

Elder Interview of Christine Misponas (A):
Place: Ile-a-la-crosse, Saskatchewan
Date: July 4, 2001
Interviewed by: Wayne Morin (Q):
Transcribe & translated by: Wayne Morin
Present at interview: Anna Ryding, Brenda MacDougal, Lilah Morin, Joe Misponas & Karla Elder
Type of equipment used: 8mm-video recorder c/w with cordless microphone

Time

00:34:58

Start: 00:34:56.05

Q: Where were you born?

A: I already told you, Sandy Point. (Laughs)

Q: What are the names of your father and mother?

A: Mary Jane & Ambrose Morin.

Q: Where were they born?

A: Oh! God I wonder where. Probably over there to, I know my mother, my father I don't know, Buffalo maybe.

Q: Buffalo Narrows?

A: Yes.

Q: What do you remember about your mother and father?

A: They taught me a lot of things, I remember. I haul wood; they ask me to do a lot of things. (Laughs)

Q: Where, Sandy Point?

A: Yes.

Q: Is that where you lived?

A: That is where we lived, yes. First we lived in Buffalo, we moved back when I was 10 from Buffalo.

Q: About what year 19?

A: I wonder.

Q: 37?

A: Yes.

Q: When?

A: 37 is when I was born.

Q: What year were you born?

A: I'm 74 right now.

Q: 1927?

A: I think that's what Joe said.

Q: 1927, yes that would make you 74 years old.

Q: How many in your family?

A: Ah! 11, 11 of us. My mother lost one in Buffalo.

Joe: She lost one here too.

A: And one here, she lost two children. One boy and one girl.

00:36:54

Lilah: What were their names?

A: Louis, now what were their names, Louise was the girl.

Q: That's the one she lost?

A: Yes, the other one I don't know his name, I can't really remember that was long ago.

Q: What are the names of your brothers and sisters?

A: Mary Rose was my sister, we lost here, she was my older sister, she would be 75 years old.

Q: So she would be older than you?

A: She's older, yes. She was raised by my grandmother.

00:37:53

Q: What did you do when you were young, you mentioned hauling water?

A: We hauled water, cooked outdoors, cooked bannock.

Q: How about the boys what did they do?

A: They hauled wood. They would cord wood in the forest. Leon and them.

Q: Did they hunt?

A: Yes.

Q: Did they hunt with your father?

A: Yes, they snared rabbits, a lot of things.

Q: Did you see your cousins and uncles a lot?

A: Yes.

Q: Did they all live there?

A: Yes, they would all come, as far away as Pinehouse.

Q: To Sandy Point?

A: Yes, today nobody comes to visit.

Q: Who did you marry?

A: Joe. (laughs)

Q: Joe?

A: Misponas.

Q: Where is he from?

A: From Sandy Point. (Laughs)

Q: He's from Sandy Point Too?

A: No, he's from Pinehouse. His family came from there.

Q: Where did you meet him?

A: I met him at Sucker Point. (Laughs)

00:39:15

Q: How many ah Children do you have?

A: Hey! I had 11 too. I lost 5 children 3 girls and 2 boys.

Q: Right now?

A: Only 3 left.

Q: Only 3?

A: Muglaire, Edward and Frieda. And the ones I lost Lena and.

Q: How about the ones you raised?

A: 2, Sheldon and Melissa.

Q: Every since?

A: Yes, since they were small.

End: 00:39:53:20

Start: 00:39:53:28

Q: Who taught you this?

A: My mother, father and grandmother, I use to go with them, she even taught me to make moose hide.

Q: Have you always known that you were a Half-breed? Is this the way your father and mother taught?

A: Yes.

Q: Did they teach you that you were a Half-breed?

A: Yes, that what they use to say.

00:40:30

(Reference between Lilah and Wayne)

Q: What did you do in the past, like today you sew?

A: I sew now, but in the past I wash cloths, like this (Shows with her hands). I washed, hauled wood, pick berries. (Pauses) I never ran out of things to do.

Q: When you guys visited did you have feasts?

