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Judy: Today is March 5, 1984, and I'm at the home of Mr.
Paul Ouellette, 101 Howell Avenue in Saskatoon. Mr. Ouellette,
how do you see yourself as a person?

Paul: How do I see myself as a person? Well I see myself
as a person is a, is... is a... well as anybody else, you know,
I mean as far as I'm concerned I, I don't think I know how to
answer that. How would you say (inaudible). Kind in a way and
sometimes pretty hot-headed, I'm very hot-headed, I take it off
on my dad's, I guess. (laughs) That's about all I know.

Judy: When you look back at your life and everything that's
happened in it, what kind of life would you say you had?

Paul: Well, good and bad, you know, I mean I've had... when
I started grow up and after I was 15, 16, things seemed to

turn. But when I was in, like I was raised up with my mom, you know, then I had a step-father and, well actually he was pretty good to me, but you know things weren't the same, you know. But after I got older and got on my own, things seemed to change. But I always made my living since I was, you know, 16 years old. And I got married when I was 21, I raised six girls and two boys and I survived, I didn't ask anybody for nothing, you know, to bring them up. I put them through school. So I, I worked pretty hard all the years that I... you know, I worked on the railroad and I trucked, I've been in the trucking business mostly all my life, you know, till I was 65, in the city. But everything seemed to turn out for me all right, you know. I mean I end up with a pension, a good pension and things like that.

Judy: Do you think your life is better than your father's life?

Paul: Well I think things were different for me than when my dad was younger, you know, things were, well, the money wasn't there, things were... they had to work pretty hard, you know. And then there was dad's side, they were a big family in them, you know, like when they lived up down south, you know, Round Prairie there. They, well I was told by Uncle Bill -- I didn't get too much from dad, but what I heard from Uncle Bill that they, they did a lot, they had a lot of stock and they had, they used to haul a lot of hay, in them days hay was a big thing. They shipped a lot, car loads of hay, they used to maybe post a car into Hanley or someplace, then they'd ship, you know. This is how they made their living. But far as I know they did pretty good in Montana, you know, because grandpa was in the lime mine like, you know, all the kids were small and Uncle Bill was the oldest, you see, and dad wasn't very old

that time. So they come over here I think with the rest of them, you know, like with the Trotters. I think they all come over here in about 1900, you know.

Judy: And this is from Montana?

Paul: Yeah, they all... you see all the family was from Montana, you see. See dad's folks were from Lewistown, Montana, and mom's family they were from around Havre, Montana. And grandpa, like that guy there, his dad's grandfather practically owned the biggest part of Lewistown, Montana, the town, like I don't know how many population. They say it's quite a pretty good size there.

Judy: And your grandfather's name was?

Paul: My grandfather was Moses Ouellette, but his dad was Rene Ouellette like, you know. That's where the Wells and Ouellettes were related, cousins, you see. Mrs. Wells was grandpa's sister, old lady Wells and that's why Fred Wells, old Fred Wells here, that's dad's cousin, you see. He's oh, about 96, I guess, you know. There's some in Vancouver like Flo Wells, and Mickey Wells, and oh, there's quite a few of them

down there.

Judy: What are the things that mattered most in your life?

Paul: Well, my life, I was very independent when I was young, you know. I mean like I like to, I never depend on anybody to, you know... I, I was kind of a guy who was kind of on my own a lot, you know. Then, I don't know, I was, didn't really bother that many, you know, till I got older, you know, and then I was more with the family, you know.

Judy: How about religion, did that matter in your life?

Paul: Well, I got married in Catholic and I was Catholic all my life, you know. I belong to, see I was raised up in Pleasant Hill. I went to St. Mary's School, and then I went to Catholic school there, you know. No I was, I was just, I wasn't really a, you know, I mean just an ordinary religion guy -- I wasn't overboard with it anyway.

Judy: What do you think are the native community's most important problems?

Paul: Well I think... to the way I see it, I think they have to, they have to stay together, you know, like they have to work together. And the way things are going it don't look like to me that they are working together, you know. They're

working against each other, you know, some of them do, some don't, you know. The way I see it I, you know, I'm just a member with them but, you know, I think they could go a long ways if they stuck together, you know. They have to stay together same as anything else, you know. Like there's different nationality people that work together, you know, and then they get ahead; but at our, in our nationality they don't. They don't work together there, even when they were working years ago they didn't stick together, you know. I mean the families did but I don't know, it seems like one guy would get more then the other one was jealous. I don't know, as far as I was concerned that's the way they worked, you know. Even like, even me, like when I was in Saskatoon, my brother and I, he held a job in the government for 35 years, and I held a job for 33 years and we were, we drove new cars, new things, and a lot of our own relations wouldn't even talk to us and I think it was just jealously. You know, I mean, which it didn't mean nothing to me because I figure that I was doing it for myself and my family, I wasn't doing it for anybody else, because I worked, I think I deserved it, you know what I mean. But this is the way things are with the native people in my books anyway. I don't know, I could be wrong, but I've seen a lot of them in that, you know, even my own relations, you know, uncles and aunts.

