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HIGHLIGHTS:

- General reminiscences of his life.  
(Summary of Side A, Tape IH-040)

After he left school had to work. He worked for the Hudson's Bay Company. He used to travel quite a bit. He used to go up north. He would do some trading. He took clothing and what Indians wanted -- tobacco, tea, sugar. They traded for fur and pelts in the winter. They were very cheap. One pelt was 5 . Five eel pelts for lb. of tobacco. He brought flour, tea, sugar. They didn't use much flour. They mostly lived on meat. Clothing and blankets. The people sewed their own socks. Those nearby came to the store. He went out to the people. He had a shack where he stored the goods on each of the reserves. He thought he earned a lot of money. He would spend 2 days going and returning. He'd stay two weeks. This was in 1902.

1903 -- Lloydminister was born. There was a caravan of a bunch of people coming in to settle. They brought machinery. There were a bunch of immigrants from England. They came in

covered wagons. About 20 or 40 wagons. It was a whole string of wagons. His schoolmate, James Whiteface, was with him. They didn't know that a particular man who spoke was a minister. He was a bishop and he said a prayer.

They were wondering what was going to happen. They thought it was a good idea. Those people started to farm. The people started to work for the farmers about 1905. Talks about Archie Miller, a boy 10 years old, what happened to him.

A bunch of surveyors hired him to go and work for them. He meets Archie Miller up north and he said he wanted to learn to Cree language. So one day he got lost and everyone looked for him. After two nights, they found him. Pierre tracked him. Found him asleep. He had lived on blueberries. Now they always shake hands when they see each other. He came to see him 2 months ago. That story was about 60 years ago.

Talks about a certain hill where there is a pond. They started a base line. That line goes to Edmonton. Then it goes to the 5th meridian. They were repairing the line. They staked the line.

When W.W.I was on, two or three went to fight. Two brothers went and got killed.

He travelled a lot with the surveyors. He went up as far as Peace River. He stayed with them for 6 months. And the next year they came back.

George Craig from Edmonton enlisted and never came back. He taught Pierre about the stars, the North Star. He told him about the movement of the stars. He gave him a little instrument and he began to record where everything went.

Then he quit, he didn't survey any more.

They took supplies as far as Athabasca where the railroad ends. Then they took horses and wagons. Then at the end of the trail they used pack horses. They slept in tents. Food they took was canned stuff. They would fish (use a net). Not much danger. The last trip they made they came back and at Great Slave Lake there were guys waiting there with more work. They got on the boat and everyone thought (40 or 50 Indians) they were heading home after their work was done. About 10 went on the boat. A big wind came and it looked like it was going to upset. Everyone was scared and got sick.

They were going to a settlement on the east side of the lake. There was a store and a few houses there. It took them 6 hours to go 40 miles. George Craig was sailing the boat. ("You guys pretty near got drowned today.") That's what he said to them as they got off the boat.

(Side B)

Mary: ...used to tell you about the old days?

Pierre: Not very much.

Mary: Did you go to school here?

Pierre: Yeah.

Mary: Which school?

Pierre: Roman Catholic school, burned down a few years ago.

Mary: How long did you go to school?

Pierre: Eight years.

Mary: Oh. And, who raised you then when you were home, was it your parents?

Pierre: Eh?

Mary: Did your parents raise you? Or did somebody else look after you?

Pierre: Oh, my mother raised me.

Mary: And did she have many stories to tell you?

Pierre: (chuckles) Oh, not very many.

Mary: I'm... The last time we were here you were talking about bringing the beaver.

Pierre: Yeah.

Mary: Do you remember any other things you did when you were younger?

Pierre: Yes. After I quit school, after I left school, you know, my first job I found was in a survey party. That's, they referred this reserve, Onion Lake Reserve, you know.

Mary: Yes.

Pierre: We had to recut the lines in the four corners, you know, the north, south, east and west lines. Then when I quit that job I started work for the Hudson's Bay Company, which was the only store at that time.

Mary: Who were you working with?

