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HIGHLIGHTS:

- General account of his life

Lawrence: Okay?

Judy: Yeah.

Lawrence: Well, we're talking about the involvement of the church or whether anything is involved, or it should get more involved or whether it's involved enough or not, wasn't that it?

Wife: That's not what she asked you.

Lawrence: No.

Judy: No, the influence that the church had.

Lawrence: Influence, oh yeah, yeah, yeah. The influence, you see, I don't think they have any influence. Like I say again, you have to have the people involved in the church to get the church to have any influence. You have to have, you have to have the people, the people, the people that are, that are in the places, the people that are in the places that can, or in the involvement of an organization, if you get what I'm trying to tell you, is the people that have to be involved in the church in order for the church to get involved with the society, I feel. And if you haven't got that why, what's the use of, or how can they cut any ice if they go, if they go to some place, like we were talking about there, and then it's cut off, you see. So therefore you can't have any involvement, the involvement is cut off. The church was involved there and it was cut off. Because, I guess, because there wasn't enough involvement in it, but it was still doing a service to the people that were there, that were going. It was comradeship. They met each other there, they prayed together, they laughed together and whatever.

Judy: Let's go on to the subject of school and education. What do you remember about going to school?

Lawrence: Not really, not really very much. All I know is that, all I can remember is... Do you mean about going to school or during my school days?

Judy: Going to school. Describe what the school was like and...

Lawrence: Just going to school, eh?

Judy: Right.

Lawrence: Oh, it was dead. (laughs) It was dead, there wasn't, there wasn't much excitement, yeah. You felt like saying, "Come on Joe, let's go. There's no fun here," you know. (laughs)

Wife: School was boring to you.

Lawrence: Yeah, it was boring. But I had good grades, I will say that. I passed my grades. Well, you can see there I was 16 years old when I was in grade ten. Did I say nine there?

Wife: You said you started ten.

Lawrence: Yeah, ten, that's what it is. I thought maybe I was nine, but I started ten, when I was 16 years old. I was doing all right, I wasn't flunking any year, I was passing every year. Some years I took two grades, I remember, a couple of

years.

Wife: You only did two.

Lawrence: Yeah.

Judy: Describe what the school was like?

Lawrence: Well I don't, I don't, I really can't think of any way I could describe it. In what way would you think, is there some way you think that maybe you could tell me to describe it? What, what went on?

Judy: How large was it? Were the classes separated?

Lawrence: Oh yeah, well, we had in Duck Lake... I don't remember, I don't remember in Duck Lake when I went to school in Duck Lake, I don't remember, I can't recall that. But in Prince Albert there was only two classes, there was only two rooms. I think there was from 1 to 5 and 6, 7 and 8. There was only two, and then 9 and 10, if you passed grade 8. Well, then they sent you to the college or whatever you call it, you know, collegiate, I guess, or in my case they sent me to St. Peter's College there. I went to St. Peter's College for...

Judy: And where was that located that?

Lawrence: In Muenster, in Muenster in Saskatchewan, not far from Humbolt.

Judy: Were you allowed to speak Cree in school? Do you know how to speak Cree?

Lawrence: Well, certainly Duck Lake. In Duck Lake you could speak Cree, yes, mostly Cree. If you talk English there, they'll catch you, "What's the matter with you? You crazy?" But in, in Prince Albert, well, there was no, no need to talk Cree unless you want to talk to yourself, you know. We were about the only ones, I guess, there that could talk Cree. And we didn't, we didn't use it as a first language, it was English. So we didn't have too much occasion to use it.

Judy: What do you remember about your teachers?

Lawrence: Oh, they were good. They were good. My teachers were very, very, very efficient and tried to be helpful, and oh, they were good.

Judy: Do you remember the kind of things they taught you in school?

Lawrence: Well, no, the only thing is they certainly taught us discipline. That's one thing we did... we did... I was taught all through my life was discipline. We had that in the school too, discipline. And I guess that's... Oh well, they taught you the other... your, your work, you know, they give you. If you were, if you didn't quite understand anything, well, who

doesn't quite understand it, you see, well, you put up your hand. Well then, all right, the rest of you go ahead and they'd talk to you separately and then try to show it to you, you see, what you didn't understand.

Judy: Did they ever teach you anything about Metis or Indian history in school?

Lawrence: No, no. No, well, it was brought up occasionally -- it wasn't teaching, it was brought up occasionally that, like the Riel Rebellion, or the Rebellion was the word. I don't like that word rebellion, I think it was an uprising. But anyway they would, if it was in the history book they'd bring it up -- 1885 Riel, or 1869-1870, the Red River Rebellion. But that's all, they wouldn't tell you why or where about Riel, or why this was so, or try to explain why or what they thought was the cause of it or anything like this, you see. They was just going through, just like a car going through a puddle of water.

Judy: Did you feel that you belonged in school, or did you feel uncomfortable there?

