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Sharon: I'm talking today with Eva Lapierre of Regina. Mrs. Lapierre, could you tell me something about your parents where they were born?

Eva: That I don't know. My dad is American he was born in Montana. And my mother she was born here I guess in Canada, she was Canadian.

Sharon: Had your family always lived here?

Eva: No not really. After my mother died I was six months old when my mother died, and I guess my dad was more or less in the States most of the time because at the age of six they put me in school, in a Residential School in Lebret. And I've been there most of the years like, you know, like well maybe I just sometimes went home for about a week or two, or, because I had no place to go after I was just, I never had no sisters, no brothers, no nobody.

Sharon: Well where did you stay when you weren't in school?

Eva: When I wasn't in school I stay with my grandmother.

Sharon: And where was that?

Eva: That's in Carry-the-Kettle.

Sharon: So she was the one who...

Eva: Who, yeah who really brought me up.

Sharon: So were you a Treaty Indian or a Metis?

Eva: Yes I was Treaty.

Sharon: So where did you say you were born?

Eva: In Carry-the-Kettle.

Sharon: When?

Eva: April 6, 1916.

Sharon: And you were the only one in your family?

Eva: Yes.

Sharon: Okay, your grandmother lived on the reserve?

Eva: Yes.

Sharon: Well how did she make her living?

Eva: I really don't know because I wasn't there half the time eh. Maybe I go there for little while, maybe a week or so something like that and back to Lebret, mostly spend my time in Lebret in school there.

Sharon: Well how long were you in Lebret?

Eva: Eleven years.

Sharon: And then where did you go after?

Eva: After eleven years I went home to my grandmother, no my grandmother had passed away already then. I went home, well my dad was there at that time when he come pick me up, but then

he went shortly after that he wen to the States and me I went to Lestock. A priest from Lestock school come pick me up, by the name of Father Gabriel, he took me to Lestock and I stayed there that's where I spent my time.

Sharon: Going to school?

Eva: No. I didn't go to school really I was just kitchen helper I guess we'll say, yeah. Till I met Mr. Lapierre and then I got married, and I got married in January 15, 1934 that's when I started my family at. I lived on the, how do you call that, how would you say that, this land belonged to the...

Sharon: (?) land?

Eva: No, no. Belonged to the Mission School. It was a pasture for cattle and we had to look after the cattle there.

Sharon: So you had a house there?

Eva: Yeah we had a house there, but it was made out of logs and mud, of course. And he worked at the Mission there, Mission School for fourteen years. So I didn't really have too much of a hard times during the depression year, although it was still hard eh. But I made gardens eh, and I picked berries, and I done lots of canning for the winter like that. And my kids when they started being age to go to school there was three of them that went three and a half miles. Had a little country school there. And, okay... We moved to the Metis farm there was a Metis farm there after that they had a raid the Metis farm, I don't know what year it was I can't recall that. But anyway they had gardens there and we worked like fifty cents a hour I think we got just to get our supplies for the winter eh. So that's what, that's where we were. But I never forget when the people from Chicago Line that's what they called it eh, when they moved to Green Lake.

Sharon: That's when you were living there?

Eva: No I didn't live with them I was still in Lestock, but, yeah and I was moving me too. Me too I moved from that, how you call that, school pasture there, Mission School pasture I was going down to (?)'s farm, that's the storekeeper in Lestock, to go and look after cattle out there for him. And that's when we went going by that gate that they were all, they were all sitting, you know, by the station there and with all their belongings. And while we were going by we seen all the houses on fire, don't tell me who, I can't tell you who burnt them but they were all in fire like, you know. It was kind of sad, very sad, even dogs were running all over the place.

Sharon: Do you know who made them that?

Eva: I reall don't know. You see I didn't associate with, I was too far away from them. But I kept on hearing, I don't know I think it was the municipality if I'm not mistaken, because they wanted the road, I don't know if they wanted the

road clear or what, it was no use of that road anyway because it was all bush road eh and there was nothing there for them to... And still today I don't think there is even a road in there, because it's all swampy and bush and, you know, sloughs and all that and I don't know, I don't know who really moved them out of there. But it was a sad story anyway. They broke up all those homes, you know, lots of people had good times there. Not like today, today is drunken, drinking parties there, drinking and drugs eh. But those days it wasn't like that, you, it wasn't like that. The older people like the ones I know now of my age they were all had respect, they done things thier way eh. But...

