Charlie: When I come up here, the first year I was up here was 1959. I come up in 1959.

Margaret: So you have been here six years now.

Charlie: This fall, in April, it will be seven years.

Margaret: You were from Selkirk?

Charlie: No, originally we were from Selkirk but we have been
living on that Matheson Island there most of our life. I was born in Selkirk there and I wasn't very big when I came out. And then after we got married we moved back into Selkirk for a couple of years and then we moved back to Matheson Island again.

Margaret: Well, were you lighthouse keeper there too?

Charlie: No, no. I was just a fisherman then. So, I went out to Great Slave Lake a couple of years, after the fishing dropped off here.

Margaret: That's a trip!

Answer: Yeah, a couple of seasons we put in up there.

Margaret: How did you go?

Charlie: We went by car the first summer and a truck took our boat, both of our boats we used to fish from. They loaded our whitefish boats. I suppose you've seen these whitefish boats, eh? The size of them?

Unknown: It is like that old boat you see out here.

Margaret: Oh yes.

Charlie: Around forty feet long, I guess. They just loaded them on there, on the truck and took it up to Great Slave, shoved her in the water there and started fishing. Then I took sick up there, couldn't go back the third year and I never done much fishing that year.

Margaret: Well, have you had any bad storms here?

Charlie: Oh, really bad storms. Last year was the first time they claimed with wind was up to 85 miles an hour here. I guess you remember that big storm here last summer? The boat blew right out. We used to have a high dock here and the boat blew right over and there was a small little post on one side of the dock there where, you know, and it blew right over it. (Inaudible). Oh, it was really terrific. I never seen winds like that in all my life. That was last year.

Margaret: Well, what about, did the boats just stay in dock then or were there some out on the lake?

Charlie: Oh, the boats, they were laid out, the big boats or any other boats. But mine, I was pulling it up a little higher on the slide, you see. I wasn't out on that stuff but it's a pretty big sea anyway.

Margaret: Well, would anything like the Kenora be out in a storm like that?
Charlie: No, unless he got caught in it like.

Unknown: Most of the boats made shelter.

Margaret: It was from here north that we had the roughest night and that was rough.

Charlie: And you are starting to get into the bigger lake after you pass Berens Island here.

Margaret: Well, how often can you get across?

Charlie: Well, we usually go out, we try to make it across there once or twice a week. Especially to meet the Kenora; we usually get some supplies off the boat. Fresh milk, you know, for the kids. Sometimes we can't do that and the manager there from the Hudson's Bay, Mr. Perry, he will look after our milk and stuff like that until we can get across. Very kind of him.

Margaret: How about you? When they can't get across how do things go?

Mrs. S: We never run out of anything, never ever got that short. We always get across before we run right out.

Margaret: Well, do you leave here in the wintertime then?

Mrs. S: I just stay here till school starts again for the summer. He stays here through the fall, till November.

Charlie: November I just about froze in here. That is the year here, that was in 1959 there, the Kenora, she couldn't make Selkirk. She had to lay at Gimli, that freeze in here. The lake was all froze. You remember that. They had a bunch of people out, they were coming from north on the Kenora and they couldn't go into Berens River. It was all froze. So, it is different seasons like that. And then other seasons, you know, it is way end of November before it freezes up.

Margaret: Well, then you go out in wintertime too?

Charlie: I go back and stay for the winter. In town there, we live in Selkirk there now. Been there for the last six years.

Margaret: You girls go to school there, do you?

Girls: Yes.

Charlie: They just come out here during the holidays and they stay here. It is good company. Glad to have them but after they go away it seems so quiet and lonesome. Takes a while to get back to living alone again.

Margaret: Well then, you'd have quite a time during spring
break-up too, wouldn't you.

Mrs. S: He doesn't come up till after the break.

Unknown: Come out after the break-up, after the navigation starts.

Margaret: Well, on the average, how long would the season be?

Charlie: Well, it runs five months, over five and a half months sometimes. Depends on the season.

Margaret: And are the fishermen out all that time?

