Victoria: The old Metis Society like the Saskatchewan Metis
Society in the '30s and '40s there, what did they do for the people? Did they help them get relief or housing?

Joseph: Oh no. They didn't, they didn't, they didn't help. We never got any help around any stuff like that. We never got any help. The only help that we give 'em is go to... (inaudible) back to go to the meetings in Saskatoon, but to get help, to get anything fixed really we didn't get anything from the government.

Victoria: What did the white people in your area think about the Metis Society back then?

Joseph: Oh they, they were sure laughing at the people, you know. They figure that, that never work. But some of them guys, some of them white people, they were right in it to help us, you know. You try to get ahead, but a lot of them, they didn't care. They didn't want nothing to do with it.

Victoria: Do you remember the name Joe LaRocque?

Joseph: Yeah.

Victoria: What do you remember about him?

Joseph: Well, I don't remember too much. I just remember to see him, that's all, but I never remember...

Victoria: Where did you meet him at?

Joseph: I met him at Meadow Lake, I think. There was a meeting in Meadow Lake, I met him there.

Victoria: A Metis Society meeting?

Joseph: (inaudible) I'm pretty sure. It was some kind of a meeting. I went with Sam and I'm pretty sure that's the place we met him, or in Battleford anyway. I just couldn't say.

Victoria: Sam Landy you mean that was, eh?

Joseph: Yeah.

Victoria: Do you remember Joe Ross?

Joseph: No. I heard of his name though. I never... I don't...

Victoria: How about Tom Major?

Joseph: No, I don't remember, I don't remember, I don't never hear, first time I ever heard.

Victoria: Solomon Pritchard?

Joseph: Yeah. I heard of his name, that one too, but I never met him.
Victoria: You didn't meet him, eh. What about Joe McKenzie?

Joseph: I think we did meet Joe McKenzie, yeah.

Victoria: Do you remember where you met him at?

Joseph: No, I don't remember that. You know, you met so many of them guys, you know, you goin' to... you don't know where they're at. Either Meadow Lake or Battleford, I met them.

Victoria: How long were you involved in that Metis Society in the '30s and '40s?

Joseph: Oh, about 10 years, I guess... 5 years, 5 or 10, well, we'll say 10 years.

Victoria: What all did you do during that time?

Joseph: Well, we never do much. We try to make always pretty scrimp to make 5 cents. It was hard times and stuff like that them days. You had a hell of a time to collect a few dollars them guys, they could go to Saskatoon to go the meetings there. I don't know, they used to go the meetings and they used to have...

Victoria: What were the meetings for then?

Joseph: Well, they try to get the government to help us to start a Metis Society, but we never progressed too much.

Victoria: About how many would you say was involved in your local here in those days?

Joseph: Well, them days we'll say about 30 I guess.

Victoria: About 30 people. Were they all the Metis from around here?

Joseph: Not Arcanes. No, there was no Arcane mixed up in that. You know they were, them Arcanes, they were slow. In fact, they didn't... the Metis Society, they didn't believe in that. I don't know they were kind of pushy or proud, or anything like that. When they seen the people they were getting stuff though, you should have seen them getting in there now, even some white people, they were half-breeds, no half-breed in them. They tried to claim they were a half-breed just to get the stuff free.

Victoria: So what really happened after awhile there? You said you were in it for about 10 years and then...

Joseph: They kind of forgotten that, you know, the Metis Society... The meantime and it's... what... too long... I bet you it's about 20 years after that, they start all over again, you know.
Victoria: Were you involved the second time again?

Joseph: Oh yeah, with the neighbors.

Victoria: What did you do this time?

Joseph: Oh, I run around for the Metis here. Me and Ernest, we were just about on top, you know. We done everything to help the Metis Society, you know. Cripes Almighty! we made a lot of miles.

Victoria: Ernest is your brother, is he?

Joseph: Yeah. Ernest is an old man. He put up a lot of his own time, wreck even a brand new truck. Tried to set up the Metis Society, and he was fighting against the Metis Indians, stuff like that, you know. They didn't want to help them.

Victoria: They didn't want to be Metis?

Joseph: No. Hell! we had a hell of a time.

Victoria: And where all did you travel?

Joseph: Oh, all over. I drove practically all over, we drove all over. We drove... me, especially me, now I drove Meadow Lake, Green Lake, Glaslyn, all over, I went all over.

Victoria: What year was that in, Joe?

Joseph: That's, geez I don't know what year. We used to drive every year. We used to do that every year except the last two, three years. About three, four years now, I never go much. I never go to hardly anyplace since I've been sick, but before that I was...

