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HIGHLIGHTS:

- General account of reserve life.
- Description of Indian games.
- Establishment of Gordon Reserve, Sask.

Alex: The following is an interview with Clara Pratt of Gordon Reserve in Saskatchewan. The interview is being conducted in Mississauga, just outside Toronto, on June 30 of one side and July 4, of the other, by Alex Cywink. The interview is being held at the daughter of Mrs. Pratt's -- Rose McInnis.

Clara: Well, how would you prefer me to start?

Alex: Oh, with your name, what your name is. I might take a few notes, you know, in case I don't understand some things, and I have to clarify it later.

Clara: Yes. Do you talk Cree?

Alex: Pardon?

Clara: Cree.

Alex: No, I'm just learning Ojibway now.

Clara: That's nice, that's nice. Well, I was in Toronto here for seven years, in the meantime, went out here, I almost mastered Ojibway. I can talk a lot in Ojibway, and I can talk Saulteaux.

Alex: Saulteaux?

Clara: My husband's a Saulteaux and I'm a Cree. My husband isn't bilingual in any way. He never spoke Saulteaux and he never spoke Cree. But I notice that when he used to drink he'd

say a word or two in my language. Well, I guess we better be starting.

Alex: Now where were you born?

Clara: Would you like me to read them? All right then. My name is Clara Pratt and I was born in the Touchwood hills. Five days from Qu'Appelle. I'm from the George Gordon Band and my band number is 112. And I believe my band is Band Seven -- this I'm not sure of. And my birthday was on the 19th of April, and I was born 1902. My height is five feet. I was married in 1922, I think, '21. Because we were at that time... I'm going too fast, eh?

Alex: No, no.

Clara: At that time we were only allowed to stay in the residential schools till you were eighteen. And if you please, regardless of how far we went, we weren't allowed to go up to Grade Eight. Our education was suppressed by the Department of Indian Affairs. They were afraid of the Indians. But that didn't matter -- everything come out anyway. My daughter was a hostess of that -- "Our Native Land"?

Alex: Yeah.

Clara: She was on that for a good many years. And everything was nice and, well, the unpleasant things she brought out to -- about how the Indians were suppressed, how they were looked after and that was all brought out, came to light. And that Trudeau didn't like her -- he made trips to, ask for her to be released from that job but C.B.C. wouldn't. They said she was doing a wonderful job. And I feel proud of

my daughter, she was on there seventeen years. And now when Trudeau was giving her such a hard time, hassling her, you know, for a long time she wouldn't give in -- but she finally did. She said, "That's all right. When I'm ready I'll put my resignation in." And she stayed on a couple of years longer, and she put her resignation in. And she racked her brains to see where she could help her people the best. And she took A.A. She could help her people the best and the A.A. -- Alcoholics Anonymous. And she said they're responding very

well. Her headquarters is Winnipeg. She bought a home there and when she was on "Our Native Land," she bought and paid for her home, and she bought a car, she still has that. She has most of her own cars, transportation across -- unless she hasn't got time to spend too much time, then she flies, and she gets all her expenses returned.

Alex: What's her name?

Clara: Her name is Bernelda Hoolay(?).

Alex: What was it like when you were growing up?

Clara: Well, when I was growing up, I was born on a Indian reservation. I never went to school until late in life. I was ten years old when I went to school, then I stayed there eight years, but I obtained Grade Seven. And I wanted, I was ready to go to Grade Eight, but no promotion. They just kept me in Grade Seven.

Alex: Were you called Clara from birth?

Clara: Yes, that was my, I was baptised Clara and I was baptised very young. I was baptised when I was only a month

old. So I've been baptised a long, long time ago. And I had chances to turn my religion. And people kind of shocked me, you know, and they'd ask me if I'd turn. A Catholic asked me to turn Catholic and I said, "I am. There's three kinds of Catholics; there's Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, and Anglican Catholic." So I was Catholic anyways, so why bother. And I said, "Anyways, if I should turn to your religion, get rebaptised and that, what would you think of me?" "We'd be proud to have you. We would be proud to have you." "But what if I suddenly changed my mind and went back to my own religion or to some other religion, what would you think then?" "That wouldn't be so good." "Okay, I'm fine what I am, and I don't intend to change." But I've been in Anglican Catholic and my children are all baptised. And how it all came about -- my husband's grandfather, Charles Calder(?) Pratt, was the first Anglican catechist in the Diocese of Qu'Appelle. That was quite a number of years ago. And I don't know too much about him, just what my husband has told me.

And when my husband's great-grandfather took religion, you know, the Anglican, he walked from Gordon Reserve to The Pas. And that's where the Bishop Anderson came to The Pas first, and that's where my husband's grandfather met the Bishop, the Bishop of the Indians. So he was in the ministry for fifty years, and he looked after the people. Then he took a stroke, I guess, too, because they said that he was helpless -- he couldn't stand up, he couldn't, he was paralyzed. And when he passed away his son took his place, my husband's father. He preached to the whole church for fifty years. And, you know, that old man would go up to the pulpit and talk to us. He'd start off in English and he'd interpret what was said in English into Cree. And they all understood -- the Indians that

weren't able to understand English got everything, anyway.

They were bilingual after my father-in-law was living there for quite a few years -- they spoke English. And they had a little school there, just a log school, and that's where they went to school.