Judy: What is it like for you to be the centre of family life?

Paul: Oh my family life was, I mean I had no complaints

with family life. We had our ups and downs, you know, but everything seemed to work out all right, you know, for me. I mean it wasn't all blues, you know, blue skies sometime, but we went through. You know, when the kids were younger things weren't that good for us but we managed.

Judy: What is it like for you to be involved in the Metis politics?

Paul: Well I was really never involved, I was just been a member, you know. I mean I went to their meetings and that's as far, you know. Helen and I were members with, you know, with the organization, you know, that's as far... I never was involved... type to be... sit on any board, anything like that, I never did, you know, because I held a job, you know, like, you know. And now it's too late, like for me I'm retired and I don't... but I go to the meetings, you know, I mean I like going to their meetings and things like that, you know.

Judy: What was it like for you to have to deal with government agencies, say welfare or unemployment insurance?

Paul: I don't.

Judy: You've never dealt with them?

Paul: No.

Judy: Do you think it would be different for you if you were a white person?

Paul: Oh, not really, no.

Judy: How about if you were a Treaty person?

Paul: Well maybe things would have been different, but I don't know. I was in, to me I was, I was, as far as I was concerned I was a Metis and, you know, and I've never really paid too much attention to the, to the... I've never been around them too much, you know, like the Indian people. Because then when we were in Saskatoon here I could count the Indian families that lived in Saskatoon because I was raised up at Saskatoon. The only ones that I knew, they were from the, from the reserve south of us here, you know, the old Harry Little Crow and all them, we knew them, but that's the only ones that were ever in Saskatoon that, you know. Oh, you see the odd one would drift in and out, but it isn't like it is today not here now, no. Saskatoon wasn't that big, you know, it was only about 35,000, 30,000, you know.

Judy: So you say that the majority of people in Saskatoon were white?

Paul: Yeah, with the Metis. It was most the Metis, there was not really that many Metis either, you know, there was just you could, oh I'd say there was the Ouellettes, Wells, and (name) and the Trottiers and things like that. There was

practically only ones were in Saskatoon, but a lot of them started to come in later, you know. We knew everybody, like my folks knew pretty well everybody in Saskatoon that time, you know, that was in the '20s and even in the '30s, late in the '30s is when they start to come in, you know. (Name) and some of the old ones that's around here now, they're starting to come in from Manitoba, you know, not too many from Alberta, you know.

Judy: Was there a certain part of the city where most of the Metis people lived?

Paul: Well, yeah, some lived in Nutana and some lived in the west side, like up in Pleasant Hills or King George

district, you know. We lived in King George district and Pleasant Hills and some, mostly the Landrys and some of the Trotters lived over up in the Nutana district, you know, Ponies, you know. They never lived on the west side really like we did, we lived on the west side.

Judy: If you had a chance to be born again what would you do different?

Paul: Well, get a good education. When I was young the school... you had to work. It was, you know, like you had to drop out of school sooner because, you know, things were tough. You didn't, you know, nowadays the school... you can't get a job now unless you get a good education, but in our time, you know, you had grade ten, grade twelve, you had a lot of education them years. But, you know, lot of kids dropped out six, seven, eight, you know, because they had, they had to go out and work to make a living because in the '30s, you know, there was the depression. That's when I really had, we had to get out and work, you know, we worked for a dollar a day, you know, to survive, you know. And you didn't get, people that time didn't much welfare, you know, it was all vouchers, not like it is today. Today, you know, you get... rent was cheap all right and, you know, not like it is today. Today now they get big welfares and they get all their medical, everything paid. Them days you didn't get nothing. You had to go out and work even if they put you out on the farm, you know, if you have two, three kids, they'd put you out on the farm for \$5 a month. That's the way things were in the '30s, you know. Because the welfare wouldn't feed the kids, you know, like if you had two or three kids, the older one had to go out on the farm. That's the way things were.

Judy: Would you choose to be a woman?

Paul: No. (laughs)

Judy: Why not?