Victoria: Would that be in the '70s?

Joseph: Yeah.

Victoria: Probably in about the '70s, '75...

Joseph: '75, '76 yeah, something like that.

Victoria: Did you know Josephine Pambrun then?

Joseph: Yeah, oh yeah.

Victoria: Was she...

Joseph: Yeah.

Victoria: ...helping out too?

Joseph: She's from Meadow Lake. I used to go and see him. (laughs) I even run, the time that election here, Jim and them, I went, oh, I went all over Canoe Lake, James Bay, Green Lake...
Victoria: Up north, eh?

Joseph: ...up north there, for Jim there, you know. But I made out good too, you know, That's what I said, I didn't go for them high-class people; I went with the guy that could... middle-class people that I knew they were (inaudible, background noise). You know, I always got good outage with them.

Victoria: What do you think they've accomplished so far with the Metis Society? This time around I should say.

Joseph: Well, they were doing real good. I think they accomplished housing anyway, know a lot of people they got good houses a nice place to live on. But since the Conservatives started taking over things sure changed that housing quite a bit. You know, that you don't know what the hell you're at, you go an' kicked outta them houses or not, you don't know. Finally, I got some stiff letters from Conservatives already, you know. They would ever raise my rent and everything.

Victoria: What do you think has been the most important thing in your life, Joe?

Joseph: Well, I like the Metis Society. I really enjoyed that, you know, that go around and talk to people and try to help people. We did help quite a few poor people around, you know, and I really enjoy that. I really like that. I still can go in the summertime if anything that is going on I'm going to try to get interested just to get out of the house. Once I get in the car I can drive, you know.

Victoria: What kind of a person do you think you are, Joe? What kind of a person do you see youself as?

Joseph: (laughs) Well, I don't know, I don't know. I must be not bad because I haven't got a bad friend nowheres.

Victoria: Oh, that's the main thing.

Joseph: I don't know, I don't think I got an enemy to say that anybody that actually that I don't like or he doesn't like me. Oh, there's a lot of people, they talk, but when it comes to brass tacks at least they come and see me to get my help anyway. But I've got nothing against nobody. I don't give a hell what the other guy does, how much money he makes, if he needs money I always help them.

Victoria: What kind of life do you say you've had, what type of life? Do you think it's interesting, satisfying or...

Joseph: Oh, not bad. I had... my life I really enjoyed it. You know, I had a good life to say I was working all the time.

Victoria: Do you think it was interesting?
Joseph: Yeah. Sure as hell. And I had different jobs. I didn't have only the highways, I had pretty well steady job. I work on the water shores for so many years. And in the winter time I used to go up north and fish.

Victoria: Do you think your life was very different from your grandparents'?

Joseph: Oh yeah.

Victoria: How do you think it was different?

Joseph: Well, I'll tell you, I was more civilized, I guess, try to be civilized. And them guys, they didn't care, them guys, you know, they never got any... To say that my relations, them, they were different people altogether. They didn't care if they farm or not. They wouldn't... so long they live.

Victoria: They didn't really get excited about it, eh?

Joseph: Yeah.

Victoria: What about from your parents'? Do you think it was very different from your parents', from your mother's and father's?

Joseph: Well, I don't know. Pretty hard to face, you know that... like my dad there, I don't know, to say, "I hate you," is all right, but he, my dad, he didn't care. That fellow, I sometime, I've often wondered when... if he was care for us or he didn't care. Sometime we didn't see him for two, three weeks.

Victoria: Why do you think he did them sort of things, Joe?

Joseph: I don't know. I guess... I don't know. What the hell... You know them old people, some of them guys, you know, they didn't care. They liked to go around, move around, and they didn't stay in one place.

Victoria: Do you think maybe it was because of responsibility they had?

Joseph: Yeah, they didn't like them. Like them Arcanes there, you know, they used to move every so long. They'd stay one year, maybe a couple of years in one place, they'd move, move to a different flock. You know, they didn't move only one family, the whole shooting match, you know, 15 families and like that. First... when they first moved from Duck Lake, they moved to Maidstone -- Maidstone, was a hell of a pile of them there. Then after that, they moved to Jackson Lake where we used to live, around the lake there. There was about 10 families there too, you know, them Arcanes, there's about the same outfit. And after that they tried to buy farms and they were scattered quite a bit that time. Still now, there's not much Arcanes out in the country.
Victoria: What has mattered most to you in your life, Joe? Is it your family or the things that you did, your religion?

