buffalo Narrows, and Ile-a-la-Crosse, Patuanak, and Dillon, Pine River. We haul fish all over and also groceries.

Victoria: Who were you working for then?

Herbert: I was working for Wade Fishery. There was four men to a cat, you see.

Victoria: What, what did you do? You loaded the groceries and things on...?

Herbert: Well, we... yes, we delivered them. Say we went to Patuanak, we'd have a load of groceries at the Hudson's Bay, see. We'd unload. And my boss got paid by the pound, 100 pounds of flour costs so much and we hauled flour, bacon all kinds of canned stuff, too, everything, ordinary groceries that most people use. And we'd bring a load of fish back, see.

Victoria: And how long did you do that?

Herbert: Oh, I don't know, about four, five winters. And I drove cat on the highway when we were building roads all over Big River.

Victoria: And how... do you sort of seasonal on that too?

Herbert: Yeah, well that was a seasonal job too. You couldn't do it in the wintertime. When it froze up, well, they had to quit road grading, you see. Well, then we'd start on the... and I got lots of other jobs such as hauling cordwood --I hauled cordwood -- and when the fishing season started well we start hauling fish and freight.

Victoria: Did you get married in between any of this time? Were you married yet or not?

Herbert: Yeah. Back awhile. I had a family then when I first started fishing at Big River.

Victoria: And how many kids?

Herbert: We had three.

Victoria: How many all together now?

Herbert: Well, I had nine kids, seven boys and two girls. We lost a little boy and that was the tenth one. He died.

Victoria: And after that, what did you do?

Herbert: Well, that's the first time when I quit picking stones I got that job at the Friendship Centre, so I...

Victoria: Oh, you were picking stones too?

Herbert: Yeah, I was picking stones all for quite a few years and then when I got that job at the Friendship Centre I started to work here. And when I took sick, I lost my job. I put in for the job again but somebody else cut me in there. They took it a little cheaper than I was getting.

Victoria: When you left Big River, where did you go to from there?

Herbert: When I left Big River? I moved to Sundre. That's when I moved to Sundre.

Victoria: Sundre, Alberta, eh?

Herbert: Yeah.

Victoria: What did you do there?

Herbert: Well I was logging, mostly logging.

Victoria: Mostly logging?

Herbert: Well, I used to go out in the spring and I'd shear till about the end of June or part of July. And sometimes we, earlier years during the war, I sheared sheep until way in August because there was no men available at that time.

Victoria: What areas did you shear sheep in?

Herbert: Eh?

Victoria: What part of the province, or was it in Saskatchewan?

Herbert: Well, yes Saskatchewan and Alberta. I worked a lot, done a lot around Brooks, Alberta.

Victoria: What do you do when you shear sheep?

Herbert: Well, it's kind of hard to describe but it's... you use sheep shears, they're seven inches long, and you fix them to suit yourself, and you set them up and you start from the neck and around the head and one side of the, one side of the

backbone...

Victoria: That's just like you're cutting the hair, the wool off the sheep.

Herbert: Yeah, you're cutting wool off. Yeah, you're cutting the wool off and you got it all in two pieces. You take off a half and you turn your sheep over, or you can step around, and do the other side and the last part, the fleece falls off and it's all in a bundle except the belly. Then you do the belly.

Victoria: What do they use this wool for, after?

Herbert: Well, for making clothing, blankets, woollen blankets, clothing and boy, they had lots of sheep in the country that time.

Victoria: So it was a good paying job too?

Herbert: Oh yes, it was. That was my best paying job I ever had.

Victoria: How did you work it? How did you get paid?

Herbert: Well, so much a piece.

Victoria: Well, how much did you get when you were shearing?

Herbert: Well, we used to get as high as 50 cents a head towards the end when the prices went up. But we started at 10 cents a bat that first year I went at Bay Beauchesne. It was 1935, I started shearing that time up until last year. I done a few small little bunches around here last year.

Victoria: Up until last year!

Herbert: Yeah. Last... 43 years I told you I done that.

Victoria: Good heavens!

Herbert: Every season. I never missed a season, because that was my best money. Well, I could do 125 a day, so that was the best wages you could find.