Lawrence: Well, I was, I felt discrimination. Not from the teachers though, not from the teachers, not from the...

Judy: The school system?

Lawrence: Yeah, not from the school system, from the pupils, from the people themselves, from the people themselves. There's something now I don't know whether I should comment on that or not. Yeah, I guess I will. When I was going to Duck Lake I was discriminated against for being a half-breed. They called me a half-breed, you see, and I was discriminated against. I was weeded out of the system, out of the system and a loner, I was a loner.

Judy: This was by the other children in school?

Lawrence: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But not all of them, the majority of them, the majority of them, I guess. Boys, of course. We were segregated boys and girls, you see. We never played with the girls, with them, you know, kind of what they do in the school here -- boys on one side and girls on the other side. And by the boys, well, some, something happened or some boy (inaudible) probably not half-breed (inaudible) something like this, and it was always a form of discrimination there. I ran away from, well, I wouldn't maybe, say, go into that. That's, that's, that makes it too hard for, for maybe, maybe certain people to understand or to, to absorb it. They wouldn't think that there had been things like this happen in a civilized country.

Judy: You wouldn't want to give us an example?

Wife: If it's buried in your memory, don't say it.

Lawrence: No I don't, I don't think I should. Not that I, I've got it in my other things there. But anyway, I was... I found

discrimination there. There was one instance there... I have a piece of a thing here I wrote at one time about my life, just a small resume.

Wife: About St. (inaudible)?

Lawrence: Yeah. That's this, where this one instance in the school. Now I'm talking about classmates, you know what I mean, girls and boys, not teachers or priests or brothers. I was sitting out, her people were in a tent and they're in the school, in the school in Duck Lake. There was a tent parked in there and I was very, very lonesome and down and everything else. I was all by myself, I was always by myself all the time, because I was a loner, I was an outcast. I was an outcast because I was a breed. I know that's what it was. I didn't know at the time but I know now, you see. And this little girl come out and invited me into the tent. And her mother gave me a cup of tea and some bannock. I thought that was very nice, that made my day. For years, sometimes when I think about it, I want to cry.

Wife: And one time we met her here at an AA meeting. I was serving the coffee there, and she remembered him.

Lawrence: Yeah. I forget her name but...

Wife: I know her name. She used to speak at the meetings here, at AA meetings, she's from Duck Lake.

Lawrence: Well anyway, she was, she come out and invited me in and gave me this cup of tea and bannock. And that was, well, it made my day. I keep that in my mind for years when I think of this. I mean this is, this erased all the bad things that had happened to me up until that time, this one good act. And this is what I say it's, this is a kind of slur on, maybe on the Indian people. But I don't mean it as that, see, what I mean, it's just some other things that I'd rather not... Like I say, it's not, this is not, these other things was not against the Indian people, it's against the system, the system, you see. But anyway, in Prince Albert it was very good. It was very good, but I was always discrimination there too in Prince Albert, yeah. I had some things I couldn't understand what was happening to me. I asked the Sister one day, I said to her, I said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she told me, she said some words similar to this, she said... what did she say now? "Young man, you're a fine young man," that's what she told me. "You have nothing to be ashamed of. Perhaps these people wish that maybe they have, or they would have what you've got, so," she said, "don't pay no attention to them. Some day you'll, this will be washed away or whatever, or forgotten about. You'll forget about this some day." But it still lingers in my mind. That's the only part of the thing, you know, part of the discrimination. I was set up to... not, as I say, not by the (inaudible), by the Sisters or anything, but by the children. Well, you see that today now.

Judy: Looking back at your school years, was your

experience at school good or bad?

Lawrence: Experiences?

Judy: Yeah.

Lawrence: Well, outside of those cases I mentioned there, cases of discrimination, I think it was very good. I was treated very good by the people that knew better.

Judy: Do you remember anything about the politics? Do you remember what political parties...

Lawrence: Oh yeah. I guess I've been a politician all my life. I'm well versed in politics. You just ask me and I'll tell you. (laughs)

Judy: Do you remember any politicians visiting your parents' home when you lived there?

Lawrence: Oh yes. No, no, no. Not my parents.

Judy: Your brother-in-law's?

Lawrence: No, my uncle's, yes.

Judy: Do you remember what they talked about?

Lawrence: Oh, mostly what we can do for these people. Do you think maybe we could do something for them, try and see they get their -- have something, that they have work to do and this and that. Naturally there was a motive behind it. We all knew what it was, it was to get the vote, get the vote of the people. My father was a staunch Liberal. I believe that's what killed him, when the Liberals went out of power in 1929, I think it was, when the government was defeated. I think that's what hastened his life. But he was strong Liberal and all of my, those people I was telling you about were strong Liberals.

Judy: Did the Metis generally see one party as the one that spoke the best for the Metis?

Lawrence: Well, our people did, yes.

Judy: What party was that?

