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HIGHLIGHTS:

- General account of her life

Alma: March 11, 1984. Olive, can you tell me about what you remember about growing up in your early years as a Metis, where your family originated from?

Olive: Well, my grandfather came from Scotland, from Glasgow, when he was two. He came and he settled in the St. Laurent area and he was the only one of his family that came

west and settled in Saskatchewan -- it wasn't known as Saskatchewan then. And he married my grandmother who was from Sand Lake Reserve, Saskamosh. My grandmother was a (inaudible), and from Sand Lake Reserve. And they settled beside a lake and it was my grandfather that named the lake, named the place as Mount Nebo school district, and he built a church and he built the school there. And my father was the oldest in the family and being that the ways of the white people from across... They believed that the mother's responsibility was to raise the children, and they would make the living so that the fathers had very little to do with the children. So then my mother couldn't talk... My grandmother couldn't talk English, so my dad, all he could understand and talk was Cree, and my mother was the same way. She come from the same area, but her grandfather was a half-breed, he was half Scotch and half English, her grandfather. But her grandmother was an Indian and her mother was, you know...

Alma: What did your grandfather do for a living?

Olive: He was, well he was a big farmer and he also had the first store in Mount Nebo. He had a big store, he had the post office, and he had a stop-over for freighters that was freghting from P.A. to Big River, eh, the freight lines with horses. So... And they had a stop over, sort of like a motel where they fed the freighters and give them rooms, see. And he was very progressive, he made a good living and, you know, he made a lot of money at what he was doing. But he hired a lot of the boys, the men then from Sand Lake and the Metis, as they're called today, from around the district, eh. He hired a lot of men to do his work.

Alma: What was your family name?

Olive: Cameron. Real Scottish name. (laughs)

Alma: And your father, what did he do for a living?

Olive: Well, he worked with his father up until he died and then he sort of took over the farm. But being that he was more or less brought up by the mother he believed more in the Indian way, eh, the Indian way of life. He didn't believe that material things counted the way his father did, eh. And like I guess his father was a real slave driver and he said he would never turn out to be like that, so my dad took more of my grandmother's culture. And, you know, this is what was the trouble. And then, of course, after the estate was all divided there was so many children that there wasn't much left, eh, after everything was divided up and that, so then he went farming. And then in the winter when the farm work was done he'd go to Big River and he'd go on the commercial fishing and he'd work there all winter, or he'd work in a logging mill or some place like that for the winter months.

Alma: You came from a big family?

Olive: Yeah, there was 12 of us in the family. There was

12, 6 boys and 6 girls.

Alma: And what kind of house, like, home did you live, did you grow up in?

Olive: Well, it was just a log shack. What I can remember as a child we had the kitchen, a lean-to kitchen, and two bedrooms, and great huge front room, eh. And what I can remember they were all beds because there was so many of us, eh.

Alma: Your family had a garden?

Olive: Yeah, my mother always put in a big garden. And it's a good thing we did because that would be all we had to eat in the winter months. And my dad did... like they butchered every fall, eh, but it was pretty skimpy -- we were quite poor.

Alma: What kind of responsibilities did you have as part of the family?

Olive: Well, we had the weeding garden, sawing wood with the swede (?) saw, filling the wood boxes for both the front room and the kitchen stove, and looking after the chickens -- we always had chickens. The boys, they had the barn chores to do -- watering the horses, and feeding the horses, and the stock.

Alma: What sort of things did your family do together, like the family life?

Olive: We... Well, I found that winter was our most enjoyable time, because in the summer we were always so busy and there always seemed to be so much to do in the summer. And in the winter we really enjoyed the winter months, because like we'd go sliding, eh, on the scoop shovels or anything we could get a hold of. (laughs) And my dad used to make us little sleighs and toboggans, eh, the home-made ones. He was quite handy in carpentry and he used to make us sleighs and that. And we went to school in a cutter and a team of horses in the winter -- in the summer we had to walk five miles there and back. And... But in the winter we always drove in the cutter, so this is why we always thought winter was the best -- (laughs) the best of our growing up years. And then we'd go about a mile and a half to our skating rink, you know, a skating rink, and we had skate blades that just used to tie onto our rubbers and moccasins, so it wasn't very good but we enjoyed ourselves. We'd make a big bonfire in there and always kept warm, eh. But I remember my grandmother on my mother's side always made us moccasins, you know, the moccasins and the moccasin rubbers, and that was our footwear in the winter. And my mother made our socks and mitts from sheep wool, so we always had...

Alma: Other family members that you remember...

Olive: Well, my grandmother...

Alma: Who and why?