And my dad he was full-blooded Cree. My father married a girl -- she was, her name was Flora Harriet McNabb and her dad was from Scotland, his name was David Thomas McNabb. And when they had the treaties signed, made, this grandfather of mine took the treaties, too. And he had a house right on the Indian reserve, where it was later made in a reserve. He was something in the reserve.

Alex: Did he get status?

Clara: Pardon?

Alex: Did his family get status?

Clara: Yes. Oh, he got status, too, himself. And he lived on the reserve. And he was the one that -- he was the interpreter for the treaties in '84 and the treaties were... I don't even keep those things in my... But anyways he interpreted for the officials that came from Ottawa to make the treaties with the Indians, he interpreted that. And at that time, none of the Indians knew what money was. And my father-in-law used to say, "My goodness," he says, "I always think about the treaty. That's always in my mind," he said. "Nobody knew what these little papers were that these... what people came and gave them. Some of them had big piles of it," he said. "Some of them with ten children all got \$5.00 each. The children were given their own money," he said, "and the babies got money. Oh," he said, "there was paper money flying

all over the ground," he said. "Nobody knew what to do with it." And they tried, Mr. Pratt there told them that that was valuable, "Pick it and keep it. Don't throw it away." Then they started to pick up and some got more and some got less. But anyways, they had a great time with their treaty. They learned what these papers were. And then when they went to school they were taught the numerals, you know, and they were able to tell what denomination their bills were. But he said, "If anyone had ever thought of picking up," he says, "I could have been a billionaire," he said, "if I had picked up all of what I saw. But I didn't," he said, "I had my own bills in my pockets."

So his name, there's reams of history for him in Archives in Ottawa. And I'm proud to say that all my children have gone to Ottawa to read the Archives, part of it anyway. They could never hope to think of reading all what was written about their great-great-grandfather. And his biblical education, when he was baptised a Christian, that went down separate, too, as well as the treaties he had with the Indians. So there was a lot they told about my family -- my husband's family.

Alex: Have you seen the Archives or did your father tell you this?

Clara: No. My girls all told me mostly what I'm telling you now, because I wasn't too interested. I was born, and I was a little girl and that's interested me.

Alex: That's what I'm interested in.

Clara: Yeah.

Alex: What was it like on the reserve when you were born?

Clara: Well, it was very quiet. And at that time, the Indians were already farming when I went down to (inaudible), you know. And mother made a garden, dad dug it with a shovel, quite a big garden we'd have -- all kinds of vegetables; carrots, and turnips, and onions, all those that we know now. Put in a garden, and potatoes especially. And they were very ambitious, and tried to get their food. And for meat, a lot of them had cattle. Each Indian was given two cows, I think, and there was sires put on the reserve, bulls on the reserve, too. (Inaudible) So we lived pretty good when we were kids, too. But we didn't have too many animals, we couldn't butcher for quite a few years, you know. And then when we did have a steer that we could sell, they sold it, and that was money for them. But my father was a butcher, he wasn't a farmer. All we farmed were... made gardens.

Alex: Then what did you do in the garden?

Clara: What did I do in the garden? Step on all the seeds that were growing up. (laughs) I got chased out of the garden, "Don't ever go in there again." So, I had to stay out of the garden. I'd look out these wee... growing up, you know; see how many I could put under my foot. But later on I had a little bit more sense and they used to tell me what that was for, and how long we'd have to wait before we could eat them. And for meat we set snares for rabbits. We killed rabbits with bows and arrows. And prairie chickens, partridges, and that, they'd set traps for them or shot them in later years when they were able to use .22s and shot guns and that -- the government issued them. And we used to get the ammunition from the

government every Treaty Day. It was quite a bit and it lasted quite a long time. But after that was all gone, then we had to buy. But it's a very interesting life on the reserves.

My parents had four boys and five girls. I was the second one born to my parents. You know, it's so funny the way we lived, one by one we lost brothers and sisters and that. And what was left was the second from the oldest and the second from the youngest. That was how many of us that were allowed to live. God (inaudible) I guess that I lived, and my brother lived.

My brother enlisted in the Second World War and he's very heart

broken. He gave his life for his country and that went very hard because there were only two of us left. My father was overseas in the First World War, and two of his brothers were overseas. And two of them were wounded, my father was the only one that came home as he went, except that he -- they had the gas, they were poisoned with mustard gas by the Germans. He had a very, very rough voice and he coughed all the time. And I think that's the same thing that was done to the First World War soldiers as it was done in the Second World War. I understand there was a big building and no windows, no air, nothing, just doors. And the men were herded in there, and they had to run around, around, and around and they said it was terrible -- some kind of a smell in there. And all the old soldiers that I know -- my brother, my father, and my uncles, and my cousins, all of them are cough, cough, cough. Never could cure them, regardless of what kind of cough mixture they take, it's just stuck there.

And my husband -- Greg, now he's in the hospital and he took a terrible stroke. And where we lived, it wasn't far from the

road, but there was no phone in our house, there was no direct road -- it was muddy -- and when my husband took a stroke we had to go quite a way before we could get to a phone to phone the offices that he used. He took a stroke, we thought it was a stroke. And mind you there was no way to get to any place and we never let them know. He took his stroke about eleven o'clock at night. Now that is the time we should have got him here to Regina, but no car, and it cost \$40. to come into Regina, to hire somebody to bring us, it's \$20 in and \$20 back. At the time we didn't have, but luckily we had relations that have cars, and our nephew drove us into the city. And an ambulance came for my husband and my youngest daughter went with her dad -- I couldn't, I was just frantic. And my son made me eat breakfast and I was sick all day, the shock got me so bad, you know. I was a couple of days sick, but that, I got over that. It was kind of hard to get better because it, you know, it was really bad. But my husband never... he was just dead, you know. They told me there wasn't very much they could do. And that's thirteen months ago, and he's still in the hospital. He's mute -- he can't talk, and he's paralyzed, half of his body, but that man, he's got a lot of energy left. He was a athlete in his younger days. He used to wrestle, he held the Saskatchewan Lightweight Championship in boxing. And he used to run, long distance running, ten miles, five miles.

