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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Discusses his views of the present situation of Indians, and
ways of improving it.
Joe: Put it in so that it's something, like it will be
handled in... Like say, for instance, British Columbia. All
right, put it in there so that you can put this here Indian
reservation just the same as their parks in that place there.
Where the natives of that country should be and I don't believe
they should be taxed on that place. Put it so there will be
reserve just for the Indians. And I don't believe that they
should be sold. Should be put in there for the benefit of all
the Indians. Not divided up into blocks. I think it should be
put in there so that the Indians could have it. That's the
trouble right here in the United States. They put these
reservations. He says, "Do you want your place divided?"
"Yeah." So divided so much acres. All right, the old people
took that first homestead there. Got there, they never educate
them to make a will to this year. Today that thing is tied up
so bad that a lot of people ain't got one foot of ground, that
place they got there. And I believe that you find... I don't
know how it is in British Columbia but I think it must be the

same.

Imbert: Well, I think it's different. The reserves are more or less divided up... Not divided up, I think it's more one big reserve. And you can't own individual pieces. The whole tribe up there...

Joe: ...Owns it. That's better, that's better.

Imbert: It's not a dividing up into, you know... They're not allowed to separate things. If you own something you go outside the reserve and you buy your land just like anybody else. However, now what do you remember about the old, the famous old people as you were growing up in the valley? There

were parents, chiefs here and there, who were outstanding people, or women that were outstanding people. I'd like you, if you could remember, just to describe and tell about some of those people? There was, for instance, Chief (name). He was a famous...

Joe: Oh yeah.

Imbert: I don't whether you ran into him or whether he was further away than where you were brought up. Anybody like that that you remember as being rather outstanding.

Joe: Well, you take Chief (name), you know, he was a Christian man. You know, Methodist. And he was a man that... how he, well, well, like, you know, he raised cattle. He raised lots, you know, and he had plenty, you know. If anybody come there, like say from (name) and once a year he come there, he lot of times killed one of his cattle, you see, and fed a lot of people from the island and maybe some from here, you know. And to his appreciation to the people there he fed. That's how he happened to get his name. He didn't only say it in words he showed that he appreciated them peoples there and he fed them. And that's how (name) happened to... And then when this here white Tate come along there, he fell in with the Methodist man there.

Imbert: Was there anybody around Matsqui and there that was (inaudible)?

Joe: Yes, there's Chief Charlie there. My uncle was a chief there in Matsqui, Edward. And then after he died Chief Charlie went in there. He was my uncle's chief first and then after he died there Chief Charlie was there. Edward Jim, that was my uncle's name.

Imbert: Do you remember any incidents, things that happened in your early days, things that you heard about, or things that experienced when you were around? Any little things that happened, or big incidents that took place? Or was life pretty well, pretty peaceful? Did it go along in its own way? Were there any sort of events, you know, that...?

Lady: Such as marriages and stuff like that?

Imbert: Well, no. I think more of unusual things or things happening to people, or things that were perhaps typical in some way of life as it was.

Joe: Well I, I wouldn't know too much at the present time, I can't think. A lot of times you can think of it afterward.

Imbert: Were things always sort of smooth in the relationship with the white man?

Joe: No.

Imbert: I know that the Indians in the valley have the reputation of being very friendly. I mean when the white man first came they were very friendly, they were not hostile.

Joe: That's right.

Imbert: Further up the valley, up in the Thompson Indians and so on, there was a little hostility and so on. But here they welcomed them and were hospitable. Now starting from there are there any incidents and things, though, that... difficulties

and things that emerged, anything that...? I'm trying to get a picture of the stories, the times, you know, and trying to get the truth of how things worked out and how the Indian people felt about it, you know, the white man coming in and so on.

