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HIGHLIGHTS:

- general account of his life

Victoria: March 26, 1984, interviewing Frank Ouellette, 210
Douglas Crescent, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Frank, could you
tell me where you were born?

Frank: Duck Lake, Saskatchewan.

Victoria: And where is Duck Lake?

Frank: Half way in between Saskatoon and Prince Albert.

Victoria: What kind of a house did you grow up in?

Frank: A lumber house, well both.

Victoria: Both?

Frank: Not in Duck Lake but after that we lived in log houses mostly.

Victoria: So while you were in Duck Lake you lived in a lumber house, it was lumber?

Frank: Yeah.

Victoria: And then where did you move to from Duck Lake?

Frank: Carlton.

Victoria: Carlton, that's Fort Carlton?

Frank: Not quite at Fort Carlton but close to Fort Carlton.

Victoria: Was it in a community or a town?

Frank: Yeah, Titanic.

Victoria: And then you lived in, in a log house there?

Frank: Log houses there, yeah.

Victoria: Did you have any conveniences in your house like running water?

Frank: No we never had that we had to go to the well for water.

Victoria: Electricity did you have?

Frank: No. No electricity.

Victoria: How did you heat your houses?

Frank: Wood.

Victoria: Wood, eh. And what kind of furniture did you have?

Frank: Mostly home made.

Victoria: Home made, eh. And who made them, do you know who made the furniture?

Frank: We did ourselves, dad and I.

Victoria: And did you, did you own your own house?

Frank: No.

Victoria: You were renting?

Frank: Renting.

Victoria: And you say you were in a, what was the name of the town that you lived in?

Frank: It wasn't a town it's just a community, Titanic. Carlton district.

Victoria: Oh it's in Carlton district. Did you, what type of neighbors?

Frank: French.

Victoria: They were mostly French?

Frank: All French.

Victoria: Was there any breeds mixed in, or...

Frank: Not too many.

Victoria: And how did you get along in the neighborhood, was it...?

Frank: Very good.

Victoria: Very good, eh. Had you ever heard of the term of road allowance people?

Frank: No.

Victoria: You don't have any idea what that means, eh?

Frank: No, I don't really know what that means.

Victoria: How big was your yard? Did you have a fairly big yard where you lived?

Frank: We didn't have a yard, it was just a house and a barn and we could go for miles around.

Victoria: Oh, so it was sort of a...

Frank: More a farm house.

Victoria: How many children were there in your family?

Frank: Seven all total.

Victoria: How many boys and how many girls?

Frank: Three boys and four girls really.

Victoria: And yourself.

Frank: Yeah, with myself.

Victoria: And were they a very close family?

Frank: Not really. We never were really close family.

Victoria: Did you have, did your, any of your relatives close, live close around you?

Frank: No. Not very close.

Victoria: Did you do anything together though, like when you were all home and you were young? Did you go camping or hunting together, picking berries?

Frank: Once in a while picking berries, or Sunday at the river or something like that.

Victoria: Did you ever know of anyone that done any storytelling? Was there anyone in your family or any neighbors that told storytelling?

Frank: No, there never was.

Victoria: Did you have chores to do you, or your brothers or sisters when you were young?

Frank: Yes. Look after horses mostly.

Victoria: And...

Frank: And keep house warm, cut the wood and all that.

Victoria: And your brothers and sisters...

Frank: Yeah, they used to do it too.

Victoria: Did you have livestock?

Frank: We had horses for a while, about a dozen or so, and a few cows.

Victoria: And did you live, you said you didn't live anywhere close around your relations, eh? Like that's aunts and uncles and...

Frank: Outside, no.

Victoria: Grandparents?

Frank: No. Never.

Victoria: Do you remember your grandparents at all?

Frank: I just remember one grandfather and I was very young then. I don't remember too much about it.

Victoria: Do you think that the others were dead by this time?

Frank: Yeah they were. Yeah they were.

Victoria: Do you remember where they came from, or did your mother and father ever talk about it?

Frank: No I don't. Don't really know where they came from.

Victoria: You, how do you remember your mother and father? What comes to mind when you think about them?

Frank: God, I don't know what I'd say for that, because so many things.

Victoria: Do you want to tell me about some? I mean just your feeling, I guess, about how you thought of them.

Frank: Oh, I loved my mother and father, I'll say that much, but...

Victoria: Did you have good times together?