Lawrence: It was the Liberal party. Of course in those days there was only two parties. Those days that I'm talking about there was only two parties -- the Liberal and the Conservative. I think it was Conservatives, or did they have a different name in those days? I can't... no, it's Conservatives, that's right, J.T.M. Anderson and those fellows who were in there at that time. J.T., he was the guy who tried to do away with the Catholic schools.

Judy: Do you remember if your father got involved with the parties, or did he just go and vote? Did he ever campaign for them?

Lawrence: He was very much involved, yes, very much involved.

Judy: Do you know if the church was ever involved in politics?

Lawrence: Not that I know of.

Judy: What did most of the Metis people in your parents' day think of politics? What were their views about it?

Lawrence: Well, I don't think they had too much view. I think they only knew one party, as far as the Metis I'm talking about, you know, they all... Few, one, two, or three or four maybe, the more educated people -- there was a few well-educated in there -- they might have been... But the ordinary one, Liberal, you know, they knew the Liberal party. They knew the Liberal party was trying to do something for them. Whether they were doing it to get votes or not they were still doing it for them. What was wrong with that? Nothing. People might think it's wrong, but I don't see there's nothing wrong with it. There was no moral laws broken, or no legal laws broken by doing this. And the people were looked after better than if they weren't, if they didn't have some of these people that were trying to help them involved in politics.

Judy: Did you follow the tradition of your father to vote Liberal, or did you change your views as your got older?

Lawrence: Oh, I changed my views a few times, yes. I followed him for a while; since that I've changed. It gets to the stage now that to a person thinks, well, flip a coin, because they're all the same. Well, I won't say it. (laughs)

Judy: Did you ever get personally involved in a campaign?

Lawrence: Yeah. Yes, a little bit. My wife too....

Judy: Let's go back to some of the other things during your life. When were you first aware of being Metis?

Lawrence: Oh, I don't know. That must have been about 1924, I'd be 13 years old. Oh no, before that, it must have been. I must be approximately 10 years old.

Judy: How often did your parents or relatives think and speak of themselves as Metis? Were they proud of being Metis?

Lawrence: Well, I don't know, I know. I don't know about my mother but my father, my dad and my uncles, and my uncle Fred, and Bill and my dad and Sol, certainly they were not, they did not try to hide the fact that they were Metis. They didn't care if you know it or not. That's what we are, so be it, that's all.

Judy: What about other Metis families? Did they express pride in being Metis, or did they not talk about it?

Lawrence: You mean in Battleford or down there?

Judy: Yeah.

Lawrence: Well, I think in around Battleford there, pretty well. There was a couple of families that wouldn't really admit that they were Metis. And then probably they weren't, they were maybe what we call a half-breed and maybe they were quarter-breed, you know. They used to call them quarter-breeds, they used to say when they didn't want to say, "Well, I'm a Metis," "I'm a quarter-breed," you see. So maybe that's... there was a couple of families. We got one lawyer here in town come from Battleford, Burlingham (?) well, his father was a Metis, but they wouldn't... his dad was a white man and his generation, they wouldn't say that they were Metis.

Judy: Do you remember your parents or your grandparents, or perhaps your uncles ever telling you stories about Metis history?

Lawrence: Oh, my grandfather, yes. Yes, that's the man that she showed you there. Oh yes, I spoke to him. He was involved in the Massacre there at Frog Lake, him and Adolphus Nolin was... These two women there was...

Wife: There's a whole bunch of stuff about him in here.

Lawrence: There's seven or eight, I just forget how many, eight, I think, eight white men that were massacred. And then two women, and God knows what would have happened to them if him and Adolphus Nolin hadn't taken these women, and he protected them for 60 days in the camp of Big Bear. And he put himself, put his life in peril -- because he was a Metis, see, he was a Metis -- but he couldn't stand to see these women maybe massacred too, so he got them and put them in his tent. They burned his house. Big Bear's Wandering Spirit burned his house there in Frog Lake. He was interpreter for the Indian nations there in the 1885 Rebellion in that northwest, our part of the thing, you see. And that's... What was that question you asked me? I kind of wandered off there a bit.

Judy: No, you were doing good. I was just wondering if they told you about history, stories about history?

Lawrence: Yeah, oh yeah, sure. I wanted to get to there after I get to the end of this. Anyway they... he kept these women in his camp for him and his family. And Adolphus went home to Onion Lake and he took these women there for 60 days, and then protected them from the... Otherwise they would have been massacred too, possibly. And he got, he put his life in peril. Anyway, finally the troops, the R.C.M.P. or North West Mounted Police, finally caught up to him. Well, they were tracking Big Bear and they finally got him, and they released my grandfather and them. But he told me that it was Wandering Spirit who wanted to kill him for what he done. They were trying to kill him but the only thing that saved him, I guess, was on account of being married to... Well see, my grandfather was a Metis, a

first generation Metis. His grandfather was a white man, he married an Indian girl, and then they had a boy, William. And then this John was a son of William, you see, that's in there. But anyway the thing that saved him was his wife was Delorme, she was a Delorme, and her dad had a lot of strings, you know, in the Riel. That's why they wouldn't, I guess that's what saved him. Her and her dad being in this kind of a position of maybe doing something, you see. But they wanted to kill him for that. He put his life in peril.