Pierre: Just the manager of the Hudson's Bay Company. I used to travel quite a bit, you know, going up north to all the reserves, especially what you call Mistiquan(?) Lake now, you know, and Loon Lake. I used to up there with Dean(?) and sometimes he'd talk to you.

Mary: What would you do up there?

Pierre: Go and buy fur, do some trading, you know.

Mary: Oh. So what would you take with you when you went?

Pierre: Oh, groceries mostly, and clothing, and such items as what Indians most wanted, you know, a little tobacco, molasses, tea, sugar.

Mary: Did you ever work with money, or was it always trading?

Pierre: Always trading. They had fur, you know, pelts. In the wintertime, and in the summertime they did nothing but hunt and fish.

Mary: Do you remember what you could get for one pelt?

Pierre: Oh, they were very cheap then, you know. Muskrats were only 5 a pelt at that time.

Mary: So how much tobacco could a person buy for one pelt?

Pierre: Oh, buy about five rat skins, five rat pelts for a quarter pound of tobacco.

Mary: Is that right?

Pierre: Yeah.

Mary: And what other things, what kind of groceries would you bring?

Pierre: Oh, flour, tea, sugar and so on, you know, what they needed. Something like... We never took very much flour, because they didn't need it at that time, they used to live on wild meat. Sometimes clothing, you know, dry goods, such as men's clothing and blankets, you know, in the wintertime. And at that time we didn't see very many socks like this, you know. (laughs)

Mary: No.

Pierre: In the wintertime they used to make their own stockings or socks, you know.

Mary: Out of what?

Pierre: Out of some kind of a... I remember the article, you know, and the Hudson's Bay used to call it duffel. Something like a blanket, white, Hudson's Bay blanket, you know.

Mary: And the people would sew their own socks out of that?

Pierre: Yeah.

Mary: So would you bring the duffel up?

Pierre: Eh?

Mary: Where would the duffel come from?

Pierre: Hudson's Bay Company used to stock it.

Mary: So you would take it to them?

Pierre: Yeah.

Mary: Did a lot of people come to the store, or did most of the time you went out?

Pierre: Oh yeah, yeah.

Mary: Did many people come to the store?

Pierre: Oh yes, yes, they come there.

Mary: Would that be just the ones nearby and...?

Pierre: Just the ones nearby, those that live more in the country, you know, couldn't come, you know.

Mary: So did you go to most of people around?

Pierre: Yeah, yeah. I used to have a little shack, you know, where I used to store the goods, you know. And they come there and do all their trading there.

Mary: Where was this shack?

Pierre: On the reserves, you know, what you call (inaudible) one day.

Mary: Oh, so in each different place you had a little shack with stores?

Pierre: Yeah, each different place, yeah.

Mary: Oh. What did you get paid?

Pierre: Hey?

Mary: How much would you have gotten paid in those days?

Pierre: Oh, not very much, you know. About a dollar a day and board.

Mary: Did you think it was a lot at the time?

Pierre: (laughs) Oh yeah, yeah.

Mary: Yeah.

Pierre: Yeah. Of course things were cheap then, you know.

Mary: How much time would you spend out on the trail?

Pierre: About two weeks. Because I spend two days going up and two days coming in, and I usually stay about ten days.

Mary: What years would those be?

Pierre: Eh?

Mary: When was that? Do you remember the years?

Pierre: Let me see, 1902, yeah.

Mary: Do you remember any of the things that happened when you were doing this, any stories you remember about those days?

Pierre: Yeah, that I quit the store, I quit work for the store. And then I started, you know, doing some work here and there, you know. Going from one place to another doing (inaudible) work for somebody. And then what happened January 1903, Lloydminster was born.

Mary: Were you there at the time?

Pierre: Yeah, I was there. We heard that there was a caravan, you know, what you call it, caravan?

Mary: Yes. What kind of a caravan?

Pierre: That there is a bunch of people coming in to settle across the river here.

Mary: Oh.

