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Joe: Today I am speaking with Eleanor Pelletier. Could  
you tell me a little about your grandparents?

Eleanor: My grandparents, when I was small, they died.

Joe: Oh, I see. How large was your family?

Eleanor: My own?

Joe: Yeah.

Eleanor: (Inaudible) five living.

Joe: Five living. Did they have their own home?

Eleanor: Yeah, they had a home.

Joe: Whereabouts was it?

Eleanor: Well, there is two living at Indian Head(?), one in Alberta and one in Regina.

Joe: But when you were growing up, when you were growing up...?

Eleanor: In the beginning?

Joe: Yeah.

Eleanor: Lestock, that's where I lived.

Joe: Lestock, yeah. What was your house made of?

Eleanor: Mud.

Joe: Mud.

Eleanor: Mud walls, mud floor, that's what I had in my house.

Joe: Yeah.

Eleanor: When I scrub, I used mud water. Used to be nice and shiny.

Joe: The floor?

Eleanor: Yeah.

Joe: Oh.

Eleanor: And the walls, too. So when it rained, you would get mud (inaudible). I had a mud roof too.

Joe: Did you have your own land which your house was on?

Eleanor: No, we lived on a road allowance.

Joe: Oh, a road allowance, eh.

Eleanor: Yeah.

Joe: Was it in town or was it on the edge of town?

Eleanor: No, it was about five miles out of town.

Joe: Five miles out of town.

Eleanor: Yeah.

Joe: There was no heat or running water or electricity?

Eleanor: Oh no, no. (Inaudible) just a row of houses where I lived. (Inaudible).

Joe: What kind of furniture did you have?

Eleanor: Well, I had homemade furniture, table and benches for chairs and I had apple boxes for cupboards, that's what I had. And we had wooden beds, they were homemade ones, not bought ones. Even the mattress we had to make out of hay. Couldn't afford to buy them.

Joe: What did you use for blankets and that?

Eleanor: Well you got old clothes and sew them together and make blankets.

Joe: Oh. How did your family make their living?

Eleanor: Now?

Joe: No, while they were growing up.

Eleanor: Well, you worked most of the time. You worked for the farmers and then when there was no work, you go dig seneca roots and go and pile brush for farmers and make fences.

Joe: Whereabouts did you dig all these seneca roots?

Eleanor: North of Lestock.

Joe: North of Lestock. What were they used for?

Eleanor: Sell them.

Joe: Sell them.

Eleanor: Sell them.

Joe: Well, what did you use those seneca roots for, like, what did they use them for?

Eleanor: They sell them, they buy them and they use that for medicine.

Joe: Oh, I see. Did you do lots of hunting, trapping, cutting fire wood?

Eleanor: Yeah, my husband did. He did lots of hunting.

Joe: Did you have a garden?

Eleanor: Yes.

Joe: You didn't have no farm animals or nothing?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: Did you do any kind of agriculture?

Eleanor: No, no.

Joe: No.

Eleanor: Not in those days.

Joe: Did you consider yourself poor compared to others, the way they lived?

Eleanor: Yes, lots of times, sure.

Joe: Yeah. Did you go to school?

Eleanor: Yes.

Joe: Whereabouts did you go to school?

Eleanor: Before I got married, I went to school at St. Josephs, about ten miles southwest of Ituna. I got grade two, that's all.

Joe: Was your family always conscious of, they were being Metis?

Eleanor: Yes.

Joe: What were dances or social events like?

Eleanor: They weren't too bad. Some, they gather enough people around, that's where they used to make dances.

Joe: Can you tell me something about some of these dances?

Eleanor: They had square dances, waltzes and two-step, and those, like. That was called, they used to have them, a jig. That used to be the best one.

Joe: Did you, where did you hold these dances?

Eleanor: Right in that Chicago Line where all the people are. There was a lot of families there.

Joe: Do you know of any Metis dances or weddings or songs?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: Any folklore?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: Don't know any stories of past Metis hunts or other happenings? Do you know any of them?

Eleanor: I don't know stories.

Joe: You don't know any past happenings that maybe your grandfather done or your father?

Eleanor: I didn't know my grandfather, I don't remember him. My father was a hunter, you know. (Inaudible).

Joe: Did he ever tell you any stories?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: No.

Eleanor: (Inaudible) to talk.

Joe: Oh, I see. Did you dress in any special way?