So when the doctor said that he will be very, very active in your younger life and he says, "That's keeping you alive." Right now, even though he's been in bed thirteen months, he can sit up out of bed, and throw his legs out of the bed, get into his wheelchair and he wheels around and around our house through all the doors. And that's wonderful, you know, the amount he's gone through in thirteen months. He's still able

to do that. And it's a long time ago that he... (tape is cut off)...

And her baby was born on the 10th of October. And we knew there was something wrong with that baby all the time. As soon as the door would knock or somebody would knock she'd look, you know, she'd stare at the person, she'd stare right till they sat down. And then she'd turn around and start to cry. She was disappointed it wasn't her mom. She did that for a whole year. All of a sudden, they said she was very quiet. Somebody came and she did the same thing. She kept quiet like that, lay down -- died on the 10th of October -- the same day she was born. Died the same time as her mother. Isn't that (inaudible). And when she died she had such a lovely smile on her face. My dad always said, "Baby saw her mommy. She was happy. Don't cry for her, don't cry for her. She's gone to her mommy." That's why she used to cry lots every time the doors open. She'd look at the people and she'd cry when they'd go, or she'd recognize them, you know. But isn't that something, eh? The smile she had, she had a beautiful smile when she died, this baby. So that was the last of our family, except I'm the last one. Both my parents are gone, all my brothers and sisters are gone. I'm the last one. You know, sometimes that hits me. But that's the way it was to be, I guess, and that's the way it is. I've got to make the best of it.

Alex: What was your home like?

Clara: My home?

Alex: Yeah.

Clara: It was a nice little home. It had a big upstairs. In those days they didn't divide everything into bedrooms. It was one big bedroom, but she had curtains, she was a Scotch girl. Her father was Scotch and he taught her a lot of things, because her mother didn't know. Her mother was Cree, full-blooded Cree. Oh, when my mother left me, oh, Lord! It just took the world out of my... I felt as though I had fell in a deep pit myself. It was dark all the time, for me. And they say it's because I cried so much -- my eyes had film over them until I had an operation -- I had both my eyes operated. There was skin grown right over both eyes.

What's that crushed stick pulling away at me? Pulling out all the flowers, if you please. I'm sure she don't know what's a flower and what's a weed. (laughs) Yeah, well it was continued that if you're going to or not.

Alex: Where did you go to school?

Clara: I went to school in Gordon School.

Alex: And were was that?

Clara: That was situated on the Gordon Reserve four, eight miles from Punnichy, south of Punnichy.

Alex: What were your teachers like?

Clara: They were very good to us, except the old school principal -- he wouldn't allow us to talk our own language. Well, I couldn't anyway, because my mother only spoke English, very broad Scotch. But she did learn a lot of words of Cree from my father, he was Cree and she was Scotch. Scotch father, Indian mother. She wasn't really bilingual you know. (Inaudible) in her later years.

Alex: So how were you treated in this school?

Clara: In school? All right, except that they wouldn't let us go forward when we wanted -- I was ambitious. I went to the office one day when I was Grade Seven and I asked the principal, "Please may I stay until I get to Grade Eight?" "There's no Grade Eight here," he said. "There's just certain ones that are going to go to Grade Eight." And this principal and the Indian Agent had picked them out, and I wasn't one of them.

Alex: So who was allowed? Why was that?

Clara: I don't know. Oh, my goodness! Oh, my goodness! That's nice, Ruth! You know what's wrong with them? They want to be transplanted -- that's why they are stunted. When you transplant those rhubarb, dig a hole and pull them apart and make more out of them. And when you do that in the spring send me some roots to put into my garden, okay?

Daughter: Okay.

Alex: What kind of food did you eat when you were growing up? What kind of food?

Clara: Rabbits, vegetables out of the garden, rabbits, chickens, ducks. My mother had chickens -- we had a lot of eggs. We had one cow -- we made our own butter out of that one cow. Boy, she was good milker.

Alex: The same diet in school?

Clara: Yes, pretty well. But I ate more food at school than at home. My mother and I were scared of wild cattle roaming on the reserve, so we didn't pick many berries. But the berries around the house -- chokecherries and a few saskatoons -- we picked them. If we found strawberries, we picked them. Or sometimes we'd go in a wagon and go way back in the bush in the mountain and we'd find strawberries there. It was always a wagon. It was only the richer Indians that had democrats and buggies. But we always had a wagon. (laughs) My grandfather had a Red River Cart -- those were the vehicles that we went around in. And, you know, a Red River Cart, it just has two wheels on it, two of the big wheels, and then the axle. And I didn't know it, but I found out quick when I was allowed to

go and walk around outside our tents. We always had a fence -- we were afraid that the bulls would come around close, and the Red River Cart was always in the fence. And I went one day and I was walking on the shaft -- we only drove one animal. One horse was in the Red River Cart, never a team, always the one horse. And I was climbing up on this shaft on one side and I got in, and didn't I overstep the axle! The shaft went up and I landed on the ground quite a ways from the... Oh, I thought I was killed! My mother come running out, "What did you do? I told you never to walk on there." Oh, I had a short memory, I guess. I never thought about it -- I'd hear her say it, but that was as far as it went. It got stuck in the middle of my head somewhere.

