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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Tells of an encounter between James Douglas and the Indians.
- Discusses various early missionaries who came to her people.
Imbert: You know, going back even further, in a sense.

Lisette: Yes.

Imbert: And there's a more recent story and then any sort of
opinions and feelings, you know, that you have about the
relationship, education and so on. All this is important. So
that we get a wide thing and it doesn't really matter where we
begin, though perhaps it's interesting to begin with something
of a more personal story. I mean, if you could talk about your
dad or about Father Maurice or something like that, the work
that they did and this sort of thing. And what you were saying
about the languages is interesting there.

Lisette: Yes.

Imbert: Well, tell me about your dad and what his name was.

Lisette: Well, my father was, he was the chief until his retirement in the '40s, I think. He retired and they had hereditary chiefs, you know, in the old days and he...

Imbert: Excuse me, can you hear that clock?

(Break in tape)

Imbert: What was your father's name?

Lisette: Louis Billy Prince.

Imbert: And when was he born?

Lisette: He was born in 1864, according to the register. He was baptized when he was four years old by Bishop, who was it, was it Bishop Demers?

Imbert: Demers, though.

Lisette: Yes, Bishop Demers in 1868. He distinctly remembers being baptized. Of course, he was four. And he said he remembers standing in front of the Bishop when he was getting baptized.

Imbert: Any of these little memories are very interesting.

Lisette: Yes.

Imbert: And the more detail you can recall, or recall what other people recall, the better because it brings it alive, you know.

Lisette: Yes.

Imbert: So just tell us a bit more about his life, you know, here. He was born here I suppose, was he?

Lisette: He was born down the river, about eighteen miles down the river, down the Stuart River. On the east side of the river in, oh what did he say, in a shelter. They didn't have any tents you know, but in a shelter that was made of spruce bows; that's where he was born.

Imbert: Was his father a chief?

Lisette: His father was a chief for a while. But the Bishop removed him because when the bishops, when the missionaries first came, everybody, well, most of the men had a couple of wives, you know. And the Bishop said, "Well, I'm going to marry you to the first woman you lived with." They didn't know of course that they were living, you know, there was no Christianity. And so anyway, he had two wives, my grandfather had. The youngest one, the last one that he took was, he took her when she was fourteen years old and she was a halfbreed, a

French halfbreed. So he refused the first one. He said, "No," he said, "I want to keep the youngest one." But of course they said, "No, you can't keep the youngest one. You have to keep the one that you got first." "No," he said, "I refuse," he said, "I want the youngest one." So after all, it was his privilege, I mean, they weren't married, it was his privilege. But of course the Catholic Church said, "No, you can't do that and for that you can't be a chief any longer." So they removed him.

Imbert: This is very interesting because it was very common and natural that they had two wives in those days.

Lisette: Yes.

Imbert: And it often created an awful lot of sorrow, actually, because the two families felt very much one. There was no problem. And I noticed the same thing with a lady in Kootenay, east Kootenay was telling that the same thing had to happen to their grandfather. They had to choose.

Lisette: Yes.

Imbert: And I don't know. It doesn't seem...

Lisette: Well, I don't how the woman felt but she was an older woman and she wasn't pleased. But I guess she had her pride, you know, so she didn't beg him to keep her or anything. As soon as he decided, she started packing up her stuff and when she was going out the door he said to her, "Aren't you going to sleep here one more night?" She turned around and she said, "No, I'm not sleeping here another night. I'm not staying with you any longer. You have made your choice," she said. And she went out and she never looked back. I thought that was very noble or something. (laughs) I don't know how she felt but that's how she...

Imbert: Yes, I think so. You know, I think that they had to face up to...

Lisette: It was kind of hard, I guess, because she had some children. She had two boys. Yeah, two boys and a daughter, I think, by him.

Imbert: Did she take the children with her?

Lisette: Yes, she took the children with her. But of course he looked after them, you know. And...

Imbert: Tell me, how far back then does it go, from there to Chief Quah. That and talking about your father and then this is your grandfather.

Lisette: This is his father. Simeon LePrince the called him. And then there was his father, Simeon's father, Quah. Actually

they called his name Guah. It's not Quah. And then his father, Quah's father, was Naqual. And this fellow lived to a ripe old age, as they say. He was so old that he crawled around when he was, you know, when he was real old. That's Quah's father.

Imbert: Is that, that's not the great, the famous Quah, was his son?

Lisette: Yes, that's his father I'm talking about, you see. Yes, his father, Quah's father.

Imbert: Yes.

Lisette: Yes.

Imbert: But Quah, now how was it that, you know, at that time he was so well known?

Lisette: Well, he was the chief of the tribe. You know, of the clan. And he was what they call a nobleman in the white man's language. He was a (Indian) they called him. He was a nobleman and he had a big trapline and he had the biggest house. Well, in those days it would be a smokehouse, you know. And he was looking, my father told me that he used to look, they used to look after orphans. They had these orphans and he looked after them. He had a big trapline, of course, and he had four wives.

