

Transcription
Dorothy Askwith
Tape 1
- Interviewed March 10, 1993 -

Dave: Okay I'm here with Dorothy Askwith. Dorothy has agreed to have an interview with us for the Métis War Veterans book that we're producing. It's March 10, 1993. Dorothy, when were you born?

Dorothy: I was born January 24, 1924.

Dave: Where were you born?

Dorothy: I was born here in Saskatoon.

Dave: When did you enlist?

Dorothy: I enlisted in the end of 42. Year ending 42. I got out October of 1945.

Dave: Where did you go to enlist?

Dorothy: Yes, it was quite an experience actually. I just went to the, the recruiting depot was situated in the Birks building here at that time. I just thought I'd go over and just be a little inquisitive and make some inquiries as to what qualifications you had to have to qualify for enlistment. I went to one individual and past on to another individual and then something else, and pretty soon I had stacks of paper. You take this paper here, now you go for your medical. I had to run up to City Hospital for a medical, back to the Birks building and upon my return they made me sign the dotted line, and I enlisted, qualified all in one day. All the same day. Believe me I had tickets the length of my arm. Meal tickets, sleeper tickets. I was to be on board the CNR train that evening. I had to be on board the train at 9:00. Departure wasn't till 5 or 5:30 the next morning. But I was suppose to be on that train. Already I felt like I was being confined to barracks because I had to be on board. And that was it, and I was on my way to Ottawa.

Dave: And that's where you went first?

Dorothy: That's where I went. I went to Upper Rockliff for my manning. I stayed for 6 weeks. It was quite an experience. I

don't think I got over the excitement and the realization of what really transpired here, because everything wasn't one step at a time, it was just one jump at a time. It was just leaps and bounds, and next thing I was eastward bound. The first time I had ever been away from home. I was elated, I was excited. I had so many mixed feelings. Going to be away for the first time in my life, away from a large family of 10 children, and my mother and father, I thought maybe the separation was going to be a problem. But there was so many things. You're involvement was so hectic that you didn't even have time to think about home. And the joy of meeting new people. I was a little hesitant sometimes, but just feeling my way around, and stuff like that. It was really great. I just fell into it like I was born to be there. (laughing)

Dave: It's quite an experience considering you went down just to check out how you go about enlisting?

Dorothy: Yeah, just to check out. I had, it was my dream. I wanted to do that. I felt rather left out. There wasn't any girls. There was girls, Métis girls in the city. But I didn't have a job, I hadn't even completed my grade 12, because I was the oldest, I quit school much sooner than I would have liked to. And because of shortage of funds and stuff. The income was very minimum. Trying to feed 10 mouths at home I guess, besides mom and dad. We lived in this area at that time. Times weren't very good. This was in the early 40's. Just coming off the dirty 30's I guess as they call them. I never recall being, having abundance of anything, clothing, housing, food, we had enough basics to get by on and that was it. No luxuries, certainly. I always dreamt of getting away from home somehow. If I could just get my way and make a buck. But in those days, bucks were not acquired even if you did have a job. I was elated when I was offered \$1.25 a day in the services. I was working for 25 cents an hour just casual labour, prior to that. So \$1.25 a day, I knew that I would make a lot, because I put in a lot of hours at 25 cents an hour. But this was going to be steady income. All the other fringe benefits too was a great attraction. I now would have clothes, my medical would be paid for, all my medical things. The travel, everything was so exciting. It was a first. I never regretted that. I think that was the most, I don't know how to really describe it, it was such an experience. Such an advantage. There was all advantageous for me. I felt so lucky to be able to qualify for one thing. And the cousins that I had in the city were not interested in anything like that. I had numerous cousins, the

girls, but none of them were interested. So I was found all by myself.

Dave: Is that right?

Dorothy: A-ha. I was the only one from the Métis community here at that time. There was a couple of other girls I know, 2 or 3 other girls that I heard of, but they had gone into the army, but I was in the RCAL. So that branch of the service, I was the only one. The others were in the army, the CWAC they called it at that time. But my favour colour was blue, and the caky didn't turn me on. They told me with my colouring, caky wasn't my calor. Browns and cackies, blue would be nicer. (laughing)

Dave: So you went into the airforce?

Dorothy: A-ha.

Dave: So that was the nature of the training that was, was for service in the airforce?