Alex: What did they teach you at school when you went there?

Clara: They taught us washing, ironing, cooking, whatever we could do, sewing, we did a lot of sewing -- patching men's and boy's clothing, our own. We learned all that at school, hence we were all good housekeepers, right down to my daughter.

Alex: And what were the other students like?

Clara: Well, they were really friendly. And then they thought if a girl and couldn't understand Cree, she was a white woman! You know, distinguished each other like that, you know. The ones that could talk English they were called -- they want to be white people. And it's still like that! "Why don't you teach your children Cree, or your mother language, instead of being, trying to do everything the white people do?" And I said, "I can't talk Cree and couldn't talk Cree when I was small." But I went to school and I learned my Cree there from my playmates, a lot of those kids, in fact all of them, couldn't talk any English or couldn't talk any Cree or Saukteaux or Ojibway, as you call it now. But we learned it quickly in school, and before those fourteen hours the interpreter of the school, when their parents to come to visit them. I'd interpret for the school principal, if he wants me to tell them anything, and tell them how the children are doing and that, I had to interpret. And I've interpreted and worked when Indians got into trouble, and I did the same in Churchill -- I interpreted, and I got a very good price for my interpreting.

So I made whatever use I could of my life, but my working days were over, I didn't work much, mind you. I only worked a year and a half after I left school, two years and half. I was married in 1921. Got married, it was 1921. He was nineteen,

I was older than he was, six months older, my hubby. And he was more pathetic than I was -- he couldn't speak a word of Ojibway, his mother's language. He could only speak English. He couldn't speak his dad's language, it was Cree, he couldn't speak that. And then he used to get strapped at school for talking Cree, because when some of the boys at the school there

would talk Cree, and my husband was around, he was always the one that was punished -- not the others, that they were talking Cree. And oh, he didn't like that.

Alex: Do you know anything of... Did you grow up on the reserve?

Clara: Sure.

Alex: Do you know any of the tribal history?

Clara: Bible history?

Alex: Tribal.

Clara: Tribal history? Very little. Mother, being that she only spoke English -- she could only say a few words of Cree, but dad could talk three languages. He spoke Saukteaux, and Cree, and English -- that's why he was picked to be a teacher in school in Christian Lake. That's why I think my husband and I grew up together. His father was a preacher as well as a farm instructor, and my dad was a teacher. And the Indian Agent came to inspect the school every month, and when the Indian Agent came up he brought a fifty pound pail of candy. And in those days, I guess they were paper bags, but he never brought any paper bags. So he used to bring his old catalogues

and my dad took the corner of the paper and held it and twisted it into a cone and turned the end up. And that's how we got a cup full of candy. He said, "These are for the children." He'd make all those first, you know, and then fill them with candies and he'd call the classes to come up and take one. And they'd take one and go on and they could go out of school and they got that -- that was a treat. And we always got the candies after lunch, and we had the half day off and you had candies to eat.

Alex: Did you play games?

Clara: Yes, we played Indian games. There was one Indian game they played, it was a piece of leather stitched in the shape of a carrot, like, and both ends -- there was a carrot on each end -- and a thong, leather thong, was in the center that kept the... And people, two or three people could, four people could play that game. They had sticks and they'd throw these carrots across and they would try and catch it, and then they really used to bet hard on that game. That's one of the games I knew. Another game that I knew was they used to make a big bowl of bark; roll it, and roll it, oh, it got quite big. That they played with arrows, bows and arrows.

Alex: Did they shoot it?

Clara: Yeah, they'd throw this ball and they'd try and see who would get the most arrows into it.

Alex: Oh.

Clara: They used to bet on that, too. And what else did they play? Oh, a hand game, all the men played that. They'd have one piece of something and they'd throw it to each other, you know. And they'd show you their hands -- they were empty. And they'd start, now where did they pick that rock from up that they were using? My uncle when he came from the First World War, he had a gold tooth, and then I don't know what happened -- it knocked his tooth away. "Boy!" he said, "that's what I'm going to play koochuck with." They called the game koochuck. (laughs) And he had his good tooth for his koochuck. Others had maybe a button or a piece of metal or something to hide, a rock, certain kind of a rock they found and they could keep track of it. They played games to beat the band. And then when the doctors and all those people came into our little town, and that man of -- our first storekeeper, his name was Hubec, old Huba. And the Indians called him Punnichy. Punnichy means, Punnichy is a Cree word. And Mr. Hubec had a real bald, his head was shiny bald, and everybody called him Punnichy, which means a bare belly of a fledgling, a little bird, you know, and it would just hatch, it would be bare belly. Any bird, Punnichy is a bare-bellied bird. And he was called Punnichy and the town was named after him, too. Punnichy; he had the first store in that place. And it used to be called Hubec's after him. Well, when it was called after him, he had to take the Punnichy too. (laughs) So the town was called Punnichy.