Pierre: And all the machinery they moved with a sleigh. There was a missionary and (inaudible) and the Roman Catholic missionary by the name of (inaudible). And they used to spread word that there was a bunch of immigrants come in from England, you know. They were going to settle south of the river some place there. A whole bunch of us, I don't know (inaudible), but some young men -- I was amongst them -- and we went out to see these people. We waited for one (inaudible) covered wagons.

Mary: Were there a lot of them?

Pierre: Oh yes, there's a lot of them.

Mary: About how many?

Pierre: Oh, I imagine about twenty or forty teams of horses, something like that. There's a bunch of them, a whole string

of wagons, you know, coming up the open prairie. And me and my chum, you know...

Mary: Who was that?

Pierre: He was my schoolmate, his name was James Whiteface. And we watched them come in and they stopped in, they all stopped in, in a certain place, you know. And here stepped down... We didn't know he was a minister, and he started talking and he said a few prayers, you know, and after a while he introduced himself, you know. He was Bishop Lloyd.

Mary: Oh.

Pierre: From England.

Mary: And he was coming to settle there too?

Pierre: Well, he called it Lloydminster, you know.

Mary: Oh so that's why they called it Lloydminster.

Pierre: Yes, yes. That what they called it Lloyd, you know.

Mary: Oh yeah. (Pierre chuckles) How did you feel about these people coming? What did the people think here?

Pierre: Oh, they were just wondering what was going to happen, you know, that they're going to settle out there, settle down and start farming. That's what we heard.

Mary: Did they think it was a good idea or...?

Pierre: Oh yeah, yeah.

Mary: So is that when the people started working for farmers around... Would those be the first white farmers around this area?

Pierre: Oh yeah, yeah. They were the first farmers around this place. But there was an old ranch in here a long time ago. I know of two ranches out east of here, but that was all. But there's no, no farmers.

Mary: So when did the people here start working for the farmers?

Pierre: Oh, somewhere around 1905, you know. They, the farmers got settled down.

Mary: And that's when they first started hiring Indian people?

Pierre: Yeah, not very many people, those immigrants, there's none of them left now, except one. He was a boy when they, when he arrived here. I suppose you've heard the name, Archie Miller, of Lloydminster.

Mary: Yes.

Pierre: He's the only one living now.

Mary: Is that right?

Pierre: Yeah.

Mary: Was he the mayor for a while?

Pierre: Eh?

Mary: Was he ever the mayor?

Pierre: No.

Mary: Did you get to meet a lot of those people?

Pierre: Oh yeah. This Archie Miller I'm talking about, he was a little boy then, you know, and...

Mary: Do you smoke?

Pierre: And then...

Mary: Do you want me to light it or...?

Pierre: Is that the right...? I can't...

Mary: Yeah, that's right.

Pierre: So I'm going to, I'm going to stop there, you know, for a little while and tell you more about Archie Miller, what happened to him. So we got to be, I mean Archie Miller, got to be a young dad, you know. A bunch of surveyors, you know, surveyors, you know what these surveyors are?

Mary: Yeah.

Pierre: They come up here and they, they hired me to go to work for them, and here was Archie Miller. I didn't know him then, you know, but I got acquainted with him. We stayed up north here about oh, about fifty miles north of here. And we worked all summer and he said to me one time, he says, "If you teach me Cree language." So I start to teach him, and I teach him everything I see in the north. That's the name of this thing, and you know, every day, that's how he come talk a little Cree now, you know. (laughs) So one day he got lost, and everybody started to look for him. He stayed out in the woods for two nights and then I found him. (inaudible)

Mary: Was he all right?

Pierre: Oh yeah. He lived on berries, blueberries and cranberries.

Mary: How did you find him?

Pierre: I tracked him. I seen his tracks in a water hole, you know, and when I found him he was sleeping -- I thought he was dead. (laughs)

Mary: Oh.

Pierre: And every time now, you know, every time I see, I see Archie he always shakes hands with me. (laughs)

Mary: Do you see him a lot?

Pierre: Oh yeah.

Mary: Was he surveying too?

Pierre: Eh?

Mary: Did he, he went surveying with you too?