Dorothy: Yes, we served the men may fly, that was our motto. So you were wide open for any trade. Wherever you were needed, that's where you went. Going in as an unqualified profession, I guess I was sort of jumping here and there and all over the place. So I had a lot of different experiences. I worked in the parachute section, I worked in the post office. I had an opportunity to serve officers in the mess hall. I really didn't like that too much. Self-consciousness just got the better of me, serving senior officers. Then I went into, as you moved from one station to the other, it opened new doors and new jobs. If you were in the service flying training school and bombing and gunnery school, and stuff like that was different things. When I was at the bombing and gunnery school, I got into the link trainer, but I also worked in GIS which was ground instructional school at the service flying training school.

Dave: The LINK trainer, is that it?

Dorothy: Yes.

Dave: What is that?

Dorothy: The LINK trainer is, I sit in a box there with a projector and all I do is run this projector and show pictures of aircraft. And the guys in the BnG school. And the gunners would be sitting in there with there guns and target practice,

it was there target practice. Identifying aircraft and being able to target on the enemy aircraft. I loved that, it was great. And then somebody was there, of course there instructor would be there to evaluate the procedure. It was great, I loved that. It was the business of meeting so many different individuals from different parts of the world. We had a lot of _____ and REF, it was not totally all Canadian. So meeting people was a great experience. Ever since that time, I believe I was rediscient most of the time. Even while I was going to school I was an introvert and didn't want to venture out and meet new people, but this really got me out of my shell. Since that time on I've been a people person. I got to be around people. I can't, I don't much care for this retirement life, sitting here and not having people around. And the latter part here, I've just retired from the Native Alcohol Addiction's field and I was counsellor there for 15 years, which is where I just went and helped out last month. And I love that, meeting people. It's been a great experience. But going back to the service life, have you got another question for me, by the way?

Dave: Oh, I'm just basically, the questions are all related to basic training and sort of experiences you had there, and if any certain experiences stuck out in your mind above others, than you could share those? A lot of them are related to going overseas which didn't happen with you so I'm more interested in finding out what happened to you, you say you spent your time in Ottawa?

Dorothy: In Canada. Just 6 weeks training in Ottawa.

Dave: Oh okay, so where else did you go?

Dorothy: So I was in Moncton, NB, and I was in St. Hebert, PQ, and I was Delmer, ON, and that was more transport training there. I finally decided that I'd like to drive. I never even owned a bicycle prior to joining the airport, and here I'm trying to drive a vehicle. I thought here's another dream come true if I could just learn how to drive a car, a vehicle. I had a girlfriend that was in the motor transport and I admired what she did. Again there was another opportunity. They didn't deny you anything if you wanted you could remuster or take a trade at almost anytime or something of your choice and if you got a test and they felt that you could give it a shot you were given that opportunity. I qualified, and I went. I got my license and I'm still driving.

Dave: Oh, that's great.

Dorothy: Still driving. It was great, it was a wonderful experience. So it was all educational. I benefited an awful lot. I don't know what I contributed to the airforce, it seems to me I was a little selfish. I got all, I did all the gaining, and I was, some of the older girls got to go overseas. It kind of left you feeling a little left out when there was a poster on the board that said so and so was going overseas and you have a little farewell due for them. We all felt a little cheated out. But for age, age being the factor here, I just didn't, I just was wishing this war would last for 10 years or so, so I could qualify. (laughs) Because you had to be 21 before you could overseas. Unfortunately the War was over, well I just turned 21 when the war was over.

Dave: So where you discharged shortly after that time, or did you stay in the service?

Dorothy: Well the war, I stayed on till I got on in October, they had D-day in the spring. And I stayed on for the rest of the summer and well into October I got. I was stationed in Calgary at the time. So I came from down east, down west. I was trying to get closer to home, to Saskatoon. It made it so difficult trying to get home on a 2 week pass. You spent all your time on the train. And coming and going there was no flying home, because that was the only thing you had to pay your own way was your transportation if you wanted to go somewhere. My first posting west was to Manitoba. I was at Kiberline, MB, that was the bombing and gunnery school there and I was at Portage LePrairie which was a service flying training school. From there I came to Yorkton. I recently visited the old base there where now they have the alcohol treatment, White Spruce treatment centre. I was over looking around there. All I could see was a little bit of old tarmac and weeds growing out of the cracked old tarmac. It was kind of, I took my son through there and showed him my old stomping ground. From Yorkton it was after D-day. D-day came around while I was in Yorkton. There was an awful lot of stations closing at that time once D-day came. They felt there was no more need for these training schools. So they were closing one after another. My first posting was suppose to be to Clairshome, AB. Before the time came that I was suppose, came up on orders that Clairshome was being closed. So there was another one that they decided to send me to in Alberta, MacLeod, that too was being closed. So the final choice was I went to number 3 service flying in Calgary. That was right on because I had relatives, my aunts and uncles and I had some more cousins in Calgary. It was like

going straight home from there. That's where I spent the rest of my time was in Calgary and then I got discharged in the number 10 repair depot. I was at the repair depot and that's where I got my discharge.