And right now all the people that can remember far back and can tell quite a bit about the, we have written a book. I had about six visits from the people that were in charge of it. They go to the oldest people and they ask them what they know, put their ideas, and things about the history in books about

that big. I say, it's priced \$40. And I said, "Oh, I'll have one of them when they're finished. I paid my \$40. and they said they just couldn't have as many books that were requested. It was a big blue thing. And they wrote this book, and it's not quite completed yet -- they're just finishing off. And they said they had to raise the price of the book, \$40, so they raised it \$5. I have the receipt of my \$40. deposit I put on the book. I'm one of the first ones to have a book. So later on I shall be having a book of the Punnichy district, Touchwood Hills district. And they thought, when they heard, I was pretty good to be the first Indian to buy that book, to want one. And I wanted one of the first editions, but they got to print more.

(END OF SIDE A)

Alex: Do you have a native name, you said?

Clara: Yes.

Alex: And what was that?

Clara: Keenequany-Pewe-Squeu. I take it to mean, in English, "perplexity." And the way the name describes that I'm sitting on the floor or something and I keeps turning around and around and not knowing what to do -- that's why I call it perplexity. I guess I was pretty doggone sick when I was given the name, when I was told, when they was speaking to me and I guess I was sitting there in front of the elders, when they were naming me. And my grandfather called me Keenequany-Pewe-Squeu, "turning around and around on the ground, sitting

on the ground." And I'm sitting on the ground uphill (Indian word), and I'm a woman. A sitting woman, turning around and around. A sitting child, a sitting person.

Alex: The elders gave you that name?

Clara: My grandfather and my dad, my uncles were there, too, when I was given the name. And they made a feast.

Alex: Is that a tradition among your tribe, your people?

Clara: I don't quite get that, what is it?

Alex: Did everybody go through that ceremony?

Clara: Well, not everybody, lots came themselves, came themselves and asked to be given a Cree name. And it was always the elders that gave the name. I was very sick at the time. I think I had tonsillitis -- I used to get that every spring and fall. And the first time I got it I was very, very ill and they thought I was going to die and they said, "We better give her a name. Her name will kind of clutch on to her and hang onto her." This would help me get better.

Alex: How old were you?

Clara: Pardon?

Alex: How old were you?

Clara: I was about eight, I guess, when I got my native name. From when I was about seven or eight years old I started getting this tonsillitis. I had it every fall and

winter, fall and spring. And several times I almost didn't get over it. Finally when I was older, when I had it in school, I was taken in to the doctor to have my tonsils taken out, extracted. And the instrument that I had, that the doctor used, were like two circles like that and it had a handle on it, and he held it like that and pressed on it. When he pressed on it these two sharp circular knives came like that and just snapped off my tonsils.

Alex: Did you ever have it after that?

Clara: Oh yes, I still had it. It never quit until I was,

oh, my gracious, I was married and I had one or two children. I think I was about twenty-three, I guess when I had it; but it never quit, it kept on every year. I had my tonsils out twice.

Alex: Twice?

Clara: Yeah. Once I was in school -- he hadn't cut all the roots out, and they just grew up again, they seemed to grow bigger. I had them on each, each tonsil had it. Oh, I was a very, very sick girl. I couldn't swallow, I was in bed, and my grandfather used to give me medicine for it. Even after the doctor took them out, my grandfather used to give me medicine. And he'd tell me, "Drink it, drink it, you have to drink it, and you have to eat." He says, "Our father that's up above put everything on earth. We don't have to buy nothing, there's everything on earth." He said the only thing we have to buy was seeds, you know. There was no wild potatoes, I don't know. I know there was wild carrots, wild onions, and wild turnips. And they used to go along the hills and dig those wild vegetables and cook them, we eat with the meat. I don't know

whether they still do it or not, I don't think so. I think that's practically gone, now, because when the people brought in, Europeans had brought in seeds and put in gardens, Indians started working for the white people and they got, took vegetables, and meat, and stuff like that in trade. They were very, very seldom given money.

Alex: Did you ever go out and dig up vegetables when you were young?

Clara: No. Not until I was about eighteen, when I left school. I dug vegetables in the place where I was working. They got me from the school, the people that saw me, they took a liking to me. But somebody else had taken a liking to me and wanted me to come into Regina and work in Regina, which I did. I came into Regina and I worked in Regina from May, June, July, August, September, October I worked. I worked about seven or eight months in Regina. I worked for an inspector -- he saw me at school when he was inspecting the school and he liked my manners, I guess, and asked the matron how I was at household work. And she said, "Oh, she's very good. She's a good worker." That's one of the things we were taught in school, how to housekeep, and how to cook, how to sew. I think I told you that before.

Alex: Yeah. So how old when you went to work for him?

Clara: I was eighteen. We were kept in school till we were eighteen years old.

Alex: Did you like that, were working in Regina?

Clara: Yes I did. It was kind of lonesome for a while, because I didn't know the white people, and I didn't go out

very much; I didn't know anybody to go with. I knew a boy from the, not from the reserve, they lived near the reserve; they were Germans. And I knew him, and when he came into Regina he took me to a show, and I thought that was a nice treat. Well, I had known him ever since I was small. He used to come and babysit for my mother when she wanted to go to town, to go and buy groceries with my dad. We children would stay home -- there weren't many of us, there was myself and another little girl, and a little boy, three of us. And he'd come and babysit at our home. We had two that came and babysit at different times; one of them was a Hungarian and my dad had no money to pay him. And this Hungarian used to always play with the little calf we had. It was quite big, it was going on to two years old. And when he was playing with him my dad asked him, "Do you like that little cow? That's a baby cow," he said. "Do you like it?" He said, "Yes." "Would you be happy if I gave you that baby cow for you working for us?" "Okay," he said, "nothing else, just that." And boy that man -- years after he had a herd of about forty, fifty head of cattle from that little calf. She'd have calves, they'd have calves, they just grew like...