Imbert: And...

Lisette: And he was a great leader, you know.

Imbert: Was he the one that was there when the white man first came?

Lisette: Yes, he was here then. He was the boss then around here when they first came.

Imbert: Are there any memories handed down of the first white man coming and what was the impression of them?

Lisette: Yes. The people were living up here, at Sowchea. They had, there is a reserve still there yet. But that's where they were living in the summertime when they saw these canoes around the point. And they were singing, the canoes were singing. And they saw these canoes and they all went on the shore to see who it was. They were singing in a strange language -- something they hadn't heard before. So they were all there when they landed and they were white men. I guess that would be Simon Fraser when they first came. And they all crowded on the shore to see. They were very curious. Of course they hadn't seen any white men before. And they started, I suppose they talked in sign language. They couldn't understand one another, you know. And they showed them different things that they had, you know, like a knife and soap. They didn't start to eat -- according to all these

stories that you hear that they started to eat the soap. My father said they didn't start to eat the soap. He said he didn't know, they didn't give them any soap in the first place, to begin with. But they showed them a knife and then they showed them the gun and they fired the gun. When they fired the gun, well, they all took for the bush, you know. They got scared. They have never heard anything like it. They did all their hunting by these homemade things like spears and... Well, they did their hunting by spears and snares and traps, these wooden traps.

Imbert: This is always interesting, this sort of first impact in any place that happened at that time.

Lisette: Yes.

Imbert: Anything else that you can say about the white man coming with that?

Lisette: Well, I'll tell you, I should have looked up my notes. I thought of it but I was so busy, you took me on short notice. I forgot. I have your letter but I forgot. I said to Ralph, "Oh, when did he say he was coming?" And I couldn't find your letter. I was going to look up my notes because my... I've put down on paper most of what my dad told me.

Imbert: Well, let's go on from there anyway. Possibly we could add some things later. You know, from your notes.

Lisette: Yes.

Imbert: The... Well then, Simon Fraser came and it was at that time that the fort was established, wasn't it? Didn't he build it?

Lisette: Well...

Imbert: Or was that a little later?

Lisette: I don't know. I should, there must be some connection because he said the first two came from McLeod Lake, right where the Hudson's Bay is and that would be Stewart and... Who was the other one now?

Imbert: I know what you mean.

Lisette: Yes, there were two white men.

Imbert: That's before Simon Fraser came.

Lisette: Yes. Two years before he came. No, the year before he came they arrived where the Hudson's Bay is. Not exactly where the store is -- that's the fourth store of the Hudson's Bay, you know. Anyway, they arrived. It was just overgrown with great big spruce and so they came out there and one of them made a blaze on the tree and said, "This is where the post

will be." And he promised the people that in a year's time they would come back and build a post where they could buy knives and guns, you know, and various things.

Imbert: So the first men didn't come by canoe, they came overland.

Lisette: Oh yes, from McLeod Lake. He came overland. But I don't know where the connection is because, I mean, when they first saw these people, they got scared and... I must have it in my notes.

Imbert: Of course it could be, I mean there was just two men turning up before and maybe there was some Indians with them. I don't know, guiding them.

Lisette: Well, well,...

Imbert: There was a trail, was there?

Lisette: There was a trail from McLeod Lake, yes, ninety miles. Did you say trail?

Imbert: Yes.

Lisette: Yes. Yes, there was a trail from McLeod Lake because there was a post up at McLeod Lake before Fort St. James. They didn't call it Fort St. James in those days, it was called Stuart Lake. Stuart Lake Post.

Imbert: Any incidents from those earlier years when the post was first established?

Lisette: Yeah, well, are we going to talk about the missionaries?

Imbert: Yes, go ahead with that.

Lisette: Yes, well, there was. I guess everybody knows about how James Douglas's life was threatened.

Imbert: That was here, was it?

Lisette: Yes, it was here.

Imbert: What was the story about that?

Lisette: Well, apparently this native gave a beating to some Hudson's Bay servant down in Fort George and according to the story, he killed him and then he sneaked back up here. It was during the summertime, during the salmon season and all the people were camped at the mouth, close to the mouth of the

Stuart River. And this man came up and, of course, he was hiding. And as soon as they heard about it across the lake there, at the post, a couple of the men, the Hudson's Bay men,

came over and started searching for him. He didn't know, they saw them coming, you know, but there was a woman who had a baby and she was in bed. Of course that would be in the smokehouse. And he didn't know where to hide so finally they hid him -- he crawled in with this woman. He didn't know, at the last moment he didn't know where to go, so he just jumped there and, well, these two men they came searching and of course they threw the blankets off this woman like they did in the old days, like the Hudson's Bay used to do, you know. They boss these natives and so they threw the blankets off her and there the poor fellow was crouching. And they got him out and they just tore him, literally tore him to pieces. And killed him. Quah was away then, he was down the river at that time.

Imbert: These are two Hudson's Bay employees?