Eleanor: No. Just in (inaudible). Poor fashions, I still dress that. I don't change my dress.

Joe: How much do you know about the Chicago Line, like when they moved up to Green Lake?

Eleanor: That's where we lived, the Chicago Line.

Joe: Do you know anything about when they were forced out of their homes?

Eleanor: They were forced everybody out of their homes but we didn't go. You find a place to work and you moved that way because they were bulldozing all the houses down, those people left.

Joe: Do you know who started this?

Eleanor: I don't know who started this. The time they bulldozed that Chicago Line before when we lived there.

Unknown: When they left?

Eleanor: Who started?

Unknown: I don't know that.

Eleanor: You don't remember?

Unknown: I remember when they fired but who did it who knows.

Eleanor: I don't know either.

Joe: What language did you speak when you were at home?

Eleanor: Cree and English for the kids so you can understand both ways.

Joe: When you were outside of your home, you speak Cree and English?

Eleanor: Yeah. What they spoke to me in, I answered in the same language they do.

Joe: When you were in school, did you speak it or...?

Eleanor: No, just English.

Joe: Just English. What if you were speaking Cree in school?

Eleanor: No, they don't speak it. Speak English, didn't allow anybody to speak different language.

Joe: Well, what if you did?

Eleanor: You get punishment for that.

Joe: Yeah. Were the punishments bad?

Eleanor: On the hand, the strap, sure.

Joe: What role did religion play in your life? Were you very religious?

Eleanor: Catholic.

Joe: Catholic. Did you attend church?

Eleanor: Oh yes.

Joe: Did you have to go far to attend church?

Eleanor: Five miles.

Joe: Five miles.

Eleanor: Do you know whether your parents went to church?

Joe: Yeah, they went to church.

Eleanor: All of us went to church, it was different then. That's where (inaudible).

Joe: Do you know what the name of that church was?

Eleanor: St. Dolphin.

Joe: St. Dolphin. Did all the Metis people on the Chicago Line all go down there?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: No, not all of them, eh?

Eleanor: No. That's where I was born and raised, in that church (inaudible) Chicago Line, the Lestock Church. That's where it used to be.

Joe: Did Metis people find it was necessary to hide their Indian ancestry?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: No, they didn't hide it?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: Were close ties kept with Metis relatives?

Eleanor: Yes.

Joe: You guys went to visit each other all the time?

Eleanor: Yes, lots.

Joe: Were there any ties or relations with, and feelings for Indians on nearby reserves? Did you go visit friends on nearby reserves?

Eleanor: Yeah, sure.

Joe: Which ones did you used to go out and visit at?

Eleanor: We used to, we worked for people in the reserve, cutting green wood for them in winter, you know, to sell to farmers. We lived there for one winter with them.

Joe: What did you sell?

Eleanor: Green wood. Green wood, green trees you know, you just cut that in the winter. That what they used to sell and that's where you help all winter.

Joe: Did they pay very much?

Eleanor: Oh, used to get (inaudible).

Unknown: There was no money them days.

Eleanor: No, there was no money in them days. It was hard. You worked out.

Joe: Were there some Metis who refused to admit they were Metis?

Eleanor: Yeah, lots of them.

Joe: Lots?

Eleanor: Yeah.

Joe: Why was this?

Eleanor: Because they were ashamed to talk to their own relations.

Joe: Well, who wouldn't associate with other Metis?

Eleanor: Eh?

Joe: Who wouldn't associate with the other Metis, the white people?

Eleanor: The white people, yeah.

Joe: Was there other Metis that wouldn't associate with other Metis?

Eleanor: No. The Metis would associate together you know.

Joe: Yeah.

Eleanor: But the white people, they wouldn't.

Joe: The ones that didn't associate with the Metis, that didn't want to, like, admit they were Metis, right, did they think they were better off than the Metis?

Eleanor: No, they weren't better off.

Joe: They weren't, eh?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: Did they act like or did they suck up to the whites to get more status?

Eleanor: Yes. They used to.

Joe: Yeah. Did the Metis people always keep to themselves?

Eleanor: Most of them.

Joe: Was there lots of discrimination or hostility towards the Metis people?

Eleanor: Not while we were around there.

Joe: No.

Eleanor: There was a few odd ones like, but not while we were there.

Joe: Did any, like, when you went to the store or something, did they refuse to serve you because you were Metis?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: They'd serve you, eh?