A: Yes.

Q: What did they eat?

A: They cooked the Indian way. No "white food".

Q: Did you play?

A: Yes, we play ball. Nobody fought like today. (Laughs)

00:42:01

Q: If something went wrong who straighten out?

A: Leon probably, Leon because he use to yell. (Laughter) Not me.

Q: What did you do on holidays like New years, Easter, Christmas?

A: Nothing much, we would eat and than travel with out grandfather, we paddle a long ways.

Q: So you did nothing?

A: No holidays for use a long time ago.

Q: Nothing?

A: No. (laughs)

Q: Nothing like today?

A: No nothing like today. We never saw anything we didn't even have a turkey.

Q: What did you eat?

A: Ducks, things like that.

Q: Rabbits?

A: They killed a cow and we cooked the meat.

Q: Where did they get cows?

A: My father had a lot of them, cows.

Q: Was he a cattle rancher?

A: Yes.

Q: In Sandy Point?

A: Yes, he raised them there.

Q: How did he get them there?

A: My grandfather had a few, my father kept them, than they multiplied. He would get cows delivered by horse and cart.

Q: He had a lot?

A: Yes, he had many. George had some too.

Q: They're cattle farmers?

A: Yes.

00:43:34

Q: What happened when people got married?

A: Nothing much, I don't even remember what I wore when I got married.
(Laughs) Not a wedding gown.

Q: Nothing like today?

A: Nothing like that, you just got married, we paddled from a cross to get married here.

Q: Here in church?

A: Yes, just when my sister Elizabeth was born we got married. Right now she 58 years old.

Q: 58 years already?

A: yes, 50 years, 50 years since we got married.

Q: What happened when people ^{passed} past away?

A: Nothing, we made a wooden box and buried them.

Q: Just like that?

A: Yes.

Q: They didn't bring the body to church?

A: Yes, but we didn't have a wake.

Q: Lets see, say something?

A: (laughs)

Q: You never did anything for New years?

A: No, we ate, we didn't even know that it was New years eve.

00:45:00

Q: A cross the lake?

A: They drank but not as much as today.

Q: No?

A: No.

Q: Where did they get it?

A: They made it themselves.

Q: They made it themselves?

A: Yes.

Q: Did your Father drink lots?

A: Yes, (Laughs) didn't take him long to pass out.

Q: Do you know how to jig?

A: Yes.

Q: Did they have any square dances?

A: Yes, over there. I use to dance then but now I don't try. (laughs) My father played the fiddle.

Q: Red River jig?

A: Yes.

Q: Your Father played the fiddle?

A: Yes.

Q: My grandfather used to be a good fiddle player!

Brenda: yeah?

Q: Yeah.

A: That is why I got that picture of the fiddle made (Points with lips). Cecile made it, Magloire's wife.

Q: Its all ah local, local artist.

A: Yes.

Q: They played fiddle a lot?

A: Yes.

Q: Good fiddle?

A: Yes.

Q: Your father played, who else played?

A: Frank played the guitar with his father.

Q: Frank?

A: Yes.

Q: Did they go around playing?

A: Yes, he would be requested to play all over, weddings, my father.

Q: Did you go with him?

A: No, I didn't go anywhere, as I had to look after the children. End: 00:46:49:26

Q: Are you the oldest in the family?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you have horses?

A: We had lots, 8.

Q: What were the horses used for?

A: Hauled wood, Straw, from the river.

Q: Those were workhorses?

A: Yes.

Q: With horses?

A: When we come a cross to church.

Q: How about in the spring?

A: Nothing, motor and boat.

00:47:31

Q: What did you eat?

A: We ate a lot of things from the bush.

Q: Did you buy much?

A: Not much, we bought flour for bannock, no bread. We made our own bread.

Q: And ducks?

A: Yes.

Q: Moose?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you mother and father ever tell stories?

A: Yes, but not often. They didn't have a lot of time to tell stories. My mother was always working, keeping and raising children. Buckley and them stay there for a long time.