Lisette: Two Hudson's Bay employees. Yes, they came and they were white men and they tore this poor fellow just to pieces without any fair trial, without even asking any questions. They just yanked him outside the door and they just literally tore him to pieces outside. And when Quah came back he was furious, of course. He was down the river at that time and when he returned and found out what happened... Well he, Quah had a terrible temper and he took his men across. He said, "We will go and avenge this man's death. They had no business to come over when I wasn't here. To do such a thing to one of my people." So he went across with some men. He picked his men and they went across to the fort and they were let in. The fort was inside a barricade, a stockade they call it.

So when they got there, he demanded to see James Douglas -- he was a clerk then. Or was he a clerk? Yeah, anyway, he was there and he, they all got in the fort, right inside the trading post and demanded to see... One of the men had a knife and he went and grabbed James Douglas. Well, James Douglas started to order them out, you know, and no, they weren't going to budge. They said, "We're staying right here. You had no business to come to our camp and do what you did to this fellow." And upsetting the whole village because all the children got scared and the women, they were just, the children were all screaming you know, running around there while they were searching for this man. And well, I guess James Douglas was, he really started to tell them off and one of the fellows grabbed him by the throat and he said -- he held him like that with a knife upraised in his right hand -- and he said to Quah, "Shall I strike?" And Quah didn't say anything so, "No," he said, "don't strike yet," he said. And this fellow at the throat of James Douglas was just, you know, he really wanted to kill him right there. And finally Quah said, "No," he said, "let him go."

So this woman, I guess it would be James Douglas's wife who was upstairs -- she was a halfbreed. And she came down and according to my father she didn't throw anything down. According to the stories is that she threw blankets and clothes down there to passify the men but she didn't. I asked my father, you know -- it was just between my father and I and I

know my dad wouldn't lie to me. I said, "Is it true," I said, "that this woman threw down blankets and dresses and stuff like that to pacify?" He said, "No, she just came down and said, she was crying of course, and she said, 'Please don't kill my husband, please. I'm one of you too and he's my husband and I love him. Please, don't kill him.'" So he said, "Put your knife down," he said to the fellow, "and let him go." So the fellow let him go and didn't kill him.

Imbert: That's very interesting. It's dramatic.

Lisette: Yes. Well, it's true because my father... There's a lot of things that are written that are not true about the native people and their ways, like, they say... Like my tribe, they are the Carrier and they say that they used to carry the bones of their husbands on their backs. According to my father, that isn't true. They didn't carry the bones on their back at all. He said he had never heard of this. I told him that was written and he said, "I never heard of such a thing." He said they used to bury them in the trees, sort of cache them, I guess, and they would bury them later, I guess. After the white man came they showed them how to bury their dead. But the story about James Douglas, well it's been retold so many times and a thing added here and a thing added there. Well, this is the true story of just what did happen.

Imbert: How did they resolve that problem?

Lisette: Well, they talked about it, after he told the fellow to, this man, I forget what his name was. My father told me he was at the throat of James Douglas. Anyway, he let him go. He didn't want to let him go but Quah said to let him go so he had to take his hands off James Douglas. And then they talked about it, you know, and so they left quite peaceably after that.

Imbert: Nothing further.

Lisette: No, no, nothing further came out but I guess they were some, you know, we're not all the same. Of course, there would be some that wanted to go over and stab James Douglas and James Douglas didn't feel safe after that. Anymore than...

Well, remember that there was no law, no policemen or anything and these natives were used to protecting one another and protecting their wives and their families. If they had to, well, they would, there was bloodshed, you know what I mean.

Imbert: Was James Douglas himself responsible for this particular killing? Or was he just happened to be there?

Lisette: Well apparently he must have given the order to do that, because he was the head of the post then. He sent these men over to search for this man that was hiding in there. I think he would have been better off if he was hiding in the bush instead of going in that smokehouse, you know.

Imbert: Could be lost.

Lisette: The poor fellow, yes. I shouldn't say the poor fellow, I guess, but...

Imbert: The original incident is difficult, why he killed that man...

Lisette: Why he killed, yes. But they just wanted to avenge this man in Fort George.

Imbert: Yes, the law was very ruthless in those days.

Lisette: Yes, oh yes, according to my... Yes, well it was their own law. There was no policeman or, you know, nobody to see except the Hudson's Bay, they were the law. And they dealt with the people according to their own, you know, their own personal feelings, I should say.

Unknown: Was it a white man that this fellow killed? It was a white man?

Lisette: It was a white man.

Imbert: At Fort George?

Lisette: Fort George, yes.

Imbert: But then why he killed him might be another thing too. Yes, he might have been doing something which he shouldn't have done and that was the logical thing to do. They often did start that way.

Lisette: Yes, well, I mean, he wouldn't have killed him for nothing. There must have been a reason for this fellow to kill him in the first place.

Imbert: Who was the first priest here?

Lisette: The first priest? Well, the first one who came here was Father Nobilly.

Imbert: Do you remember anything about him coming?

Lisette: No, I don't.