Joe: Well, you take in Matsqui prairie there where I was practically brought up, from my uncle there, you know. The white peoples there, you know, they settled in that prairie place there, you know, because a lot of prairie in there. They raised hay there, you know. My uncle sold them fruit, apples and things, some fish and so forth there and they all bought from them. Then they seem to be very friendly. And even they offered them work, they worked. Everything was cut down by scythe anyway, you know. They didn't have any mowing machines them days there. Everything was cut, even the grain was cut by (coughs)... But they worked together, the white man and the Indians all together, a long time ago. They're just the same, seemed like they were just one another. They were just a family affair. When the white men wanted their hay cut, well, the Indians helped them. Everything was cut down by hand. They all worked to... There wasn't too many white settlers in Matsqui when I was a kid, very little.

Imbert: What was that family that lived up there, up towards Abbotsford? They had the telegraph line that ran through there?

Joe: (Name)?

Imbert: He came out with the Royal Engineers, actually, over a hundred years ago. It was probably before your time. They lived in a house up at the head of the valley and he

telegraphed Trail, and he operated the telegraph. Cruickshanks were...

Joe: No. Cruickshank, I know Cruickshank...

Imbert: He lived down at... But that was before your days.

Joe: Yeah.

Imbert: I know Cornay(?) Kelliher there.

Joe: Oh, you know Cornay(?). Oh yeah.

Imbert: I went to see him several times. He was a great old chap, he and his wife.

Joe: He's up in his eighties now, nineties, I guess.

Imbert: He's come to live in Abottsford now with the daughter. She has that little house up on the hill. Well, they're awfully nice people. We've been there several times. We keep in touch with them. What about the priests of Mission and so on, like? There's another side altogether, isn't there?

Joe: The what?

Imbert: The priests at Mission. There's another story altogether. The Catholic priests over at Mission itself. They had a big centre there, of course. Are there any stories, anything about that? Of course Cornay(?) Kelliher told us about that -- he went to school there at the mission. And then his wife, Mrs. Kelliher, she came from Hatzic Prairie, I think, or at least her grandfather did. Do you remember much about Mission in those days, what it was like in your younger days. Did you go across to Mission very much at all? Or did you...

Joe: I know Mission, but I, to... I don't know, I criticize the mission right there, the priests right at Mission, they're here. I imagine thirty-five, forty years ago I was in there, you know, and I criticize because the priest didn't let me in there to see her cousin. We went over there to see her cousin -- she has a girl cousin in there at that time, you know. He made fun of me because I was an American and I didn't belong to the Catholic religion, you know. And I told him, I says, "I know, I know my peoples that went to school here, you've never had one child leave this school that ever hit high school. You tell me one," I says, "I never seen them hit high school." And I says, "Why is it?" He says, "The Indians," he says, "can't attend high school," he says. "If they get educated they'll die." That's just what he told me. Well, I says, "We've got lots of Indians across the line that's went through high school, colleges and universities. They never die." He says, "They're better off in these here woods," he said, "logging." Well, that's what the priest in Mission says. I says, "No," I says, "Whenever you can get to go to work and qualify an Indian," I says, "and hit high school," I says, "and get into college, then I say your school is just

right. You take (name)," I says, "that little school where the hospital is across there," I says, "they've qualified lots of children. Lots of their children went to (name). Came there and business and Vancouver, Nanaimo, and over here." That's where my wife went to school, (name).

Imbert: That's interesting because I heard the same thing the other day from up in Stuart Lake. An Indian lady was telling me about how the Catholic schools there kept them back from getting on at all, and from learning. And they would not let

them get on to higher education. And she was really upset about it, you know, and she told us quite a bit about this. This was up in Fort St. James. They've got the same thing, there was a Catholic mission there. And holding back, not let them go on to another kind of education. Whether they went away to a boarding school like Lejac up there at Fraser Lake, that didn't matter. It didn't take them on to a higher education. And this is true. I was interested, in fact, I was going to ask you about (name) -- whether that was a different thing, whether it was...

Joe: (Name) was a good school. I seen quite a lot of children that hit business. Methodists...