Dave: So what year would that have been?

Dorothy: 45.

Dave: 45?

Dorothy: A-ha.

Dave: Did you ever learn to fly at all, was that ever part of your training?

Dorothy: No. It wasn't any part of the training. We did go on our familiarization flips, and I was involved in baseball. We did get to fly there from one, playing baseball with different teams. Short flips from here to there. It was part of our sports recreation program. Get off duty and you can play hooky from your job if you got involved in sports.

Dave: Right, yeah. I was talking with a gentlemen by the name of Roderick Bear. He never saw service overseas either, but he was in, I forget where he was. But he was quite a pitcher. He was a coveted pitcher. So he was kept in the service for his baseball abilities.

Dorothy: Can I get you some more coffee?

Dave: Sure. How did your parents, your family feel about you joining?

Dorothy: My mother was very apprehensive on the onset. I believe the military life was quite apparent on the streets when people were on leave. There was a lot of drinking. It was party time when you got leaves or passes. I think my mother was afraid of us being introduced to alcohol. There was a bit of a lecture and she said I will let you go. She did have to give me permission to get in there, because I was 17. She said if the first time I ever hear of your drinking all I have to do is write a letter and I can get you out. She says I don't want no drinking. Of course poor mom, what can she see when I'm about 3, 4, 5 provinces away. Certainly, her fears were realistic, because that's what it was all about. We got introduced to alcohol very quickly. That was the time I was a little hesitant

to drink anything stronger than beer. At that time my idea of alcohol was beer, beer you wouldn't get drunk if you drank beer. Now since I've worked with addictions, it, the content is still there. It might take a little more, more in terms of quantity, but the alcohol content is still there. Rather than enjoy the company, I liked the relaxed feeling that you got. I guess what we called it then was relief drinking. You did a lot of, a lot of people went through tension. Of course you went through a certain amount of tension. Especially when you heard the news, daily there was war news. What was happening. And you hear that relatives and close friends have terminated or got killed or seriously wounded. You go through mixed kinds of feelings and a lot of apprehension. I imagine those people, I would think that I was the luckiest one, because I was here, and not really involved in the direct fighting, or direct involvement in the war, such as my husband was. I am the fortunate one. But you still feel it, you still have the feeling through relating to other people and experiencing the trauma when news came like that. I think I was the fortunate one, not being exposed to the direct warfare.

Dave: Did you find that as an aboriginal woman that you experienced any discrimination at all?

Dorothy: Not, I believe everybody was too busy at that time. I've been asked that, did you ever experience that in the services? Do you know, it's funny that you should mention that. I believe that everybody was so involved in what was happening at that time, nobody was involved in such pettiness. I don't think you bothered to look at the color of your buddies skin when you're going through things like that. Especially the guys who were in warfare. I know I had a couple of cousins and they said that. Who the hell ever stopped to look at. They were in the same foxholes

Dave: Trenches.

Dorothy: Trenches and foxholes with these Negroes. He said you were both so gall darn glad that you could get a place to duck into who. Who gives a damn who's with you. We're here together, it's two lives. That is my feeling. I don't think, there was so much going on those days that I don't think we were really involved in pettiness. Everything was too serious to think petty like that. Casually yeah, I had a couple of casual gestures I guess as a native person. And it was a senior officer. We had to salute all the senior officers, no matter where and no matter who you were. You salute a senior officer