Judy: Were there other stories that you remember being told to you?

Lawrence: Well, there was the one about the... well, this one wasn't told me; this was in later years where I got this. What was his name, the guy that was in, on Bellevue there, that stole a cow.

Wife: Almighty Voice.

Lawrence: Almighty Voice, yeah. He told about that one too. I got stories about Almighty Voice but it was...

Wife: Oh, lots of stories in the old...

Lawrence: Well, there was lots of, but it's hard to recollect them.

Wife: So many things were told in them days.

Lawrence: You know, it's hard to recollect.

Wife: Just the same in our family.

Lawrence: She got more stories than me.

Judy: Do you remember the Metis families in your area getting together for social events?

Lawrence: You mean in town there, in Battleford, or here since we were married?

Judy: Those places, do you remember them getting together?

Lawrence: Oh yeah. In Battleford there, oh shucks, we used to have a fight about every week. Yeah, (laughs) but they used to have social dances, you know, and...

Wife: House parties.

Lawrence: House parties, and some one of them put one on maybe this week and invite everybody, all the Metis, and next week, maybe two weeks later, not necessarily every week. There was lots. They would go all night.

Judy: Did they ever invite any white people along with them?

Lawrence: I think so, if I recollect, not too many. But there used to be, and certainly in town here, eh, when we used to have them in the 30s, certainly we used to have lots of white people here. But in Battleford, not so many in Battleford.

Judy: Were there any special days that you remember the Metis people gathering together especially?

Lawrence: Oh yeah. On Christmas and New Year's, eh.

Wife: New Year's especially.

Lawrence: It was New Year's especially, my goodness. I guess, her... you tell her about the New Year's, what used to happen.

Wife: Oh well, they'd start in the morning and...

Lawrence: Or do you want to...

Wife: No, you tell her. This is your story not mine.

Lawrence: But there used to be about, used to start about midnight. You'd have horses, you know, team of horses and sleigh, and lots of hay in the thing and the horses' blankets. And they would, this one guy would start from his place and then he'd go to the next place, and you'd have maybe a meal there and a drink or something. And then they'd pick those up and go to the next place. Oh, and maybe in another part of the area or the town, whatever you want to call it, there would be not only... they meet over here maybe, and end up with a big dance, you see.

Judy: And this was on New Year's?

Lawrence: Yeah, yeah. And oh...

Wife: Kids and all, these kids there would...

Lawrence: Oh yes, there was...

Wife: We used to have those beams, you know, where they used to put their little swings.

Lawrence: Lots to drink, lots...

Wife: Bring their own rope. (laughs)

Lawrence: Lots to eat, you bring your own rope and your boxing gloves too. (laughs) No, there wasn't too many fights, I just...

Wife: No, nobody drank that much then, I don't...

Lawrence: No, not that bad, it wasn't that bad at all. I just put that in there just for a laugh.

Wife: And they smoke kinnikinnik and...

Lawrence: But they would, they would meet in the place, and then the dancing would start and then sometime maybe they'd go in the morning, sometime they'd maybe go to the next morning. But it was lots of fun, everybody had lots of fun.

Judy: Could I ask you what that is, kinnikinnik?

Wife: That's bark from the willow tree.

Lawrence: The old squash, well, the older native people used to smoke that.

Wife: Instead of tobacco they just scraped...

Lawrence: Yeah, they would scrape it off and then dry it and then go, you know, let it dry and put it in the pipe -- not in cigarettes. I don't know I...

Wife: I only smelled it, I've never seen it.

Lawrence: I never heard of cigarettes, but then pipe was used.

Wife: Oh, and it smells really nice.

Lawrence: And they... a lot of them used to smoke in those days. I don't know if they do now.

Wife: Old ladies even.

Lawrence: A lot of ladies used to use pipes. Yeah, go in the tent there, you'd see an old lady, with the pipe, smoking. I'm going to put a little heat on -- my feet are getting cold.

Judy: Do you remember your father ever wearing a...

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Judy: Do you remember your father ever wearing a Metis sash or any other traditional Metis clothing?

Lawrence: I don't know whether you're talking about a Metis sash, but my grandfather used to wear a thing they used to bring around here.

Judy: Yeah, that's a sash.

Lawrence: Is that a sash?

Judy: It was perhaps a leather a belt with beadwork done on it.

Lawrence: Yeah. He wore it all the time. Well, I mean, you know, he didn't wear it to bed but I mean (laughs) he wore it

when he was up all the time. I don't remember ever seeing him without it. And he used to have, he used to wear a buckskin jacket.