Eleanor: They served you.

Joe: Were any Metis refused relief when whites in the same situation received it? Some were turned back, eh?

Eleanor: Yes, yeah.

Joe: Why was this?

Eleanor: They didn't really like our ways.

Joe: Didn't like them.

Eleanor: Yeah, didn't like our ways.

Joe: Didn't like the ways. Did town officials ever try to get you to move or try to force you off the land you were on?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: They never tried?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: Do you think that the Metis that had lighter skin, did you consider them they were luckier than the ones with darker skin?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: No?

Eleanor: No, didn't bother me.

Joe: Do you think they were, like, was there any feeling that a Metis should marry a Metis?

Eleanor: You should marry your own kind, sure.

Joe: They should, eh?

Eleanor: Yeah. There is a lot of them don't agree and they marry different people now, different color, like, you know.

Joe: So did they always though?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: They didn't eh?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: Were Metis women encouraged to marry the white man?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: No. Did Metis men marry only Metis women?

Eleanor: No, there was, not most of them. But if you were married differently, then.

Joe: Okay, we'll get into, do you know anything about World War I? How old were you when World War I started?

Eleanor: I know I was born right about (inaudible). I would be about only two years old, something like that. My brother was born in World War I.

Joe: What did your family live on while the War was on, just trapping and hunting, eh?

Eleanor: Yeah. We had relief that time.

Joe: Relief. You didn't participate in it, did you?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: Did you? (To unknown man in room)

Unknown: What?

Joe: Did you participate in World War I?

Eleanor: (Inaudible).

Unknown: No, I don't think so. No, I don't remember anyway.

Joe: Did any members of your family ever participate in this War?

Eleanor: What's that word?

Joe: Participate?

Eleanor: Yes.

Joe: Did they go into the War?

Eleanor: Just my brothers.

Joe: Did they?

Eleanor: Yes.

Joe: World War I?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: World War II?

Eleanor: The last one they had.

Joe: Oh, World War II. How old were you during the Depression? The Depression was from 1932 to 1939.

Eleanor: How old, I was, I don't, I remember 1930s (inaudible) everybody snowbound in that winter. I was about eight years old. Because you couldn't go down to the barn, the snow was too deep. That's the '30s though.

Joe: Yeah, that's right. Did you have to work to help your family during the Depression?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: You didn't have to work for your family?

Eleanor: Too young.

Joe: Did your family every have to move during the Depression? Quite a bit?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: You stayed in the same place, eh? Yeah. Did your family ever have to move, like, to go make a living or to farm or...?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: Find jobs?

Eleanor: No, just where we used to live (inaudible) when he'd come pick him up, I'd go to work and bring him back.

Joe: How'd your family get their goods? Through trading and buying?

Eleanor: Just buying, that's all.

Joe: Didn't do much trading, eh?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: No. Did you have a garden or crop to help you get by during the Depression?

Eleanor: Just a garden.

Joe: Was a lawn hard to keep up with during the Depression?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: No? What did you use for transportation?

Eleanor: Horses.

Joe: Horses. What did you do for entertainment during the Depression?

Eleanor: Nothing.

Joe: Nothing, nothing. Did you receive relief during the Depression?

Eleanor: Yes.

Joe: You did. Was it adequate? Was it enough?

Eleanor: Yes, it was enough. We were sick that time, we had all smallpox. That wasn't a big help.

Joe: Was a doctor ever nearby right near your house?

Eleanor: Yeah, he used to come. He'd come (inaudible).

Joe: How far away was the doctor?

Eleanor: Eight miles. Eight miles from town.

Joe: Did you have to pay for when they came to see you?

Eleanor: No. (Inaudible) We were on relief you know.

Joe: Do you know anything about the Saskatchewan Metis Society?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: 1933. How old were you when World War II started?

Eleanor: I told you when my brother went how old I was. My son is forty and he was a baby that time, when the War started.

Joe: Did your family still make their living the same way?

Eleanor: My family, my own like?

Joe: Yeah.

Eleanor: Yes, they were.

Joe: Were you or any of your family members directly involved in the Second World War? You were saying your brother was, eh?

Eleanor: Yeah, my brother.

Joe: Was there change in your lifestyle after your brothers went to War?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: Did you ever worry about them?

Eleanor: Oh yes.

Joe: Was there a lot of jobs during the War?