when you address them. And he was an adjacent to where we were stationed, he was next to the CO. He was the second highest in command and I was really quite bitter about that. When I went to salute him, instead of returning my salute he'd go "HOW". Just raised his hand and said "HOW". And that just stunned me, it floored me, but what do you do. I mentioned it to my girlfriend. So what can you do. So he sat there and he said here, they'll never listen to you. You're just going to get yourself in trouble. So dummy up. So dummy up I did. So I just avoided him. If I saw him coming down anywhere on the station, it meant that I would have to meet him and give him a salute. No way, I'd about turn or make a right or left turn and go somewhere else, to avoid an encounter with him. He was really quite ignorant when I think now, when I think about it. How ignorant he was. He really stunned me. But other than that, my girlfriends, I had, we shared a bunkhouse with a lot of girls of different nationalities. Most of the time I was the only one of native ancestry. And I never ever, if they talked behind my back I never heard it. But never in front of me. Whatever we were involved in, we were always involved as a team. It was all teamwork, whatever we did. I felt very comfortable. If I had felt things like that were going to go on, I don't think I would have hung around. I don't think I would have wanted to stay. I don't know what I would have done. I would have talked to somebody about it. I felt like talking to someone about this, that's funny now, I should have went to this senior. The women had there own senior officer. He was the adjacent of the whole base. But we had our senior officer and I never went to her. I never went to complain, I thought oh hell, it's just pettiness. Anyways, that's the only experience I had, other than that, nothing too much.

Dave: Yeah, when I talk to a lot, you're the first woman I've interviewed, when I talk to a lot of the men, they say the same thing. Especially the guys who did see action. They said exactly the same thing that you did. There was no time to worry about, Hi.

Dorothy: This is my husband Harold. We're near the end anyways, I think.

Harold: You're near the end. Well give him a good one.
(laughs)

Dorothy: Did I give you some coffee?

Dave: Yes you did, I'm just guzzling away here.

Dorothy: Can I get you more?

Dave: No, I'm fine thanks. I should just probably turn this thing over. (end of side 1)

Dave: But anyway, they did say the same thing, skin color, race, it had no place in their experiences. They were too busy trying to stay alive and of course you had to help one another to do that. Which I think is so ironic you know the one.

Dorothy: It was people helping people. And that's what I notice is lacking in today's society. Nobody helps anybody. Nobody, paddle your own canoe. Tough titty. If you haven't got it, too bad. And if you haven't got it, it's give me give me. There is no one that is willing to give a hand. My husband tells me quite often, boy he says, you're always for the underdog. I am for the underdog, not in terms of giving them sympathy, but encouraging them. You don't have to be down here, go for it. I have a model, go for it. If you want something bad enough, go for it. Don't sit there and say give me or sit there and cry and complain. Get off your butt and go for it. You can't depend on anybody in today's society. If you're going to be a little backward, you're going to be sitting there a heck of a long time. It's whoever gets out there first. Whoever gets out there first. Or, who you know.

Dave: Yes, that's true. So after you were discharged, what did you do at that time?

Dorothy: At that time I got to like Calgary very well. I decided to stay there for awhile although I was coming home quite often. Now I could come back to Saskatoon quite often. But in the meantime I got married. I decided to stay there with my husband, as he already got out of the services and was there. My first husband, not Harold. And I guess those wartime marriages didn't last, didn't work very good. He was kind of a, there's no courtship certainly, not like you would ordinarily. It's a hurry up thing, kind of right now, and overseas they're gone, so you're left. In the meantime I had a couple, 3 years to grow up and 2 to 3 years separation on a short relationship. I thought I was looking at a stranger here. And people do change when they go through that traumatic situation especially haven't been wounded and then being 21 years old, I wasn't ready to settle down anyways. I was Miss KnowItAll now. I had a lot of experience. I just wanted to do my own thing. I've been use to being looked after, so having this monthly income I felt this

is the end. Now once you get that income, it's the same as your first job. You get that experience of getting that paycheck and you quit or you don't have a job, and it leaves an emptiness. So I think I was living in a bit of a fear, what am I going to do now. So I stayed in Calgary and I had a job and I worked there. I worked there for about 2 years. 2 years at my first job and then I got another one. But I was coming back to Saskatoon periodically. And my mother and father were here, and my mother was suffering ill health at that time so I came home quite often. 1929 at 50 my mom took a turn for the worse, she was diabetic. So I came home and decided to move back to Saskatoon. All my younger sisters were employed. There was no one at home now. I felt I had left them in a lurch too. Everybody had been at home looking after the home front and Dorothy's been away having a good time sort of thing, doing her own thing. I felt being the oldest I was always by my mom's side prior to the war. I was her helper. I was her babysitter and I was her little cook helper or whatever. I felt that I better get back there and give a hand. And from there on, I no sooner got back here and I was introduced to Harold. I had, had a divorce by that time, separating from husband, my first husband a long time before that in 46 I finally was separated. He was from down east, so he went back down east and I stayed in the west, I'm a westerner. I guess I'll die a westerner, there's no way I'll ever live in the east, and here I still am. I met Harold, and I remember Harold when we went to school. I went to St. Mary's and he went to _____ John's school. I knew him as the guy down the street. I guy that went to the Protestant school when I went to the Catholic school. That's the meaning _____ there. But my sister had married his best friend, his buddy. And that's how we started, I got an introduction and that. And we got married in 1952. And here we are. 40 years last September.