Judy: Do you ever remember him telling you what that sash represented?

Lawrence: No. Never asked him. Never thought to ask him even.

Judy: Did your father know how to jig?

Lawrence: My father?

Judy: Yes.

Lawrence: Oh yeah.

Judy: How about your other relatives?

Lawrence: Oh yeah. My, I had a cousin that was one of the best jiggers in the world, I guess.

Wife: Babe?

Lawrence: Babe, yeah. Babe was one of the best callers for square dances and stuff. Oh, they used to go miles to get him for square dances when they were... Well, they went here one time to way the other side of Biggar to get him for a dance here at Saskatoon before he died, yeah, for caller, you know, he's a big caller. And good jigger too.

Judy: Did they teach you how to jig?

Lawrence: I used to jig a little bit but not very much. I jiggered, the last time I jiggered was in 1929, 1930. There was a wedding, Pete (name) and oh, I forget what the girl's name was, but there was, well out there near...

Wife: Where you were stoning.

Lawrence: No, where Sol is, out there. What do you call that place?

Wife: (Inaudible)

Lawrence: No, out by Cando there. Oh my God, I had it on there a little while ago.

Wife: Well, it's there anyway.

Lawrence: Anyway, yeah, that was the last time I jiggered at that wedding. That was 1930.

Judy: Why was that the last time you jiggered?

Lawrence: Because I was drunk.

Judy: You wouldn't jig if you weren't, if you weren't

drinking?

Lawrence: Well maybe, I don't know. They asked me to and...

Wife: And he hasn't jigged since because nobody asked him.

Lawrence: Nobody asked me since then. Yeah, that was the last time. Yeah, they asked me, Bill Tate asked me. He said, "Come on there, show them your steps." I said, "Okay."

Wife: Oh, Bill Tate could jig, eh.

Lawrence: Yeah, oh God yes. That was your uncle Bill, I guess.

Wife: No, her mother's uncle, eh.

Lawrence: Louise's husband, before she married Ed.

Judy: That would be on my mother's side.

Lawrence: Louise Belcourt's husband. Oh yeah, she married him down by... He could jig that man.

Wife: He played the violin.

Lawrence: He could play the violin too.

Judy: So jigging was a part of the local dances then?

Lawrence: Oh yeah.

Judy: Quite a few Metis people did that?

Lawrence: We used to have a lot. But I don't think they drank as much then as they do now, as these people do now. I don't think so, eh, Mother? No, I don't think so.

Wife: I don't remember them drinking.

Lawrence: Not by a long ways.

Judy: So you don't think that was a large problem of the Metis people?

Lawrence: No. No, there were more, the Metis people in those days were more, how would I put it, they were more Christian oriented, whatever you want to call it. They didn't... that wasn't part of their culture, too much drinking like they do now, you know. Is that the way to put it?

Wife: Yeah. You know, did you ever have to dance the eight hand reel and the rabbit dance, and the dance de crochet... I've seen that all!

Lawrence: I seen that but if I seen...

Judy: Are those different types of jigs or just...

Lawrence: Oh yes.

Wife: They were square dances like, not square dances, some kind of dances. It took more than one person. I think it was three or four, as far as seven or eight couples, but I've seen them.

Lawrence: ...but it was actually square dancing, I think, Mother.

Wife: Probably.

Lawrence: But if I saw today I wouldn't know whether they dance the crochet, whatever you said, I wouldn't know the difference -- it would be all square dancing to me.

Judy: Do you remember if there were any fiddle players in your family?

Lawrence: Oh, my dad could play. And Fred, my Uncle Fred could play, but... My brother Jim could play, but that's about it. I don't know about Sol, I believe he could.

Wife: All those old guys used to play the violin, eh.

Lawrence: Yeah. Her dad was a good violin player.

Judy: Do you remember them playing and singing any Metis songs?

Lawrence: Oh yeah. I don't know what they were but I heard them, oh yeah. I used to sing one little song that... How would it go? (sings) You know that's -- I used to sing that -- that's French, eh, well French and Cree, I guess. But anyways, that's the way it used to start off and it used to go (sings). You know, it used to sound good with the violin. (laughs)

Judy: Do you remember what any of these songs were about, or the majority of them?

Lawrence: Well this one was, "Give me a little more to drink, that felt pretty good," or something like that.

Wife: La poutine is pudding.

Lawrence: Oh, I don't know what I was sing about, but I knew I was singing something.

Wife: You just knew the words.

Lawrence: Yeah, I knew the words, yeah. I used to talk Cree pretty good but I forget.

Wife: But that was French.

Lawrence: Yeah, that was French, yeah.

Judy: Did any non-native relative live in your community?  
And if so, what was the family's relationship with them?

Lawrence: Non-native relatives?

Judy: Well, white people, did any members of your family  
marry white people, and if so what was the relationship?