Alex: Do you remember your babysitter's names?

Clara: My babysitter's name?

Alex: Yeah.

Clara: I don't know. It wasn't an Indian. What was his name now? I used to know his name, and I have no relations that remembers him, to give me his name. But he was Hungarian.

And when his mother came for him, when he told her that he was not working anymore, he had to go home and work with his parents. When she brought him and came for him, they came and they trussed the calf up, tied its legs, front legs and hind legs, and tied them so it couldn't kick, you know. And they put hay under where that calf was lying, the heifer was lying in the wagon, and they took it home. It was all tied down, trussed down. And that Hungarian woman came and she took my mother's hands and she prayed and she made the sign of the cross. And she patted my mother on the hair, and she did the same thing to us children. I guess she was blessing us, telling us we were good people and to live long. Of course, here I am yet, but I'm the only one out of the family that's living. My brother that I had was killed in the Second World War.

Alex: What was your brother's name?

Clara: Edward Lawrence Anderson. He was killed overseas.

Alex: And only you two...

Clara: Pardon?

Alex: And only you two lived?

Clara: Yes, just the two of us. Second from the oldest and second from the youngest. I always thought about that a lot; it's quite a coincidence. And my oldest in the family was my sister, oldest sister Anna, her name was Anna Maria.

Alex: What did the men and the women and the children do on the reserve?

Clara: Men, women, and children?

Alex: Yeah, what did the men do?

Clara: The men worked wherever they could get work. And they'd usually take food for living. They'd buy meat and pork, chickens, hens, eggs. And they'd go and hoe gardens, too, and they'd take vegetables for that, and they were cheap with their vegetables. We used to get, I don't know how many bags of potatoes, enough to do for the winter; cabbage, carrots, turnips, onions -- they got all those things in pay for their work.

Alex: And the women?

Clara: The women stayed at home, did the cooking, looked after the... Usually the women had big families to look after. And they looked after the children. I never remember having had anything new to wear -- I had new things to wear but they were not bought ones. My mother made all our clothing. My brothers and my sisters all had homemade clothing, bought yardage stuff, you know, and she made them, she made coats, jackets for the kids, coats, everything she made. She was really a nice sewer. We used to be proud of our things when they were finished and we wore them to church, or to school or something, Treaty. Treaty time, we got dressed good as... to make two or three outfits for the girls and the boys.

Alex: The children, did they go away to the school, or did they stay on the reserve?

Clara: Well, there weren't many of us that went to school. They got sick and died. My mother had very bad luck with her kids. She used to work hard with them and get the Indian doctors, and there was only the two of us left over of nine children. Seven of them passed away, eight, seven, yeah.

Alex: So there was a high death rate for kids then?

Clara: Yes there was. Especially infants.

Alex: Did you ever go on any trips when you were a kid?

Clara: Yes. We moved from Gordon Reserve to Fishing Lake Reserve. My father was a school teacher there, in the school. And my husband's father was over there before we were there; he was there about a year or two before us. He was the farm

instructor. And my husband's mother had two little boys, three; she had two in Fishing Lake and she had one in Gordon's.

Alex: How did you... Gordon Reserve, how did that get it's name?

Clara: The first chief that was voted for when they going to make reserve bands, the first chief's name was George Gordon. And our reserve was called George Gordon Reserve. And the same with Day Stars, Poor Man's, Muskowekwan's -- they all had names pertaining to the chiefs. And from there on, when one chief died, an old chief died, they choose their next chief hereditary -- the son of a chief, all the way down. And this is the first time on our reserve that we have a chief not Gordon -- he's a McMorris, Wayne McMorris -- my nephew, my niece's... Before that all the chiefs were named Gordon.

Alex: So you didn't elect your chiefs, then?

Clara: Yes, we elect our chiefs -- the one that is capable of handling the position. And we found that Wayne was the best one for a chief. He was very well educated, he had reached his Grade Twelve or Thirteen, and he had been out and worked some. And he could write, oh, he was a good writer. We figured that he could handle his position far better than any chief they had had. And I understand, since we been here in Regina, that the things are starting to improve on the reserve.

Alex: What's the name of your people that you come from?

Clara: What's the name of my people?

Alex: Yeah, what is the name of your tribe?

Clara: The George Gordon Tribe.

Alex: So it comes from the chief's name?

Clara: Yeah.

Alex: Well, where did the people come from that live on the reserve?

Clara: I guess they were all over on the prairies. You know, Indians used to travel around from place to place, no settled place. And they used to live in one camp for so long, until they wanted a fresh clean place to camp, and they'd move again. They were always moving from place to place. Then they used to go and look for logs and build houses, there was houses scattered all over, until the reserves were organized. They

picked out locations. Each reserve was supposed to have a fishing lake so that they could fish and live on fish. And they had a lot of animals -- most of the reserves had a lot of animals, they had moose, and deer, and elk, and smaller, rabbits to live on. But our reserve was a dry place where it

was located on. It had some little lakes but not big enough for fish to be in. But now they've planted, I think it's 5,000 fish, in our reserve, in our big lakes. And they're growing up there now. But before that was done there was a Fishing Reserve found for us -- the Long Lake, you know, you've heard of Long Lake. The Cree name for that is (Indian).