Dave: I think that's the same year my parents got married.

Dorothy: Is that right?

Dave: Yep. Actually we're from the east, from

Dorothy: Oh pardon me.

Dave: No, no. I could never go back there. This province in particular has a really interesting beauty about it and the people too, the people are wonderful. That was the year that my parents got married. So what happened after that. Were you

working after that, after you got married, or did you sort of settle down?

Dorothy: No, just settled down and been the pampered housewife. My husband was working here, Harold was working. He got out of the navy in 45 and his dad ran a plumbing shop here in Saskatoon. So he learned the trade, he was plumbing since he was 8 years old. He worked side by side with his dad, being the oldest boy. And when he came back from overseas, it was only natural that he get back into the swing of things. Back into the plumbing trade. And he retired. He had been at the plumbing trade until he had retired 5 or 6 years ago.

Dave: And you have children?

Dorothy: Yeah, we have 3 children, 4 children not my oldest daughter, and Valerie who just had the baby boy the other night and our last ones, our babies were born in 1961, I had twins.

Dave: Oh really, lots of fun.

Dorothy: Lots of fun. I had a boy and a girl. My son now works in Yorkton at the Royal _____. Oh my goodness, I got loads of pictures here. Here's our family. Here's the gal that just had the baby. These are the twins. That's dad and myself. That was just taken at Christmas time.

Dave: That's a good picture.

Dorothy: Except dad, he looks awful. This is my son and his wife. They're expecting in August. They're first. She's nursing. She works here at the University. Pediatrics. And this is Valerie's oldest daughter. She had a little brother.

Dave: So there's 2 in that family now, 2 kids.

Dorothy: She has a boy and a girl.

Dave: We have 2 boys and a girl.

Dorothy: Well have you. We've only got the one guy.

Dave: So how did you get involved in working with addictions counselling?

Dorothy: A lot of experience. I guess I was introduced to alcohol during the war and after I got married, I started to

discover. We never had children for the first 6 years. So Harold and I had a lot of friends, young friends. And it was party time every weekend. And alcohol was beginning to be quite a problem for me. I guess I call myself a recovering addict. Alcoholic. I went to Alcoholics Anonymous in 1963 got _____ after my twins were born. You cannot do two jobs. You cannot do two things. You got to do one job and do it well. You cannot be involved in two. I was making party time quite a full time job here, and it was making my homelife unmanageable. Certainly I was not happy. Nobody was too happy. No one was too happy for this alcoholism or drug addiction. So I had a choice I guess. Thank goodness I had a choice. There was no treatment centres around at that time, but there was Alcoholics Anonymous which had begun in 1935 and alcoholics were using that program for recovery. And I had never heard of AA before. I sort of ran into it accidentally and never even had anybody. None of our friends that we drank with mentioned AA. Nobody ever, oh I guess when you're young you never look at it as it as a problem or might be a problem. Or if it is a problem, what do you do. Just started nosing around I guess and in my own way kind of looking. I thought one day when I was home I'd phone and see what it's all about. I went to the hospital yesterday to meet the man who visited me after my first phone call. He's an AA sponsor since that time, since 1963. Been supportive. His whole family. His wife got involved and she's my buddy. She's been a buddy over the years. We had to change friends, it helped to change friends. So they were very supportive, he had quite a drinking problem too. He's a veteran too and she's a veterans wife. Left with 3 children while he went overseas, well 2 I guess. So she kind of related our story. We understood one another I guess. So we've been pals for years and now he's very ill. He's been deteriorating, of course he's in the 70's, he's 72 years old. He's in the hospital, and I was in to visit Valerie in the hospital. He's palliative care, so Harold and I went through and had a quick visit with him. So there's a lot of good people in AA, and once I got in there again, when I get into something I like to jump in both feet and I really got involved in AA and learned about the whole program, and I guess when treatment centres started to open, particularly the native alcohol program, again it opened new doors for me. Seeing as my husband was English and I really didn't have full involvement or association with other Métis people or native people, particularly treaties, and non-status, I didn't even know there was non-status treaty. You're either reserve or you live in the city, that was my understanding of native people at that time. But when my stepbrother, Clarence Trotchie became the director of the first native alcohol treatment centre in Saskatoon, I