Frank: Not that many.

Victoria: While you were growing up was it a hard time, was growing up hard?

Frank: We worked hard all the time. From the time I was about 8 years old I was cutting wood with my dad.

Victoria: So it was very very hard, it was a hard living, eh?

Frank: Hard.

Victoria: Is there any other family members that you remember? Any special ones like aunt, or uncle, or just any family members that really stand out in your memory?

Frank: The only one is my Aunt Josephine, my father's step-sister. I remember her, she was the closest to us.

Victoria: And was there something about her that made you think of her?

Frank: No, she was always the closest at hand.

Victoria: When you had troubles or something was she there to give a hand?

Frank: Yeah, she always was.

Victoria: Was there a strong family loyalty among you?

Frank: Oh yes, very much.

Victoria: You really stuck together, eh?

Frank: The whole family.

Victoria: Do you remember where your grandparents were born?

Frank: As far as I know they were born in Duck Lake or around Duck Lake.

Victoria: Was that just one set of grandparents?

Frank: No both sides.

Victoria: Both sides, eh. And what was the community life like when you were growing up? You know, what did the people in the community do?

Frank: Mostly farmers.

Victoria: And what language did your parents speak in the home when you were growing up?

Frank: French.

Victoria: French, eh. Was that the first language you learned to speak?

Frank: Yes.

Victoria: Did your parents think of themselves as being Metis or talk about it at all?

Frank: They didn't talk about it, but they did think about it, what they were, because we could all speak Cree.

Victoria: Oh, you talked Cree also at home, eh?

Frank: Not at home. But it was spoke. I learned it from my folks.

Victoria: How old were you when you first became aware that you were Metis?

Frank: Oh gosh, I'd have to say when I first started school.

Victoria: What, what...

Frank: The kids in school were always calling us Metis, half-breeds and that.

Victoria: Oh they come right out and say half-breed, did they? And was there just French people around or was there Metis in your, in your district?

Frank: There was two families of Metis that came to school, Laflamms and Dumonts.

Victoria: Did they speak of themselves as being Metis?

Frank: Yeah, they would.

Victoria: Be proud of it?

Frank: They seemed to be.

Victoria: There was no one at all, as your grandparents or anybody, that told stories about Metis history?

Frank: Not that I can remember, no.

Victoria: About the Rebellion at all?

Frank: No, no, not that I can remember. But my grandfather was in the Rebellion.

Victoria: He was, was he?

Frank: I know that much, but I don't know any, any more about that.

Victoria: You don't know what he done during the Rebellion at all, eh?

Frank: No I don't. All I know is that he was in there.

Victoria: What would, would that be your mother's or your father's...?

Frank: My father's.

Victoria: Your father's dad, eh. So he would be a Ouellette then, eh?

Frank: Yeah he was a Ouellette, yeah. It was Joseph Ouellette.

Victoria: Joseph Ouellette. And you're not sure what he done at all, eh?

Frank: No, I couldn't say for sure.

Victoria: What did the other Metis families in your community do? Did they go, did they have, you know, get together for dancing and that type of thing?

Frank: No, no.

Victoria: Nothing like that, eh?

Frank: No.

Victoria: What about Christmas and New Year's, how was that like for you?

Frank: Christmas and New Year's was pretty well spent, spent

right in the family.

Victoria: At home, eh. And New Year's there was no celebrating, you didn't...

Frank: No. More for Christmas than New Year's.

Victoria: What, was there very much work in your community?

Frank: Like for us?

Victoria: Yeah. Like for people to go out and go out to work to earn a living?

Frank: Yes, yes there was.

Victoria: What types was there?

Frank: Well there was wood cutting, stump picking, the farms...

Victoria: What did they do when they stumped?

Frank: Farm work. Stump, pick the stumps up, stack them up and burn them.

Victoria: Was this on fields?

Frank: On plowed fields, yeah.

Victoria: They were sort of clearing the land then, eh?

Frank: They're clearing the land, yeah.

Victoria: Was there very many Metis people that worked doing this?

Frank: Well just the families that were around. And the people themselves that had the land.

Victoria: Did you ever work doing that?

Frank: Oh yes.

Victoria: How much was the pay for stump picking or wood cutting?

Frank: Well, my dad used to get I think it was \$1.50 a day, and we'd get a little bit, eh. They'd never give us a definite price but right around 25, 30 cents a day each for the kids.