Victoria: What did you do, like after you moved, or back from Sundre, you did this when... just off and on shearing sheep, did you?

Herbert: Yeah. Well that was a seasonal job. I started that, like I told you, 1935. Every year, I went with Al Babe and went with others. And we had a big crew when we worked for John Morley; he was captain of the crew. There was ten of us and we guaranteed 1,000 a day. And there was two, two guys, Babe, and what you call it, Molly Adams, they couldn't do 100, but it was the other guys. There was some guys who could really go, like Frank McKay, he did 140, and Colin McKay, he could do 140 a day. I never got that high. But I was champion at one time. In 1947 in a competition, I sheared a sheep in 74

seconds.

Victoria: Good heavens. Where was the competition held at?

Herbert: At Saskatoon University.

Victoria: Well, for heaven sakes. And you won first prize, eh?

Herbert: Yeah.

Victoria: You were the best. That was in the province or was that...

Herbert: Yes, that's only for one sheep, you see, because I, like I said, Franky McKay and Colin McKay, they could beat me in the long run but maybe they never beat me for one sheep.

Victoria: Was this competition... was that first prize or...?

Herbert: Well there was no money in that. It was just that we had a kind of a big celebration at that university.

Victoria: Did you live in Saskatoon at onetime?

Herbert: Yes, that's the time when I was living in Saskatoon. And that's when I was working at Ehrle's. But I take time off at Ehrle's and I'd go here in the fall. We'd fix up the machinery, the seed-cleaning machines and used sieves and everything ready, and that grain start coming in. There was crested wheat, and bromegrass, alfalfa, clover, and wheat, anyway all kinds of different seeds -- oats, and barley, rye, everything like that. That was my winter's job. I done that for six years. Well, it was not full years; I always take a couple of months off each year.

Victoria: How long did you live in Saskatoon?

Herbert: Six years.

Victoria: How did you take to living in the city after, you know, being on your own or just in a small town?

Herbert: Well, I didn't seem to make any difference to me. I got along good with everybody. The boys I worked with seemed like -- they were 16, as high as 20 men at Ehrle's -- it seems like... it was really good, the boys was all good workers. We never had any problems at all.

Victoria: How was your family? How did they take to it, bein' in the city, a big city? I imagine that was a big city then, eh?

Herbert: Yes, it was a big city, yeah. Well, they, my kids, I never had any problems with the boys till they got older and they got on their own and they start drinking. But they never got into any serious trouble but they got in trouble, minor things, you see. They never done anything really bad.

Victoria: So they didn't really mind too much then, moving to the city?

Herbert: Oh, they're all makin' a livin'. Lawrence, a boy, he's working steady, and Bernie and Joe, they all got a steady job. In fact they worked for 12 years steady, I think, Joe and Bernie. Bernie stays with us; he's not married.

Victoria: Did you ever know of or hear of anyone, you know, like a Metis person who was, you know, doing the same job as a white person and got less pay for it?

Herbert: Well yes, I do. I didn't find out... I got less pay lots of times, but it didn't hurt me. It never hurt me. I just done my best and if I got \$25 a week.., See, when I first started at Ehrle's I got \$24.95 a week but I made a living with my family. I had six kids that time. And I didn't, it didn't bother me.

Victoria: And there was others doing the same work as you were that got higher wages?

Herbert: Yes, they got maybe \$30 a week. But they were, they weren't any better than me at it. But it's just that I was a beginner and they paid me accordingly.

Victoria: Oh, seniority counted then when you worked, eh?

Herbert: Yeah, yeah. So, but I... it never hurt me.

Victoria: Were you ever denied a job because you were Metis, I mean, did anybody ever just, you know, not hire you because you were Metis?

Herbert: Only once.

Victoria: When was that?

Herbert: Yeah, well, that was at threshing time at Biggar. A guy come to hire us and he asked us if, who wanted to do some threshing. I said, "Sure." So he took us along and when we got to that farm that he... a German fellow, he said he wouldn't hire Metis people or Indians, they were no God damn good.

Victoria: Well, he even give you the reason, did he?

