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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Very general account of his life.

Margaret: Were you born in Norway House?

Joe: No, I wasn't born in Norway House but we come from there.
I was born on the way, you know, in 1877. I was born in 1877.

Margaret: And your father and mother, where did they come

from?

Joe: My parents come from Norway House. They all come from Norway House.

Margaret: Were they connected with the Hudson's Bay Company? Did they work for the Company?

Joe: Yes. I can't hear very good, you know. I'm kind of deaf.

Margaret: Well, what I really would like you to do is just tell me about yourself, what you did when you were a young man.

Joe: Who, me?

Margaret: Yes.

Joe: Well, I was working on, tried to raise cattle, mixed up a little farm. That is what I was trying to do. And I was fishing the same time.

Margaret: Was that here?

Joe: Yeah, that's here.

Margaret: So you've been here for a number of years?

Joe: Yeah. See, I'm 88 now.

Margaret: Did you go hunting at all when you were younger?

Joe: Yes.

Margaret: Where did you go?

Joe: I go back in the bush, back here, you know, north. All over this, trapping the same time, you know, sometimes, in the spring. And I went to cut cord wood and took it up to Hudson with the oxen. (laughs) Two days.

Margaret: Did you go by dog team in the woods?

Joe: Yes.

Margaret: How far did you go?

Joe: Oh, sometimes go one day, two days, so on like that.

Margaret: And you would take your food?

Joe: Yes, yes. Oh, I've been travelling all over in Lake Winnipeg, you know. I used to with the Agent in four years, like. In the winter and in the summer on treaties. That is why I begin to know all the people around Lake Winnipeg, all around Lake Winnipeg. I travelled with the dogs them days. The Agent named Mr. Carter.

Margaret: That would be quite a time of celebration then, to go from one place to the other?

Joe: Yes, yes. Sometimes we went away sometimes a month and a half. He was the inspector the same time with nine reserves. Walked way up inland, you know, in winter and in the summer.

Margaret: Well, did you go by boat?

Joe: Yes, go by boat in the summer, they had government boat. And from there in summer they go with canoes on treaties way up inland. Little Grand Rapids, that way, and all them reserves there.

Margaret: How long would the treaty time take? Several days?

Joe: Sometimes two days and sometimes stay four days. Yeah. That is they had meetings the same time, you know -- talk about these things. The chief and the councillors.

Margaret: Well, did they have celebrations at them too?

Joe: Yes. Oh yes. Oh, I was travelling quite a bit, you know, when I was... Now I just stay, you know, I just stay home. My home is back here and my home was that school there, you know. That is where I was born, these, my daughters and all my children.

Margaret: Well, you are a young-looking man.

Joe: Yeah. (laughs)

Margaret: You were saying you had friends in Norway House?

Joe: Oh yes.

Margaret: Who's there?

Joe: Well, it is one of my cousin's mothers, his mother and my mother were sisters. Roderick -- I forgot his last name, that man Roderick. And George Balfour. I guess you know him, George Balfour.

Margaret: I met the other Mrs. Russell Balfour, a young woman.

Joe: Yeah, all them Balfours, you know.

Margaret: And McKays?

Joe: McKays, and what is the name of the chief there now? It is...

Margaret: Duncan.

Joe: Duncan. Yeah, but there is another chief there now, this

year. George, I forgot his last name. Scribe, George Scribe.

Margaret: Oh, I didn't meet him. Is he coming in as the new chief?

Joe: No. That Roderick Algou(?), that is my cousin. His mother is an Algou(?) and she is a little younger than me. My mother and his mother were sisters.

Margaret: What were their names?

Joe: That Roderick?

Margaret: No, what was your mother's name?

Joe: Mary Jane, her last name was Rundle but after she got married to my father her name is Cochrane. That was my... Old Chief Rundle was the first chief, that was my grandfather. And my father's father, he was the first councillor when they made treaty in 1875. That was my grandfather too. The councillor named Jim Cochrane.

Margaret: Well, the Paupanakis up there, do you know them?

Joe: Yes, yes, we know them. Paupanakis, yes. They call them Minnows too. Minnows they call them. That was my cousins too, them. But they all died, but their children some of them are living.

Margaret: Well, did you go back and forth much by dog team in the wintertime.

Joe: No, we do it once, go. Once in the winter, you know, that is the time we went with the Agent all around them reserves. Sometimes we stayed a week and two weeks in one reserve to talk about these things, you know. Of course he was the inspector at the same time. That is why we went away sometimes a month and a half.

