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NOTE: Because there are several people who ask the interviewee
questions on this tape and none are indentified, all questions
are under the 'Inter:' title for all interviewers.

Inter: Okay, today is July 22. My guest is Gladys MacLeanan
and we'll first talk about school. Okay, where did you attend
school?

Gladys: Whitfield, I passed into grade one, I passed into grade two, that was it.

Inter: What school was that?

Gladys: Whitfield School.

Inter: In what area.

Gladys: Oh, it's about nine miles north.

Inter: Of Prince Albert?

Gladys: Yeah.

Inter: Did you like school when you were there?

Gladys: Yes, I liked school. I really like school because when I wasn't in school, I had to work.

Inter: Did your parents go to school at all?

Gladys: I think they went to school but not very high.

Inter: You don't know where they would've went?

Gladys: No.

Inter: Where were your parents from?

Gladys: My father was from Prince Albert, I'm sure. And my mother was from, oh let's see now...

Inter: Do you know if they liked school? Did they ever talk about it?

Gladys: I don't think they had much chance. I think they went to school just once in a while.

Inter: I see. How come you only went up to grade one or two?

Gladys: Because I stayed with my father, my mother and my father, like, when they, my mother wasn't married to my father so I stayed with my father.

Inter: There was no schools around or nothing?

Gladys: Yeah, there was schools but I had to stay home and look after my grandmother.

Inter: Do you speak another language?

Gladys: I understand French a little bit, that's all.

Inter: Did your parents speak another language?

Gladys: My dad could talk Cree and French. My grandmother couldn't talk English, only French.

Inter: How did you learn to speak French?

Gladys: From her.

Inter: But English was your main language?

Gladys: Yeah.

Inter: Okay, talk about work history then. What did your parents do for a living?

Gladys: My father was a lumberjack. He used to cut wood and sell and work out in the bush and harvests and this in the fall and he did, that's what he did. Well work.

Inter: What did he get for wages?

Gladys: Not very much, not, I can't remember. I know it was only about six dollars, five dollars for a load of wood.

Inter: So, like, how much would that buy?

Gladys: Could buy lots.

Inter: Was that a fairly good wage for that time?

Gladys: Not really. Not really.

Inter: What kind of work did you do as you were growing up?

Gladys: Washing dishes.

Inter: In a cafe or something?

Gladys: Yeah.

Inter: What were your wages?

Gladys: Nine dollars a week.

Inter: You say your dad was a lumberjack, did he have to stay in the bush all the time?

Gladys: In his early life, yeah.

Inter: Did he travel a lot going from job to job?

Gladys: Well, yeah. That's what he told me. (laughs) He used to tell little stories about things. Being a lumberjack and on the drive, you know, when the logs went down the river,

he used a, what do you call that?

Inter: Boom. I know they call them booms, eh.

Gladys: No, it was river drive wasn't it?

Inter: Yeah. What area was he a lumberjack? Where did he work mostly?

Gladys: Well, this was before I was born. He worked all over, I don't know.

Inter: Because there was a big mill at Big River for quite a while.

Gladys: Probably worked there too.

Inter: Did he like that job?

Gladys: Well, he never said, he used to, that's all he knew, eh.

Inter: He worked there most of his life?

Gladys: Yeah, (inaudible). He worked on a farm.

Inter: Like in the fall.

Gladys: Yeah.

Inter: What did your mother do?

Gladys: Had children. (laughs) Looked after the house.

Inter: Did she ever work in, for wages and that?

Gladys: Oh, I think she went, well, I think she used to do some housework, eh.

Inter: Okay, we'll talk about social life now. Where did you meet your husband?

Gladys: At the fair grounds. (laughs)

Inter: In Prince Albert?

Gladys: Yeah.

Inter: Do you know where your parents might have met? How large was that family you were in? Like, how many people lived in your house?

Gladys: Well, when I went home there was quite a few of us, about seven, eight.

Inter: You mean other relatives now?

Gladys: No, brothers and sisters and that.

Inter: Was there any, you mentioned your grandmother, did she live with you?

Gladys: Well, she lived on the farm and I used to go and live with her and my dad.

Inter: I see. So you were the only three out at your grandmother's place?

Gladys: Oh no, there was lots. There was my aunts and uncles lived there. My grandmother was old, she was about eighty.

Inter: So the young people looked after her more or less?

Gladys: Yeah.

Inter: What kind of dances or songs or games did your parents play?

Gladys: Used to play cards and used to dance and they'd just have a party eh. Like, say, now here, they wanted to come and have a party, you just threw everything out and (inaudible) and away you went. (laughs)

Inter: What kind of dances were they?

Gladys: Square dances, round dances.

Inter: Was there any special songs that they used to play?

Gladys: Oh, other than the Red River Jig, Turkey in the Straw...

Inter: Everybody always mentions that Red River Jig. What kind of games did you guys play?

Gladys: Not too many games. Do you mean...? When we were kids?

Inter: Yeah.

Gladys: Well,...