Victoria: And how old would you be at that time?

Frank: Seven, eight, nine.

Victoria: What did your father do for a living, what was his occupation?

Frank: Well, he was a, he cut wood, work for farmers all around, and then do carpenter work also, rough carpenter work.

Victoria: Then his, his work would just, was seasonal then, eh?

Frank: Yeah.

Victoria: Did he ever do any other jobs to supplement the income?

Frank: Not much, no, not besides little bit of trapping we did, and...

Victoria: How about hunting, did he do much hunting for meat?

Frank: Not too much. Not too much, just for our own use.

Victoria: Yeah this is, you know, for family. How about fishing?

Frank: No. Fishing we never did.

Victoria: How about selling firewood, cutting firewood, did he do much, any selling of firewood and that?

Frank: Yes we did a lot of that. That was our living too, we used to haul wood from Titanic all the way to Rosthern, 16 miles with horses.

Victoria: And how much did you get, how was it paid?

Frank: \$1.50 a load up to, depending on how much a load is.

Victoria: What type of loads?

Frank: Like pole wood would be about a load, about oh, I'd say 3 X 4 square and full length of the poles. It's hard work.

Victoria: And you'd get how much for that?

Frank: \$1.50, \$2. Take all day to take one load in.

Victoria: Yeah, 16 miles to go.

Frank: I used to haul firewood.

Victoria: So it's 16 miles there and 16 miles home?

Frank: Yeah. Every day.

Victoria: Did your parents raise a garden?

Frank: Oh yes always had a garden, big garden.

Victoria: Big garden, eh. What all did you grow in it do you

remember?

Frank: Anything eatable, I'd say. Like mostly potatoes, had lots of potatoes, and cabbage, turnips, and small seed like onions and stuff like that.

Victoria: How did you keep, how did your parents keep this in the wintertime?

Frank: In the basement.

Victoria: You had a basement or...

Frank: Yeah, in the cellar I should say. We had a cellar that would hold about roughly around 100 bushels of potatoes plus the small seeds.

Victoria: Where were these cellars?

Frank: Underneath the house.

Victoria: And they would keep, the vegetables kept good down there?

Frank: Very good.

Victoria: Was it, did it ever freeze down there?

Frank: Never.

Victoria: About how deep were these cellars?

Frank: Oh, eight or nine feet deep.

Victoria: And you said you only had a team of horses.

Frank: Yeah.

Victoria: That, that was the amount of your livestock, you didn't keep chickens or...

Frank: We kept a few chickens but not that many. Just keep them in the summertime and then butchered them off in the fall. We had a few pigs but not too many, just enough for our own use. Never to sell.

Victoria: Can you ever remember a time when your father was unemployed, I mean right out of work, nothing to do at all?

Frank: No, never. He always had something to do.

Victoria: What did the rest of your relatives do for a living? Did they do the same odd jobs mostly or...

Frank: Mostly same odd jobs.

Victoria: Was there anyone that had steady employment?

Frank: Not that I know about.

Victoria: They just mostly all seasonal work around?

Frank: There might have been some that had unemployment, steady employment but I didn't know. Not close to us anyways.

Victoria: Did your father or mother wear traditional Metis clothing?

Frank: No.

Victoria: None, eh. Do you remember of anyone wearing, you know, the men wearing Metis sashes?

Frank: Yeah, I know what you mean but I don't remember my family doing it at all.

Victoria: Did your mother do any beadwork or tanning hides?

Frank: No.

Victoria: Does, was there any of your relations that you knew of that did?

Frank: My aunt used to do some of it, my Aunt Josephine, the one I spoke about before. She used to do beadwork, but that's the only one I know.

Victoria: Did your parents know how to jig?

Frank: Oh yes.

Victoria: Did you learn how?

Frank: Very little.

Victoria: Was jigging a part of their local dances, you know, when they all got together it was part of the dancing eh?

Frank: That was mostly what they dance at the time.

Victoria: Was there fiddle players in your family?

Frank: My grandfather on my mother's side was from what I heard classed as one of the best in the world.

Victoria: You don't remember his name?

Frank: Louie.

Victoria: Louie?

Frank: (Inaudible)

Victoria: (Inaudible). Where did he come from, do you know?

Frank: No I don't really. I think he was from around Duck Lake someplace, he lived most of his life there anyway.

Victoria: Did you learn to play the fiddle?