Imbert: I mean not you but...

Lisette: Well, yes, my father knew him, of course. And he came first and he tried to Christianize the people here but they refused because he had some matches with him which they

had never seen before. He had these Chinese matches. Do you remember them?

Imbert: I think probably it mentions that. What happened...?

Lisette: Yes, I remember them. They were little blocks like that, about so long, little thin slivers. He had one of these and they didn't know how to smoke you know. They didn't smoke in those days. And he had this pipe and he filled his pipe and he took out these matches and he lit the matches. Well, they all started to get away from him. They said, "Let's keep away from him, he's a fire man, he's made of fire. Let's not have anything to do with him." So he didn't baptize anybody then and he left.

Imbert: Well, did he come back again or...?

Lisette: He came back again, later. He came back with...

Imbert: Who established the mission itself?

Lisette: The priests, the Oblate...

Imbert: Yes. Would it be Father Maurice?

Lisette: Father Le Jacques -- no, Father Maurice, I knew Father Maurice, it would be Father Le Jacques.

Imbert: Who baptized your father?

Lisette: Bishop Demers.

Imbert: Tell me about Father Maurice. How did he impress you? I suppose you knew him.

Lisette: Yes, I knew him. He left here when I was quite small, I guess, but he came back in 1924. He found quite a difference when he came back. One of the natives had a car, one of those Ford cars you remember, with a cloth top. They met him at the train in Vanderhoof and he was surprised. "Imagine one of you driving one of these things that run by themselves," he said -- in the Carrier language, of course. And he came back here, he stayed for a while and then he left again. Went back to Winnipeg and he came back in 1927 and that's when he stayed three weeks here. That was the last time we saw him.

Imbert: What's the impression of Father Maurice, amongst the people here, as a person?

Lisette: Well he was, according to my father who knew him personally -- he was with him quite a bit -- he had to have everything done for him. He had what you call a houseboy who did all his cooking. He wouldn't do his own cooking. Of course the boy didn't get paid. And he had to have everything done for him. He had to be carried when he was travelling in the wintertime by these, what you call those, carryalls they call them?

Unknown: Carryalls?

Lisette: Yes, carryalls. He used to travel in that, you know, with a dog team. And he had to have everything made of, to cover him. They had these animal skins, bear hides and stuff like that, and they would carry him from his house to this

sleigh. And when they stopped for camp, they would carry him out and put him in the camp.

Imbert: Why?

Lisette: Well, he demanded that. Of course, he had a few run-ins with some of them that refused to do this for him, you know. But the majority of them, well, they just had to do these things for him.

Imbert: He was quite a learned man, wasn't he?

Lisette: Oh, he was very learned. He was a member of the Geographical Society of Canada. He took the soundings on all the lakes, Francois Lake, Babine Lake, Stuart Lake. And he took, he went up in the mountains to, you know, to survey and all that kind of stuff.

Imbert: Was Father Le Jacques like that too? He was an earlier...

Lisette: He was an earlier one but he wasn't like that. He was a very humble man, according to my father. He knew all these priests and their nature, you know. He used to tell what each one used to do. There was a priest named Father Marechal. He used to drum -- that cabin is still over there near the old church where he lived. He used to sit at the door in the evening and he would drum on a dish, you know, on a tin dish. And he used to sing -- he must have been a Frenchman -- he used to sing that song, that French national song, you know. And he would sit in the evening, he would sit at his door and he would drum on this tin dish and sing.

Imbert: The Marseillaise?

Lisette: Marechal is his name, I guess that would be Father Marechal.

Imbert: And he sang the Marseillaise?

Lisette: Yes, yes, that's what he was singing. And then he would drum on this tin dish.

Imbert: What would he sing, could you tell me in your own words? The Marseillaise?

Lisette: I guess that would be it, yes, yeah, the French national anthem, that's what he would sing.

Imbert: Was he after Father Maurice or was he before?

Lisette: He was before. Father Maurice was here quite a while, you know. And the people, despite his ways, you know, they all got attached to him. I remember when, the last time he left, he said mass in the old mission church and he said good-bye to them in church. And he just broke down, right at the altar, when he was saying good-bye to the people.

Imbert: He was quite an old man then?

Lisette: He wasn't too old then, he wasn't too old.

Imbert: He was taken away from, removed, wasn't he?

Lisette: He was removed from here. I don't know why. Of course there is jealousy, you know, in those high places that we don't know about. But apparently some of them were very jealous of him, some of the priests. And the last time he left the people gave him \$140. That was quite a big sum of money in those days. And the priest that came after, the priest that was here then when he came, his name was Father Wolfe. And the Sunday after Father Maurice left, they took up a collection in church and they put in the collection plate two dollars. I remember that so distinctly -- I was just a young girl then. And he turned around and he had this plate in his hand and he said, "Look at what you give me! Two dollars." He said, "And you gave \$140 to that priest who just left." He said, "I don't want this two dollars." And he flung the money out on the church floor. He said, "Here, you keep it," he said, "I don't want this two dollars." It was in silver, you know, mostly in silver. (laughs)

Imbert: They lived in that old log house that's just to the side of the church there, up at the back?