Herbert: Yeah, he gave us the reason. They said we... Well, we went back and we went another place. We got a job the next... the same day; we got back to Biggar -- that fellow drove us back -- and we got another job. They didn't ask us what we were: they hired us. They asked us if we could handle a team of horses. I said, "Sure. I done it lots of times," so that. And Danon Young, my brother-in-law, the two of us, and that's when we were refused a job because we were Metis.

Victoria: And that was the only time?

Herbert: That was the only time.

Victoria: When you first started dealing with, you know, people in the different communities did they, white people like police, or judges, or anything like that did they ever make you feel uncomfortable to be around them?

Herbert: No, no. I never had any trouble with the police. I was never in trouble with the police, and I cooperated with them, and I found a few that was kind of miserable, you know, but I found some that was really good. You take for instance, we were shearing and a fellow's house burnt down, and we stayed at Mike Roy's place. That same policeman stopped me three times, every morning he'd stop me, and I finally told him, "I'm getting fed up with this, see." We had breakfast...

Victoria: Did he give you a reason for stopping?

Herbert: No he was, he wanted to check my brakes and check the gas and see if I was using purple gas. I told him I never use purple gas unless I was absolutely stuck. I'd have to use it then but only to get to a service station.

Victoria: Were your family or you, were you always treated fairly, or ever treated unfairly, by any town authorities of any kind?

Herbert: Not that I know of. Like I said, there was the town police at Simpson, he never bothered me. He always called me by name and I talked to him, and he never, he never gave me any rough times.

Victoria: How about, did you ever any dealings with government, or welfare? Welfare agents of any kind?

Herbert: Oh yes, I was on welfare but I never had any problems either.

Victoria: So you were always treated good.

Herbert: Yeah, except that one particular time. When I was in the hospital, my wife had a problem, but when, when I had to go on welfare when I was in the hospital she had lots of trouble. The guy was miserable and he wouldn't even believe that we had... I was in the hospital. He had to come to the hospital to see me and she had to make three trips to get some help. And finally she got a letter from the doctor to go and get welfare, because I never asked for welfare before. And she had to make three trips. And one time we were stuck. We were trapping beavers and we were making pretty good money, the price of beavers was good. But we got caught in a three-foot snow storm and we were stuck, and we were just about out of food ourselves. And the wife had nothing, and she went to get welfare and they refused. So she called the police and the police came and seen, so, by God, they got help.

Victoria: That was good.
Herbert: Yeah.

Victoria: That's the only problems you've had with them, eh?

Herbert: Yeah.

Victoria: Any other government agents or anything...

Herbert: Nothing. I deal with the bank, I can borrow money there and I just finished paying my store bill. I got credit. I've been dealing in that same store for 22 years, and I just have to pick up the phone and deliver my stuff if I want it. They never ask questions, I'll (?) my store (?), they never ask me.

Victoria: How about when you lived in the small towns, also in the city, did they ever try to force Metis people to either one side of the town or live in one area, or to just make them move out?

Herbert: Well, there was some families had that problem with the, in Kerrobert but I never had any problem. I never, never had no problem. We were alone in lots of places. There was no Metis around the country, like when I lived in Sundre, and my neighbours was really, really good to me. Art Whitney was my next-door neighbour, the school house was only across the road and they got... the kids was always good. They were a nice family. And Wes Darling, old Glen Stone was my neighbour, Elton Bonnis, and they were all my neighbours, close neighbours. They were all good people.

Victoria: What about when you moved to Saskatoon? Did you find the breeds were living in a certain area or were they scattered all over?

Herbert: No, they were scattered all over. You see, the reason I moved to Saskatoon... when I left Big River... I liked Big River. I was getting along fine. See, I was driving cat in summertime and in the winter I go Kaput (?) and I worked at the mill. But the only reason I moved was on account of my mother, She had a cancer and I moved to Saskatoon so I could find a job here. In fact my cousin had a job for me when I got here, so I rented a house and eventually I bought that place and I sold it.

Victoria: When you were young, Bert, did the church play an important role in your life, or in your family's life?

Herbert: Well, in the beginning of time, yes. But when we got away from each other, the family broke up, like my dad and mother died, and religion was not too much of us. Although, I believe in it. I pray every day but as far as being a religious man, I never was.