Q: What do you remember of the stories they told?

A: Oh! Crime, I wonder, A long time ago they would speak of elders moving up north. That's all I remember.

Q: For what?

A: Use dogs to go and trap.

Q: Like North?

A: Yes.

Q: When would they come home?

A: They come home at Easter.

Start: 00:46:55:25

Q: Easter?

A: Yes.

Q: When did they leave?

A: In the fall, just before freeze up, with boat.

Q: They would fish and what?

A: Yes, everything, they would dry fish to survive.

Q: When they kill animals they would use all parts?

A: Everything, even the bones would be used to make oil.

Q: Moose antlers?

A: Yes, we made dry meat so the meat wouldn't spoil.

Q: So they did have any waste?

A: No, we threw nothing away.

00:50:13

Q: Since childhood where did you live?

A: (Points) Over there, every since my grandfather moved there.

Q: Where, Sandy Point?

A: Yes, Sandy Point, towards the beach. Then we moved to the point, My father moved (microphone dropped) This thing keeps slipping.

Lilah: I know.

Q: Is that Sucker Point, where is that?

A: Water surrounds Sucker Point.

Q: Sucker Point, you live there a long time?

A: Yes, I lived at Sandy Point for long.

Q: How about sucker point?

A: Yes, I live there too, I still do.

Joe: They live at Black Bay.

A: First place was Black Bay that's the only name, Black Bay? My grandfather lived there.

Q: Did your father or mother ever talk about Land?

A: No.

Q: Like land script, if they ever signed a paper?

A: They never spoke of it, I never heard them, I was busy working all the time, maybe they did, not very often I.

Q: Do you know if?

A: They made something, No?

Q: No, they owned land some where?

A: Yes, I just don't know.

Lilah: Sandy Point they must have owned it.

A: That's the only place they lived.

Q: Half-breed Land was the thing they signed, and Money script was the other.

A: Yes, Yes he never talk about it.

Q: No?

A: No, but he passed away suddenly. Didn't talk about it.

End: 00:52:36:17

00:52:39

Q: What did you women do?

A: Just, cook, wash, nothing else, than I would sew.

Q: And the Boys?

A: Wood them, fishing things like that.

Q: Did you get paid with money?

A: We never got paid.

Q: No?

A: No.

Q: How did you make a living?

A: I use to come here (Points) and work for the elders and police, they paid me.

Q: From a cross?

Start: 00:52:38:19

A: I walked from a cross.

Q: What did you do?

A: Mop floors, wash cloths. Sometimes I would take the police shirts home to wash. Than I would bring them back. I worked lots; I would buy lots of food. My mother was happy. (Laughs) Things were not expensive, like today.

00:54:09

Q: Did you?

A: Yes, I trapped.

Q: You Trapped?

A: I trapped animals, I trapped, yes, that's why.

Q: Who did you go with?

A: Nobody, I was a lone, when Joe leaves, I too would trap around where I lived.

Q: Oh! That's where you trapped?

A: Yes.

Q: Who build houses?

A: Where?

Q: Sandy Point, were you lived, Who?

A: My father, no men, my uncle George would help him, and then for him.

Q: Were did they get?

A: They bought it, it would be delivered, they fished in the winter (Points), the people that bought fish, in sleds, would bring them lumber.

Q: Oh!

A: Yes, they were never stuck, people cooperated.

Q: Did any body from you family fight in the war?

A: Only my uncle Vital that's the only one I know.

Q: When was that?

A: A long time ago. I wonder.

Q: Long?

A: Long, I wonder what year it was he to war, its written on a picture, but.

Q: He fought in World War 2?

A: Yes.

00:56:14

Q: Did you make hide yourself?

A: Yes.

Q: Not now?

A: I don't have the materials.

Q: You would still do it now?

A: I would still be able to make it, if I had it.

Q: You made things like moccasins, mulucks and mitts and stuff like that?

A: Yes, mitts, yes

Q: How did they dress in the past?

A: They made ~~there~~ ^{their} own cloths, dresses, we didn't buy dresses like this.