Sharon: What kind of dances did they have?

Eva: Oh square dances, and social, box socials and stuff like that eh.

Sharon: Was Metis and white, or just Metis?

Eva: No, no mostly Metis annd I suppose maybe an odd white man and a few Indians would come in eh. Come to the reserve to just right beside it anyway so maybe they joined in too. I never used to go down to the dance because I was just not a person that ever danced. I didn't go to no socials like that. And just lately now, now that I come on pension and I live alone and I have freedom to go places I can go to bingos, I go to these powwows now. I enjoy myself now.

Sharon: What language did they speak, English?

Eva: My children?

Sharon: No, all these people that we're talking about.

Eva: Oh they talk in Cree, Soto, French all mixed, you know, half breed language they call it, you know, it's a mixed language of Cree, Soto, and French and English all mixed up. I remember my mother-in-law she, you see like when I went to school I didn't talk no language I lost my language eh, because I was too much into the white society all ready into the schools and that eh, and I really lost my language and that. I could understand it, you know, at times but it seemed like they were tongue tied or something, I don't know. And anyway my kids didn't talk nothing they talked English, but I learnt from the people that I lived with over there in Lestock. My mother-in-law, my father-in-law they talked the half breed language, what they call the half breed language is Cree, and French, and Soto all mixed up and English, and little bit of English once in awhile. Now I pick up quite a bit.

Sharon: When you went to school what language did you have to speak?

Eva: In English. And Lestock, Lebret oh yeah we spoke right in English. I don't think Cree was allowed in there at that time.

Sharon: Who taught you?

Eva: The nuns. You know, the sisters, grey nuns.

Sharon: Were they very strict?

Eva: Oh yes you better believe it. I was talking to a guy at the Buffalo, I was down in Buffalo, you know, and he was saying oh how we used to shut in, we were really shut in like, you know. What I mean shut in is that the boys couldn't get to the girls and the girls couldn't get to the boys, we just had to...

Sharon: You were kept separate from each other?

Eva: Yeah separately all, you know, you couldn't communicate with them at all, or you couldn't even say hello it was a sin to say hello eh. (telephone rings) Well, for me I (laughs)... Let me say verse it this way that I was a very obedient child eh. Being so much with the nuns that I was, I never wanted to do anything wrong eh, I, everything was a sin to me. (laughs) I don't think it like that anymore, but when I was young, you know, because I didn't have anybody to tell me anything so I went according to them, but then some kids were very rough there eh. Like I know some kids ran away one time and when they brought them back they were shaved their hair right off eh. And at those days, you know, when we were punished we were punished. What I mean was really punished you'd have to put your hands on the table, if you done anything wrong you had to put your hands on the table and then they'd hit you with a ruler or something eh. But now if those days this child abuse was on and then they wouldn't have done it maybe eh. But there was lots of things done in that school, it was very hard for some of them them eh. Well, if you disobey I guess you would get a really hard punishment eh. But I, I went along with anything they told me to do eh. So that was not too hard for me because I just... And even now, even now I'm always scared to do wrong, I can't explain how I want to tell you. I'm a person that there's not, my heart never say no that's a word I cannot say. I don't know what that means no. What I'm trying to tell you is that if anybody came here and wanted five bucks my heart says yes, but could never say no. That's how I was brought up myself eh. I'm not saying that I'm better than everybody else, but that's just how I am. My heart is very large, open to everybody. I don't care, anything at all, any kind of Cree and Negroes, any kind, anything.

Sharon: That's the way they taught you to be at boarding school?