Olive: No I never, we never did question too much. We knew we were half-breeds, but we were in the settlement where there was all half-breeds pretty well except for maybe four or five families of Norwegians.

Alma: So you grew up knowing you were Metis?

Olive: Well, no, we were known then as half-breeds because we were, most of us in that community our grandfathers were either Scottish or English, from England or Scotland so we knew that, we knew we were half-breeds. I never heard of Metis till we started the Metis Association, that was the first time we knew. Metis is a French word for half-breeds, that's all it is really.

Alma: When did you become involved in the Metis Organization?

Olive: I guess it must have been about '65 or '66. I forget what year the first Batoche Days was on but we were... the Prince Albert Local was responsible for getting everything set up and organizing it and everything for the Batoche Days. And organizing everything. And there was, there was about, oh, in all would be about five or six men and their wives to start up the Local. See there was a Local when Mr. Deater -- Walter Deater -- started up one at the Friendship Centre, the old Friendship Centre on River Street. And then that sort of petered out and Walter Landon come in. And then he start getting us all involved and Amyotte and McDonald, Jack McDonald, and Richard and I, and we all started getting everything organized and getting, try to get something for the people that really needed it.

Alma: So before...

Olive: The people that was involved in starting it up was all employed, eh. We were all working at the time, but we thought of the people that weren't and was on welfare and all that, you know. That's who we were really working for was to try and get something organized so that they could be self-supporting, you know, and get off the welfare line.

Alma: Before 1965 had you been aware of the Metis Society?

Olive: Yes we were, we were aware of it. We heard a lot, but Walter Deater being a status Indian, we thought it was for the status people not for the half-breeds (laughs) or the Metis, as they're known.

Alma: Do you remember names like Joe LaRocque?

Olive: No.

Alma: This was back in 1930s when it was the beginning of the Metis Society. Do you know anything about that?

Olive: Well, I used to hear my dad -- my dad was involved way back, like -- and he used to talk about it and I remember he used to come into Prince Albert for meetings. But as a child you didn't pay too much attention, eh, you didn't know what they were talking about. And in our home was the children were to be seen and not heard when our parents were talking, and most of the time they talked Cree. That was the only time they talked Cree -- when we weren't supposed to hear anything. See, that's why none of our family talks Cree, although my mother and dad was very fluent in Cree, eh. But you see, when they started school they had that language barrier, and apparently when they got married and started raising their children, they said they weren't going to put us through the language barrier that they went through. And they were in the same category, like they were 8, 9 years old in grade one or two, eh, because they had to interpret the English into Cree in their minds before they could do anything, eh, because this language barrier was there. And they said, "Well, our children won't have that barrier when they start school. If they want to learn Cree then they can learn after." But the whole community was in the same situation so we never did, none of us ever learned to talk Cree, although our mother and dad talked Cree really well. But they say it was an advantage to them -- I guess because when they talk about something we weren't supposed to hear about. That was the only time we heard Cree in the home. And I remember, though, different times my dad talking about this meeting of the Society of the half-breeds...

Alma: But you don't remember what...

Olive: I don't remember names or anything that was involved, no.

Alma: So after '65 you became involved and what was your main objective when you were first were involved in the association?

Olive: Well, our main objective was to get something organized and to make the provincial government aware of the people that was up north and all that -- that they had no opportunity, there was no work they were all on welfare, eh. And our main objective then was to get something organized in the way of creating employment for them so that they in turn could be self-sufficient, you know, self... and look after themselves.

Alma: And today are you active with the association?

Olive: No we're not. Well, I guess getting older and our family was all gone we sort of got into our own little rut. And like we worked all our life, both of us, and we made the most... I think why we were so determined to... that is, that we were both brought up very poor, poor homes and poor, you know, we never had anything extra or anything. So both of us, with that in mind, I think we strived more to give our children more. We felt, well, if we're going to bring them here we're

going to look after them, eh. And that is what we did, we educated them and dressed them properly and they're getting so they wouldn't go through what, I guess, we went through, where it was very hard. And of course there were more opportunities was open to them too, because I always had the hopes of going through school, eh, and... But at that time we only had teachers that was qualified to teach grade eight, and my dad sent for correspondence for me for grade nine, eh, and she couldn't help me in my grade nine. So my dream was never... it never was. So then when I had my family we made sure that they did what they wanted to do, and we worked hard. It took every cent we could make to do it.

Alma: Were there a lot of other people who were involved in the association?