Pierre: Oh yeah. He came to see me about two months ago. That was some sixty years ago that, when we were together. Then another survey party came, you know, surveyors. They came around -- there were too many damned surveyors to (inaudible).

Mary: Yes.

Pierre: And we started this what you call the (inaudible) hill, you know. Do you know where (inaudible) hill is?

Mary: No.

Pierre: Across the river there.

Mary: Oh, that second hill after the ferry?

Pierre: Yeah. On the other side of the ferry, you know, there's a little water hole, or swamp, or little pond, you know.

Mary: Yeah.

Pierre: And they'd go in on the right hand side. We come and we started that line, you know, what you call the base line. We built that line to Edmonton. You'd be surprised to know that that line goes through what they call Jasper Avenue, in Edmonton.

Mary: So it's right in line with it?

Pierre: Yeah.

Mary: Oh.

Pierre: Went through the city. Of course, Edmonton wasn't very big at that time. And then we went up straight west and we cut the fifth meridian -- that's west of Edmonton.

Mary: What were they surveying for then? Was it...?

Pierre: Oh, just repairing the line. We repaired the line and, you know, what they call this iron, iron stakes, you know, with numbers. And what you call, in Roman figures.

Mary: So it was just to mark the line then?

Pierre: Yeah, just to mark the line, yeah.

Mary: Was much of that land settled or... yes?

Pierre: Oh yeah. That's the time when the First World War, you know, was on, 1914. Everybody remembers World War I, eh? World War I.

Mary: Did a lot of people from here go and fight?

Pierre: Oh, about two or three.

Mary: Who was that?

Pierre: There's two boys by the name of McCarthy(?), two brothers. One got killed and one came back, but he was badly gassed, you know. He died about five or six years after.

Mary: He was from the reserve?

Pierre: From the reserve, yeah. They were from here, they were from Onion Lake Reserve here. I did a lot travelling, you know, and mostly on survey after I quit the Hudson's Bay Company, you know. I travelled to the north with the surveyors, and I was hired again by surveyors from Edmonton. I went up with them as far as Peace River at that time.

Mary: Was that the first time that country was surveyed?

Pierre: Yeah, yeah.

Mary: Did you have to act as a guide a lot?

Pierre: Eh?

Mary: Were you mainly a guide?

Pierre: No, I was just some kind of a foreman for the bunch, you know. Then my boss, you know, he enlisted.

Mary: Do you want that out?

Pierre: So I stayed with them for six months. And the next year they came along again and we went up to Peace River again.

Mary: Yeah.

Pierre: And then when we quit up there it was in the (inaudible) And he enlisted, you know, and he went overseas and never came back.

Mary: Who was he?

Pierre: He's a friend of mine by the name of George Craig. He's from Edmonton. And he started to teach me about the instrument, you know, what they call, oh, what making observations in the sky, you know. He used to take me out in the night and we'd look at the North Star. You know what the

North Star, you know, what we see doesn't move. But he'd teach... It moves, you know. He told me that the star moves one, one degree west and one degree east like this, and it makes lots of variations, you know. In his reports.

Mary: Yeah.

Pierre: So I come to know about the... He gave me a little instrument, you know, then I started to work on the land, taking slopes and taking the heights of the hills and the valleys, this, you know. (inaudible) That's the time I quit, you know, I couldn't do nothing. (laughs)

Mary: So you didn't survey any more after that?

Pierre: No, no, no.

Mary: When you went out surveying, how would you be living? Like, would you spend a lot of time on the trail?

Pierre: Oh yeah. We used to have three, they take their supplies, you know, as far as Athabasca, you know. That's Athabasca, north of Edmonton there.

Mary: Yeah.

Pierre: On the Athabasca River, what they call the town now? Athabasca, that's where the railroad ends, you know, at that time. And they took their supplies to there and from there on they took the wagons. All this in the wagons and freight them up north, and where we came to the end of the trail we used pack horses, you know.

Mary: Oh. And where would you sleep? How would...

Pierre: We got tents, you know. Sometimes, you know, we had two horses, carts, blankets and tents. We had some horses to cart, you know, just what we could eat, you know, in the way of food.

