

Mike Mercredi, Frank Tomkins, Ron Laliberte  
Métis Political Activist Interviews (Jan 24, 25, 2004)

Tape 1

**Start Time: 10:34:58.14**

**(Video Time: 10:34.58.14) Ron Laliberte:** That's interesting. Mike, when you, when you think back on the people who influenced your political consciousness and, you know, when you first started becoming political aware, what memories do you have of that? Do you, was there certain people that come to mind from your community or other politicians that, you know, sort of shaped the way you thought about things politically? Do you have any memories of that at all?

**(Video Time: 10:35.24.16) Mike Mercredi:** Yeah a little bit. I am sort of envious of, of you, Frank in getting to know Malcolm Norris and Jim Brady so well. I'm going to jump a head a little bit here to when we were in La Ronge. When I first came to La Ronge in about 1979, 1980 Stan Durocher, who was an ex-war vet, and was on the Senate for the Métis Nation, he died I think a couple years ago. Stan and I used to sit outside Jim Brady's shack, I think it's the tin shack you're talking about. The shack was still there and, and we would sit out there and he would tell me about Jim Brady, because he knew him very well also. And it was Stan's suggestion that our local should be called the Jim Brady Local. And, and I thought that was an excellent idea because I never could remember what number it was, but the Jim Brady Local we knew. And the Jim Brady Local was unique to La Ronge area and

the fact that Jim and Halkett don't have a, a grave marker, I thought it was only fitting....

**Ron Laliberte:** Yeah.

**Mike Mercredi:** ... that the local be called the Jim Brady Local. My awareness in the Métis movement, of course really started to get going after I completed University in 1974. I got out of the Army in 1974, 1976 I completed University and I was in Manitoba. And first with the Métis, Manitoba Métis Federation and I was at an All Chief's conference and I was talking to an, an ex-soldier, Aboriginal guy and while we were talking he said, "There's a Mercredi over there." So he pointed to a young guy and it was Ovide Mercredi. Now I didn't have a clue who in the hell Ovide Mercredi was, nobody did at that time because he was just finishing University. And so that was sort of the beginning and then the people that made me more politically aware, I guess would be Yvon Dumont in Manitoba, Larry Desmille in Alberta and Jim Sinclair in Saskatchewan. I made a mistake when I said Sam Sinclair but remembering now is that, yeah Sam and I had an awful lot, many, many long talks about, about Métis politics. He's quite a guy too and I think he might have been interested on, on this program on this interview. But I have no idea where he is. Last time I saw him he was in Alberta but that was a long time ago. So these guys are like, you know, they're not in the distant past but they're sort of behind us and Yvon Dumont, of course, is still around but they were the ones that sort of helped me establish some kind of foundation about Métis politics. And when we got to La Ronge in 1979, shortly after that I was on the Board of Directors with Métis Local and I

was there for a number of years and then I moved on to Alberta. I was a member of the Métis Association of Alberta. I was a member of the Métis Association of the Northwest Territories for a little while. I was traveling all over the place. And as I moved through this from place to place I started to take a much greater interest in the politics of the Métis. And some of the things I have a hell of a time with is that, we're, the term that keeps coming to mind is that "we're committed." But that's not a good term but we're in this, we're committed to getting funding from the governments, the Saskatchewan government, the federal government, and everything else. For the longest time I think, what we need to be doing is negotiating with the federal government. We should have a federal act to address Métis issues. We should not be hooked onto the shirttail of the First Nations. We are a nation in our own right and we should begin negotiating with the, with the federal government to establish a *Métis Act*. And then we can deal with the provincial governments as necessary. I don't think that we should be confined to the artificial boundaries of each province. And as you move from one province to the other you have to get yourself a new Métis card. I don't think it's right. I think we should have one Métis card that says we belong to the Métis Nation. That one Métis Nation should cover all of our homeland and our homeland, of course, stretches from Northern Ontario right through to the Rocky Mountains and to the Arctic.

**End Time: 10:40:32.14**