Frank: Yeah, some.

Victoria: Anybody else in your family?

Frank: Not that fiddle, no.

Victoria: Do you know of anyone that sang Metis songs?

Frank: No, I couldn't answer that for sure. I can't sing -- I only had two brothers that could sing, I don't really know what they sang. They sang mostly rock and roll they were younger.

Victoria: So they would have been into the younger stuff, were they?

Frank: Yeah.

Victoria: Did you know of any elders in your family that practised traditional Indian medicine?

Frank: No, I didn't.

Victoria: There was no one that you know of?

Frank: Not that I know of. There could have happened but I didn't know.

Victoria: Do you remember any real serious illnesses that people had in those days?

Frank: Well I wouldn't know for sure, all I know is I had (inaudible) when I was 14 beside of that I don't know.

Victoria: About T.B., was it very common that you know of in that community?

Frank: No, not that I know of.

Victoria: Did you or have you ever heard of a, I should say did you ever use a sweat lodge, or have you heard of one?

Frank: I don't even know what that is.

Victoria: A sweat lodge?

Frank: Yeah.

Victoria: Well, that's I think what the Indians used to use. When you went in it was supposed to cleanse you of...

Frank: Oh no, no, no.

Victoria: Of, of, of the evil spirits or whatever (inaudible).

Frank: No, not with us, no.

Victoria: What was your first paying job?

Frank: My first paying job, farm work.

Victoria: And do you remember who you worked for at that time?

Frank: John Sheilo.

Victoria: Where was he at?

Frank: Farm work, Titanic.

Victoria: And do you remember how much you got paid at that time?

Frank: Fifty cents a week.

Victoria: How old were you?

Frank: About 11, 12. Still going to school, work after school.

Victoria: And what, what did you, what was your job?

Frank: Feeding cattle, horses, make sure they had enough water and all that.

Victoria: How many, how many cattle or horses did you have to feed?

Frank: That about 12 horses and maybe around 150 cattle.

Victoria: How long did it take you?

Frank: Well it was fed outside and very handy. Took about two hours a night to have them ready and then you'd go in the middle of night to warm up the water. In other words you wanted to stay with the cattle all night on and off.

Victoria: And what other, what did you do after that, what other jobs did you have?

Frank: Well when I got bigger I went threshing, stuff like that.

Victoria: Sort of farm laboring.

Frank: That was lots of farm laboring, working on the threshing crews.

Victoria: And it was quite a bit of seasonal work then, I imagine.

Frank: That was all seasonal.

Victoria: Did you ever have, you know, times when you were unemployed?

Frank: Very little when I was home.

Victoria: How about the other people in the community, were there times when they were...

Frank: No, it's about the same as we were, because we were all poor people and every time you heard when you do the house...

Victoria: The times when you were unemployed, how did it affect you, how did you feel?

Frank: Didn't even think about it.

Victoria: You never even thought about it that time, didn't, suppose if everybody was in that predicament it didn't matter too much, eh.

Frank: That's right.

Victoria: What, what was your next job after? Did you, later on in life what did you do?

Frank: Work steady like you say, I haven't worked steady until I came out of the services.

Victoria: Oh, you were in the army, were you?

Frank: Yeah, the age of 21.

Victoria: Oh, you went in at 21. How long were you there?

Frank: Five and a half years.

Victoria: And what, what...

Frank: I was a private.

Victoria: Private. And where all did you go, did you just stay in one place or...

Frank: I was pretty well all over Canada, and in England, Belgium, Holland.

Victoria: Did you see any active...

Frank: I had 11 months left to service.

Victoria: And where was that at?

Frank: In Germany. Well ended up in Germany.

Victoria: Is there any experiences that really outstanding...

Frank: Oh, lots of them but you can't talk about them. They just muttered up, there's too many of them.

Victoria: Yeah. And what, what year did you come home?

Frank: The year? I don't really know what year it was.

Victoria: Well what, what did you do then after you got home? Were you married before you went into the service?

Frank: No I never was. I wasn't married. I didn't get married for quite a while after.

Victoria: And then what, what was your first job you got after coming out of the army?

Frank: Well I got back into working odd jobs all over. And then until I came to Saskatoon.

Victoria: And then what, what did you do? What was your next job in Saskatoon?

Frank: My next job in Saskatoon was for Saskatchewan Hide and Fur.