Alex: Was it on the reserve?

Clara: No, thirty-five miles west of the reserve. And they made a small reserve there for us. We had a long strip of beach and we could fish there in the winter, and fish there for fish, for winter's feed. Froze them and they used to put them in buildings outside when they were frozen. There was no such things as refridgerators, there was no refridgerators. You know, I'm getting to be forgetful. It's too bad that I hadn't started this ten years ago. But I'm not get mentally or anything, you know, but I just can't remember. Refridgerators -- there were no refridgerators in our time, only in the towns, I guess. Nobody on the reserves had refridgerators. Now pretty well every house has refridgerators and freezers. They can keep meat much longer.

Alex: Did you have to, when you had wild meat and that, did you have to store it, like away from wild animals, too?

Clara: Yes. But when we killed any wild animals it was cut up in pieces, and it was either buried in a cellar, or it was hung out in the trees on high branches where dogs and animals

couldn't get them; but cats could sure get them. Then when they had refridgerators, the meat was cut up small and frozen outside before they were brought in and put in the freezer.

Alex: And it kept better, eh?

Clara: Yes.

Alex: How many people were on the reserve?

Clara: It used to be quite full; it used to have about seven hundred or eight hundred. I don't think it has that many now. Of course, all the time, there's people increasing all the time on the reserve now, more so than in the olden days. In the olden days there wasn't such a thing known as an illegitimate child. The girls were well cared for and they were taught self respect. They weren't allowed to wear short dresses -- they had to wear long dresses. And they weren't allowed to go out with boys. They were allowed to have visitors in the house, and then when the man would ask for the girl, they waited a while, and gradually getting ready to get married. When they got married, oh boy, did they ever have a good time! They had fiddle dances, and powwows outside, powwows outside in a place built up on (inaudible). They'd have their powwows in there and they'd have the fiddle dances in a big house, or in big platforms made outside. And I can remember there used to be a fence around these big platforms so

that you could dance, two outfits could dance. Boy, I took a prize for that when I was eighteen, nineteen. They were having a contest of dancing, who could dance the most dances, and who could... We had violin players that knew every dance, fiddle dances, schottische, two-step, three-step, four-step -- reel-of-eight they called it, reel-of-eight, that's how they

pronounced it. And they had all those dances, and there was a (name), a cousin of mine that come and took me as his partner, we took the first prize.

Alex: It must have been a good dance.

Clara: I, well, I shouldn't say I was, but I was considered to be the best dancer. And when they started dressing in beaded clothing, you know, dressing up and having sports, horse races, and sports, and that -- we had nine tribes dancing in Gordon Reserve. They danced in the biggest reserve, Poor Man Reserve. And there was some people on the Day Star Reserve, they only had one daughter and one son. This woman sewed for two years making an outfit for her son and an outfit for her daughter -- oh, what a beautiful outfit! Do you know that she wouldn't wear that Indian outfit! She wouldn't wear it! "To think I'm going to get into that clown suit," she says. "I'm not going to put all that on and go and show myself." She wouldn't. Her mother, it just broke her heart when her daughter said that to her. And this girl ran away. She kept right in the crowd all the time. Her mother couldn't catch her up to make her dress and dance. So she looked at my father. She says, "Now I'm going to ask you something." She said, "I shouldn't have to ask you, but I have to ask somebody." And she said, "You have a pretty daughter. Do you think she could put on the Indian outfit? Because I made an Indian outfit for my daughter and she won't put it on. Do you think she would?" She says, "I'll pay her if she does it. I want my outfit showing, my work shown in the big dance."

And my dad came and took me over to her tent -- and she went home then when she asked him. And she said, "I'll come over and visit you. You make supper for me, and I'll come over and

visit you. I'll make a big supper for you and your daughter," she said. So we went over there, and oh, she made a lovely supper for us! We had duck soup and barbecued ducks, rabbits barbecued, cooked outside, you know, and turned... Oh, she made a big feast for us! We had duck soup and everything. There was all kinds of canned fruits that they could buy, and vegetables. And this old lady, she asked my father, "What did she say?" He said, "I didn't ask for nothing," he said. "That's for you to ask. You put out your dress and stuff that you want her to wear and ask her if she'll wear them. Get a prize." And she put them all out on a hanger -- my dad made her a hanger, you know, to put all the clothes on -- the dress and the beaded blouse. Oh, my gracious! And you know these long bones? I had about eight, ten rows of those beads, go right around my neck and right around about four inches, or five inches from the edge of my skirt, those beads hung down.

And I had smaller beads up here -- I was just full of bead work; they were just heavy.