really got inquisitive. I really wanted to know what it was all about. And I guess he was secretly wishing that I'd come forward because he was really wanting some help. I went there and sat through lectures and stuff, observed the people that were in treatment and sort of observed and absorbing whatever I could, and I thought hey, this is a piece of cake. I thought I could do this. In the meantime he told me, I know you know this AA program a whole lot better, you know all about the addictions and recovering, because you've been in the program, you've only been a sober a year. You've been around here since 1972, you've been here a little. I'm glad you came, but I don't want you to come. I'm the director of the centre. I want you to stay here and keep your mouth shut. That was the job. He said if I make mistakes, please don't embarrass me and try to correct me in a lecture, let's discuss this by ourselves. We were learning and teaching one another. So anyways, that's how we got started, after 30 days, I got into part-time. I had the children going to highschool at that time, still at home. I still wanted to be the mother here, and get my working husband off to work, be home and have supper ready for him, and the children when they come home from school. So I accepted it part-time from 9:00-1:30 everyday. Home by 2:00 and have lots of time to pick up the kids from school, drive up the _____ and get them home, have supper ready for hubby and back to work the next morning. Oh I was on the ball, and I enjoyed that very much. One of the first ladies I worked, and one of the first guys that I worked with our still sober, it's fantastic. Speaking about being a peoples person, I just love that. You get patients in there for 30 days and then they're gone. And then you get a new bunch in there for 30 days. I didn't know that there was so many native people in this province. You travel in the circle of your own. You see over there and that, but today, my God, just the years that I've worked in that treatment centre, the number of native people that have come into the city, it's unbelievable. When I speak of the time when the war broke out, my dad was a drinker. I think he brought home more native soldiers to our house in 1939 before I joined up when I was 15-16 years old, he'd bring these soldiers home and they'd have a few drinks at home, and I thought where the hell did he get all these people from, all these guys in the uniform. He was just trying to be the friendly guy and find out who they were and invite them home for a meal, and I never saw native people like that in the city until the war broke out, and I think that was the beginning. And they too got out of the reserve kind of thing. When they got out like myself, they just want to be in with people and they just sort of started migrating into the city. But speaking of the treatment centre, I never knew anybody anywhere. I think

I knew the treaties at the reserve just south of town here, the Sioux reserve, but any other reserve I was unfamiliar with anybody. I knew friends and relatives in Regina, maybe one or two in Battleford, maybe one or two in Prince Albert. But I'm afraid if you told me to go to Meadow Lake, North Battleford, Buffalo Narrows, La Loche, Walaston, Uranium City, Pinehouse, you name it. I never heard of it. Today I say, I don't know what I acquired working here for 16 years, but I know that I am rich with friends. I can go anywhere in this province and I would no someone. Because of all the invitations that I get from different people who come from different areas they say, Dorothy if you ever come to La Loche, don't worry about where you're going to stay, come and stay with me for a week. Ile-a-la-Crosse, Meadow Lake or right up to the far north, there's people. I can go anywhere in this province and I know people. So many friends and they're all alcoholics or recovering alcoholics. And so many who are do meaningful jobs today and that gives me such a good feeling. That they were one time drunks and are leading such useful and meaningful lives today. Like all the staff at the treatment centre, those guys, night guys there were all guys that I worked for. Saw them when they come in and saw them when they were going through the treatment centre and observed them for a year or two after and see how they were doing in recovery. And I ran a meeting in conjunction with the treatment centre, I was involved with that. So I encouraged these guys that were in the city, guys to keep coming to meetings, coming to meetings, because that's how I got my recovery, it wasn't by going to treatment centres, it was through meetings. So I encouraged them and then when I observed how well they were doing, whenever we needed staff I'd say there's somebody that's doing really well. I'll give him that first chance, and that's how they got there jobs. Just observing there recovery. So one of the guys that is there now I guess has been there for about 13-14 years. Richard and Peter have all gone through treatment. So I feel a little, a little down sometimes because I'm not involved, but it gives me a little pick up. I volunteer once a month, once a month I volunteer to go in there and lecture. But this little bit I was telling Larry, the other counsellor that got ill one December, I said you know Larry it's a heck of a thing for me to say, I'm glad you're sick. But you know what I mean. I'm sorry that you're ill, but I'm so happy because it gives me an opportunity to come back and take your place. I'm sympathetic for you but I'm so happy for myself that I can come back again and do my little bit. It was great, it's a great experience. I wouldn't pass it for the world. I don't have time to really get despondent and I haven't got time to get full of self-pity. My