Victoria: What did you do there?

Frank: Mostly sell hides and every so often I salted them up and ship them away.

Victoria: What, what, what did, what were the salting hides, what did you do, why were they salted?

Frank: So you can keep them, otherwise they'd spoil.

Victoria: And what did they do with these hides?

Frank: They make leather out of them, ship them out to be processed into leather.

Victoria: Do you remember where they sent them to for processing?

Frank: Some of them but not all of them, some went to Montreal, most of them went to Montreal from where I worked.

Victoria: And where did these hides all come from, where did they get them?

Frank: From the beef.

Victoria: From beef, that was a cow, cow hide?

Frank: Cow hide and there was also other fur hides like beaver, mink, all those. But the biggest of all was from cow hides.

Victoria: From cow hides, eh. Then where did you go from there?

Frank: From the Saskatchewan Hide and Fur? Well I worked Saskatchewan Hide and Fur long time, then I worked for Western Car Exchange.

Victoria: What did you do there?

Frank: There I mostly mechanic work.

Victoria: And were, were your wages good there?

Frank: No, at \$25 a week is what I was getting there.

Victoria: At Western Car?

Frank: Yeah.

Victoria: How about at the Hide and Fur?

Frank: The same thing only difference is I got expenses at the Hide and Fur, which allowed me to quite a bit more money.

Victoria: What do you mean by expenses?

Frank: Well, you had to go out on the road and take some of these hides up and stuff like that, you got good pay for that.

Victoria: And then after Western Car Exchange?

Frank: Well I went to St. Louis Hide and Fur then, and that was the same thing. But at St. Louis Hide and Fur I was on the road steady, not too much office work.

Victoria: Was that just picking up the hides?

Frank: Picking up hides. I made good money there, I was getting \$75 a week plus I'd clear myself \$40, \$50 a week in expenses.

Victoria: And then it was pretty much the same type of...

Frank: Same type of work.

Victoria: And how long were you there?

Frank: Not quite sure. Be at least about three or four years, maybe more. I could't say exactly how long.

Victoria: And Western Car Exchange, how long did you work there?

Frank: Sixteen years. Fourteen years for sure.

Victoria: At Western Car Exchange?

Frank: No, no. Western Car Exchange I only worked a year and a half, two years.

Victoria: And then at, at Saskatchewan Hide and Fur that was how long?

Frank: Yeah, that was a long time.

Victoria: That was the 14 years?

Frank: Yeah, 14 years up there.

Victoria: That's a long time.

Frank: Long time to be in one place.

Victoria: And then did you get married in along this time someplace?

Frank: Oh yeah, I got married twice. First time was before I came to Saskatoon I got married.

Victoria: And what happened to your wife?

Frank: She passed away.

Victoria: And then how long after that did you get married?

Frank: About I think maybe two maybe three years later, I got married again here in Saskatoon.

Victoria: And how, how did you first feel when you moved into the city? Was it a big change for you?

Frank: Not really, because I lived in the city when I was in the army for all that time. It...

Victoria: So in the army was it, it was a really different way of life than what you had been living before. Do you think that your living standards increased then, you know, were they better?

Frank: Well they'd have to increase from the army to civilian life, because civilian life you don't have, I mean in the army you didn't have a thing to worry about -- everything was given to you. And then in civilian life you have to work for everything.

Victoria: So did, did you like the army?

Frank: Oh yes, very much. That's one thing I'll always say.

Victoria: Did you ever think of just staying in the army and not...

Frank: No I never. Never even tried.

Victoria: Is that right? What do you remember about school? Like what, what type of things were taught when you went to school?

Frank: Just to read and write, arithmetic, that's about it.

Victoria: The usual school things?

Frank: Usual school things, yeah. We didn't have a high school where we were so...

Victoria: What type of a school did you have, was it lots of rooms or...?

Frank: No, just one great big room with all the classes in one room, one teacher.

Victoria: What, what was your teacher, just a person, or was it a nun, or...?

Frank: No she wasn't, she's just an ordinary school teacher.

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Victoria: Were you allowed to speak Cree or French in school?

Frank: Not Cree in school, we were allowed to speak French.

Victoria: Did the teacher just tell you you weren't allowed to talk Cree?

Frank: No, she never said nothing, we just never used it. But, but we did learn read and write in French in school.

Victoria: Oh, you were taught...

Frank: We had French, yeah.