Paul: I don't know, I couldn't answer that. No I, I'd sooner be a, maybe I, I'd sooner be a man. (laughs)

Judy: How do you see your community's future?

Paul: Oh, well I don't know. I think Saskatoon is a good place to live -- it's been good me, you know, I mean I, I have no complaint, you know. I was born here and raised here and I raised my kids here, and then I was, you know, I had my job here. Oh, it's been good to me.

Judy: Where do you think native people will have a better future -- in the country, in the north, or in the cities?

Paul: Well, I think some of them, the ones that are coming in here now they, they got to get adapted to city life and there's a lot of them hard to get adapted to city life. Through my experience, like to me I, I couldn't live in the north because, I mean, I could never survive there, you know, but I can survive the city life because I know the city life, I can work the city life, you know. But for them I think it's very hard for some of them unless they, you know, they got to have a good education to get anywhere in the city, you know. Well, I see lots of them in the city and I, I don't think they're getting anywhere, you know. I... we have a few in the city that they'd stay for maybe six months and they quit, you know, I mean if they wanted to stay there, I know we did have some pretty good men there but they just couldn't get adapted to city life.

Judy: So you think then that their future would be...?

Paul: I think some of them, yeah, if they're... I'm not saying the younger ones, if they went to school and they got into something, but the older ones, no, I couldn't see them. I think there were a lot of them better off in, in their community, you know, like, you know. I think so, I don't know.

Judy: What do you think the future of your children and your grandchildren will be like?

Paul: Well, they've got to, they've got to get schooling like, you know, my grandchildren has got to get... It's a lot different for, for them like now, you know, like it was for me, you know. But I think my grandchildren, I think they got a better future, you know. They're pretty well scattered around some in Vancouver, you know, some of my older daughter's kids they finished their school, like Gloria's kids they've all finished their high school, but from there I don't know where they're going from there, you know. But there's the young ones, I couldn't really tell what their future is, you know. I know Jackie's kids are going to go a long ways, you know, because she's putting them right through. She's going to, you know, one is in the piano (inaudible) and things like that, you know. But I know Jackie's kids will go, you know, I mean because they're not native, they're part... their (inaudible) native and her husband is German, eh, so I don't know really... Pete's, I know Pete is thinking of a future for his kids, and so is Roddy, you know, Shirley's kids they're...

Judy: So you think education is the key to the future?

Paul: Education is the key thing for the native people, that's right. And if they haven't got that they've got nothing, you know. And it's not, I look at this way for the native people this era, you know, I mean this era I could see years ago that they didn't have it, but they had no excuse as far as I was concerned. Because when I was a kid, what I told you before, we had to survive, you know, in which, you know, to live. We did get out and work. We were working for cheap wages, you know, like 15, 16 years old, but today I think the native kids they got a lot going for them, it don't matter whether they're native or not. I heard that story in my books. I think it's an excuse to say, "Well, here I'm a native people." I was born in the city of Saskatoon, I lived in the society as anybody else. If I wanted to go to high school there was nobody knock me. If I want to go to university that was, you know, that was my business and if I... My kids went to high school, they went to school here, but they got this excuse that they got the schooling and I don't go for that. If the schools are in our problem we're living in a, we're Canadians, as far as I'm concerned we're all Canadians. You know, and I think that today if you want to go to school you don't have to go to a native school. If you don't want to go to a native school if you're an Indian person or whatever you are, you can go to their school, you know. They've got that backlash yet and I, I disagree with a lot of that, you know, I do. Well maybe because I was raised here, but I've seen so much of it. They're not going to get anywhere by doing this, I think they have to get out and... We're Canadians, I don't care whether you're an Indian or a breed, or the Ukrainian, or the Italians, or the, all the D.Ps come over here, well they made good living here as far as I'm concerned. And I think they can all can do the same thing, you know. I don't know, maybe I'm different than some of the native people that talk that way because I know, I had to go out and make my living and I never asked anybody for nothing, you know. This is the way I look at it, you know. But some of them were, you don't get nothing for nothing, you know.

Judy: Looking back on your youth, describe to me an ordinary day as you remember during the summer as a young boy.

Paul: Oh I can remember when we were young, you know. I was 8, 9 years old, you know, when we used to, we used to be the, with all our cousins and things, you know, things like that, you know. With the Ouellette boys, Wally Ouellette -- that would be Aunt Madeleine's boys like, you know. They're all dead now but we used to have a real good time, you know, in the city here like. We sold papers, you know, we had, we used to go out and have paper routes, you know. We'd go out and haul coal for some old ladies for 25 cents a week to go to the show. (No I don't smoke.) Oh, we had a pretty good youth life when we were young. We didn't have much, we didn't have to say... money was, you know, like the kids have today, you know, we used to get 25, 50 cents a week, you know, it was lots of

money for us but things were cheap, we could go to a show for 10 cents a week, you know.