Eva: That's the way I was taught to be, you know, that kind of a person eh. And I went through that and I'm still at that and here I'm still like that. Now if somebody came to my door and I know the person I done it so many time, sometimes I could kick myself for it but then again, like I told you my heart cannot say no. It's got to be a yes. And if I say no I

feel very bad after, I feel like oh I let them down or, you know, something like that. Oh it's a very hard life. And when I raised my kids I learned them to be that way. I have a big family I've got eight girls and three boys. One passed away but all the girls have their own homes. Now one thing I'll tell you, these kids of mine now they're all married in white society they have white husbands and they all have jobs, and my daughters have work too eh. And I don't know, I just never understand them. Maybe from this is what causing our young kids to be what they are doing. They mostly bringing up themselves because the mother's not home, the dad is not home they're both working. In our days it didn't work like that, we were home with the kids oh day after day.

Sharon: There was no such thing as babysitters...

Eva: No, no we didn't have no babysitters. Well, for me I never had a babysitter because I really didn't know, I didn't have anybody well I had my mother-in-law then, but I never, never asked anybody to babysit for me. I think this is where the wrong thing is, I don't know, I don't say. I like people working, I like my daughters working they're making extra money, but then again the kids need their parents at home. Right? I don't know, I just... It's a very hard thing for me to tell you how the world should go eh. (laughs) But I enjoy every bit of it, I used to babysit a lot but not anymore, I don't anymore. I do lots of, I belong to this (inaudible) over here. I go there every day and every other day, they are sewing there and making... I crochet lots make lots of things.

Sharon: Like when you were younger back in the old days did you associate a lot with your other relatives, Indian relatives and Metis relatives?

Eva: No not really, not really. Because I was far out from them eh, and to tell you the truth I never, after I got married I don't think I seen Tom fourteen years after that. I just stayed at home and I just do what I suppose to do look after the kids, I guess, and I never went to town because he used to go downtown like my husband used to go downtown and bring the supplies and this is all I needed. I didn't, I never talked to the people at all over there. I didn't even know them till fourteen years later when this one time one of my kids took sick and I had to go take her to the doctor eh. And that's the first time been to town, but it was a very strange feeling when I...

Sharon: Was there a doctor in town?

Eva: Yes then, but when I had my children I had five of them at home there was no doctor.

Sharon: No doctor around?

Eva: No, no.

Sharon: Was there a hospital around?

Eva: No.

Sharon: So what did you do then...

Eva: We had, how you call it... Oh when the child got sick or heck we didn't have no doctors but, you know, we had a... Well for me I don't know how I raised my kids but my kids were never sick. I don't know how I did it but if they did get sick I had one that used to have touch of pneumonia every now and again, but all I did was I just put a bunch of plaster on, you know, to break that chest cold and give her maybe a aspirin or this, what you call this boom, you know, this mint they picked around the spruce. You just boil that and you strain it, and you put a little sugar and aspirin and it killed the fever. But we never, never bothered doctors. I think there's too much doctors now. I know one of my daughters she's in the doctor every day, but...

Sharon: That time you did take your, one of your kids to see the doctor was that the same doctor that treated everybody?

Eva: Yes. Yeah we only had one doctor and he was, he just came in there... I only took her once because she was having convulsions eh so I only took her once and that was, let me see, that was, it was the seventh child. And she was having convulsions I didn't know no other way had to put down the fever so I had to put her in the hospital for a couple of days or so.

Sharon: That was in Lestock?

Eva: Yeah that was in Lestock. But other than that my kids never had no doctors like, well from her she was the one I first went, that's when they had, the first time they had a hospital there eh and that's when I had her at the hospital, and you know the rest.

Sharon: Did she get treated the same as say like the white children?

Eva: Yeah, yeah. Yeah they treated her pretty good.

Sharon: Did you notice any, like was there discrimination then against Metis and Indians?

Eva: Not so, no I don't, I don't think so because we never, we all got along like. Well, we just lived right at the edge of the reserve eh, so these people used to come and visit us and we used to go and visit them, but there was nothing ever said. There was the Metis and the, they used to go to dances there and there was never anything going on. Well it was no white people in it then it was just all Metis and Indians. So I don't think there was any discrimination at that time, but now it is.

Sharon: Did you know of like any Metis or Indian who tried to

hide the fact that they were Indian and Metis?