Mary: What kind of food would you take?

Pierre: Mostly canned stuff. And of course besides that we had fish hooks, you know, we could get some fish. We used to carry all the things, we used to have fish nets, and there was some Indians there, where we could find Indians up north there. Sometimes we come at their place and they had boats, you know, birch bark canoes.

Mary: Yeah.

Pierre: And they could cast nets for us and we could eat fish. And mostly we lived on wild meats, you know, moose, deer and ducks or something like that, geese.

Mary: Would you do your own hunting, or would you get the meat from the Indians?

Pierre: Oh, we got the meat from the Indians.

Mary: Did you ever run into any danger while you were surveying?

Pierre: No, no, not very much. Only once, you know, when we... The last trip we made to Peace River we came back and we come to what you call, Slave Lake now, you know.

Mary: Yeah.

Pierre: They called it at that time, you know, that was (inaudible). It's a big lake, you know, about seventy-five miles long. And there was a bunch of guys waiting for us there at Lesser Slave Lake, and we had to do some work there. Which we never got finished, you know, while we were going up north. So we had to come back and finish that job, and when we quit that day, you know, we had a sail boat, you know, about the length of this house, and about six feet wide. And we loaded all the stuff there and it was nice and warm, about noon. So we got on the boat, on this boat, and oh, it was very, very warm, you know. And the boys were all saying that they got through with their work and we were heading for home. And so there was the both of us, about forty or fifty men, you know.

Mary: On the boat?

Pierre: No, no. About ten of us got on the boat and the rest, you know, came home with the teams, you know, with the horses and the wagons. They were travelling by wagons and we had to, and about ten of us came, went on the boat. Oh, about twelve miles from the shore, here comes a little cold breeze, you know. Start to blow a little bit, and about an hour or two after, you know, here comes a big wind. Boy, we had big waves and the little boat was going this way, you know, and I thought we were going to upset. Boy I was scared, everybody was scared, and everybody got off, what you call, seasick, you know.

Mary: Oh yeah.

Pierre: And we started to vomit and we got dizzy and... A good thing the wind was coming from the west and we were going east, you know.

Mary: Oh.

Pierre: (Laughs)

Mary: Where were you going with the boat?

Pierre: We were going to, what you call, there's a place there, Hudson's Bay post, you know. I don't remember the name of that place.

Mary: Was it on the same lake?

Pierre: Yes, it was at the east end of the lake, you know. There was a little settlement there, Hudson's Bay post.

Mary: Yeah.

Pierre: And a store. Oh, it's a little place, something like this village here, you know, a few houses. It took us six hours to go forty miles, coming to the lake, you know, on the lake.

Mary: Who was sailing the boat?

Pierre: This fellow, you know, George Craig. I mentioned his name before.

Mary: Him.

Pierre: Of course we were scared. We thought we were going to upset, you know. But he never said no word. And when we got to, when we got back to the dry land it was evening. And we got off the boat and he says, "You guys pretty near got drowned today." (laughs)

Mary: Oh.

(END OF SIDE B)

(END OF TAPE)

(Tape IH-041, Side A)

Mary: Which school did you go to?

Pierre: I went to the Roman Catholic school. They called it St. Anthony's. Roman Catholic school.

Mary: What years did you go?

Pierre: Let me see, I went in the year of 1896, I think, yeah, 1896.

Mary: How long did you stay there?

Pierre: Eight years.

Mary: Did you start in grade one right away or did you have to learn English first?

Pierre: The first part of my school days was when my father died, you know. I was two years old, my mother told me. She moved up to Saddle Lake. That is west of St. Paul.

Mary: And she left you in the school here?

Pierre: No, no. She took me along and we stayed there, we went when I was a little boy then. I remember that I went to a school out there, you know, Saddle Lake, in a day school. The next summer we come back here to Onion Lake. I started day school first and then I went to the boarding school.

Mary: Was it the Roman Catholic day school?

Pierre: Yes.