Judy: Describe to me the house that you grew up in.

Paul: Well, we lived in different ones, you know. But oh, they were the old two-storey house with the staircases, you know, things like that. The house I was born in was on Avenue L in 1918, was a two-storey old house and it's still sitting there today. In fact I raised all my kids in that, within two, three blocks from that house, you know.

Judy: How many rooms did you say it had?

Paul: It had about five rooms.

Judy: Did it have running water and electricity?

Paul: No there was, them years the most of the city...

Judy: Did it have wood or oil for heating?

Paul: No, wood, coal and wood. Them years, see, the city wasn't modernized, just the main part of the city was modernized and the outskirts were only, you know... They were unmodernized, you know, till within 1930s, then they started to expand out. But our houses were all unmodernized.

Judy: Describe the furniture that you had.

Paul: Today it would be considered antiques, you know, that's practically what we had. We had a range stove, an old black range stove, and long table, you know, things like that, you know.

Judy: Were they store bought?

Paul: Pardon?

Judy: Were they bought in the store?

Paul: Oh yeah. Yeah, but the things were cheap that time, you know. They didn't really have many chesterfields, we had more of what we call a hideabed bed today. That would be our chesterfield, you know, because they had houses were small, you

know, things like that. Furniture was, oh they didn't have building cupboards but they had cupboards that you could take with you, you know, that's the kind of cupboards they had. A lot of people built their own cupboards, you know, like you didn't see cupboards like this, you know. Old wood stoves, but that time they were modern, like to us they were, you know. And later they come out with enamel and that was a big thing. You know, water that time, washing clothes, it was all done by with a tub and washboard, you know. We didn't have no such a thing as a washing machine until later they come out with the old hand one, you know, that was in later years, you know. The

kids would run the old hand washer, you know, then they come out with an electric one -- that was in maybe in beginning of '30s, '40s, that time. Things wasn't really getting that modernized till you get in the '45, '40s. I remember when we were married things weren't that modernized. It was just in the last 25, 30 years things started getting modernized.

Judy: Did your father own any land?

Paul: Yeah, dad owned some land down around in the Round Prairie district, he homesteaded in there. Yeah, they were right next to, the Ouellettes were toward the Genroy's(?) flat. See, they had practically I think that was given to Genroy's(?) flat was give to them by the native people in there, they were from Montreal. But I think practically the Genroy's(?) were part native too, you know, from the east but they, they, they give him some land. They sold him some land or whatever it is down in that part of the, they were down more in the north end of Round Prairie. And the Ouellettes were down right next to them, the Wells, they were all down in that part. And dad had a homestead, most of them they all had homesteads in there.

Judy: How long did he have it for?

Paul: Well, I think they had it for... till after he got married then they left there in the '20s and they moved in the city here.

Judy: So you had it up until the 1920s?

Paul: Oh, I think, yeah.

Judy: When you were living in the city what was your neighborhood like?

Paul: Oh, it was a mixed neighborhood, you know. There was everything down in our district. I was in the Riverdale district and there was, oh there was the Ukrainians, and there was the Germans, you know, there was, it was actually a mixed

district. Lot of good hockey playeres come out of there. Gordie Howe come out of there, he lived on Avenue L. In fact he lived half a block from us. And Mel Hill (?), all the good hockey players that played in the National League all come out of there, you know, in that... They all played for King George School, but we had a good district.

Judy: When you were young did you ever hear the saying road allowance people?

Paul: Road allowance. People that live on the road allowance?

Judy: Yeah.

Paul: Yes. That's what they used to (inaudible) they were going out looking for work and they just pull off the, you

know... There was no highways, they'd just be a road. Well, they'd pull off the highway and they'd unhook their horses, and maybe they'd try to camp where there was a place to water their horses, you know, and lots of feed. Maybe tie their horses on what you call a chain called a (inaudible) rope, you know. Like they'd have one on a horse's foot so maybe they'd do one and the other one wouldn't go away. But that's what they used to call the road allowance, you know. But I don't know really where they got this road allowance thing. I know, I think I was brought up in, they didn't, they didn't really live on the road allowance. I don't know, that's, well that's the same as today. If I'm going to Calgary I'd pull off in some tourist place to have lunch, eh. Well that's what they'd call the road allowance, because them days there was no tourist, there was no picnic grounds, eh. People would go travel, if they were travelling with a team of horses, and maybe two or three going down south to look for work, which they did. They'd camp along the road allowances or an open field, you know, that's what they'd call the road allowance, you know. But they never lived in the road allowance, to say they lived there year round, they never lived there -- not in my days they didn't, you know. I know K and M was put in there, that they lived in road allowance. They never lived there, they camped there, you know, they camped there.