Lisette: Yes, that's the first missionaries' home. There was an older, there was another priest's house there made of logs but...

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Lisette: ...too, but I don't...

Imbert: Okay, then (inaudible).

Lisette: Yes, I...

Imbert: Did you ever hear a story about Father Maurice and the printing press that he had, and the money that was involved in that? Remember that?

Lisette: Yes, he had this, in fact, I saw some of the type that he had. They were made of lead and they were quite heavy. When Father Maurice left he left his machine here, you know,

that he was printing on. And they sent him away and he didn't even have a chance to pack this machine, this printing press. And when he was going, well, apparently they gave him permission to continue his work down in Winnipeg and he sent for his printing press. And whoever was in charge here, the priest who was in charge there, they just took the machine to pieces and they flung them into a box without even packing them properly and damaged some of the types, you know. And of course his feelings were very hurt. He told my father this, he said they just threw everything in a box and they shipped them to him.

Imbert: Obviously some of the others didn't like him then.

Lisette: Yes, no, they didn't like him. I guess there was jealousy among the priests then. Of course they're all humans, you know, but...

Imbert: I had heard some story that he spent a lot of money on this that should not have been spent on it and they were annoyed at this. In fact, I had heard the thing was dumped in the lake because it was occupying too much of his time and all this sort of thing.

Lisette: No, they didn't, I hadn't heard. I do know that they sent him these, they just dumped everything in a box and sent them to him. He said he had quite a time, you know, rearranging this printing press. And of course some of them were damaged beyond repair and he had to have some new stuff put in it.

Imbert: Was Father Cocola(?) here?

Lisette: Yes, he was here too.

Imbert: Do you remember him?

Lisette: Yes, I remember him.

Imbert: How was he and what impression did he make?

Lisette: Well, he used to rule the people with an iron hand.

Imbert: More so than the others?

Lisette: More so than the others, yes. My father told me in the old days when they were building this old church here, they brought this tin. Have you seen the inside of the Catholic church, the old mission? Yes? The building is lined with tin and all these came up by, on the scow from down east, you know, on the river. And he said they didn't know how to go about putting this tin up inside of the church and they told Father Cocola, said, "Maybe we should ask one of the white men to do this for us. We would pay him." And he said, "No," he said, "you're not going to ask a white man. A white man shouldn't work for the Indians," he said.

Imbert: I guess he didn't make a good impression either.

Lisette: No. Well, some of the people who heard him I guess took it for law that they shouldn't, you know. And I think the feeling is still like that to this day among some of the native people; they think that the white man shouldn't do anything for them and they look at the white men as gods.

Imbert: Yeah, that's a bad thing.

Lisette: Yes, it is.

Imbert: They lose confidence in themselves.

Lisette: Well, they were taught right from the early start to have this feeling.

Imbert: How was the relationship with the Hudson's Bay Company and the feeling there? Was it the same thing or was it any different?

Lisette: Well, they used to rule the people. They told them what to do. And of course, the people, the native people didn't have anything to do with the white men before and they weren't used to their ways. Well, they just did as they were told.

Imbert: Was there any further conflict with the...?

Lisette: No, there wasn't but the feeling wasn't very good after that. Of course, some of the natives didn't have any liking for the Hudson's Bay at all, you know, after that. But what else could they do but trade with them because there was no other trading post.

Imbert: Yes, and they, by that time they needed the things that the trading post had.

Lisette: Yes, well certainly. There was...

Imbert: It would be different before they came but...

Lisette: There was no other store then, you know. And when they found they could use these knives, that they were very handy, well, they had to have them.

Imbert: In your youngest days, do you remember the post as it was here?

Child: Hello.

Imbert: Hello.

(Break in tape) (Bell rings)

Unknown: Let's go out and see the man, okay?

Child: Okay.

Lisette: I always keep that bell on. The other one is a year older than she is.

Imbert: There were several other things more that I would like to ask you about. This sort of kind of impression of, you know, these people and the problem, they... And this has really, you felt, retarded the educational, you know, the native education.

Lisette: Yes.

Imbert: Was it Catholic schools from the very early...?

Lisette: Right from the earliest. Well, the Catholic missionaries came. And what they should have done to educate, they should have put up a school right at the beginning, to try to teach them how to read and write but they didn't. I don't know if the views of the Catholic Church are changing but they just thought of the spiritual needs, never mind the bodily needs of the native people. They weren't to be considered. They never even taught them how to wash and sew and things like that, you know. And they didn't advise them. Of course, they were men, these missionaries, you know, the priests. But they didn't teach them how to be clean and all that sort of stuff, you know. It was just the spiritual needs that they were interested in.

Imbert: Well, how did that eventually come? There was a residential school here at one time.

Lisette: There was a residential school, yes. At first there was a public school near the old mission church and they built this of logs. I remember that, I was quite small. And the first pupils entered in 1913. They had a man school teacher.