Eleanor: Not very many.

Joe: What did you do during your free time?

Eleanor: At home, like?

Joe: Yeah.

Eleanor: Do housework, sew mostly for people. See, that's how I used to help out for groceries.

Joe: Can you tell me, like, some when you were growing up, some of the things you done? You know?

Eleanor: Some of the things I done when I was in school, I used to fight with whites. I used to fight lots. Well, they called me names because I was a halfbreed, see. I had white too, leave me alone then.

Joe: When they were at school or did they, was there lots of fights?

Eleanor: No.

Joe: There wasn't?

Eleanor: No, there was only two halfbreeds in the school, me and my sister.

Joe: Oh.

Eleanor: Some of the halfbreeds were in that school, the country school.

Joe: that was at Lestock there, eh?

Eleanor: No, no, not in Lestock. South of Ituna.

Joe: South of Ituna, oh. Around Peeksees Reserve there, eh?

Eleanor: No. In that country school there. An old school.

Joe: What was that school made of?

Eleanor: Stone.

Joe: Just a one-room school, eh?

Eleanor: Yeah. It's still up, I went through there this summer, going to visit in Ituna.

Joe: What other exciting things did you do in your life?

Eleanor: Used to go to picnics. Used to have lots of fun picking berries.

Joe: Berries?

Eleanor: Yeah, berries.

Joe: You would go down the valley, eh?

Eleanor: No, they didn't come that far. (Inaudible) Pick berries, raspberries, saskatoons, all those. Used to do lots of canning. And we used to go to ball games, you know, for entertainment. Play ball and have a picnic lunch. We had lots of fun when we were younger but not now.

Joe: Do you know any old stories or anything?

Eleanor: No, I don't know stories.

Joe: You don't know any stories?

Eleanor: No. After we fighting, well I live here and there. (Inaudible)

Joe: What's this?

Eleanor: (Inaudible)? That's where I lived in that shack there. You get five, six, sixty dollars a month, and that shack. (Inaudible) come here. (Inaudible) in a house. (Inaudible) old age home place. (Inaudible).

Joe: What were the winters like when you were growing up, when you were small?

Eleanor: Winters used to be bad when there was a lot of snow. It used to be nice though, but cold. Used to go to town, you used to drive a horse, a cutter and you used to have logs (inaudible).

Joe: Cutter?

Eleanor: Yeah, cutter.

Joe: Oh, that's a sleigh isn't it?

Eleanor: No. It looks like half a sleigh, you know, with a box on and one horse. That's a cutter. And haul wood in that too, with one horse. I used to help my dad hauling. He used to cut cord wood, you know. We used to call that cord wood and half a sleigh, one horse. One time he got stuck in a snowbank and (inaudible) they couldn't get out of there, couldn't jump out. Had to go and call my dad to come and dig him out. Dig out a path like, so the horse would go. We made it. That winter was bad.

Joe: Was there any times when the food was scarce?

Eleanor: Yes, there was lots of times.

Joe: When you had to go hunting, did you have to go far sometimes?

Eleanor: Oh sometimes quite a ways. But in days, boy, when it starts snowing, fourteen days can't do nothing. You got to sit and wait until the day comes clear and you go out again. Used to haul wood from the bush and that's before we had horses. My dad used to make those sleighs, take those sleighs and put wood in and I would go there and load our sleighs and drive home. (Inaudible) That's how we haul our wood before. We made it. I wish we could today again.

Joe: Do you think you could tell me something about the, like the Chicago Line you know, how they moved them all up north? Can you give me a little story about that.

Eleanor: Gee, I don't know about that. We weren't living there.

Joe: You weren't living there then.

Eleanor: We moved out of there before they done that. We lived north of Lestock then. We was working for a farmer. I don't know what happened there when they all did that but they said that -- (inaudible). That's why they left so we (inaudible). That's where we were living after that. I lived there about fifteen years ago, I moved from Meadow Lake to there. And I had all those foster kids, (inaudible). Had six of them I had to look after and I had two myself. (Inaudible) to look after (inaudible).

Joe: Any more you can tell me?

Eleanor: I don't know no more. (Inaudible) For two years, now my eyes are no good. Can't see nothing, you know, nobody. so I listen to the radio, I don't got TV. We don't sit and watch TV, maybe once a week, that's all. I don't bother. (Inaudible).

(END OF SIDE A)

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