Lawrence: My family married... You mean my children?

Wife: Your brother, your two brothers.

Lawrence: Well, two of my brothers married white people and  
Mary... no, Mary (inaudible) she was, and Eva married... Yeah,  
two of my, well one of my brothers and one of my sisters -- two  
of my brothers.

Wife: Just two brothers.

Lawrence: Two of my brothers married white people, yeah.

Judy: What was the relationship like?

Lawrence: Well...

Wife: One brother is divorced.

Lawrence: One brother is divorced. He's been divorced for  
years.

Judy: Oh, I mean between the entire, like the rest of the  
family, the Metis family towards the white relatives.

Lawrence: I really couldn't say, we never had too much to do  
with them. Like I was saying a while back, I wasn't too close  
to -- outside of Jim. Jim, that was one of my... That part  
was good. Jim and his wife, that was my older brother -- he  
married a white woman. Their life was good. He was, he could  
mix with anybody, you know, he just seemed to have a knack.  
They knew that he was a Metis, he knew that they knew, and he  
just mixed right with them. But my other brother, I wasn't too  
close to him, never had too much to... you know, too close to  
him, so I really don't know.

Wife: He married a Ukrainian and she was a funny person.

Judy: Did any of the older people in your family believe  
and practise the traditional Indian religion?

Lawrence: No. Maybe Sol. Maybe Sol, I don't know, I don't  
think so, no. No, I'm sure not.

Judy: How about Indian medicine?

Lawrence: Oh yes.

Wife: We still do.

Lawrence: Yes, we still do, we do even today.

Wife: You know, like you take if you have a cut or something, you put a piece of birch bark and it draws all the dirt, the poison out, and different things like flax...

Lawrence: Like flax for...

Wife: Lots of things.

Lawrence: ...for drawing out...

Wife: If you got a boil or something.

Lawrence: ...boil or something like that. Oh we... it's hard to say, but there's quite a few things we use yet today.

Judy: Who taught you these things?

Lawrence: Well I think...

Wife: Our grandmothers.

Lawrence: I knew a little bit about it, not really that much, I wasn't taught that much. But her family I guess was, you know, it come from her side mostly. There was some in our family too.

Judy: Do you remember if any of the elderly people in your family ever used sweat lodges?

Wife: Never heard of them.

Lawrence: Yeah, I've heard of them...

Wife: What were they for?

Judy: It was to purify yourself.

Lawrence: Oh no, no, I had that wrong. No, I never run into that kind of stuff, no.

Judy: When you remember moving into the city, did you keep up with some of the practices that you were taught?

Wife: Well, you still do, don't you?

Lawrence: I don't know what you're talking about, Metis culture?

Judy: Yes.

Lawrence: I guess so, I don't know just what there would be. But one of the things is grandchildren I guess, put grandchildren in the moss bag, yeah.

Wife: No! We never put Kenny in the moss bag! We used to

have a swing like, you know, like those hammocks.

Lawrence: Hammocks and stuff like that.

Wife: Lots of times he went to a place and there was... it maybe had two beds for 12 people or something, and they'd have a place for the babies, you know. And it didn't matter how small your house was, your visitors were always welcome. Didn't matter how many babies they brought, or kids, they always found a place for them.

Judy: When you moved to the city did you find you were still practising what you knew of the Indian medicine?

Lawrence: Oh yeah. Still, like I say, still do it. Maybe can't think of just all the things that we would do but I imagine something crop up, well, we can do this, we can use this, see.

Judy: When you moved to the city did your ties with other Metis people grow weaker or stronger?

Lawrence: When I moved to the city? Well, I think for some time it was stronger, I think so. You take, like, when I was in working in the Mental Hospital and that, before I moved into Saskatoon, and previous to that when I was going to school and that sort of thing, I never had too much ties with Metis, you know what I mean, outside of being mocked. And when I come into Saskatoon, well, I was involved in the Metis community. I was right in with them, that was my friends.

Judy: So you would definitely say that in the city of Saskatoon there was definitely a Metis community?

Lawrence: Oh yes.

Judy: Did you or any other Metis people that you know of ever receive less pay for the same work that white people have done?

Lawrence: I really don't know.

Judy: You've never heard of anything like that happening?

Lawrence: No I don't, I don't remember of anybody telling me that I'm working for minimum wage and there's a guy along side of me doing the same job getting more money than me because I'm a Metis or something like that. I don't remember. I never heard of it, no.

Judy: Were you ever denied a job because you were Metis?

Wife: Never.

Lawrence: No, I don't think so. And I never hid the fact that I was a Metis, I never did hide that fact. I mean I just, I felt proud of it. I was asked that on the... when I was

working on the railroad one guy asked me, he said, "Do you know Sol?" They'd heard about Sol, and then he asked me if he was any relation to me. I said, "Yeah that's my uncle." He said, "He's pretty prominent in the Society down there." I said, "Yeah." He said, "Are you Metis? I didn't think you were." And I said, "Sure I am, sure, and I'm proud of it." And the same thing at the post office, I told them there and the guy said, "God," he said, "I'd have never known it," he said, "it wouldn't have made any difference," he told me. But he said, "I never, I would never have know it," he said.