Judy: What were your chores at home when you were growing up?

Paul: Well we had to do our, we had to look after the wood -- cut wood, you know, haul coal in the house. That was, that was practically the younger fellow's job, you know. Shovel snow and go and look after the, feed the horses, you know, like. You know, I mean not the, we had to be 12 years old but

not, the younger ones didn't do that, you know, but the, because they wouldn't let you around the stock, you know. But, you know, you're around 12, 13 years old, that was your job, you know, you had to go out and feed the horses, and clean the barn out, and you know general... haul the wood in.

Judy: So you did own some livestock?

Paul: I didn't, no.

Judy: No, your...

Paul: Yeah they did, oh yeah, they had, they had stock, you know, they had horses and they had cattle...

(END OF SIDE A)

Judy: So they owned horses and cattle...

Paul: Oh yeah, pretty well all the native people, they had, some would have maybe three, four horses. Some had a team,

some of the them were sitting not too bad, you know. You know the ones that lived in the country, the ones that helped themselves, they didn't do too bad, you know. And the ones that lived in the city here they, they worked. I know, I saw most of my uncles had jobs here, like Uncle Fred Wells was a mechanic for the Ford Company since 1927 till he retired -- he's 96. You know, and Uncle Bill worked for the, I think Uncle Bill was one of the first truck drivers in Saskatoon in the Early Fruit Company, you know, they all held jobs when they come to Saskatoon. And dad he, when he was young he worked in town here. He was a, he was a teamster, you know, he had his own teams working general teaming, and cartage and stuff like that. But most of our people were all worked, you know, in the city. The Wells the Trotters they all, they all made a pretty good living, you know, as far as I know. That time there was no bloody welfare, you know, things were cheap, you know, but I'm just talking for ourselves, you know. I'm not talking for anyone else up in the north because we didn't, we didn't live in the north, we lived in the city here. I'm just going through my own experience, you know, in Saskatoon. I started school in Drumheller, you know, I went to school. We lived in Alberta. Like my mother married Bruce Lorrie and we left -- 1923 we lived in Moose Jaw, out west of Moose Jaw. Then from there we went to Drumheller. He worked in the mine there. That's where I started school in 19-- I think '25. And we left there in 1928, '29, then we come back to Saskatoon. We lived here but I was raised and born here, you know, this has been my home town.

Judy: What were the schools like that you attended?

Paul: Well the only ones that I actually went to was St. Mary's school and the ones in Drumheller. I started in Drumheller then I finished off here, I only went to St. Mary's school.

Judy: What was that school like?

Paul: Oh, it was a good school, Catholic school. It was a good school.

Judy: Do you remember the boys and girls being segregated?

Paul: Oh, not really.

Judy: What kind of things would they teach in the school?

Paul: Well they were teaching us, not like what they are today, you know. We had our arithmetic and our, and our spelling, and reading, and it was the old reading book, you know. Like they don't have them any more, like kids nowadays they have all their science, they have this mathematics and all this stuff. We they didn't have none of that but, you know, if you had a reader that's all you had, you know. But I know things were different when they went to school in there, and even our kids... Well, I know Helen was trying to learn some of our kids' homework was a lot different, you know. Even now,

like Wayne, when he brought back some of his homework, even Jackie's kids now today she says... Jackie went through high school but she says their work is a lot different today than it was when she went to school. She went to Bedford here.

Judy: How about the teachers, how do you remember them?

Paul: Oh they were... Oh, I had old Mrs. Prial(?) and Mrs.... They were more of a, well, to me they were like my mother, you know. I mean they weren't, I wouldn't say they were old-fashioned but to me I thought they were because I was young. But now I look back that they weren't, you know, they were just women in their, in their 20s. How we used to call them old bags, eh, but they were, that's one teacher taught me school, went to school with my mother. Her dad used to be principal in St. Mary's School, Mr. McDonald. And I went to school with the (name) the principal's kids, in fact some of them are priests now, you know. And that's what they call A.D. (name) School, that was my principal, old (name). And his kids some of them turned out to be Catholic priests, I think a couple of them did, you know.

Judy: Would you say your experience at school has been good or bad?