Imbert: This was not run by the church?

Lisette: No, the priest wasn't there. No, I don't know who ran that. Maybe it was the Indian Department or somebody looking after the natives. Anyway, this... It was a public school and it was run for three years. They used to give them

their lunch at noon, this schoolmaster we called them. And then this fellow went to join the armed forces -- the First World War, you know. And another man came with his wife and he had three daughters. And he took that over after this first fellow went to war. And he taught the native children there. But his wife used to teach the girls -- the big girls, of course -- how to knit and sew.

(Break in tape)

Imbert: So they had a public school and then that stopped

because of the First World War.

Lisette: Yes. Well, the priests brought in some nuns in 1918 -- 1917, I beg your pardon. And the public school stopped and they took in some children. There were three nuns came first and they opened this boarding school. Then after a while two more came and they started to teach the children, you know, like knitting and sewing and reading and writing but mostly to teach them the catechism about the church, you know, church teachings. Then the school was here until 1921 and they built that school at Lajac on Fraser Lake, you know. They moved us over in January. We had to get on the sleighs, you know, team and horses from here to Vanderhoof in thirty below zero weather. Then we stayed at one of the hotels in Vanderhoof and then we got on the train the next day into Lejac. That was the end of the Catholic school in here, in those days. But now they have another school, a big parochial school.

Imbert: Is there no public school here?

Lisette: There is a public school, yes, they have a big public school. In fact, they are adding to it, there are so many children now. They are increasing all the time. You know, people coming in and they are adding to the public school.

Imbert: Do they have a parochial school as well?

Lisette: They have a parochial school, yes.

Imbert: But do most of the children now go to public school?

Lisette: Most of the natives go to the parochial school.

Imbert: Still?

Lisette: Oh yes.

Imbert: It's your own choice?

Lisette: Well some of them, I guess, from their own choice. But a few of them have taken their children to the public school, very few.

Imbert: They can do so if they want to?

Lisette: Oh, they can do so if they want to. But they feel that they should send their children to the Catholic school because they are Catholics, you know. Of course, they're encouraged to do that.

Imbert: You went to this school at Lejac?

Lisette: I went to the school, yes. In those days, we had to go to school and they would give us one grade, it didn't matter whether a child were smart or not. They had to go until they

were eighteen years old and at eighteen they would finish their grade eight. They didn't advance a child whether she was smart or he was smart but they just, from the time, the first year you know, grade one, two, three, four.

Imbert: There was no going on to another higher education?

Lisette: No, there wasn't, so... I went, they taught me how to read and write anyway. And I don't know very much, I guess, but I learned what I know now through reading, you know, good material.

Imbert: Well, did... Many of these boarding schools seemed to be places that children were very unhappy because they were taken away from their home life and everything. Was this true?

Lisette: Yes, yes. I know, I used to feel so lonely for my parents, you know. You had to go. And I know a lot of the children were very lonely.

Imbert: Some of the schools -- I'm thinking of one of the Protestant schools -- there were very severe penalties if they were caught speaking their own language.

Lisette: Yes. We had to do the same too. When they took us to Lejac, well, they said no more, "You don't talk your own language anymore, that's finished. You don't." And if we were caught talking our own language, we would get punished.

Imbert: How would they punish you?

Lisette: Well, they had these straps, these thick straps that the sisters carried under their aprons, you know.

Imbert: And that's what you got if you...?

Lisette: Yeah, that's what we got.

Imbert: If you talked your own language.

Lisette: If you talked your own, yes, we were told. I think it's different now, everything is different, of course. The native people they know, most of them know what's what now, and every once in a while they go to Lejac and check up on their children, you know. About what they eat and what they wear and everything. In those days when I was going to school, well, what they fed us wasn't fit to give to dogs. They would mix up the tea and coffee and the cocoa together, like what was left over from the day before, and that's what we drank. And sometimes we had sour milk on our porridge and then they would mix beans and meat, like the leftovers. You could see the fishbones sticking out from the beans that they used to feed us sometimes. Of course, we weren't to complain. I remember one of the children got a licking. She was a big girl too. She got a licking for saying she didn't like this cheese. We weren't, I guess she wasn't used to that kind of cheese, you

know, it was kind of blue. It wasn't blue but it was all mouldy according to her. She wouldn't eat it. She said, she took it to the sister and said, "I don't want to eat this cheese," she said, "it's mouldy." So the sister got out her strap and she punished her right there. "You eat that," she forced her to eat it too.

Imbert: This has changed now, of course, because the whole atmosphere has changed, but I know this seemed to be so. And they thought they must eradicate everything of the background, the cultural, language background, everything of your background.

Lisette: Everything, yes.

Imbert: This was what, and the songs, dances, all these things were forbidden. Was that so?