Judy: Did you ever hear of anybody who was Metis being turned down because they were?

Lawrence: Not that I know, no.

Judy: When you came to the city did you feel comfortable when you went into the stores, or into different cities where there were a lot of white people?

Lawrence: Oh, for a while. But not for too long.

Judy: Oh, you felt uncomfortable at first, but then after...

Lawrence: Yeah, a little bit. That was from the... what I was getting at school. Yeah, it was there pretty deep yet, and I felt somewhat uncomfortable, yes.

Judy: Did the city authorities treat you unfairly? Like by authorities I mean perhaps the police.

Lawrence: Oh yeah. Yes, we had problems, eh, Mother?

Wife: With our children.

Lawrence: We had problems, not...

Wife: Not with you.

Lawrence: I don't think so much with me, no, but our children would... I don't know whether it was the fact that we were Metis or not, I don't know.

Wife: No, I didn't. Just because we had a big family, they'd look for somebody and they'd pick... Well, it's either the Pritchards or the (inaudible) because they had a bunch of boys.

Lawrence: Yeah.

Wife: They took Bunny one time, Bunny, and kept him till after midnight. We didn't know where he was -- he was being questioned at the police station.

Lawrence: There was another time we were having supper, sit down to supper, the boys were, the kids were all at the table, and one of the other kids, I think, well, one of them wasn't

there, eh, said, "Somebody wants to see you outside," eh. So our two boys, they went outside and the police was out there, I guess, and they took them to the police station. And I was there and I said, all of a sudden I said, "Where's Jimmy and Johnny?" And...

Wife: Rose -- there was a girl visiting at our place...

Judy: Fellow said the police took them to the police station. "Well," I said, "what the hell?" So I went down there and I raised hell. I told them, "I'm going to have you up for kidnapping," I told them, I said, "if you don't give me those kids right now." They brought them. But things like that, you see, that happened to us, that...

Wife: It was mostly because we had lots of kids and if somebody, if something went wrong in the neighborhood it was either the (name), the Pritchards, or (name).

Lawrence: Well, I don't know whether that's discrimination on that aspect, I don't know. Maybe it was on account of being Metis, I don't know. I really wouldn't say, I really couldn't say.

Judy: Were you ever treated unfairly in places of business such as banks, or grocery stores?

Lawrence: I don't think so, eh?

Wife: Never.

Lawrence: No.

Judy: Do you remember any of the towns that you lived in ever trying to force Metis people to move away?

Lawrence: No, I don't think so, eh? I think we had some problem with rent there when we were living at Avenue 0, Mother. I think that we couldn't get a place to live in. We had to live in that place, and I think that was the reason, because we were Metis. I really believe that.

Wife: But they didn't ask us to move out of town.

Lawrence: Oh no, no.

Wife: It was just during the war years and there was no houses to rent, and if you had a big family you had a hell of a time to get a house. So you stayed put till you found a place.

Judy: So you didn't think that they turned you down because of being Metis?

Lawrence: I don't know, I think they did. I think that's part of the reason that time, I think. They never said, they never come out and said it.

Judy: How was city life different from life in a small

town?

Lawrence: I don't know. I don't see too much difference except it costs you more to live and you're under the gun more against crime and stuff like that than you are in a small town, I think. But I don't think there would be too much difference.

Judy: Do you think it would be different for you if you were white?

Lawrence: Today? You mean now?

Judy: Today or before. Earlier, when you were growing up, do you think it would have been quite a difference if you were white?

Lawrence: I don't think outside of my school days. I think in my school days the children there -- both the Indian school and the Catholic orphanage -- the children, not the, like I say, not the priests and the Brothers or the Sisters but the children. Outside of that I don't think it would have made... you know, I would be treated any differently whether I was white or... There was no distinction, eh. I don't think so. No, I don't think so.

Judy: If you had a chance to be born again what would you do different?

Lawrence: Well I guess there may be two or three things that I might do different, but really... There's one thing I thought at one time if I was, if I had to do it over again, I wonder if I would have maybe went and done it this way. But really it can't be that important, it couldn't have been that important because I can't think of it now, you know. I can't think of it now so it couldn't have been made that much difference. But one thing... I just can't recollect what it would be.

Wife: It was most of it was growing up with your children.

Lawrence: I think, yeah, I think it was, she's got it -- it was my children. But I would have, I...

Wife: You were brought up in, he was brought up in an institution and he figured he could bring up his kids that way too.

Lawrence: Discipline, strict discipline and this and that you see.

Wife: Many's the problems we had over that.