Margaret: That is a long time.

Joe: Yeah.

Margaret: Well, did you go out shooting in the fall? Ducks and things?

Joe: Yes. Sometimes I took my family out, you know, and hunting moose the same time. Make dry meat.

Margaret: Pemmican?

Joe: Pemmican, yes. (laughs)

Margaret: You know it's funny, I've never eaten that.

Mrs. Cochrane: I make that.

Margaret: Oh you do? Good. It must be a very complete food.

Joe: Yeah.

Mrs. Cochrane: Oh, dried meat is good with salt bacon and potatoes.

Margaret: Do you ever make bannock?

Mrs. Cochrane: Oh sometimes. Oh yes, he can make bannock too.

Inter: You can?

Joe: Yes, outside, you know. I just use a frying pan set like this on a fire. The fire here and the frying pan here, you know. Oh, yeah, I make bannock. Pretty good too.

Margaret: Tastes good, does it?

Joe: Tastes good, you know.

Margaret: Did you ever go on shooting, did a group of you go together on parties of shooting ducks or geese or anything like that?

Joe: Yes.

Margaret: How many of you would go?

Joe: Oh, it just depends, you know. If there is lots of ducks, well take sometimes a hundred and so on like that, and fifty and so on like that, you know.

Margaret: And how long would this go on? This would be in the spring or fall?

Joe: In the spring, well, no, no. Well, we can shoot anytime you know, us people, that is the treaty people. We can shoot ducks right now and of course they are good right now, see, and in the spring. And sometimes we kill the geese, you know, when they come up in the spring. In March they come up and we kill geese in the spring.

Margaret: They would be more plentiful in spring or fall than they would be in between, wouldn't they?

Joe: Yeah.

Margaret: Did your father and mother ever tell you things about their experiences?

Joe: Well, I didn't know much. That is, I didn't go to school very much, you know. But I know lots of things, you know, that is way back. I was a councillor too, in here, you know. Well, my mother was a Christian parent, you know. She was a Christian parent. She did it the same way. And they were raising cattle and raised pigs and so on like that. And when they come

here, you know, it was pretty hard the first time when they come here from Norway House. There was no store. The only store we had to travel two days to get something. So on like that.

Margaret: Were you working on the York boats ever or were you just travelling on them?

Joe: Well, a little travelling, you know. When they come to the place where they go and they turn back from there.

Margaret: It must have been quite a sight if a group of them came in.

Joe: Yes, it is a big York boats. Them paddles, you know, one man and it is pretty hard to carry one man with one paddle on a York boat paddle.

Margaret: With big sweeps.

Joe: Oh yes, go to pull it this way, you know. Well, sometimes if there is a fair wind they will sail it. Sail away. Come to the lake, you know, the river, and come out to the lake and that is how they go.

Margaret: Were there any particular trips that stick in your memory?

Joe: Once there was, which way? I remember lots of things, you know. I remember lots of things way back, and I remember lots of things. I remember on the treaties, you know, what they get on the treaties. Oh, they used to get flour and bacon and tea and tobacco and so on like that, you know. Them days, in my day. We used to get that, rations like, in the treaties. Oh, lots of flour, a pile this. And bacon. Nowadays... Them days everything was cheap them days, you know, not like now. It used to be four or five dollars a bag. And here, they used to be a dollar and sixty a bag in here. But up north it's dear, them days, you know. But now it is, you know, everything it is way up. And I used to work for seventy-five cents a day in my days. One day, seventy-five cents a day. And sometimes you sold the cord wood. One time we used to chop for seventy-five cents a cord. Yeah, in my days. Seventy-five cents a cord. Still, we made a good living in the summer like this. But after we, now this time we come home, you know, and working out our hay because we had cattle. I had cattle all the time.

Margaret: Did you have buyers for the cattle?

Joe: Yes. Cattle was very cheap in them days. The good price for cattle was about twenty, twenty-five, fifteen, so on like that.

Margaret: Did you ever have any hard...? Were there ever any fires or anything like that? Bad fires?

