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Connie: Where did you attend school?

Martin: St. Laurent:

Connie: (inaudible). Did your parents attend school at St.  
Laurent?

Martin: Yeah my dad.

Connie: Do you know where your mom attended school?

Martin: (inaudible).

Connie: Did you enjoy school?

Martin: (inaudible) finished grade eight.

Connie: Do you speak any other languages?

Martin: English, Cree and French.

Connie: With English?

Martin: (inaudible).

Connie: French?

Martin: Mostly French (inaudible).

Connie: What did you or your parents do for a living?

Martin: (inaudible) mostly farming. (inaudible).

Connie: What did you do for a living?

Martin: I worked for farmers (inaudible).

Connie: So most of the work that was involved was farm work and stuff, mostly farm work. Do you know what kind of wages they received?

Martin: I heard it was seventy-five cents a day working. (inaudible) fifty cents a day.

Connie: Was that average pay?

Martin: Average pay when you could it, sometimes you couldn't get a job (inaudible). Sometimes the farmers (inaudible) bush or something they want it out (inaudible) they pay only (inaudible). Everything was done (inaudible) even the Metis people the only time they (inaudible) thrashing that kind of (inaudible). Oh after thrashing time (inaudible).

Connie: When you worked out like that did you live close to farmers or did you travel in?

Martin: Yeah. Some place, some farmers would let us sleep in the house (inaudible) hayloft. (inaudible) no place to wash and... Could wash up to your elbows, your face (inaudible).

Connie: Where did your parents meet?

Martin: In St. Laurent.

Connie: Was it at a social function, or just...

Martin: Most likely house dance or something.

Connie: How large is the family?

Martin: They had ten children.

Connie: That was an average size family then eh?

Martin: Average is usually twelve to sixteen children.

Connie: Yeah. Then more than ten usually?

Martin: Yes. If you went to church on Sundays the priest preached strongly to have kids. The more kids you have the more chance you have to go to heaven, so you believe that. (inaudible). And the women got married very young too at that time. (inaudible) she had her baby at (inaudible). And the men were quite older too eh (inaudible). But it was more or less the girl would sometimes (inaudible). She didn't have too much to say, if the boyfriend weren't there, well the old (inaudible). Something like that (?) of the cross (inaudible).

Connie: What's that mean?

Martin: (inaudible) they will bring back this girl to Winnipeg (inaudible) she didn't like it so much that she reported herself at work (inaudible). And there was a priest along that time, well of course naturally you (inaudible) suicide they was not be buried. So they buried her on top of a hill there (inaudible). I was told about that a long time ago, but then after I didn't know anything about that fairy tale or (inaudible). (inaudible) they could have done something about it, but that wouldn't have been enough because she committed suicide because she wouldn't marry him.

Connie: Do you remember the kind of dances?

Martin: Oh yes, lots of them. Especially around New Years there's a dance every night sometimes six days (inaudible).

Connie: WHat kind of dancing did they do?

Martin: Two step, one steps, waltzes, lots of old timers. Square dance oh that (inaudible). Dance for about seven or eight squares at once that's the waltzes. But the squares at my time that was for old people, older people (inaudible) waltz and the fox trots (inaudible).

Connie: How about some of the songs?

Martin: Oh the old people after they had their lots of times they had the stairs, they go upstairs have (inaudible) sing the old songs. (inaudible) cowboy, the cowboys (inaudible).

Connie: Did you guys play many games?

Martin: Well mostly softball.

Connie: Softball.

Martin: But for our own entertainment that I never see it again now with a top made of birch and we used a whip to turn that, it used to go a mile (inaudible). THE last time I seen a top was at the St. Micheal's there at Duck Lake. That priest used to have a (inaudible) to whip that top. (inaudible) but I never se a top, I got one over there made of birch. But in

orderto be the tops to be solid had to be dried birch, because they won't go first when you turn them because they crack. Even a birch one I'm sure (inaudible). We happened to come across that because there was an old man here he started making them and he showed us how to make them. We went to school with his (inaudible) it was good exercise. (inaudible) good on the whip. But I never see one (inaudible).

Connie: Who supplied the entertainment as far as instruments?

Martin: Entertainment well, guitars were too expensive nobody played guitars; so it was mostly one fiddle in the corner. And there was always about seven or eight that would try to (inaudible).

Connie: That was just people (inaudible)?

Martin: Yeah. We always had plenty of fiddles. (inaudible) they sounded like (inaudible).

Connie: Were you or your parents ever affected by prejudism?

Martin: Well, we had one Ukranian family, quite a few French families that come to our (inaudible). And there was not too many (inaudible) then it was no longer you damn half breed or you damn Metis, it was you damn Indian. Well, I don't know we don't see too many Indians at that time, because since 1836 around in the Cree and Metis people had separated so by that time we didn't see Indians until pilgrimage time, they passed (inaudible) and we didn't want to be Indian. But of course (inaudible). Because we were, my time before that they Cree and the Metis people were very close at that time, because they had to help the (inaudible).