Paul: Oh, I don't know. I don't know I got along good in school. I mean I had, I wish I would have went a lot farther anyway, you know.

Judy: Did you have any problems with the white children there? Did they ever call you names or anything?

Paul: No. No we never had any problems with the white society because there seemed to be in one they never bothered us and we never, you know.

Judy: When you think of family what all did that include? Was that just your immediate family or does that include your aunts, your uncles?

Paul: Yeah they, that was aunts and uncles and everything, you know, like we were all in one big family. Like mom had a whole lot of sisters and dad had a lot of brothers, eh, and we had a lot of cousins and that was more of our family, eh, you know. There was quite a few on dad's side -- three girls and about five boys and they all had families, you know. Well Alex and Ed they didn't, I didn't get to know their kids till after I was married, eh. But Uncle Bill, like he was and the Carrons, like not these Carrons but all Carrons, you know, like there was my dad's sister's kids, you know. But they were older than we were but they were, we were all pretty close, you know. Some of the Trottiers, they were all my first cousins, you know, that would be on mother's side. That was a pretty big family then too.

Judy: How do you remember your mother?

Paul: Oh, very well. I was raised by her.

Judy: How would you describe her?

Paul: Mom was a very fine woman. Mom kind of, she lived a, well she was raised here practically too in the city, you know. She was raised... when she was a girl she come, she was very young when, she was maybe about 2 years old when they brought her from the States, but she was raised up in that Round Prairie. Then when she was a teenager she got, you know, mom got very, very young and then they come into the city, eh. And practically she lived in the city all her life too, you know.

Judy: How about your father, how do you remember him?

Paul: Oh, I didn't really, I got to know dad more when I got, after I got older and I was, you know. Dad was a very, he was a pretty good man -- he was kind, he wasn't mean. Oh, I got to know him more when I was, after I got married, you know, because I was raised up by mom.

Judy: How old were you when you got your first paying job?

Paul: Well I was, when I first went on the railroad I was in my, no, I started actually trucking, you know, I was working for the refinery but before that I was working just here and there, you know, same as any young fellow goes out. They work, you know, like maybe go out and thresh maybe for two weeks, you know, we were only making \$2 a day.

Judy: So you just did various jobs?

Paul: Yeah, till I got, till I got married, you know, then after I was married then I got on permanent jobs, you know. But before that we were just doing local jobs, you know, we'd go out of town maybe and go out thresh, maybe go out and work for some gardener, do things like that, you know. That's about all we did.

Judy: What other types of jobs have you had during your life?

Paul: Well, as I said I was a trucker. I liked trucking, my step-dad was a trucker and then I kind of went into it. And I went into gas hauling out for the refineries, then I got in my own then. Then I decided I want to go railroading, then I went on the railroad. Then I stayed there five or six years then I decided to go trucking again, then that's where I finished up. Stayed at my service all the years after that was trucking, you know. Trucking was good to me.

Judy: So you worked in the city as a trucker, eh?

Paul: Then I went in the city in the '50s, the end of '50s. I stayed right up there till I retired in the '80s.

Judy: What sticks out in your mind about the community life

in your area when you were growing up?

Paul: Oh, I think back when I was young, you know, like, you know, when I was very young, you know, I lived in the old district I was, you know, raised up in. Then I was getting older I was getting... and, you know, it brings back a lot of old memories to you, you know, like, you know. You tell your

kids that you were playing here, used to play on this block when you were 8, 9 years old, you know. It brings back a lot of old things, you know.

Judy: What language do you remember as being spoken in your home?

Paul: English.

Judy: English, it was always English?

Paul: And then, then they, see they mixed the, the Metis they talked, like our people they used to mix, they don't talk, our Metis people don't talk the same as Metis people in the north... that's strictly, they don't know. But when our Metis people here talk they mix their Metis with French, you know. And my mother used to talk to me in that, but I never did learn to talk, I understand it but I could never talk it. I could never talk to my grandmother like, you know. She raised... I could say a few words to her, you know, but, you know, like to string it off like my, my mother and them, no I couldn't. Because, see my mother and dad they talk English around, like when I was young then mom was, see my step-dad he wasn't native, you know, so, you know. We didn't get too much of that around home, you know. When my aunts and all them would get together then they'd, you know, and that's when you'd hear more of it, you know. But oh, we were all talking, we went to school in English and we had our folks talk to us in English, you know, that's... And I, well my wife and I talked English all our life and our kids, you know. And I don't know how to talk it. I understand it, you know, like if they're talking to me, like my mother could talk to me I understand it, but to get it back to her I couldn't, you know, like I say I couldn't.