Eva: Oh I'd imagine so. I'd imagine so lots of the Metis want to be more or less white eh. Like you take my family now they're all married, I told you like once before that they were married to Germans, Hungarians, and Polish and all this, and they don't want to be Metis no more they want to be what, what they married into I suppose that's how they, you know, I don't know. Me, for me I'm still who I am. I like to go to powwows, I like to go to all kinds of things. Any assembly or whatever, gatherings.

Sharon: Were the Metis and Indians were they paid the same wages as the other people when they worked?

Eva: I think so, because my husband, you know, when my husband used to work for \$4. a day. I think so. I don't think there was any because work was work, unless some like one lady over here said that she used to live in Wischart and there's people are from Daystar's and she was saying that they used to work for potatoes and meat, and chickens, and eggs, and whatever eh. They never wanted cash so if we didn't take cash well we took...

Sharon: Produce and stuff like that.

Eva: Yeah, yeah.

Sharon: You could exchange for working?

Eva: Yeah for exchange for working there. And wood same thing, cutting wood same thing they used, you know, they give us whole pig you cut so many loads of wood for that one pig, you know, just for the winter. It was always that way. I don't know. And we dug lots of seneca roots of course.

Sharon: Sell them?

Eva: Yeah we sold them good price at that time. We figured it was good price, you know, but now you bring in a pound now (inaudible) pay for that now.

Sharon: How did the stores, how were you treated in the stores?

Eva: Oh, I don't know because like I told you for fourteen years I never done the shopping, my husband done it all.

Sharon: Do you remember the world war one?

Eva: Oh no, I don't think so. Born in 1916, no...

Sharon: Oh you would have been just a baby.

Eva: No, I was just a baby I don't remember.

Sharon: What about the depression do you remember the

depression?

Eva: Oh yes, during the depression oh yes I never forget that. But we had it really hard, you know, it was a hard time to make a dollar that's what I'll tell you. The cash was very hard, even work was hard, you know, they... But that dollar brought more than what a dollar brings in today. You know, because a pound of butter was ten cents I think, and the only time that we were rationed was when we got those ration books, you know, for sugar, meat, and I think it was butter I think we had just certain time to go. If we run out of it, you know, we had to stay with that...

Sharon: Were they good for one month?

Eva: Yeah, I think so they were good for, we had a whole book of it yeah. It was just for a short time not too long. But like I told you, my husband was a worker eh he cut cord wood, he snared rabbits, and I made gardens, and I canned stuff and during the depression years, yeah.

Sharon: That's how you lived?

Eva: That's how we lived. We had to live on what we can get. And lots of times lots of people couldn't even get that flour, yeah.

Sharon: They couldn't buy or you couldn't pay for it?

Eva: They couldn't, well my brother-in-law used to live about a mile from us we supported him most of the winter because he was a sick man, he had, he had T.B. eh. And we used to help him quite a bit that's the reason why I made a big garden because to help the old his mother and dad eh.

Sharon: You husband is...

Eva: Yeah my husband because they were old age that I can't, and mind you we were getting, they called it relief that time, \$15. a month. And a few years after that my husband had to go do forty-two days for the winter welfare, we didn't get that welfare for nothing let me tell you. God it was hard, but then like my husband he used to go eh and brush the road allowances and he had, like I said, forty hours for the winter of brushing.

Sharon: And then he'd be able to get relief?

Eva: Yeah he get that relief during the winter months eh. But now I wish we the living today now...

Sharon: What did you use for transportation, how did you get around?

Eva: Wagons, democrat, buggies.

Sharon: Pulled by horses?

Eva: Yeah. We didn't have a car then.

Sharon: What did you do for entertainment like in your spare time?

Eva: I didn't, we didn't do very much entertainment. Like my husband didn't care for much, well he used to go to a odd dance or something, but we never, I never went. I never, as far as that goes I don't know if we even radio. And when we did get a radio well the kids were already quite a few of them and we just had a battery radioes then. You know those old battery radioes, coal oil lamps and... But it was good those days. If I was asked if I want to go back I'd say yes anytime.

Sharon: So you didn't really suffer during the depression?