Mary: Was that the one that burned down? Was there a boarding school at the same time as a day school?

Pierre: Yes. They took me to the school then, the boarding school, and I stayed in that school for 8 years. I also started in A,B,C, and 1,2,3.

Mary: Did you know any English when you started?

Pierre: Very little. What I learned in Saddle Lake school. I could understand a little bit. There wasn't very many of us. Most of my schoolmates are gone now. There are very few of us living that attended that school. There's Jimmy Chief, he went to school there. My brother Francis and this old man here by the name of David Wolf. Up at Cold Lake there's another one by the name of Sam McCavenge(?) and another Chipewyan boy by the name of Sam Janvier.

Mary: Were you about the first people to go to school from here?

Pierre: Yes.

Mary: Who was teaching you then?

Pierre: The nuns, you know.

Mary: How did you feel about going to school?

Pierre: I didn't like it in the first place, you know. I felt lonesome. But in the end I got used to it, attending this school. That time, we used to get a holiday. Only one day a year, the first of July.

Mary: Just the one day?

Pierre: Yeah.

Mary: What would you do on the first of July then?

Pierre: We came home and we went out on a picnic. We came home right after breakfast and had to be back by 6 o'clock in the evening. That is on the first of July.

Mary: The rest of the time you were in school?

Pierre: Yes.

Mary: For all of those eight years?

Pierre: Yes.

Mary: Did you see your parents at all in school?

Pierre: Yes.

Mary: How often would they come?

Pierre: Usually they come almost every day.

Mary: Would there certain times for them to come, or could they come any time during the day?

Pierre: After school, they used to come in the evenings, mostly in the evenings.

Mary: Was there a special place for you to meet with them?

Pierre: Just outside the buildings. We used to see them almost every day.

Mary: So it wasn't like you were away from them all the time. What did they think about the school?

Pierre: I don't know. You know, they had to like it anyway. I guess, or hate it, I don't know what.

Mary: But they thought you should go?

Pierre: We should stay there, you know. They never had much trouble to try and get us home. In those days the teachers were not as good as the teachers of today. They were mostly French Canadian nuns, just teachers. We didn't know what language to learn, you know. We used to hear French and Latin and English. Three languages all the time, every day. I could understand a little French, little Latin, and a little English, and of course our language was Cree. We got punished when the nuns heard us talking Cree.

Mary: How did they punish you?

Pierre: They put us in some kind of little room and just like prisoners, you know. (laughs) Some place where you could see no one. Sometimes it would last 15 minutes. We kept silent.

Mary: So you weren't ever allowed to speak Cree, even after school?

Pierre: Yeah, oh yeah. There's always one nun, you know, looking after us. And when she hears someone talking Cree she says, "Look out! Look out! (laughs) Don't you talk Cree." That's what they told us.

Mary: Did they make any special effort to teach you English or were you just supposed to learn it by yourself?

Pierre: We learned by ourselves.

Mary: Did anybody go around telling you what everything was called in English or telling you how to say things in English?

Pierre: Yes.

Mary: At that time, did all the kids your age go school or just some of them? When you were starting school, was everybody who was the same age as you in school, or were there a lot of people at home.

Pierre: There were a lot at home. Some children came and stay there for about one week and then run away. That usually happened, you know.

Mary: Did the teachers mix with the other people on the reserve or keep to themselves?

Pierre: They keep to themselves. They don't mix very much with the people outside.

Mary: At that time, when Robert Chief would come to the school, would they have very much to do with him?

Pierre: No, he stayed in school with me. We were in the boarding school together. But how long he stayed, I don't know.

Mary: No, the first Robert Chief, Mishihew(?).

Pierre: We had no chiefs at that time.

Mary: He wasn't chief at all?

Pierre: There were no chiefs at that time. The only chiefs you heard about were the ones who were at the Rebellion. After it was over all the chiefs were gone. There was no chiefs. I can remember about 10 or 15 years after the Rebellion the chiefs came back again.

Mary: Who was chief here then?

Pierre: Louis (name) was the first chief here. After, Robert Chief, that's Jimmy Chief's dad, he was chief after Louis (name).