Lawrence: Yeah, and I was probably a little too rough on them, and I think if I had to do it over again, if I could live my life over and I had to do it again, I could foresee what I see now, that I would have given my children more of my time, or try to at least. I didn't give them enough time. I, she brought them up, you see. I was a discipliner...

Wife: He was too strict and because he was too strict I was

too lax. From one extreme to the other.

Lawrence: Yeah. That would be a change, I guess. That's the one I was trying to think about. Outside of that, I don't know. I thank God for what He's given me and what He might still give me.

Judy: Would you choose to be a woman?

Lawrence: No, no. Never.

Judy: Why?

Lawrence: A woman has got too much responsibility. I always figure, and I've said it to her and I'll say to anybody, that people say, well, I've heard people say, oh, a man come home and says, "I've worked 8 hours a day today and God I'm tired. What did you do? What you been doing?" And the woman has got five or six children to look, she's got to clean the house, she's got to wash the clothes, she's got everything, she's got to buy groceries for him and, good God Almighty, she's 24 hours a day. She's working 24 hours a day. And I come home and I got 8 hours and I think I'm crucified, you know. And I wouldn't want a woman's life. Well, maybe there's a good...

Wife: Maybe a rich woman.

Lawrence: Maybe a rich woman, they don't do nothing, but I mean an ordinary woman now. Well it's... I admire a woman for bringing up children like my wife did, nine children and then do what she done, you know. It's phenomenal, it's... well, you can't give them enough credit.

Judy: How do you see your future?

Lawrence: Well, my future is past. It's in the history books. (laughs) I hope maybe some day it might be in the history books, I don't know. It don't matter: it's immaterial altogether. But, you know, the future I got now, I can live my life without too much suffering. When I go I hope I go quick, you know, so I'm not a burden to my family or to myself and to my children, and that I can enjoy my... well, in this case, say my grandchildren for the rest of my life, and I can enjoy their company and not be... when they come around and they come to see Grandpa or something, that he don't know them, you know.

Judy: What do you think the future of your children will be like?

Lawrence: I dread to think about it.

Wife: Our children are all grown up now.

Lawrence: Yes, but I mean the...

Judy: Your grandchildren.

Lawrence: I think the grandchildren, well, there's trouble...

Even our children, it's terrific this holocaust or whatever you want to call it, this nuclear business they got coming on. The disrespect that they have for the enforcement of law, the people have, for the enforcement of law in this country, that you can't go down the streets now. I take a walk down the streets here -- I usually go in the evening; you beat me out of that tonight -- but I usually go for a walk in the evening and I'm scared, I'm scared to walk the streets in the dark. Of course my eyesight's going on me too, so I can't see too good, but I'm scared to walk the streets in the dark. Well, the policeman does something today, we talk about discrimination and this and that, still those people are protecting us. And the disrespect that they're getting today from the people, it's going to get to the stage where they're not going to get police. Then what happens? This is the future of my grandchildren: this is what I dread. I hate to think about it. And then besides, like I said, the possible chance of nuclear war. Of course, if nuclear war comes it's going to be... that's the end, I guess. And like Khrushchov said, he said, "The living will envy the dead." So that's what I think. The future of my children... I hope and pray that somebody can put a, come up with some solution for these things, but it looks bad. The politicians certainly won't.

Judy: Where do you think native people will have a better future? Should they move back to the country, up to the north, or remain in the city?

Lawrence: Well I, I do not believe that our organizations now, today, they're fighting for aboriginal rights. The Indians, yes. The Indians I can see it, because they have the land, but the... Our Society is fighting for aboriginal rights, okay, and they'll get it, maybe, when... after they assimilate all of us into the white society. After then, there may be three or four left to get their aboriginal rights, see. But anyway, this aboriginal rights, they'll get this thing, you see. I don't believe it. It's the land base they want, they want land base. Well, who wants to go into a ghetto? Do you want to go in the ghetto? Would you rather today that this organization, or society, or whatever it is, fought for compensation for aboriginal people per head, maybe \$40,000 or \$50,000 or something?

Wife: Be a start.

Lawrence: Per person or something. And then where they can do something with it, instead of being set up in a ghetto in -- well, I don't know where, northern Alberta all segregated and, oh, stuff like that. I don't know. I think it's the wrong proposition, and they're going to fight for this land base, I think. I feel they're going to fight for this land base and it's just prolonging the settlement, it's just prolonging the settlement because it's going to take... If they went for straight compensation like the Chinese are doing and the Japanese are doing in B.C., are compensated for what was taken away from them in the last war, they're pretty near down to settlement now. How long did it take? Not very long, see. They only started about three years ago. Now we're going for a land base settlement, well it's going to take years. By the

time that they get this land base settlement our people is going to be assimilated to the white society, there's not going to be any of us left. I'm not only talking about our generation, I'm talking about your generation. I'm talking about 50 years hence, 50, 60 years from now, see. That's how long it's going to take them.

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