Judy: When were you first aware of being Metis?

Paul: Well, I guess when I was very young when I... You know, what I was start a new life when I was, oh, I'd say around when my family got together when I could hear them talk and I knew it was a different, they were different than somebody else, you know. But, you know, like in our life I don't know, you were brought up in the way I was brought up it was, I don't know, it was a little different maybe than some people because there are people that brought up in the city eh, you know, in my life, you know. Our friends were... they were a lot of them weren't natives, you know, but, you know, we all lived in our district or any other district. We lived pretty good life, you know, like with our friends, you know. But yeah, I imagine I started to realize when I went to school that

I was never called anything, you know, because, you know, we knew that we were... They used to call us... people would call half-breeds and we didn't really know what the hell a half-breed was till we start looking it up what it was, you know, that's...

Judy: Were your parents proud of being Metis?

Paul: Oh, I think so, I think so. They never talked about it but I think they did. They weren't ashamed of it, you know.

Judy: Do you remember your parents or your grandparents, or anyone else in your family ever telling stories about Metis history?

Paul: Oh yeah, they used to talk, talk way back in the early days how they used to travel, you know. Like they're... my mother's folks and their folks, they used to talk the way they used to travel in the early days. You know, they used to travel, you know, by bunches, you know. But they actually talked more about Montana, you know. See, they were never around this part of the country that much -- more in the Montana area, you know.

Judy: Do you remember Metis families in your community getting together for social events or holidays?

Paul: Oh yeah. Sure, they used to get together, then they'd have their little get togethers and sometimes they used to organize little bingo games and stuff like that, you know. They'd have little ball games, you know.

Judy: How about holidays?

Paul: Well that time, you know, they didn't have steady jobs, you know, they didn't travel that far, you know. But the, they'd always get together, they'd get together. And people I thought them years got a lot, got along a lot better than they do today, you know, they were more closer, you know. I know my people were closer. They would help each other a lot, you know, than they do today. The younger people now today they drift away, eh, not like they used to.

Judy: How about the holidays like Christmas and New Year's?

Paul: Oh yeah, they'd have big celebrations down around, mostly they'd celebrate around New Year's and Christmas, and New Year's maybe for a good two weeks. More in New Year's

they'd celebrate. They'd all get together and they'd have a, go from house to house and they'd travel by horses, you know, like they'd have bells and they'd go to, they'd have a big feed at this house, maybe then the next they just go and maybe a dance that night, you know. Every other night there would be a dance somewhere, you know, especially up around Round Prairie when they did. But they did it in the city here too, you know,

the ones that lived here, you know.

Judy: Do you remember your father ever wearing a Metis sash, or any other traditional clothing?

Paul: No. No dad never wore that.

Judy: How about your grandfather?

Paul: No, not that I know, remember my grandfather ever wearing one of that.

Judy: Did your mother ever dress in the Metis style?

Paul: No.

Judy: Did your parents know how to jig?

Paul: Some of them, some of my relatives did, yeah, some of them did.

Judy: Do you know how to jig?

Paul: No. (laughs)

Judy: Was jigging a part of the local dances?

Paul: Yeah, it was kind of a culture to them. A lot of them used to jig when they had house parties, you know. Some of the better ones would jig and some of the women were pretty good at it too, you know, some of the younger girls were very good at it, you know.

Judy: Were there any fiddle players in your family?

Paul: Oh yeah. There was some good fiddle players, some of our relations were good fiddle players.

Judy: What types of songs did they used to sing?

Paul: Oh, they used to play some of the ones that you hear on the Don Messer Show. Some of them, you know, they played some of them, you know.

Judy: How about any Metis songs?

Paul: Well, the older people sometimes at a party would get together and some of the older ones, not the younger ones. Maybe in the 20s would be in a different room where they'd have a party, the older guys would get into a different, maybe a different place or a different room then they'd all sing songs, you know.

Judy: Do you remember what any of these songs were about?

Paul: No, I couldn't remember none of them.

Judy: Did any of the elderly people in your family believe in practising the traditional Indian medicine?

Paul: No. Not on the Metis side, no.

Judy: Did they ever use sweat lodges?

Paul: No, not that I remember.

Judy: Do you remember any illnesses such as perhaps tuberculosis?

Paul: Yeah, there was a lot of tuberculosis -- like we called it T.B. that time. There was a lot of them had it that time, you know. In fact they had a sanitorium here -- it's not running now but there used to be quite a few of the younger women had it, you know.