Victoria: Were your parents?

Herbert: Well, my dad and mother they used to go to church quite often.

Victoria: Did you ever remember of the priest visiting at your home?

Herbert: Oh yes.

Victoria: Do you remember the things he talked about?

Herbert: Not too much, because they were kind of quiet and they didn't let the children nose around and make noise. My dad was strict that time. "You kids go out and play," he'd tell us.

Victoria: That's when they wanted to talk?

Herbert: Yeah, when they were visiting. And not only the priest or anybody, but that was their ways, the older people. They didn't allow the kids to run around and make all kinds of noise when the older people was visiting, you see. My dad and mother and my Uncle Isadore, and my Uncle Charlie and their family, they used to play cards quite often in the wintertime. But we'd sit around, my cousin Clem and Ed and (name), we'd sit around in different room and we'd play there, play cards sometimes our own way. But we didn't interfere. They'd have a big lunch at about 10 o'clock and then they hook up the horses and go home.

Victoria: Do you think that the church had more influence on the people then than it does, you know, nowadays?

Herbert: Well that's pretty hard for me to say, because I don't go to church very often; mostly to weddings and funerals.

Victoria: And you're hoping that isn't often.

Herbert: Yeah, that's not often, quite often though at weddings.

Victoria: Do you think though that the church all in all has helped Metis people when they had problems?

Herbert: Oh yes, I do believe that there's... there's always... there's always... especially when there's a death in the family. Well, we all get to... you all see... see all of them, all the relations and not only the relations but those that you know, they all will show up. They have a... they bring food, everything for a burial (inaudible).

Victoria: It was like that very much in the old days?

Herbert: Yeah, it was always a... always a... last I can remember... as far back as I can remember. Everybody, everybody would try to help.

Victoria: Did you want to go to school when you were young?

Herbert: Oh yes I really wanted to go to school. I loved school, all the schooling I had. I got to be an altar boy. Not all the time but once in a while the priest, Father Talman, would call me (inaudible) an altar boy. And he used to take me around and I carried holy water and everything and bless all the places. They had a big farm here, you see, and then they had big barns that they had milk cows...

Victoria: Where was this at?

Herbert: In Montana. And I...

Victoria: What were they used for, what was the barns and...

Herbert: Well, they had lots of cattle. They had a big dairy farm and...

Victoria: Oh, this was for the priest?

Herbert: Yeah. There was two priests there and a nun taught school to us. And the priests, they had a big farm there, and they had cattle, and they had lots of cattle, and lots of horses -- they worked with horses that time there was no tractors. My job used to be haulin' wood. We all had a job. The two of us, Johnny Green and I, that was the play hall, that was our job to sweep every morning just before mass. And then we'd go to mass and then we'd have breakfast and then we'd go to school.

Victoria: The things that they taught you when you went there... Who did you say taught you? Who was the teacher?

Herbert: Well, it's a nun. Sister Incarnation, that was her name.

Victoria: And what was your schoolroom like? Was it like a regular old school house?

Herbert: Yeah. No, it was a boarding school and you had individual rooms. They stayed... like a dorm, maybe ten kids in one room, one big room, single beds, all single beds.

Victoria: What about in the school part?

Herbert: Oh yes, well, you had certain things to do and the school, well, different classes, like your...

Victoria: Was it one big room or did they have several different ones?

Herbert: Well they had several places, different grades, in schools. And the thing was you had a gymnasium, you had wrestling and ball playing, and boxing; but you couldn't do any wrestling or boxing only certain times in the evening.

Victoria: And did they... were you allowed to talk Cree in the

school, at school, or French or whichever, you know?

Herbert: Yeah, well, my brothers talked Cree to me but mostly they were Crow Indians so we couldn't talk Cree to them.

Victoria: Was there more than you in your family that went there?

Herbert: Oh yes, there was lots of people.

Victoria: But I mean, out of your family was there more than you that went there?

Herbert: Well, there was Sam and Jim.

Victoria: Oh, you had two other brothers in school there?

Herbert: Yeah, and I had another brother, a cripple, Henry...

(END OF SIDE B)

(END OF TAPE)