And she made me cups, they were race horse, like, and they cover up the (inaudible). I could really ride. And they asked me if I'd race this horse, race him around the track, a mile. They said, "He'll not throw you. You pull the lines a little and he'll slow down. But don't pull them fast," he says, "you'll fall right over his head and onto the ground." So I did. I ran around this race track -- I won, needless to say. That horse won about nine or ten cups in horse racing, and they were going to retire it. And they said when they retired it, they'd retire it at that big powwow. It would be led into the circle. And I was to ride it. I went around and around that mile race track, a couple of times, for people to see it. They doggone near scared the horse on me. They'd yell, you

know, and clap, and that horse's ears were just going like this. And I'd talk to it. I bent down and talked to it, and patted him on the shoulder. Oh, and it was a female -- her name was Dolly Bardon; and she had a heck of a pile of silver cups she won. And I was to be honored -- I was the first woman to ever ride on that Dolly Bardon. Women were kept away from that horse when it was going to race. It was never taken near the women, because women are supposed to be unclean to the Indians, you know. Therefore, no women or maidens, young women would near that horse. We all had our own place to sit down at and we didn't bother anybody's horse. I was the first woman to get on that horse. No doggone wonder, you know. She looked at me, snorting, you know, and then they were teasing me, "You must stink they way that horse is doing it." Oh gee, I didn't want to ride it after that. But they said, "Naw, we're only playing with you. That horse knows you're different, knows that you are different. That's only why it's doing that, you're not stinking." I sure made them talk before I did. I wouldn't listen -- oh, I was insulted! Because I wasn't one that was ever dirty, I always kept myself clean.

I was a girl that was very highly respected by my boyfriend, because his father was a preacher for fifty years, and his grandfather was a preacher and an interpreter for fifty years. He was the one that interpreted the treaties to the reserves down in the Qu'Appelle Valley and in Gordon Reserve. He interpreted to all the people. I don't know how in the world that old man ever -- there was no such thing as a megaphone at that time. But he was days and days and days preaching to the Indians and interpreting to them. And when they paid out the money, my husband's father was telling me about it. He says, "You know, when I think about it," he said, "by gollies I

was silly," he says, you know. Found himself so silly. I says, "Why, dad?" "Because I didn't even pick up \$10 bills, \$5 bills, \$2 bills, \$1 bills. Kids were just throwing their money like this and seeing how far their money will blow. And they wouldn't pick them up. They left them down -- it's only paper, some of them would tear their paper up." But he says, "If anybody had the sense to pick all that up, he'd would have been

very, very rich," he says. I always think that John Archie McDonald -- that was the man that was living in the Qu'Appelle Valley, and he was at the treaties, and he was a secretary I guess. But I bet that man got thousands and thousands of dollars picking up off of the ground. Every man, woman, and child got \$5 a head. That's not much mind you, but when a person had ten kids that was \$50. And the chief got \$25, and the headman got \$15 -- that's a lot of money.

But that's how ignorant we were, how illiterate we were. We didn't know that nice paper was valuable. They had to teach them the use of that money before they would keep it. Some of them had their money for years before they used it. They just gathered it up and tied it in bundles and kept it in with their medicine values(?).

Alex: When you were talking about they built platforms and fiddling dances, how long did those go on?

Clara: What's that, fiddle dances?

Alex: Yeah, and the powwows.

Clara: Till the sun was high up in the sky. They danced all night. Even an ordinary fiddle dance, wedding dance, or something, that would go on till sun-up. One dance, I went up

to a wedding, my husband was overseas, and my husband's cousin, his sister like, she used to always visit me when my husband was overseas. One day they came over and her husband says, "Clara," he said, "I'm not coming here for nothing. I'm coming to ask you for a animal to kill for the wedding of my son. I was looking at your herd of cattle," he says, "and I saw, I don't know how many little steers I saw there," he said. "I'd like one of them to kill for my son's wedding." "All right," I said. Then I said, "What do you want to pay me for it, John?" His name was John Blant. "What will you give me for my steer? I have nice fat steers." "I know it," he says, "that's why I came to you. I seen other cattle but they are not good like yours," he says. Then I said, "You want to go and see them? I know where they always are," I said. "Okay," he said, "get in the wagon and put your little kids and show me where to go, I'll take you there." So he took me and I called my cattle. I had all my cattle named, and when I called them, they all came -- there was no running around for them in the bush. Every animal I'd call would answer, and they all came. Gee, that man was sure surprised. "My golly, (Indian word)," he said. "You're very wise, you named all your cattle and you're good to them, they all listen to you. Even the ones that you don't milk listen to you." "Oh yes," I said. That was when my husband was overseas that I named all my cattle and calves and everything. I'd call them and "Come on, come on," I'd say, "come on, Bossie, come on." And they'd start running. I really had my... my horses were like that too.

When my husband went away overseas we used to have a team of horses, and then we had six cows. We used to chop wood and

sell it to the school and instead of getting cash for our wood we took calves and animals, two year old animals and year old

calves, too. And when I went to the school principal to make a deal, and I asked my husband, "What will I tell him to make a deal with?" "Well," he says, "wood is \$3 a cord," he says. "You can go and make a deal for as many cattle as you like, and we'll chop wood. We'll borrow a team and horses from outside," he says, "to come and haul our wood to the school." So I did, and the school principal sat back and he says, "What will you give me for an animal?" I says, "What do you want?" "I've got to buy wood," he said. "I've got to buy cord wood for the cattle. I have no stock of cattle and I've got to sell them." He says, "What will you give me for an animal?" And the animals were cheap. What did they charge? They were \$3. or \$4. a animal for calves and I told him I would give him two cords of wood for a calf. "Fine, that's good. How many calves do you want?" "I want all two year olds," I said. "Well, that's not going to be two cords." "No," I said, "the little wee calves are going to make two cords, and the older ones, oh, about twenty cords I'll give you for an older animal." I bought six, no not six, three big ones, two year old heifers, and they were all to freshen in the spring. I bought those three and I trained them myself. The following year there was another three and...

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