Connie: How much influence did the church have on you or your family?

Martin: Oh my parents were they were, especially my mother. And I myself was quite religious, I don't go to church every Sunday. I cannot remember (inaudible). I'm telling you this because maybe it sounds funny to you, but and I don't tell it to anybody now because they'd probably laugh at me. Sometimes if I can't sleep I pray myself to sleep, which (inaudible). I think I'm maybe I stayed old fashioned, but I do believe, I have my believe and let the other guy or the other person believe what he wants. So I guess I can't get away with that. You get very sick or something we pray don't worry, when you can't sleep at night well I pray to go to sleep.

Connie: How did the church laws back then compare to those of today? Have they changed quite a bit?

Martin: Yeah.

Connie: In what way?

Martin: In all kinds of ways. The saints are not all there.

Now the Pope just, you know, lead the Anglican, Catholic... At one time Catholic if it was not a religion especially the Protestant it seemed like to the Catholic the Protestants they didn't (inaudible). They were headed for help (inaudible). (inaudible) their descendants of (inaudible). And then after that well, when they start come down here (inaudible). Then some of them going to have turned Catholic (inaudible), because it was always hardly (inaudible) but they would (inaudible). The few were Catholic but (inaudible) Protestant there would be (?). The Protestant had to turn Catholic then the priests took (inaudible) catechism and everything turned Catholic, so that's why (inaudible).

Connie: Did you or your parents attend shrines of the church?

Martin: Oh yes. (inaudible).

Connie: Where were these, where were the shrines?

Martin: In St. Laurent.

Connie: St. Laurent.

Martin: Well after (?) I don't know it is now they used to have two, they used to call it (inaudible) or something.

Connie: Did you or your parents celebrate weddings?

Martin: Oh yes. (inaudible). ...horses decorated with red and white ribbons, those were the buggy days. (inaudible).

Connie: How about Christmas?

Martin: Christmas was not celebrated too much, except a big dinner them days. (inaudible). But New Years oh they made preparations a month before New Years. They'd haul cord wood in town here a little bit at the time, mind your everything was cheap so (inaudible) pretty good size. Twenty-five cents a (?) was a pretty big size too. (inaudible) were a (?) at that time. A tabel was set steady. Everybody would go around and to have (inaudible) house to house kissing everybody. (inaudible) drink. (inaudible) meatballs.

Connie: How did your and your parents get your food?

Martin: Oh a lot of them grow wild meat, but we had the few head of cattle all the time, a few pigs, chickens, also got the eggs.

Connie: Did you have a garden?

Martin: Oh yes garden. Large (inaudible).

Connie: Would they have food, was the food prepared in any different kinds of ways?

Martin: Well yeah, in a sense yeah but a lot of boiled stuff.

Which I prefer that stuff today. (inaudible).

Connie: How about clothes?

Martin: Oh clothes was, well no money to get it, the Army and Navy catalog was, you know catalog pretty cheap clothes, a shirt (inaudible). Some people couldn't buy these long underwear (inaudible) used to wear rabbit skin used to wear it like (inaudible), it was mostly big overalls. So they put a rabbit skin in their crotch and then your coveralls. Girls didn't wear (inaudible). Before Christmas (inaudible). (inaudible). Lucky I got that old suit because I don't have a suit (inaudible). They were cheap but they wouldn't have the money to buy them.

Connie: Can you describe any special (inaudible)?

Martin: No. We had a lot of food but such things as baloney, weiners we never got that time maybe once or twice a year. And all of those kids went crazy over baloney and weiners. And half the time (inaudible). There was a lot of pork, and a lot of deer meat and they could make sausage out of it. Other than that to go hungry we never, some of the peoples (inaudible). But sometimes I think the people they brought it on themselves. You know, there used to be got a house here for (inaudible) buildings still up there; well people used to go there for (?) just waiting to kill a cow or something and the cow head, and the cow feet, I eat that.

Connie: Cow hocks.

Martin: Yeah, they call them feet. Just like (inaudible). (inaudible) but depends who mix it, because one time they didn't cut the nose too short, you know, over there in the (?) with their teeth (inaudible). Sometimes I wonder if you were using a handkerchief (inaudible). Like if it's done right then (inaudible). And I'm sure they don't wash the teeth with a brush before they put them in a pot. Had to be (inaudible). (inaudible) bannock toast in the morning. (inaudible).

Connie: Was there doctors around here?

Martin: No. Dr. Touchette was in Duck Lake here and St. Laurent. If sometimes happened you could take person with pneumonia or something (inaudible). But he had good (inaudible) so ten miles it didn't take very long. Mind you he started his practise in 1907 here and his last year 1939 (inaudible).

Connie: Was there another doctor come in after he left?

Martin: Dr. Pare.

Connie: Who brought the medicine to the people, the doctors themselves?