Imbert: What was his name? Was it Tate that ran that?

Lady: My mother was there when Tate was there.

Joe: The first man that came into the...

Imbert: And Crosbie, he wasn't there much, was he? Anything else about, anything else about the missions? The Methodist missions and so on, anything that you could tell about them?

Joe: Well, as I said, a long time ago the mission schools begin to change its ways. They begin to educate them into high schools. They're keeping them right into that Catholic school. I've went... See, I'm called to different funerals, different ceremonies -- not only here, I've called all over the country to go there and encourage them along. I guess that's what they call me for. I go to Chilliwack, I go to Chehalis, and I go to North Vancouver, to the Island and all over, Matsqui. All over

this here place, all over, I'm called. I say I'm just a servant to the Indian peoples. It seems like if I can't get there they are disappointed. They seem like they don't want to talk to me, seem like I just have to be there to keep peace in with the Indians. I have to go there and make talks in there and that's how I happened to meet a priest up there at Chilliwack.

I got there and he was encouraging the Indians to go through education and so forth, you know. Well, I thanked him for that part of it. But I says, "There's another thing that I would like to have you... You encourage our Indian people to get their education. Try to encourage the white people to accept

them when they get their education," I says. "That's the next step," I said, "and that's the hardest," I said. "It's as hard if you take these here road to... You never seen an Indian working the... You take any work that the province got, you couldn't, they wouldn't hire an Indian. I know. I was over there. I had to get there and persuade one place," I says, "to put the Indians on a mission. The (name) Indians was there and told I them, 'You put them Indians on,' I says, 'they need it.' They are really absolutely against it too." I says, "They're up against it," I says, "help them." So they did. They put them Indians... That's what I say, we've got to have more kind of push and trying to talk to the people to accept our Indian peoples there. That priest that I spoke several times up there and finally he got so that every time me there, he's a friend of mine, you know. I really talked hard against him one time there. He can see my point now. He's doing everything under the sun trying to promote a system to develop both sides -- whites and the Indians -- so that they can get along.

And I think that's our problem today. And you and the position where you're at there could do that, because it's not to qualifing the Indian. The biggest step isto place the Indians there and see that they're called. But I placed one of my boys that went through. I put him through this teletype -- he's a teletype man. He went there to Montana, he worked over there and he built up; in three years he was the next man to take a post over. And there's forty-five people working in there and he was in the second place and just one more and he'd have took that post over. He was all right on the job because he was well qualified for what he was doing. They had, once a month they had a get-together, they had a social gathering -- that's when the Indian was an Indian. Everybody turned his back against him. So that's hard for an Indian, you see. It's the white peoples that got to try to develop themselves to accept them, because they're part of this country, they're part of this here. To make a more beautiful country you've got to respect one another.

Imbert: They're really more part of it than the white man.

Joe: Yeah. Well, you got to... It's a hard thing.

Imbert: It varies, of course, in different parts of the province. Mostly it's not good at all. But there are some parts -- and I've been all over the province and there are some parts where there's much more equality. It depends on some certain areas. Just before we... I was going to ask if there's anything else. What do you understand, what have you heard at any time about Mount Baker being a volcano? In recent times being active, are there any stories or any experiences in regard to that?

Joe: Well, the only thing that the old people is always saying the mountain smokes. That's all it did. I don't think they had any volcanoes, wasn't a 1000 years or... I don't think

so but it's still smoking.

Imbert: It's still smoking?

Joe: Oh yes. Yes, yes. Yes, its fumes coming out of there, deadly fumes, you can't get near it.

Imbert: In the older days was there more of that?

Joe: Yes. Yes, the old people says it always smoked right on top there, smoked right up there. Yes, that...

Imbert: How late would that be, that you would notice it in the distance? I mean, not in your day, I suppose.

Joe: Well, I, it's before my time. I imagine it would be around 200 years, I imagine. Because I'm seventy years old, you know, and my dad said that his people told him about the smoking. Every now and then it will smoke right up, he says.