Eva: No, no not really. I didn't suffer that much because I done lots of sewing eh, like the Mission in Lestock there they used to bring some old clothes and I'd rip them up make either blankets or make jackets for the kids and stuff like that, it paid me quite a bit eh. And, you know, I didn't suffer that much not during the depression years. I didn't have the best of food let me tell you no steaks and stuff like that, but we did live anyway.

Sharon: How were other Metis people making a living?

Eva: I really don't know because the Chicago Line was quite aways. I think they were doing okay because they were selling wood and, you know, cutting wood for farmers the same like we were doing. And some had gardens too, but I don't think they were suffering, maybe they did some of them but they was not...

Sharon: Is this relief you were talking about was it available to everybody?

Eva: Yeah.

Sharon: Didn't matter if you were Metis or white?

Eva: No it didn't matter as long as you worked those hours eh. But we couldn't get, even the young girls that had babies, you know, that got in trouble and had baby they couldn't even get a dollar of welfar, no way.

Sharon: Why not?

Eva: All they would tell them is lift your socks up and go to work. And where the poor girls was suppose to go I don't know.

Sharon: They didn't help them?

Eva: No, they never helped the girls, nothing they got. Like my oldest daughter, Diana, and my husband said, well to

heck with it. He says, don't worry about it. He says, I'll, what is one and we already had eleven, what is one more he said eh.

Sharon: So the married people that did have children they helped those ones?

Eva: Yeah.

Sharon: Yeah.

Eva: We used to help our kids anyway, I don't know.

Sharon: Well, what about say women that were widows and who had children did they get help?

Eva: If they did they get very little. I know a woman that she had, her husband was in the second world war, and all she fed her kid was, she was milking cows eh, and bread and milk.

Sharon: A baby?

Eva: All the family.

Sharon: (inaudible)?

Eva: Oh bread, and milk and potatoes that's all. It was really something, you know, but we survived through and mind you right now that same woman has got a big car and everything else now.

Sharon: She's doing good now?

Eva: Oh yes, yeah. We didn't have furniture really, all we had for me all I had beds for the kids, bed for me, a table and a few chairs and a cook stove that's all we had. We didn't have chesterfields or coffee tables, nothing like that.

Sharon: Was your furniture homemade or did you buy it?

Eva: Yeah we bought it, yeah we bought the beds.

Sharon: The table and chairs were bought then?

Eva: Yes. No that's not true there, the cupboard was made by my husband, the table was, yeah it was a homemade table but the chairs we bought yeah because somebody else made the chairs. All we used to have are long benches made, you know, for the kids to put in their bedroom. That's how we lived we didn't have furniture like, you know, all that thing, you know.

Sharon: The Saskatchewan Metis Society started in 1933, did you know anything about it? Did you hear about it?

Eva: 1933?

Sharon: Yeah.

Eva: Oh gees, I was in school there that time, yeah I was in school. Because the school burnt in 1932, I was still in school.

Sharon: But you didn't hear anything about the Saskatchewan Metis Society? It didn't help you in any way?

Eva: No, no. Well I wasn't married even yet I was just a young girl. And I got married in 1934. I don't know. We didn't know, of course I didn't know I never, you know, when you young like that your so kiddish eh, you don't listen to anything.

Sharon: How old were you when world war two started?

Eva: What year is that anyway?

Sharon: 1939 to 1945. It would have been about...

Eva: Around in my twenties I guess.

Sharon: And you were already married then?

Eva: Oh yes I was married all ready.

Sharon: Was your husband did he have to go to war?

Eva: No, no.

Sharon: Did any of your family have to go?

Eva: One of my brother-in-laws yes.

Sharon: He went to war?

Eva: Yes he went to war.

Sharon: Did the war affect you in any way or your family?

Eva: No, no it didn't.

Sharon: You lived the same way that you've always lived?

Eva: Yeah, right, yeah right. It didn't bother us, but we used to listen to radio and all this and to the, see who... We had one of our boys over there killed, you know the neighbor's boy. But no it didn't make me worry or anything like that.

Sharon: Were there a lot of jobs around at that time?

Eva: Oh no, not that much.

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