Martin: Yeah. Lot of times yeah. Yeah you had to more or

less somebody went to him on horseback or (inaudible) buggy (inaudible).

Connie: Was there people in the area who made their own medicine?

Martin: Oh yes lots. Muskeg tea and eveything for fever. I can remember Uncle (?) was gone to work and my Aunt Margaret she got very sick, so she didn't know what to do so she took off on foot about a mile and half to go to this (?). (inaudible) pneumonia or something she was going to die, she walked there and (inaudible) took the muskeg tea and (inaudible). They think for diarrhea well the boil the root of the choke cherries. (inaudible) ginger. And for ulcers they chew that, you know.

Connie: Was there...

Martin: some boiled it in blanket (inaudible).

Connie: Was there many people in the area who...

Martin: Pretty well everybody. I'll tell you what I drank for whooping cough (inaudible) the only people in the sheep that time was (inaudible) she used to make sheep turds boil it and then put a lot of sugar on it. And a lot of people had whooping cough at that time, and she (inaudible) I don't know if she was selling that or (inaudible) I don't remember. It was (inaudible). Cured us. How could they have brought out the whole family to the doctor they couldn't afford it. Good thing Dr. Touchette sometimes he'd get his (inaudible)...

(END OF SIDE A)

Connie: Did you or your parents have any special people in the community that helped such as a mid-wife?

Martin: Oh yes. Oh yes when that old lady come in about a month before maybe the oldest (inaudible) brother or your sister. That went (inaudible).

Connie: During the depression what kind of jobs were available?

Martin: None. (laughs) I think it was just lucky if you got to cut some cord wood if you could sell it, and then the farmers well they didn't have no money so how could you get a job, you couldn't buy one.

Connie: Do you remember what cord wood was selling for?

Martin: I think right in the bush fifty cents a cord. But that, what was the use of cutting it because there was cord wood all over you couldn't sell it. Kind of, the Metis people kind of got discouraged. Of course a lot of it we couldn't buy

(inaudible).

Connie: Was there enough food, clothing, and shelter available to your family?

Martin: Well, fortunately us yes, because dad owned the ferry. And we managed to haul the ice at that time because (inaudible). So we could sell our ice. (inaudible).

Connie: Did the people help each other?

Martin: Oh yes. That today how much would you pay for a pair (inaudible)? Myself got too many piglets, do you want a couple? (inaudible) the next door neighbor he say well, I think I'll kill myself. If you kill yours and when I kill mine I'll give you half, things like that, you know, (inaudible). Better than today, today (inaudible). And if somebody wanted to build a log, especially after thrashing time when they got married, a log cabin. I don't know how you'd call that in English, we used to call that (inaudible). Anyway all the neighbors would get together and they'd especially build that house for that person that got married, or even somebody that had moved there. They all got together and built a house. And in French they say that (?) (inaudible) regardless how big it is. (inaudible). (laughs)

Connie: How active was your community in politics?

Martin: Pardon?

Connie: How active was your community in politics?

Martin: They had a committiee, that time it in my time it was (inaudible) that's why my dad lost his job after (inaudible). (inaudible).

Connie: Were you or your parents actively involved in politics?

Martin: My dad was involved somewhat, and really I don't think he would have lost his job if he was the only one that had the ferry (inaudible). They had nominated him to go to a conference of some kind in Saskatoon (inaudible).

Connie: Who did you or your parents look up to?

Martin: Well, in some many cases I think we had one (inaudible) not Sir John (inaudible) rebellion. Sir John A. MacDonald (inaudible). (inaudible) Batoche 1885 (inaudible) til 1906 (inaudible). (inaudible).

Connie: Louis Riel?

Martin: Oh well, in the eyes of the old Metis people that I was talking to he was (inaudible). In the eyes of the Metis people Riel was political figure; and Gabriel he was the military figure. They couldn't say very much about the people,

because oh no, you know, couldn't say anything wrong and Riel, you know, a prophet to them, you know, (inaudible). And Gabriel was there fighting that's all there was to it and the (?) people trying to make us believe that he never did (inaudible). Doesn't matter how good you are you can be (inaudible) I thow a bottle there and you miss one or two (inaudible). (inaudible) says well I used to go hunting with him. (inaudible) that's how much he thinks (inaudible). He said, (inaudible)

Connie: Is there any stories or experiences that you know?

Martin: Not very well because (inaudible) appear to us, you know. Riel was the educated party always talk, and Gabriel well he fought for what he believed in but it wasn't (inaudible). Like I say, I don't think (inaudible) than I am, you know, but well he wasn't any better because when I went to school there was only about that much of Riel and about two, three lines and a picture in there about Gabriel and he was known to be a renegade. And then we were young like that there used to be get your attention what they put in history books, you know. Long time ago (inaudible). Oh yes, then they looked at you funny, you know, the person (inaudible). (inaudible) talking to white people.

(END OF SIDE B)

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