Joseph: Well, I'll tell you. My religion, well, I used to go to church but I never was a, I was a relig... religion, I used to go to church but I'm not, I wasn't that religious anyway, you know. But the family, I'm saying a word of my mother. My mother's one of the best, you know that, if it wasn't... if there wasn't my Mother I wouldn't stick around here. I think I'd pull the... I'd go away.

Victoria: What do you think about economic security? Like for when you're old, Joe, what do you think is going to happen?

Joseph: Well, I don't know. The shape I am, I never know. (laughs) The shape I am, I never know what the hell's gonna happen. Maybe I live the next 10 years: maybe I won't live that long.

Victoria: What do you think are this, your native community here around here, what do you think are their worst problems?

Joseph: Well, I'll tell you. There's, oh there's all kinds of problems with them guys. You know, the more you feed them, like, the worse they get. You know, you never could satisfy them, you know. You know them guys, they're hard to please. Don't matter how good you are to them, they always something complain about. Mostly now, they got the nice houses and mostly they all moved to town. There's only about 30 Arnesesys still in the farm, but him, he's different. What he's got, he didn't get it from the Metis Society. George always had a bunch of cattle around home there. But like this odd breeds, they still out in the country but mostly they're in town, you know. They get the new houses. But now again, see, where the problem is, if the Conservative comes in over... over... over all of them guys, they go and chase out of them house. Only...

Victoria: So you think they're worried then, eh?

Joseph: Oh yeah, they're worried over that, sure. And I'll tell you, another couple of years that the Metis guys, they'll be moving out of them house.

Victoria: What do you think can be done about it?

Joseph: Well, the only way... I don't know that. If that, if... I don't know a guy should have meetings over that, talk about for leader take there Jim Sinclair but no use to talk anything to Jim anymore, because that's his last year too, you know. He's going to quit the Metis Society. So I don't know, I don't know a guy... what the hell to say, who to... a fellow's got to hang on for another year just to see what the score.

Victoria: I was going to say, what can you do about it, but...

Joseph: Well, if there was a pure Liberal would come in. You
know, the Liberals they were good with the, like to try to help the poor people. Maybe there's some ways they were no good, but like building them houses and stuff like that. You know, they were good but since Conservatives started butting in there... I got two, three letters here already that... Any my rent going up (inaudible) at $75. If they keep going up, how the hell can I pay? Victoria: How much will it be then?

Joseph: $275 a month, I couldn't do it.

Victoria: You're just on pension now?

Joseph: Yeah.

Victoria: That's bad.

Joseph: Yes, you can say that again. $500 and you pay $200 for your house -- that's what I paid for my payments for the house. It is a... I put my lots for down payment. That's the biggest mistake I ever done, to get a new house. But I didn't think... Everything sounds good, you know, oh, about this new housing, you know. So I signed my lots to the housing for down payment. I don't know what the... I don't know, I never really to see anybody anymore, you know. I never seen a Metis worker over two years now.

Victoria: So you don't really know what's going to happen.

Joseph: I don't know what the score is.

Victoria: What was it like? Was it fun or bad to grow up in a large family, Joe?

Joseph: Oh, we never had... I never got no trouble with them, no way. We all got along really good, because I never was, after I was 14 years old I never was home much anyway.

Victoria: And you enjoyed working in politics, eh, with the Metis Society?

Joseph: Yeah. I still got the... That was nice. You meet people and talk people, and some of them, they were pretty nice to talk with and lot of them guys, there was quite an argument with them guys. I think some of them Metis Society guys they loved a short meetin'.

Victoria: Do you think it would have been different if you would have been born white?

Joseph: Oh no, I don't think...

Victoria: Or maybe a Treaty Indian?

Joseph: I don't know. Well, the (inaudible) I got more relation in the reserve than I do on the outside.
Victoria: So your relations...

Joseph: Oh yeah. All them Ahenakews, that's all my cousins, every one of them, first cousin in Sandy Lake.

Victoria: Do you visit much with them?

Joseph: Oh yeah, they visit me. The Indian chief there, what you call him (inaudible) he come up two, three times (inaudible) me and him, he didn't even say good-bye or hello or nothing one time he come and visit because he start to argue with me. Oh no...

Victoria: If you had a chance, Joe, to be born all over again would you have wanted your life to be any different?

Joseph: No. I think... well, I done... I think I would keep on the same way but I would do it a little different.

Victoria: How would you make it different?

Joseph: Well, I would save more money anyway now. I wasted a lot of money, I didn't save. If I made a dollar, I give it away. I never could keep a dollar. Help people there (inaudible), you know. Lots of time I used to come to town and buy stuff for people that I didn't even know, give them money.

Victoria: So you would have saved more money. What else would you have done?