Lisette: Yes, they were forbidden. The missionaries, their potlatches were forbidden. They said that it was a sin. The missionaries, well, but the people now have taken it all out again, you know. Like, of course, it was carried on in secret. They didn't want to get caught but now they have these sort of community funerals, like, you know. Like the people, one clan will bury their own dead. And they help each other that way by burying their own dead, you know. They are all buried like that, except a few. I guess my father didn't have a clan funeral because he didn't want a clan funeral. And so we buried him, the funeral director from Prince George came and buried him because he didn't want a clan funeral.

Imbert: Did he have a Catholic funeral?

Lisette: Oh yes, he had a Catholic funeral, yes.

Imbert: Tell me, to go back now to the early days and the relations with the Carriers and Babines and so on. Did they all regard them, they were really very distinct, weren't they, the Babine and the -- well, they're all Carriers, isn't that right?

Lisette: No, Babines... My father was surprised when I told him Father Maurice classed the Babines as Carriers. They're not Carriers, they're different.

Imbert: (Inaudible)

Lisette: Yeah.

(Break in tape)

Imbert: Yes. The... Tell me about... Is there any history going way, way back, legend possibly, of the origin of the Carrier tribe? How in legend was the first man created or what were something, you know, way, way back there, in myth and so on. Is there any that you remember about that?

Lisette: No. I know they said that there was a big fire. They talk about there was big fire on this world. Of course they didn't know how big the world was but they said that on this earth there was a big fire and after the fire came the first men.

Imbert: Did you hear any of the story of Astace?

Lisette: Astace, oh yes. Yes, I think that was told by the missionaries. That story was told by the missionaries, Astace.

Imbert: How could it be and what in that way?

Lisette: I don't know. He did... I don't think it was told by the missionaries. I know part of it. I've forgotten, the wonderful things that he did.

Imbert: He's called Astace?

Lisette: Astace, yes. He's called Astace.

Imbert: He's called Astace by the Babine?

Lisette: Well, I guess so, yes, Astace, yeah. They have a different...

Imbert: He seems to have a common, but Father Maurice just mentioned him once in his book on the native people. But he, there are legends about him and... Do you know any at all, just even vaguely, any sort of legend about, as you've heard, what this man did and where he came from and so on?

Lisette: Yes, he was a very clever man. And he, I know one story about him where he was -- not attacked -- he was picked up by a bunch of swans. He set some snares for swans and these birds were so big that they picked him up bodily. And he couldn't let go, you know, so they flew away with him and finally he landed, he landed by the Stuart River, the Nechako. And according to the legends, to this day there is the imprint of his body where he fell on some rocks. I guess it would be clay in those days. And they say that's the imprint of Astace falling from the sky after he got carried away by these swans.

(Break in tape)

Imbert: Do you know where it was that he's supposed to have fallen? Where the landmark is that...?

Lisette: Well, according to the Carriers, it's by the river down, the Stuart River, or is it the Netchako? That's where he's supposed to have fallen.

Imbert: He was considered a big giant of a man, I suppose.

Lisette: Well, he wasn't a giant only. He was a very clever

man. The things that he did, you know. I'll tell you another story about him -- I think that's awfully cute. He was in a smokehouse down the river, down the Stuart River. He had a big smokehouse and he invited, there was smoked salmon drying in the smokehouse on racks and he invited all the birds, the ducks, all kinds of ducks and geese. In those days, according to the Carrier legend, they all talked like we did and so he invited them all to a dance in this smokehouse. So they all came and he started to sing and they were all dancing -- the geese and the swans and the ducks, the mallards -- and they were all dancing, this smokehouse. And of course Astace was singing for them and they were dancing to the tune of his singing. So after a while he said, "You all close your eyes," he said, "I sing much better when everyone close their eyes, I sing much better." So they all closed their eyes and he was singing and all you could hear was Astace singing and they all had their eyes closed. And he said, so they were all going out the door and what he was doing was, each one, he was standing at the door and he was wringing the necks of each bird as they went out and killing them, you know. I think that was awfully cute. (laughs)

Imbert: Was he in any way considered, as well as a clever man, somewhat of a mean man?

Lisette: No, he wasn't, no, he wasn't a mean man. He was, and he had a sense of humor too. And to this day they call, like if a native is slick, you know, like to taking things that they're not supposed to and maneuvering, you know, and conniving, well they call them Astace.

Imbert: He was a sly man.

Lisette: Yes. Well, he was...

Imbert: Not exactly noble, or was he noble in a sense?

Lisette: Well, I guess he was noble, but he was a sly man. But I mean he didn't do that to his fellow human beings. But that's what they say that he did to these birds, you know, like the geese and... Yes, he was wringing the necks of the... And of course one of them opened his eyes and saw what he was doing so he give the alarm and said, "Oh, Astace is wringing the necks of us, let's escape." And they all run out the door.

Imbert: That's quite an interesting story. Any more that you remember of him?

Lisette: Well, I don't remember them all but there is quite a few stories about him.

Imbert: You don't remember anything about him creating the rivers and things with drops of water?