Mary: Do you know what year that would be?

Pierre: No, I don't know. When Jimmy's father died, I was chief then. After me was Joe Taylor.

Mary: When were you Chief, do you remember the years?

Pierre: In 1930.

Mary: Was that year that Mr. Mishihew(?) died?

Pierre: No, no, 1933, I was chief, 1933.

Mary: How long were you chief?

Pierre: For two years. Coming back to my school days, you know, we were treated very well by the nuns. Of course they were a little strict, you know. The boys used to go out and milk the cows and make hay. And carried water for the horses. And we used to have a cart, you know, two-wheeled, what you call Red River Cart, I think. Two barrels in there and the horses used to carry water from the well to the house, and carried water to the (inaudible) operator's house -- that's up the hill there someplace. We did a lot of work, we used to cut wood by hand, by saw. We had a long saw with two handles on each side. After school hourse we used to saw wood, carry wood, carry water, milk cows.

Mary: How much time did you spend in school studying? How much of the day did yo spend right in school?

Pierre: In the morning we do our chores, the afternoon we feed the cows, milked cows. The girls used to look after the chickens and the gardens.

Mary: Who looked after the buildings, the janitor's work?

Pierre: They had a lay brother who looked after the work, the boys work. And one of the nuns looked after the girls work.

Mary: That was all one big building where the dormitory was, was it?

Pierre: Yes.

Mary: Was the school in the same building?

Pierre: No, there were two buildings, ther were many buildings -- the principal's house, a church, and the nun's residence,

and a children's building, you know.

Mary: How many children were at school there when you started?

Pierre: There were about 50 children or more in school, 50 or 60, something like that.

Mary: Did you see quite a difference on the reserve before people went to school and after?

Pierrie: Oh yeah.

Mary: How would you say things changed most?

Pierre: The first thing I noticed was that the new teachers they sent to us, they were good. They knew more about how to improve the situation in the way to teach children.

Mary: How would you say it changed the way of life on the reserve? When the people started getting to school and getting better education, did you see a big difference in the people here?

Pierre: Oh yeah, yeah.

Mary: Were parents quite interested in what you were learning in school when you started?

Pierre: Oh yeah, yeah.

Mary: Did they ever have anything to say about what you were learning, or make any suggestions to the teachers?

Pierre: Yes, they used to tell us everything what would interest us most. Like history, what happened years ago and they used to predict that there will be more people in this country before long, like a better world, better living. They told us everything in school.

Mary: The teachers told you?

Pierre: How to become good citizens and like that, you know.

Mary: And were your parents interested in these things?

Pierre: Oh yeah.

Mary: Do you have any suggestions for things that could be done in school now to help the situation?

Pierre: No. I don't think I have because the teachers make suggestions to the children how to improve the education on the children. There's so much discussion nowadays whenever there is a meeting amongst the Indians in Canada.

Mary: You don't know of anything they'd like to see done in the school that maybe the teachers haven't thought of?

Pierre: Oh, things have changed a lot, you know. In them days, you know, we should to... Then, at the time... When I finished my grade 8, me and one of my school pals decided what we should get to high school. And when we told the principal about it and he says yes. At that time the Department of Indian Affairs looked after the Indian affairs, education, and paid half of the expenditures and then the Oblate Fathers paid half for the Indian children. So the principal wrote to the Bishop in Edmonton to see if I could go to high school. So he wrote to the Bishop. At that time it took a long time to get an answer back. We only had mail about once a month. It took 6 months before we got an answer.

Mary: Six months! Were you still in school when it came back?

Pierre: Yeah, we stayed in school. We finished our grade 8. We stayed in school saiting for the answer.

Mary: And what was the answer?

Pierre: No.

Mary: Oh no. Did they say why?

Pierre: To tell you the truth, I didn't like the way the answer was. The Bishop wrote back to the principal and he called us, me and the other boy, to the principal's house, and he read the letter to us and he said, "Your answer has been approved by the Dept. of Indian Affairs on one condition." It said, "Unless these two boys, they will have to be ministers of some denomination." That is what they wanted us to be.