Charlie: They come out... No, they're not out during that time. They stopped allowing different types of fishing, see. There is spring fishing, like for the settlers on the lake, and they fish about, what is it? They just have a month in spring then but the white fishermen, they stay out from the first of June until the eighth of August you see them. And then they go in and then the fall season starts around the first of September until the end of October.

Margaret: I see. And what would they be catching then?

Charlie: Oh, they catch all types of fish, whitefish and... Well, not so much whitefish around here but pickerel, and augers(?) and stuff like that. Jackfish and tulibees(?).

Margaret: Oh, yes, I've had those.

Charlie: They are nice to eat. Did you ever eat them smoked?

Margaret: Yes.

Unknown: Aren't they nice?

Margaret: Yes. Well, the Winnipeg goldeye is a little different from them, isn't it? That is another type, is it?

Mrs. S: Goldeyes? Oh, they are nice, but different fishing.

Charlie: They are pretty scarce on the lake now. They used to be pretty thick here years ago but now there is just the odd one.

Unknown: The most ones we get there is not really a goldeye, it is what they call the mooneyes. They are not real goldeye, they are not as good a fish. They are more soft.

Margaret: Well, in town sometimes they try to pass off smoked tulibee(?) as goldeye.

Mrs. S: Yeah, if you don't know. Sure. And they try and pass
them off as whitefish too, baby whitefish.

Charlie: I guess that happens quite a few times. I go in and want to buy some different types of fish. They try to sell me something but you can't fool me, I have fished for 25 years. (laughs) I happen to know them.

Margaret: Well, when you go back to town then what do you do in the wintertime?

Charlie: Oh, I just stay home there and do the odd little job here and there and get along.

Margaret: Well your family is an old family down around the Selkirk and Winnipeg and up the lake, isn't it? The Settee family?

Mrs. S: Well, they've been around here a long time.

Charlie: Been around here... That's where we first lived was at Selkirk there.

Mrs. S: But the old-timers, like the old, old Settees, they might have started up there.

Charlie: I remember my mother, she used to tell me about way back when there was just a few houses there. They lived there for a while. Sure.

Margaret: Well, then there was a Reverend Mr. Settee?

Charlie: That was a relative of mine. I think it was my great-great-grandfather. He was a Reverend. He used to go all along the lake here preaching.

Margaret: Were both your mother and father from Selkirk too?

Charlie: Yes.

Margaret: Well, up here, how often do you feel that you must go up and watch, just... or do you have to watch? Or do you just put a light on or...?

Charlie: No, it depends on the weather. I usually watch the lake three or four times a night to see that it is going and everything is fine. Of course if there is a storm on you got to keep watch.

Margaret: And you sleep in the daytime?

Charlie: Oh, you can sleep in the day. I have a two-way airwave keeping touch there. We have a scare three or four times a day on that.

Margaret: Well, all of these lighthouses along the way have
now made the lake safe but it must have been pretty risky in older days.

Charlie: Yes, it was pretty risky. I remember there when I used to fish there, I would come out in these spears(?) there. I forget what year that was but there wasn't a light over by Bear Rock. Now there is a light there, nice one on the end of Berens Island here. But we went in there one time going about forty miles an hour from the northwest on the J.R. Spear and Captain Ed Nelson was on there, he was the captain that year. And we went and we got into Berens River about one o'clock in the morning and it was blowing, he couldn't see nothing. How he done it I don't know. And you got to go pretty close to that rock there.

Margaret: Well, that is what I was impressed with coming down. They wouldn't go into Berens River after dark. They wouldn't go into Warren Landing after dark because the channels are so tricky.

Unknown: Yeah, they are tricky. There's raised lights there at Berens River now, they've been there for the last three, four years. It's a help there.

Charlie: All these lights is an asset to navigation, there is no doubt about that, from what it used to be there.

Margaret: But it still takes pilots who know the water and the channels?

Charlie: Oh yeah, you got to know where you are going, you got to be plotting a course. There is lots of small fishing stations along that branches off of the course and they got to know their way in. They're very tricky along the shore there, especially right from one end of the state to the other. It is pretty tricky. Usually some of them have their own beacons up on the fishing stations to go by.

(End of Interview)