Joe: Oh yes, bad fires, yes. There used to be lots of bush,

lots of timber. And they had fires and fires and so on like that, you know. I remember one time a fire come from way west. Where there was lots of timber in the river. It come right down to here. And men working at it and us, we was boys, you know. He took us down to the lake with a skiff. Because they were scared to get burned, you know. And some houses burned. Oh, there was bad fires, pretty bad fires. We pretty near smothered. We just covered all the skiff like this with a canvas, you know, for the smoke not to go there. People took their stuff down to the river, along the river, you know, and

along the banks and put it in the water not to burn. Stuff like that. Oh, fire was pretty bad. Now the bush, it is no bush now today. Very little. Just here and there, little bluffs, you know. Just here and there. They used to be lots of bush, lots of pulp. But now, nowadays, it is only way back, a little. To work on the pulp now.

Margaret: We'd better be getting back, the children.

Joe: Oh yes. (Break in tape) I am 88 and my seven grandchildren, about eighty great-grandchildren. I've got five generations now. And my children, their children, I don't know all of them. And I had seven sisters and six boys of us. Now, I'm only live out of thirteen in the family. I'm the only one alive now.

Margaret: Well, this has been one of the interesting things. To meet the connections and the relatives and somebody's cousin is married to somebody else, so that I get the feeling that it is one huge community.

Joe: My father was 115 when he died, 115.

Margaret: Well, you've got a long way to go yet.

Joe: Yes (laughs). My father was a small man. But my wife's side, they had a big father and her mother was a big woman and all their children, they are big.

Margaret: And what was your wife's name before she was married?

Joe: Jessie Workymykapo. That's her right name and the first, you know. But they changed the name after that. They go their name by Cochrane because this Agent, they don't want to use that name. They say it's Indian name. That is why they are changed, that's why their name Cochrane now.

Margaret: Well, you have certainly seen many changes around here.

Joe: Yes.

Margaret: This whole area has changed a great deal since you came here.

Joe: Changed everything. Now today, what I used to work on the, when they are making hay. I used to use forks, day by day, not like this. I never, I don't mind it that way. But nowadays, my boys they are making the hay back up here, up the river. They don't use a fork now. They do it alone. They are making a stack alone. And they got power. A starter and a basket and just put the hay there with that starter, you know. And after they make about ten loads stacked, he just pull that basket back and they make another one. Alone. One man with the power mower. That is how they work now. So I told them, "You poor men, you can't even use forks nowadays. Everything is machine." That is what the difference is now. And I used to use scythes in my days. Now today, when they are starting to cut hay, they use a lever and cut it with tractor. One man raking with a tractor. Today everything is different. Oh, there is a lot of difference now. And these men now, they can do anything. They can fix their tractors, they can fix their cars when they are broke. And it goes on like that now.

Margaret: It is a lot easier.

Joe: A lot easier. They are mechanics now these days, Indians. They are good mechanics too.

Margaret: They are.

Joe: One of my grandsons is a principal now. Out way up in the (inaudible) that way. He is a principal.

Mrs. Cochrane: Another one electrician, William.

Joe: Yeah. Everything. I don't know how many of my grandsons was electric working, you know. A lot of them.

Mrs. Cochrane: We got a grandson that is a principal at an Edmonton school for 400 children.

Joe: The last winter they came here, come and see me, my son, my grandson. And they said they had, he might be back here to be the principal in the school here, maybe the new school. That is what he told me. "Next time I come, my Grandfather, I'll take you to visit me for two weeks and so on and I'll bring you back. Away up in Edmonton, that way." But he didn't come this treaty time.

Margaret: We must get the children back.

Joe: Yeah (laughs).

(End of Interview)

INDEX

| INDEX TERM | IH NUMBER | DOC NAME | DISC # | PAGE # |
|------------|-----------|----------|--------|--------|
|------------|-----------|----------|--------|--------|

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------|--------|--|
| DISASTERS | | | | | |
| -forest fires | IH-MS.023a/.026b | JOE COCHRANE | 42 | 7,8 | |
| FOOD | | | | | |
| -preparation of | IH-MS.023a/.026b | JOE COCHRANE | 42 | 5 | |
| MONEY | | | | | |
| -payment of treaty | | | | | |
| money | IH-MS.023a/.026b | JOE COCHRANE | 42 | 3,5 | |
| TRANSPORTATION | | | | | |
| -York boat | IH-MS.023a/.026b | JOE COCHRANE | 42 | 6,7 | |
| WORK | | | | | |
| -for wages | IH-MS.023a/.026b | JOE COCHRANE | 42 | 7 | |
| | PROPER NAME INDEX | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| PROPER NAME | IH NUMBER | DOC NAME | DISC # | PAGE # | |
| | | | | | |
| NORWAY HOUSE, MAN. | IH-MS.023a/.026b | JOE COCHRANE | 42 | 2,3 | |