Mary: That is the only way you could get to school?

Pierre: So my friend said, "To hell with it," so we walked out.

Mary: And there was no other schools you could have gone too?

Pierre: No. If we had to go to another school and we had to pay our own expenses for ourselves, but we couldn't do that.

Mary: Was it both the Department and the fathers wanted you to be a minister or was the Department of Education paid half of your way to another school, the Department of Indian Affairs?

Pierre: They'd pay for it that way, you know.

Mary: Only if you were a minister? Even the Department of Indian Affairs said that?

Pierre: Yes. I don't think we ever believed that, the only thing it was the Bishop's intentions.

Mary: There was no chance you could have gone to school and

then quit before you became a priest?

Pierre: I felt sorry after. Me and my friend, we felt sorry that we should answer that thing and start studying for the ministry. And then by the time we complete our course, then we quit and left it altogether behind us.

Mary: Did anybody do that?

Pierre: Oh yes, one boy did that not very long ago. That's Arsene Cardinal, here, his half-brother. He lives in Ottawa now. He studied for the ministry. I don't know how long it took him. One Sunday I went to church here and the priest told the crowd that this Eric Carleton, the half-brother of Arsene, that next year Eric is coming here to be ordained. "So you have to prepare yourselves to come and see him. "By the time Eric was to be ordained to come here, he quit and left the place. Now he's working at the Indian Affairs branch in Ottawa.

Mary: Is that right? So is that the main reason why people never went much beyond grade 8?

Pierre: Yes.

Mary: If there had been high school taught here, would you have stayed right through?

Pierre: Yes. If they had taught high school, I could have stayed here until grade 12.

Mary: Do you remember anything else that happened during your school days?

Pierre: No, not very much. That's just about...

Mary: Did you have to grow your own food and prepare it, or did somebody look after it?

Pierre: No, there were two cooks who looked after food and everything, cleaning up. There was always boys who was looking after the bedding, beds, and cleaning up the floors.

Mary: What kind of meals did you have?

Pierre: Very good. They grow lots of vegetables and we had meat. A few cattle and lots of chickens and turkeys and pigs.

Mary: And the kids looked after them too?

Pierre: Yeah.

Mary: What was there for your recreation?

Pierre: We used make bow and arrows, we used to play Indian games. And in wintertime, we used to haul water to make a

skating rink and played hockey. There was a minister here, he used to be a hockey player before he got to be a priest. He'd come in the evenings and we started to play hockey.

Mary: Who was that?

Pierre: A priest by the name of Robert Comaire(?). He used to be a hockey player. We used to play hockey in the evenings, after supper in the wintertime. Football in the summertime. There was no baseball game at that time. We never hear anything about baseball.

Mary: Were you provided with skates?

Pierre: Oh yeah, yeah.

Mary: Where would they come from?

Pierre: Oh, I couldn't tell you that but we had skates.

Mary: At that time, when you say there were no chiefs, were there any people who were looked upon as leaders in the Indian communities?

Pierre: Yes. They were looked upon as leaders, but they were not chiefs.

Mary: Who was there then?

Pierre: There was a man by the name of Peter Thunder. And Jimmy Chief's father, you know. That's the only two I knew that looked after us, chiefs.

Mary: What kind of things did they do?

Pierre: Oh, they would hold meetings and do a little work for the Indians. And giving them advice of some kind, tell them what to do. That's the only two I knew that were acting as chiefs.

Mary: How would they become leaders?

Pierre: I don't know, but they were recognized as chiefs. But they were not chiefs, they were just advisors or councillors.

Mary: Would there ever have been a meeting where people would decide this would be their leader?

Pierre: Yes, they had.

Mary: Who was Peter Thunder? Was he leading at the same time as Jimmy's dad?

Pierre: I don't know very much about Peter Thunder, you know, where he came from or who his relations were. I don't know nothing about him. One thing I know, he used to be living in

the Indian reserves, you know. The only thing I know about his relations was that...

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