Judy: When you were growing up in your family, did you have any problems with the white community?

Paul: No, no I didn't.

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

Paul: No. No I, I've, I've always got what I wanted and I wanted to be a truck driver and I got it, and I wanted to be a railroader and I got it. And I've never been turned down a job in the city of Saskatoon.

Judy: Do you remember, did the church play an important role in your parents' life?

Paul: Well, they went to church, yeah. They were pretty good Catholics, you know. I thought they were, you know, like the older people were. Us younger fellows we kind of drift

away but I still believe in the Catholic Church, you know, because I went there when I was young, you know. And I got married in Catholic and most of my kids got married in Catholic.

Judy: Did the priest ever visit your home?

Paul: Yeah.

Judy: What did he used to talk about?

Paul: Oh, they talked about religion, and they'd talk about social life, you know, things like that, you know. They never try to push too much onto you.

Judy: Did they ever talk about politics?

Paul: Not really, no. No, they never talked about politics.

Judy: Do you think the church has more or less influence today than in the past?

Paul: Oh, I think the church are turning to more of a, well I just don't know how to answer that, but I know they're changing to like a Christian, you know, to me, you know. They speak out a lot more, you know. In fact I went to one the other night and they seemed as like it's more the Christian type, you know, the way they preach now, you know, than they did. They seem to be changing, you know.

Judy: Oh, they're more sort of showboating?

Paul: Yeah.

Judy: More vigorous, like what you see on T.V.?

Paul: Yeah, yeah, they're more, getting out more than they used to, you know.

Judy: Do you think the church has generally helped the Metis people face their problems?

Paul: Well I don't know, I don't think so. I don't think so. I think if you live in a community and you want to go to church and things like that, but they never, they've come up to the house and visit, you know. But they never pushed anything onto us, their, you know. They did it, it's not only, they didn't even, they didn't only do it to the Metis people, they did it to everybody, you know. If you belonged to that parish,

well they'd always come up and visit you, you know. I thought they were very good about it, but they never did try to push religion, I mean any religion onto you. If you wanted to go to church that was fine, if you didn't well, you know... But they never charged you like some of the churches do today like, you know. In my time if you wanted to throw collection in, that was fine, if you didn't have it, it didn't make any difference, you know. Like some of the churches today they want, you know, you have to sign so much of your wages, or 5 percent, or something to your wage. But we've never been asked that in our parish anyway.

Judy: What political parties, or party did your parents vote for?

Paul: Well years ago I think the parties was strictly Liberals.

Judy: Do you remember any politicians visiting your home, your parents' home?

Paul: No. No.

Judy: Do you feel like talking about the way you voted over the years?

Paul: No, not really.

Judy: Were you ever involved in the Saskatchewan Metis Society?

Paul: No, I haven't.

Judy: In the early years?

Paul: No.

Judy: Do you remember your parents or anyone else that you know mention the name Joe LaRocque?

Paul: Joe LaRocque, yeah I did, yeah.

Judy: What do you remember about him?

Paul: I didn't remember too much. I knew one of the LaRocques -- I think it's his brother was married to dad's cousin, they used to call him J.B. LaRocque. I think that's a brother, I wouldn't be too sure but I think it is.

Judy: How about the name Joe Ross?

Paul: Joe Ross. No I didn't remember, no. I knew some Rosses but not that particular name, no.

Judy: Do you remember the name Tom Major?

Paul: No I didn't, no.

Judy: Joe McKenzie?

Paul: No.

Judy: How about Sol Pritchard?

Paul: Yeah, I remember Sol Pritchard, yeah.

Judy: What do you remember about him?

Paul: Oh, I remember him. He used to be with, he used to be with my grandfather a lot, you know, they were down in the same area, they were in around Candu in Candu district and around the, they called it I think (inaudible) up in there. That's where I got to know him, you know. Yeah, Sol Pritchard, yeah.

Judy: Do you remember him ever being involved with the Metis Society?

Paul: I don't know, I think they used to talk about the Metis Society years ago, because I remember years ago they had a Metis Society started here in the '30s. There was my Uncle Charlie Ouellette and my cousin Mike Vandale and a bunch... it was in the '30s, they were involved in the Metis Society, you

know. I think it was in about 1933, '34 in there, you know. But they didn't get, they used to have just the odd little bingo games and things like that, you know.

Judy: And that's about all you can remember?

Paul: That's about all I can remember about that, yeah.

Judy: Okay, I want to thank you very much for your cooperation.

Paul: Okay, thanks.

(END OF SIDE B)

(END OF TAPE)