Inter: Things your parents might have taught you like the string games and little stick games and that sort of thing?

Gladys: Oh yeah, yeah.

Inter: Do you remember any particular ones?

Gladys: Not really. No.

Inter: Who supplied the entertainment when there was a

party?

Gladys: Oh, a lot of people, a lot of these older guys that played the fiddle or the guitar, you could just say you wanted to have a party and somebody would play the fiddle or the guitar or whatever.

Inter: Was there a few people that were known to be musicians in the area?

Gladys: Oh yeah.

Inter: Do you know of any names?

Gladys: Well, my uncle Bill, he played the fiddle. And my Uncle Jordy, he played the fiddle.

Inter: MacLeanan?

Gladys: No. Gunther.

Inter: Gunther.

Gladys: And my Uncle Antoine, my great-uncle, he played the fiddle and Arthur Pocha, he's still living. And he played the fiddle and accordian. That's one you should interview. His mind is good. He's pretty near ninety.

Inter: Put his name down there.

(Break in tape)

Inter: Were your parents affected by prejudism?

Gladys: No.

Inter: Everybody just got along at the time?

Gladys: That's right, yes.

Inter: What about you? Anybody ever, you know, tease you or anything?

Gladys: Well, if they said anything I always brought up that everybody was the same. Even if they wanted to say things that would, they could say them if they wanted to but it didn't hurt, really, our feelings.

Inter: Religion. How much influence did the church have on your family or the whole community?

Gladys: My father was a Catholic and my mother belonged to the Pentecostal and that never, they lived their own, you know. Nobody interfered with the religion. You had your own and...

Inter: Well, what religion did the family grow up as then?

Gladys: I think half and half.

Inter: They just decided which they wanted?

Gladys: Yeah, well, you know, we had Sunday School at the house, at Mom's and see, my mother and father, they'd say their prayers every night. And if you wanted to be a Catholic, fine with them or whatever.

Inter: What kind of religion was that Pentecostal?

Gladys: Oh, it's hard to say, well, I don't know. Pentecostal.

Inter: Protestant.

Gladys: Well, yeah, Protestant.

Inter: How did the church laws compare to today's laws in the church? Do you think they were less stricter? Was religion more important then than it is now?

Gladys: I don't think so.

Inter: Were the laws of the church more stringent than they are now? More forceful than they are now?

Gladys: Well, the Catholics were. And my own kids, we got married in the United Church and they went to Sunday School till the boy was thirteen and my daughter was eighteen. She taught Sunday School and she went to the Covenant Church. I let her make her own mind of what church she wanted to go to.

Inter: Did you or your parents ever attend shrines or retreats?

Gladys: Not that I know of.

Inter: How did your parents celebrate weddings?

Gladys: Well, I don't know. They had a dance.

(Break in tape)

Inter: How did your parents celebrate weddings?

Gladys: Well, they went to the wedding and had a few drinks and had a good time.

Inter: How was the wedding prepared? Was there a lot of preparation from the community or did one family put up everything for the wedding?

Gladys: Well, in those days, well, everybody was poor eh, you know. You just had what you, you didn't have big weddings like you have today. You have, most of the stuff come off the farm and sometimes...

Inter: In some communities it was the bride's parents that supplied everything for the wedding and in some, everybody from the community pitched in. Do you remember how it was for your community?

Gladys: When I got married, I think we only had about five dollars for the hall, for a house we rented from my aunt and the music was there, everything was there.

Inter: But the food for the feast and the...

Gladys: We never had any, we couldn't afford it. (laughs)

Inter: Oh, you didn't have it?

Gladys: No.

Inter: So you never decorated up the horses and buggies and stuff?

Gladys: No. Everybody was poor in those days.

Inter: I'd imagine everybody pitched in where they could though.

Gladys: Well, we really had only small weddings eh. They don't have anything like they do now.

Inter: What about Christmas? Did just one family celebrate by themselves?

Gladys: No, everybody got together and had a big dinner and put on turkey and Christmas cake and...

Inter: Did three or families get together or...?

Gladys: Well, your family, you know.

Inter: Your relatives.

Gladys: But my father, my father, well, they had New Year's, they'd cook for a week and everybody, all the relatives would come and they'd have dance and singing and...

Inter: Do you remember any other special occasions where you'd have big feasts and celebration?

Gladys: No.

Inter: Not even New Year's with their guns?

Gladys: Well, let's say that my family were all poor.

Inter: How did you celebrate Easter? With the two religions, there must be some difference there eh?

Gladys: No, never. Never that...

Inter: Just celebrate Easter day, you didn't have any...?

Gladys: Well, my mother wasn't with my father all the time. Only when I was small they parted and that was it, eh. So I lived with my father and then my mother.

Inter: Okay, talk about food and clothing. Where did your parents get the food to feed you guys?

Gladys: Well, we sold wood and worked different places. You could buy lots with fifty cents then, you could buy.

Inter: Where did he deal, with what store did he deal out of?

Gladys: The little store, what was the name of that store,...

Inter: What area was it in?