Imbert: But he never saw it, your dad?

Joe: My dad didn't, no.

Imbert: Because I understood that since the coming... one early times, '50s or '60s it was reported that smoke was often coming out of it at that time. But I've never been able to pin this down, you know, to find out exactly what it was.

Joe: Well, it's smoking yet. I mean the fumes is, as I say, you couldn't get near it.

Imbert: There's a place there...

Joe: Yes.

Imbert: Was it on the other side?

Joe: On the other side. Be on the east side of it. Yeah, you get that in a certain time of the day, you could see kind of a blue smoke, like. You can see where the fumes is coming out it. So it is an active volcano mountain. It may come yet, because it's still fuming.

Imbert: Do you remember the Watkin(?) Trail? Of course, well that came through here, more or less, didn't it? The Watkin(?) Trail? Or was that more north of here? It came along the side of Sumas Lake.

Joe: The telegraph.

Imbert: Yeah. Well, the telegraph came up but the Watkin(?) Trail came all the way from Watkin(?) right up to the railway and across the border. Do you remember that at all?

Joe: No. No, I just know the telegraph.

Imbert: Do you remember the building of a B.C. Electric?

Joe: Yes. I know all that there.

Imbert: Tell us about that. What was that like? Anything to do with that.

Joe: I was living there. They came there. They had to come through the reservation in Matsqui, that's how we happened to know. There's a funny part there, you know. They imported their help from Indian, Hindus. That's one thing that we Indians in Matsqui didn't like. We gave them Hindus a rough time.

Imbert: In what way?

Joe: Well, we just, whenever we caught two or three of them there, we either took their pants off or... We just gave them a rough time. We didn't beat them up, we just had a lot of fun. We took his pants up and hung it away somewhere else.

Imbert: This was youngsters, of course, young men?

Joe: Oh we, we was around... I was around about fifteen, my brother was around about eighteen, and we was all qualified now, there's no getting out of that. I could handle myself, you know. We knew what we could do. We handle, we handle five or six of them. Well, we'd never beat them up, we just gave them a rough time. We just didn't like that, you know, because we didn't think that they should be here, you know, working there. They had to go right through the reservation. We didn't only catch them in the reservation, you know, we caught them outside -- but they worked. Finally the chief gave them permission to build their kitchen right in the reservation. Sometimes we'd get in there and we'd give them a pretty tough time. But we didn't like them, we didn't like them at all. Yeah, they worked all the way through there, mostly Hindus.

Imbert: Any Chinese?

Joe: No Chinese, all Hindus. Yeah, they went over and brought them over.

Imbert: What was your earliest memories of growing up there? You grew up at Matsqui. What did it seem like? Were there any longhouses there at all when you first grew up?

Joe: Yes. Right down by the river. They had their own house down there. But we never had any, you know, like take beaver, pheasant, and them boats all went up the river. We sold them wood. And I never had any hard times them days because they all bought grouse, pheasants and ducks from me, two bits apiece. Well, two bits is a lot of money them days, more than the dollar is now. But, you know, I sold them by the sackfuls. They bought it. And every time a boat comes through

I have a sack full of birds, you know, and I had plenty to get along with. But they bought wood, we had wood for them, we had stacks of wood right down to... Gee, it's snowing.

Imbert: It's not cold enough for that but it is.

Joe: Yeah, they had pretty good down there, fish. They bought fish from us, you know. But as far as getting out and developing themselves there, the Indians long ago, you know, was entirely lost from the way that the white people there. We should have had more help. They should have helped now. We're getting so, as I was telling her here, two years ago I encouraged the Indian Department to try to get up there to these big factories and ask them to accept our Indians. "Oh," he says, "we've got too much to do. More than what we can do."