husband says, my God I never see this woman around. I could be so involved in so many things. But right now it's my family, my grandchildren. I guess that's what grannies are for. I go to Edmonton, I got one granddaughter up there, the twin girl lives in Edmonton, the twin brother lives in Yorkton. They're expecting a first in August and then Valerie is here and Sylvia is here, and Sylvia has 3 teenagers, so I've got 5 grandchildren. So life has been pretty good. It's certainly been, I am so lucky. I am so lucky, so many people, what a drag it must be. Bored, you live one lifestyle, and you terminate. You live a life. I can tell the alcoholics, so many people, the native people that they're leased in a lifestyle of drinking. That's all they know is drinking and drugs, at an early age, 8,9,10 years old, they've already started drinking. In their early 20's they're dead. It's sad. I said but we can turn that around, each and everyone. Every alcoholic, native or otherwise, but particularly when I address those people, you can turn that around. Wouldn't that be wonderful, and I, when I first came, I heard people say I am a grateful alcoholic, I am so glad that I am an alcoholic. What in the hell have you got to be glad to be an alcoholic for. You're grateful because you're an alcoholic? Now I can understand. I'm grateful. If I hadn't been, if I hadn't had an addiction problem I would have never even opened the big book of alcoholics anonymous and it would have never have been of interest to me. All it is, is introduces you to a new way of life, a drug-alcohol free lifestyle. That you can live abundantly without these dependents on chemicals. I said, you know, isn't it wonderful. I'm glad that I was an alcoholic because I was exposed to this program, and we as recovering alcoholics are unique kind of people. Because I can say now that I have lived two different lifestyles in one lifetime. I lived the addictions lifestyle, I know what that's all about, I know what the feelings are, I know the problems, I know the physical, mental and emotional trauma that I went through. And then the recovery, the chemical free is so abundant. I wouldn't trade it for the world. All I know is, I don't give a damn how the rest of you want to die, there's stereotypes and people are stereotyped. Turn on the radio and turn on the TV, there's another drunken Indian. Another one down the drain. It upsets me to the point that I've got so angry. I will not be stereotyped, I don't know about you guys, but I've promised Dorothy that I will die sober, I don't give a damn what happens. That's my promise, not to you or to anyone else, but to me. One native is going to die sober. That's the whole thing about the addictions program. That's my life over there. And you know, the only sad thing about it is I called the native addictions program my baby. There's a lot of inner

Métis squabbling over the program itself. I don't know what the idea is, but all I see it's for probably power gain, it's all big politically. Trying to be politically ruled, and anyone that is going to be involved in an addictions program, better damn well have a heart for people and forget about the goddamn paycheck that's going to be involved, because if your heart is not in people and you're not willing to help people it's going to go out the window.

Dave: So there's some change, some people trying to change the program now?

Dorothy: Well there's been a lot of changes since I left. A lot of petty jealousies and stuff, power struggles is what it's all about. Everybody's on the power trip, they want to kick this one out so they can have, kick all our board out, just making decisions. I don't like that, but again my husband tells me stay out of it. You did your bit. What they do with it, it's up to them now. I sure hate to see that program go down the drain because it's sure as hell helped a lot of people if they want to be helped. There's the unfortunate ones that can't seem to do nothing about. But if you win one, that's a life, and that's what the whole war is all about. It's been a war all the way through. And there's a hell of a battle to be won right now. And it's not with guns and stuff. Like the mechanical warfare. This is a chemical warfare today. And there's more native people dying today than there was in the war I think, being that there is more.

Dave: When you count infant mortality and suicide as well.

Dorothy: So I've been through a lot of wars.

Dave: Yeah, you're active service duty did not end with your discharge from the army that's for sure.

Dorothy: No, and I don't want it to end. (end of tape)