Victoria: Did you enjoy that?

Frank: No.

Victoria: You didn't!

Frank: I never liked French. (laughs)

Victoria: Did you feel like you belonged in school, or did you feel uncomfortable?

Frank: No, I'd say I felt good at school.

Victoria: Did they teach you anything about Metis or Indian history at school?

Frank: No, none at all.

Victoria: Nothing, eh. Were there white kids going to school?

Frank: Yeah. Well most of them were white.

Victoria: And did they treat you well?

Frank: Yeah, very good.

Victoria: So you got along real good with them, eh?

Frank: Oh yes.

Victoria: So looking at the overall experience at school what would you say, was it good or bad?

Frank: I'd say it was very good.

Victoria: Did your parents encourage you to go to school?

Frank: Yes. To a certain age.

Victoria: And, and you enjoyed it?

Frank: Not really. It was, it had to be done but didn't really enjoy it.

Victoria: When you were young did any white kids ever call you names, you know, about being Metis or anything like that?

Frank: No, not that I can remember. We were with white kids all day all the time.

Victoria: Do you ever remember of any instance say where a Metis person and a white person were working at the same job and the Metis person took less pay, you know? Even as when you were young or even after you grew up had you ever heard of any instances like that?

Frank: No I don't, I don't think so. Not that I knew of anyway -- it's possible.

Victoria: Were you ever denied a job because you were Metis?

Frank: No. Never. I was refused job for lack of education but not because I was Metis.

Victoria: And, did you ever feel uncomfortable when you walked into a place where there was a lot of white people?

Frank: No, never.

Victoria: Did the town authorities, like in the small communities I guess they'd be called town authorities, was your family always treated fairly by them?

Frank: I'd say we were.

Victoria: How about any instances that you've, you know, might have been with police or judges and that sort of thing?

Frank: Well, I never had those troubles that I know of.

Victoria: Your, did your family go to outings like, or, or to dances, or social events where there were non-native people?

Frank: No. Not where, depends what you mean -- where native people were refused to go or...

Victoria: No, not necessarily. Did, did they just sort of all go to like Metis, didn't matter what nationality you were, did you all go to social events together?

Frank: Like card parties, yes.

Victoria: Yeah, dances, them type of things?

Frank: Yes, yes, yes.

Victoria: So it was all... didn't matter what nationality you were you just...

Frank: No, it didn't make no difference what nationality you were.

Victoria: Have you ever had any bad dealings or unpleasant dealings with the government, or, you know, such as government agencies such as welfare?

Frank: No, not really.

Victoria: Or types of businesses?

Frank: No.

Victoria: No. No discrimination of any kind that you ever had?

Frank: Not me, no. I've never had that.

Victoria: In, in any of these small communities where you lived, do you ever remember of them trying to force a Metis family or Metis people of any kind to move away?

Frank: No, not where I lived.

Victoria: Did the church play an important in, in your parents' life?

Frank: I'd say they did yeah, yeah.

Victoria: Was there a church where you lived very close?

Frank: Yeah, about two and a half miles.

Victoria: Did you attend regularly?

Frank: Yes we did.

Victoria: Did everybody sort of go, like all the Metis people in the community?

Frank: All, all the Metis, all the French people all went to one church.

Victoria: What kind of a church was it?

Frank: Catholic.

Victoria: Catholic church, eh. Do you remember if the priest ever visited your home?

Frank: Lots of times.

Victoria: Do you know of anything that he talked about?

Frank: Not, well he talked about... I don't know what a person would call it, more or less what a priest talks about in the home.

Victoria: More of less just about the church and...

Frank: Mostly about the church and stuff like that, but we never had any troubles in our home for the priest to come up and preach all that.

Victoria: Did any, at any time did you, you know, your commitment towards the church ever get weaker?

Frank: Not for me, no.

Victoria: You've always went to church good and solidly? Do you think the church had more influence in the old days on people and their lives than it does today?

Frank: I think so.

Victoria: In, in what way do you think?

Frank: I don't know exactly what you, which way, but I know

it did with most people when I was younger.

Victoria: Like they would, do you think they went to church more in them days than they do now?

Frank: Oh yes, a lot more, a lot more. Because in our community on Sundays, Sunday morning after nine o'clock you couldn't find a soul at home, everybody, the whole community went to church.

Victoria: Do you think that the church has, you know, helped Metis people face difficulties?