I says, "Would you let me go?" "Well, if you can go." "Yeah, I'll go. I'll do anything," I says, "to try and help my people." I went to Lockheed, you know, the big airplane there, and I went to Boeing. And I came back and I seen this here paper mill in Bellingham. Went to the oil refinery and this place, Ferndale. Then this here (inaudible) plant was just coming in. Then I went to that iron factory, you know, and (inaudible name). And I asked them if they would accept our qualified Indians. And Seattle they was 100 percent behind it, they'll do anything to promote the Indians. So I got one of my boys working over there. He's working on one of the highest paid jobs there, he went right on. He must be getting around about thirty-seven dollars a day now. Overtime, Saturday, he gets forty hours or forty-eight hours, whatever it is there, overtime, he gets double time. He's doing all right. Well, we got that, I just... iron factory and (name), I asked them.

They even talked to our Indians. I brought five of my Indians down there and they talked to them just like a father would. He told them, he says, "Qualify yourself," he says, "to a certain job." Boy, I never heard a man talk to our people so good. And that's what we need. And he talk to the high school kids right there. He says, "Don't quit your schooling. Keep on going. Then," he says, "if you have to, we'll take you onto this here place, we'll take you here." Then this here Taco(?) plant, they was good. We got a lot of our boys in there. And they're getting... One of our boys has got one of them... he could get one of them white caps, I think it's \$650... \$6,500 a year. Well, he didn't take that. He can make more, you know... When you take that job you just get that flat rate. The other way you can get your overtime. You see, you can get overtime on that there. I think our Indians are doing good.

And then after I got going the Indian Department jumped in, started pushing along too, you know. But that's the thing we

had to do. We had to get in there and push, you see. I don't get no credit from the Indians, I don't get no credit from anybody -- I don't want it. It's nothing to me because I'm going to be just the same as anybody else. A lot people want to feel big about it, but I don't. As long as I see my Indian

people raised to a certain level, so that they could be accepted by the general public, it's the same as the rest there, and I think I'll be well satisfied. And I know the white people will be the same. They're helping somebody that's behind.

Imbert: What is your father's name?

Joe: Joe Kelly, he was Chief Joe Kelly. See, he was one of the first Indians, I believe, in the Fraser Valley that made a successful farmer, dairyman. He was... Not only the Indians but the white peoples and the farmers all looked towards him because he made it in such a short time. He developed himself so that he gathered that much cows and he made a good income out of it. All the peoples from Mission clean up there to (name) all respected him; they all knew him. And he made a good farmer. I respect him because he was a millwright also. You know, he couldn't read or write. He couldn't read or write. All he could do was sign his name, and he was a successful millwright man. He built mills, he built two mills in Blayne, built one in Cloverdale, and he took care of lots of different mills in Vancouver. He couldn't read. Then he went, he got tired of that and he went farming and twenty years he was, he made a good farmer. And that's where all, I think all the Indians looked towards him, he made it in such a short time.

Imbert: He was drowned, was he, at that time?

Wife: No, he died of old age.

Imbert: Oh, he died of old age.

Wife: He was eighty-nine, I think, when he died.

Joe: Yeah. Yeah he, but... Yeah he made good, made good. I was proud to see that, a man that...

(END OF SIDE A)
(END OF TAPE)

PROPER NAME INDEX

PROPER NAME	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
MATSQUI, B.C.	IH-BC.54	JOE LOUIE #2	176	3,5,8
MISSION, B.C.	IH-BC.54	JOE LOUIE #2	176	6,7

INDEX

INDEX TERM	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
------------	-----------	----------	--------	--------

AGRICULTURE

-farming	IH-BC.54	JOE LOUIE #2	176	5,16
MISSIONARIES				
-attitudes toward	IH-BC.54	JOE LOUIE #2	176	6-9
NON-INDIANS				
-relationships with	IH-BC.54	JOE LOUIE #2	176	13,14
STORIES AND STORYTELLING (GENERAL)				
-landscape features	IH-BC.54	JOE LOUIE #2	176	10,11,12