Joseph: Well, I think I would have had a better home, I guess. And I would have a better vehicle because the money I made all went in the farm too, you know, I never got a bloody cent back. I have quite a bit of (inaudible) in the farm there, I'm suppose to get some back but I never did get anything. Oh, it's no use to say anything because it would be just a bunch of argument. This way I get along and I didn't need it anyway.

Victoria: Is there anything else you would have changed, like your wife or your family?

Joseph: Well, (inaudible) she's said... she's said he wasn't much fun. She was young kid. He was nothing but... He didn't have much money. He was just a drunkard and he never care for us. If you care for us you'd be home today.

Victoria: What do you see about the future, Joe? What do you think is going to happen in the future? Is it going to be better for your kids or for us?

Joseph: Well, I hope. You know, if the people, they would smarten up and stick together, you know, them half-breeds, you
know, they had a nice thing going that Metis Society. If they
would stick up together, and instead of fighting amongst them-

selves whose going to steal that extra dollar there, you know,
everything would have been all right. If...

Victoria: You figure money is the bad point, eh?

Joseph: Oh yeah, 'cause there they were fighting over that
few dollars and the one who was going to be on top of that,
that one done this. You know, that time... did you not... you
know, that it's a... remember that time you used to run Batoche
there, how nice it used to be. Stuff, how much we used to have
left over, and we had money left over. We paid for the power,
we paid for everything there, you know. Now, how much in the
hole they were, them guys since that. They don't go ahead a
bit at all. You know, they should let them old people do the
work they'd like to do, things like taxes. And Tony and them,
Tony and...

Victoria: You think the older ones should organize Batoche, eh?

Joseph: Oh yeah, you're God damn right.

Victoria: Do you miss it out there? Do you miss working out

there?

Joseph: Oh yeah. In a way, I didn't miss... I didn't like
working with... I could have worked, but I didn't want to work
with them, the other guys. I liked to work with the...

Victoria: The old crew, eh.

Joseph: ...the old crew, like Harry Vandale, Dexter and all
them guys. You would've... one of the best, you know. You
know, they look after the stuff good. We used to have quite a
time there, you know, and people, man! you know, there was
people there... I was told that people there less and less
every year that Metis Society there. You know, they don't,
they don't cooperate like we used to do. No way.

Victoria: What do you think about the community around here?
Do you think it's going to get better in the future?

Joseph: Well, I hope. If there's anybody that... if there's
anybody that... Ernest, soon as he knew the... soon as we quit
little... that's what I mean, Ernest from Metis Society
everything dies out. We got to keep push them all the time,
otherwise... like Ernest, he didn't do much for the last two,

three years, the Metis Society goes haywire. The people they
don't, they don't go anyplace.

Victoria: What do you think it will be like for your grand-
children? Do you think they'll still have a Metis Society or...
Joseph: Well, I hope if everything goes right. I hope they go to Metis Society.

Victoria: By then maybe some land claims or something.

Joseph: Yeah.

Victoria: Free hunting?

Joseph: Be still Conservative and they give us free hunting already. (both laugh)

Victoria: Do you think native people have a better future, like in the towns, or would they be better off in the north?

Joseph: Well I'll tell you one thing. It's good for them, the Metis people, in towns 'cause they don't have to work. They can get juiced, live there, and they live like kings, you know. That that's the biggest racket the government, he ever done in his life, to have them Indians and Metis Society to stick up in the reserve, er... in the... in the towns, you know. Oh boy, something wicked down there. Out in (inaudible) Lake guys there, healthy guys they're getting juiced (inaudible) don't have to work. You know, some of them guys, they get $1,500. a month sitting on their ass. And they talk about Indians. Sure Indian, that's another bad thing -- what the hell they doin' chase all them Indians off the grounds, they don't go and stay on the reserve. Oh that piss me off. Every God damn one of them go to town, go to Regina, go to Saskatoon, go to P.A. That's all you see in the beer parlour. You go to the beer parlour, there's nothing but half-breeds and Indians filled up with the beer parlours. Yeah.

Victoria: Do you think it's the, like the Metis Society now has changed a lot from the first one that they had?

Joseph: Well, I don't know how much they changed 'cause we never used to have meetings like used to have either. You don't know what the heck's going on. I've never been to a meeting the last four years. I don't know what the... how the Metis Society's doing or anything. They used to have them meetings in town with Jim. I don't know, I never heard anymore, anymore what the score is.

Victoria: Well, I guess that finishes our interview, Joe, and I thank you very much.

Joseph: You bet you.

Victoria: I'll get back up to see you again.

Joseph: Yeah.

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