Frank: If they had to they did, yes.

Victoria: So you, you really, you think then that the church has helped Metis people?

Frank: Oh yes, yeah. Not necessarily our family but...

Victoria: Just Metis people in general though.

Frank: In general, yes.

Victoria: Do you mind talking about politics at all?

Frank: No, I don't talk about politics, I don't know nothing about it.

Victoria: But I mean as far, just for yourself like, and your family though.

Frank: No, we never talk politics at home either.

Victoria: No, but I mean do you, could you do it now if I ask you some questions on it?

Frank: No.

Victoria: You don't want to get involved in...

Frank: I wouldn't be able to answer most of them anyway, so...

Victoria: Okay. Do you remember the first Metis Society that ever, you know, came out I believe that would be in the '30s? You don't remember no Metis Societies?

Frank: Not that I know.

Victoria: Have you, were you a member of the local Metis Society in Saskatoon here?

Frank: Yes I was, but what years I don't know.

Victoria: You don't remember you were involved, eh?

Frank: Yeah. I was also involved in the Friendship Inn.

Victoria: And that's...

Frank: For a few years, yes, not any more but I was then.

Victoria: And do you have, we had fairly big local at Saskatoon at that time?

Frank: Oh yes, we did.

Victoria: And your, you've attended meetings and that type of thing, eh?

Frank: Oh yes, yes.

Victoria: What about any big conferences, have you attended any in the province?

Frank: Just one in Prince Albert.

Victoria: And did you enjoy it?

Frank: Oh yes, very much.

Victoria: Do you know of what the white people in the community, you know, think of the Metis Society, of, of Metis people having an organization of their own?

Frank: What do you mean, do you think they should have one, or they shouldn't, or what?

Victoria: Like I wonder do, do white people in the community, what did they think of it?

Frank: Oh God, I've never spoken to them about it.

Victoria: You have never, they've never said their opinion?

Frank: Some came up.

Victoria: Have you ever heard anything about Metis scrip?

Frank: No, I don't know what that is.

Victoria: You don't have any idea what that is, eh. Do you, have you ever heard the name Joe LaRocque?

Frank: Yeah.

Victoria: Do you remember who he is?

Frank: No, not right now. I've heard the name though.

Victoria: How about Joe Ross?

Frank: Ross?

Victoria: Yeah, Joe Ross.

Frank: Yeah, I've heard of him too but I don't know what he does.

Victoria: Tom Major?

Frank: Yes, I've heard of him.

Victoria: Joe McKenzie?

Frank: That one maybe I don't remember him.

Victoria: Sol Pritchard?

Frank: Yeah, Pritchard, yeah. I've heard of those people but I don't know them.

Victoria: These were all I believe members of the first organization, the first Saskatchewan Metis Society, that's what it was called, Saskatchewan Metis Society. And they started in the '30s and '40s.

Frank: Oh, that's a long time ago.

Victoria: So they, I guess it was more or less to find out if people had, you know, participated -- your parents or anyone like that had ever participated in it.

Frank: No, I don't think my parents did.

Victoria: When you look back on your life, you know, and all things that happened in it, how would you describe your life?

Frank: Me, exactly what?

Victoria: Yeah, would you say it was difficult, interesting, satisfying, you know, was it a hard life or a good life?

Frank: It was a hard life, I'd say, all the way through except my army years.

Victoria: And you, that was the part you enjoyed the most, eh?

Frank: Yeah.

Victoria: How do you think that your life is better than what your father's was? Do you think, or I should have said is, is your life, was your life better than what your father's was?

Frank: I'd say yes.

Victoria: In, in what ways?

Frank: Well first of all, I got some education. My father never had any whatsoever, he had a very hard time to even write his name and that made him a lower class or worker. In my life I never had to put up with that. I can read and write either way -- French or English.

Victoria: Is there any other way that you figure your life, you know, has been better than your father's?

Frank: Well, I'd say there was more work for me.

Victoria: Different types of work.

Frank: Different types of work, and that's about all I can say. He worked very hard all his life.

Victoria: What are some of the things that have mattered most to you in your life? Like there's, there must be some special things, you know, that happened in your life, or special people that you think of.

Frank: No, not, not that, not special people, I wouldn't say that.

Victoria: No, nobody that has been special in your family?

Frank: No.

Victoria: What about then... about special things that have happened?

Frank: Meaning what exactly?