Q: No?

A: You just made, sewn by hand, no machine.

Q: How about shoes?

A: Those too.

Q: How about for cold?

A: They made those too, except for jackets, they bought those.

Q: Where did they buy?

A: They hauled things from Meadow Lake, that's where they bought them. They found them there.

Q: You still sew, did you sew?

A: I still sew, Yes, I sew, at the age of 10 I started beading I still do it today.

Q: What did you make, what kind of?

A: Moccasins, mitts, I have lots of mitts

Q: You have some now?

A: Yes, almost one suitcase, not too many moccasins, no hide. I started 4 or 5 pairs.

Q: You want it on Video?

Q: Can you get them?

00:58:05

(Video of Art work)

Q: Do sell these?

A: Yes, if I have hide.

Q: She made that her self, that's hand made hide.

Audience: Beautiful.

Q: Right from the moose's back.

End: 00:59:20:17

Q: They prayed a lot?

A: Yes they prayed a lot, not like to today.

Q: Your mother and father they prayed a lot?

A: Yes, they said the rosary a lot.

(Laughter)

Q: Everybody spoke CREE or michif?

A: Yes.

Q: Didn't speak English?

A: No.

(Asking price of items)

Q: Today the children have no respect?

A: Yes.

Q: How come?

A: They are taught nothing, they get away with everything, In the past you couldn't even go out after dark.

Q: And today?

A: Today, they stay out all night and day.

01:01:10

Q: Did you have a garden?

A: Yes, we grew potatoes and other vegetables, everything, yes.

01:01:36

End of Tape

00:00:01

Start of Tape 2

Q: Did you ever go to school?

A: No, I was just about to start, when my father moved back from Buffalo?

Q: Is that were you lived?

A: Yes, we lived there, yes.

Q: How many years did you live there?

A: A long time, I was big already, I was ten when we moved, with horse. We didn't have much, only one load of items. Not like today it takes a lot of trucks to move things.

A: Don't worry they'll stretch.

Q: Do you speak English?

A: No, I understand it good, if I went to school I would catch on right away.

Q: When you speak CREE, it's like?

A: Yes, it's like French.

Start: 00:00:52:02

Q: Yes, it's like French and CREE mixed.

A: Yes?

Q: Is that the language you parents spoke?

A: Yes, them too, that is why I speak this way. (Pauses) My grandmother (points) spoke that way too.

Q: Her too?

A: Yes, Them too?

Q: Great-grandmother is the English saying and how do you say it in CREE?

A: My grandmother (kukom) and your great- grandmother (Tsapan)? (Laughs)

00:01:43

Lilah: What about ah! Midwives did auntie Christine even deliver babies?

Q: When babies were born, who did it, Because you didn't have doctors over there?

A: No.

Q: Who did it then?

A: Abraham Maurice's wife they said, Abraham Maurice Adeline was her name.

Q: Adeline?

A: Yes, She would deliver the babies.

Q: All of them?

A: Yes.

Q: You never did that?

A: No, wouldn't know what to do. (Laughs) I would kill the babies.

Q: What else?

Lilah: How about when Auntie Christine had her kids?

Q: Where did you have yours?

A: Right here, right here all of them.

Q: They had this hospital?

A: Already, I had some in the old part and in the new only one, William I had in the new part. The rest in the old part.

Q: Magloire is the oldest or Edward?

A: Magloire, no two girls, The ones I lost, Lena and Yvonne. One would be 55 and the other 56.

A: Was this hospital build yet?

Q: No not this one the old one. That's where they were born, Frieda was born there too.

A: When did the priest get here?

Q: Almost right away, the priest was here.

End: 00:03:21.26

A: Good.

Lilah: Yup that's good.

00:03:28

END OF INTERVIEW

00:03:29

(Group of altar boys)

00:03:31

(Christine's maternal grandparents, Mr. & Mrs. Lariviere in Sandy Point)

00:03:29

(Christine's parents, Ambrose and Mary Jane Morin, in Sandy Point)