Gladys: Right where the bridge, right off the bridge now.

Inter: Right downtown?

Gladys: Yeah.

Inter: I see.

Gladys: Oh, I forget his name. And we dealt there for years and years.

Inter: And you could get all your staples, canned goods even there maybe? Did they have canned goods then?

Gladys: Oh yeah, they had canned goods. They've got mostly everything.

Inter: Did you have a big garden at home?

Gladys: Yes.

Inter: Did you have a farm for cattle or anything like that?

Gladys: My grandmother had. My father kind of looked after it for her in summer.

Inter: Did your father ever trap?

Gladys: No, not too much.

Inter: How did your parents prepare the food? Was there any special meals, did they have to make any special dish that they would cook?

Gladys: No.

Inter: How did your mom make clothing? Did she make it or did you guys just buy it?

Gladys: We bought some, lots hand me downs and everywhere we could get it.

Inter: Did she sew her own clothes, like bought material from the store maybe?

Gladys: Oh, well the flour bags she used to, when we bought flour, a hundred pounds, she used to make shirts for the boys.
(laughs)

Inter: I think everybody did. Was there ever any large shortage of food?

Gladys: Sometimes.

Inter: Was there any real exceptional case where it was really bad or where things were really good? When things were either really hard or else really good?

Gladys: Oh, I remember lots of times. Lots of times we had hard times that we couldn't hardly afford to buy groceries.

Inter: So what kinds of things would you do to pull through those times?

Gladys: Oh, my mother used to work sometimes. Haytime, my father used to go and work on the farm and...

Inter: Were you ever forced to go trapping to get food on the table?

Gladys: Who me?

Inter: Anybody in your family?

Gladys: Travel?

Inter: Trapping.

Gladys: Trapping.

Inter: Or hunting?

Gladys: No, not really.

Inter: Medical care. Was there a doctor available to you in your community?

Gladys: No, just when we lived, we had to come to Prince Albert to the doctor.

Inter: How far away from Prince Albert did you live?

Gladys: About nine miles.

Inter: Who brought the medicine for the people when somebody was sick? Possibly your grandmother, did she help...?

Gladys: Well, you never went to a doctor until you were really, really sick, eh.

Inter: Well, the rest of the time, it was your grandmothers maybe that would prepare the medicine or whatever.

Gladys: Yeah, my mom.

Inter: Did she have any special ways of making medicine or any special herbs or anything that she used?

Gladys: No, and any time we were sick it was big, two tablespoons of castor oil in a big cup of tea and they washed the tea out of your mouth. No, there wasn't too many people sick in our family.

Inter: Was there any special people in the town like midwives or medicine men or something?

Gladys: Oh, there was. There was Mrs. Sara Vermette. She was a midwife.

Inter: Do you guys have any medicine men or anything?

Gladys: No. (laughs)

Inter: (Inaudible) The Depression. What kinds of jobs were available to your father or somebody in your family?

Gladys: In the Depression years?

Inter: Yeah.

Gladys: Well, we still worked on the farm. Worked on his mom's farm. And he went out threshing and that.

Inter: Was there enough food and clothing to go around?

Gladys: Yeah. There was just me and my dad and my brother what lived there. My mother lived in town, eh.

Inter: If somebody was short of food did the other people that have a little extra give them some?

Gladys: Yes.

Inter: Okay, politics.

Gladys: Politics! (laughs)

Inter: How active was your community in the government and that?

Gladys: I don't know. They never talked too much about politics and I don't know too much about politics. I like to, I like to say what I know and I don't know nothing about politics.

Inter: Were any of your parents or relatives involved in politics?

Gladys: No, I don't think so. They used to go and vote and everything, that's about all.

Inter: Do you remember any particular native leaders in your community? Was there anybody that the people disliked, like, didn't like? That would be leaders again, you know, who was in government you know, did people like the government or did

people just let it go because they didn't feel they had any control?

Gladys: Well, that's about it. Yeah.

Inter: They didn't feel they had the control.

Gladys: No.

Inter: Do you remember any stories about native leaders?

Gladys: No.

Inter: Especially like, after the rebellion, do you remember any stories about Dumont or Riel or Almighty Voice?

Gladys: No.

Inter: Poundmaker, any of those? Do you think that things are better now or back then?

Gladys: Oh I think back then. Now is too much pressure on everybody. I really do, that's what I think. Even the kids. There is so much pressure put on them because they did everything. There's nothing left for them to do. (laughs)

Inter: What about, do you think that you've gained from those hard experiences, like you said that you had a fairly hard life.

Gladys: Yeah, but we were happy. Yeah.

Inter: Everybody was in the same...?

Gladys: Well, everybody didn't, they never complained. Oh, I think long time ago was best.

Inter: Was there any stories that your father ever told you about anything?

Gladys: Oh, my father could tell me stories, I used to listen to him but I forget half of them.

Inter: What kind of stories did he like best to tell?

Gladys: Oh, about his drives and when he was in the army and...

(END OF SIDE A)

(END OF TAPE)