Victoria: Well, like you said, you really enjoyed the army, was that one of the special things in your life?

Frank: Oh yeah, for me, yeah. I really enjoyed the army all my life.

Victoria: Was there any other job that you enjoyed doing?

Frank: Well, I enjoyed working for the Hide and Fur Companies because I knew it all.

Victoria: How about religion, was it really important to you too?

Frank: It used to be, yes.

Victoria: And saying it used to be, is it not...

Frank: Not as much now.

Victoria: Not any more. What about education, was that an important thing for you?

Frank: Yes, it was very... Well it is now. Wish I would have known that when I was younger. But I've never had the chance to, to take it anyway.

Victoria: What about economic security? Will you be okay, you know, in your later years?

Frank: I don't...

Victoria: Like when you grow older, will you have economic security? Will you not have to worry about money or...

Frank: No, never.

Victoria: What do you think are the native community in Saskatoon, what do you think is their biggest problems?

Frank: Golly, I've had so little to do with them now that I don't...

Victoria: Just from what you can see though, what do you think that some of their problems are? You know, even go walking down the streets in Saskatoon you see native people, what problems would you think that they would have?

Frank: Most of them, to me, most of them don't try, that's the biggest troubles with them. I'm talking about street people.

Victoria: Do you think, when you say that they're not trying...

Frank: They don't try to help themselves.

Victoria: Then you, you think that they have problems. What are some of those problems?

Frank: Well for a lot of them it's too much welfare. The younger people anyway. They depend on welfare and they don't want to work.

Victoria: Do you see is drinking a problem for them?

Frank: Well, I don't have that much to do with them so I don't really know if they do drink lots.

Victoria: How about education, would that be a problem too?

Frank: A lot of them have a very good education -- they never use it.

Victoria: So what would you think would be a suggestion then, what, what do you think could be done, should be done with these people?

Frank: Oh golly, that's pretty hard to say, I don't know. I wouldn't know how to answer that, because every person is different. You can't say you'll do something, you can't do it

just for one person because that don't help.

Victoria: Do you think it would have been different for you would have been born say as a white person or maybe a Treaty Indian?

Frank: I don't think so. But...

Victoria: You don't think there would have been any more advantages?

Frank: Oh, there might have been if you were white.

Victoria: What, what, what other...

Frank: Well most white people are either farmers or something similar to that.

Victoria: Why do you think that they are though? Why do you think that they are though? Why do you think this?

Frank: Their father was, their grandfather was all the way down see (inaudible).

Victoria: So you figure that they were sort of, the land was passed down to them then, eh?

Frank: Yeah, it's the same thing with the Indian people. They were brought up by their, their family, but really they're brought up by the reserve, it's all furnished from the reserve.

Victoria: So you figure there is an advantage then to being a Treaty Indian too?

Frank: Oh yes. A Treaty Indian, yes.

Victoria: If you had a chance to be born again would you do different things in your life, would you change your life?

Frank: I don't think so.

Victoria: You think you would do the same, eh. Would you choose to be a man again or would you choose to be a woman?

Frank: No, I'd still want to be a man.

Victoria: Do you think things are going to be better in the future?

Frank: I doubt it.

Victoria: What do you think is not going to be, what do you think there's going to be for problems in the future?

Frank: Oh, I don't know. Depends, I couldn't say for sure what, what it would be. I don't think it would be much

difference in the future than there is now.

Victoria: Do you think there will be more opportunity for work?

Frank: They're trying to do that, but I don't know it doesn't work that way.

Victoria: How about war?

Frank: War. You can expect that any time as far as war is concerned.

Victoria: So it, and say do you think it will be better for you grandchildren in the future or your children?

Frank: That would be pretty hard to say that, but I'd be hoping that it would be better anyway.

Victoria: Do you think that there would be better opportunities for them than there was for you?

Frank: I think so.

Victoria: Do you think that native people will be better in the future like in the country, or, or away in the far north, or in the cities?

Frank: I'd say in the country they'd be better off.

Victoria: How, how do you think it would benefit...?

Frank: Far north is a very rough place to live. And in the cities almost as bad, only different, different way.

Victoria: So what, what opportunity you figure they would have in the countries, will they make a better living or...?

Frank: Country, if you want to work there is some work. It may not consist of big wages and all that, but it's a living.

Victoria: Okay, thank you very much for the interview, Frank.

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