Lisette: No, according to the Carrier it was a man who created, a little boy who created the drops, like, with a

bucket you know, like the drops. He made them into a lake, into lakes.

Imbert: Who was he?

Lisette: And rivers. They say it was just a little boy who came and made the lakes. He, they were drops out of his bucket.

Imbert: What is the meaning of Netchako?

Lisette: Well, actually... Like all these names, the white people can't pronounce the native names, you know. The name is Ninchako, not Netchako. The true name in the Indian language is Ninchako.

Imbert: What does that mean?

Lisette: Ninchako, it means a big, big river. 'Ko' is river in the Carrier language.

Imbert: I see, that's interesting.

Lisette: Yes, yes, all 'Ko' is river in the Carrier language.

Imbert: What was the name of the village that was here, the native village, before the Fort St. James was started? That was this name here, was it?

Lisette: Yes.

Imbert: How do you pronounce it? Could you tell us about that name, what the name was and what it means?

Lisette: Well, the whole lake was called Nagasli and the people from Fort St. James, they were called Nagasliden.

Imbert: Does that have any meaning, Nagasli?

Lisette: Yes, Nagasli is named Mount Pope, they call it Nagal. That's the Indian name for Mount Pope. And they call the lake by Nagasli, 'sli' means the river.

Imbert: Those were the people who lived by the lake, they were called Nagasli.

Lisette: Nagasliden, yes. There are other villages up the lake. The ones from Pinchie, they are called Pinchiden and there's another village about twenty-six miles from Fort St. James and it's Tachie, Tachie they call it in the Indian language, Tachieoden. And there is another village up further, close to the north arm there, Portage, it's Yacouchee(?).

Imbert: Do these, does Tachie and Pinchie, do these have any special kind of meaning?

Lisette: Well, Pinchie, it means lake and 'chie' means a creek. That's what it means.

Imbert: It's a creek that goes into the lake.

Lisette: Yes, yeah. They all speak the same language but there is a slight difference. This Fort St. James language is the basic Carrier language and there is a few words that they pronounce differently but it's all the same.

Imbert: Was Fort St. James around here the place where the biggest chiefs lived and (inaudible)?

Lisette: Yes. Of course, they had their noblemen, like the people from up the lake too, you know. But they had, like Quah, he was the most outstanding one of them.

Imbert: These chiefs here did not have anything to do with the Babines, I suppose. Did they have any power or authority over the Babines?

Lisette: No, they didn't, but they were well-known, you know, and they were respected.

Imbert: Right. But they were separately organized.

Lisette: Yes, they were separately organized, yes. Like each village had their own chief and a head man.

Imbert: Anything that you feel about the native people in the oldest days, the life that they lived... Were they happy in the olden days?

Lisette: Yes, they were very happy. They would do all their work in the summertime, like prepare for the winter. And in the winter they would find these places where they set up camp, sheltered from the north wind and that's where they would spend the winter. In the evenings, the men would tell stories around the campfire and if the food got short, the men would go out and go hunting for food. That's how they spent the winters.

Imbert: The winters were mostly at home around then.

Lisette: Yes.

Imbert: So in summers they were roaming a lot.

Lisette: Yes. Well, they weren't exactly roaming, they all kept together, you know, for safety. Like they were always raided from the other villages.

Imbert: Did the Babines have any fights with them? Were they considered as people to be watched, so to speak?

Lisette: No, they never had any fights with the Babines. It was mostly from the Chilcotins and the Beaver Indians from the

north who raided the village. Some of our language is spoken down in the Quesnel area. They took women and children captives and they brought them down. That's how some of our language is spoken -- not by the Chilcotins -- around Quesnel.

Imbert: The Chilcotins were regarded as, by all the other tribes, as rather objectionable.

Lisette: Yes, they were very warlike.

Imbert: Just hold it for a second, see if...

(Break in tape)

Lisette: ...should be, you know, the education of the native people should be under the government.

Imbert: Tell me, how was the, before the white man came, how were people educated? How did they grow up into the... to know the things in the various villages and so on, tribes?

Lisette: Well, each family brought up their own family and taught them to do the right things. They were told, the head men of course, advised the people on how to behave and if they didn't do things right, thought was wrong, they would tell them that, "You shouldn't do this, it isn't right, and you shouldn't say that." Some people talk foolish, you know, and they said, "You shouldn't talk foolish like that or do this. It isn't right. The one on high is listening to you and watching you." They knew that there was a Supreme Being in the old days even though they were not Christians, you know.

Imbert: The one sort of Creator, was He the person that was supposed to have created the world or...?

Lisette: Well, they didn't say He was the Creator. There was a Being that they knew and they said this one is watching you and listening to you. If you don't talk right and don't do things right, this Being is watching you.

Imbert: Was this Being sort of all powerful?

Lisette: Yes. Yes, this Being was supposed to be all powerful. And they brought their children up, you know, to do everything. Of course, they showed them how to hunt and fish and get along in those days. They had to get along on their own, they had no stores and no help. They had to depend and rely on themselves for survival and...

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