Olive: Oh yes, eventually the Local in Prince Albert grew quite big, yeah. There was Alex Primeau, Jack McDonald, Walter Land, I think his name was, and Joey Nott, myself, and there was Alex Primeau. And then from there all the Metis people in Prince Albert start coming when... You know, it was by word of mouth and they all start and they did become very involved. And then we started expanding to the rural areas so two would go in a certain place and talk to the people, and then I know Jack McDonald and myself come to Duck Lake and we called a meeting at the Legion Hall and they started their Local then in Duck Lake. In fact the man that helped us notify the people is the president of the Local here, Leonard Pambrock.

Alma: There were a lot of Metis people who were not involved with the association too, eh?

Olive: Oh yes, there was a lot.

Alma: Do you know why?

Olive: Because they wouldn't admit they were Metis, a lot of them. A lot of them wouldn't get, they didn't want to admit... We felt we... when we started working we felt that there was an awful lot of people -- especially the people that lived in the cities -- that wouldn't admit that they had even any Indian blood in them, eh. And we knew they had, so we kept talking and we asked... we... And I guess maybe this was from my upbringing, my dad used to always tell us to be proud of what we are and never try to be something that we weren't, but to be proud of the Indian blood that we have in us and the white blood, that we are to hold our heads up and be proud of what we were and never try to be somebody else.

Alma: Do you think these people still feel like that, that they don't...

Olive: Oh yes, I think there's a lot. There's still quite a few that still (inaudible) around, you know, they don't like to admit it. But if there's anything handed out they're (laughs)... We found that out from the beginning. It's the same thing all over, you know, I don't think it will ever change. And I brought up my own family with the same idea.

Now you can meet any one of them on the street and they will admit right away, you know, "I'm Metis."

Alma: Did you ever have experiences like that in school, did you ever have to...

Olive: No, they didn't. I asked them two or three times, or they never ever come home very down and say, well, "The kids called me this, the kids called me that," eh. And because I always told them, you know, "You look for discrimination, you'll find it. If you don't look for it you won't find it," eh. And I said, always, I said, "If anybody tried to discriminate against you," I said, "you tell them you're just as good they are and you can hold your head up just as high," you know. And this way I think they had that air about them, that they weren't going to let anybody trample on them.

Alma: Did you ever face discrimination?

Olive: Not myself, no. No, never. And I think that is from the community being all half-breeds that we didn't really know, you know, didn't notice. And then when we moved into the city, well, I just lived my own life. People knew I was because you can't hide it, you know. And... but to really feel discrimination in any way, you know, no, or to be laughed at -- no.

Alma: Let's go back to when you were younger, when you were going to school and as you were getting older. I want to find about social activities that the communities would get together.

Olive: Oh, we would have box socials, or pie socials. We'd have fowl suppers and dances. We always had dances -- there was always dances every month, you know, we'd all hoedown. We all could dance the drops of brandy, the (inaudible) and all that, eh. We were all... Like my dad used to do that, so he taught us all and the whole community was... So we did like to have a real good time when we met socially, like. There was always somebody that would have it, start a dance here. We used to, we didn't have a hall for a number of years, but everybody had one great big room so they'd clear the room out and it would be like a house dance, and they danced till five o'clock in the morning, no let-up. (laughs)

Alma: Just the whole community would get together for these dances?

Olive: Oh yes, the whole community. That was the outing, eh. That was the outing then and everybody got involved, everybody. Yeah, we used to really enjoy ourselves with our big hoedowns, barn dances, you know, anybody had a hayloft there was a barn dance, you know.

Alma: And then when you got married and had your family did you live in...

Olive: No, we lived in Prince Albert, our family. When we got married we moved into Prince Albert and we lived there and

raised our children, in Prince Albert. Not right in the heart of the town -- we lived out, well, like more or less on the outskirts. I wouldn't live in the city, like right in the town, eh, because I didn't believe that you can raise a family in the city and be happy, eh.

Alma: Did you have a big family?

Olive: I had seven -- we had seven. Five boys and two girls. We have seven children.

Alma: And your work I bet was at home. I was going to ask, did you work outside your home? (laughs)

Olive: Oh yes, I worked outside my home.

Alma: Oh, you did!

Olive: Oh yes, because when my husband first started, Richard first start he was only making $140 a month. And we bought a little house and we had three children then, so on $140 a month... Mind you, living wasn't that high that time, we managed all right, but we didn't get family allowance or nothing, eh. So I was always interested in working at the residence -- the Indian school at that time -- so I went and applied and they called me the next day, so I'd go in. And I think then when Karen, the youngest girl, was born -- she was a year old when I went to work full time, so I've been working for the last 30 years. I kept on working -- I had to in order to educate our children and look after them the proper way, which we said we would, eh. But it made it quite nice because I'd go to work at 8:00 to 4:00 and my husband would go to work from 4:00 to 12:00, so that our children wasn't raised by baby sitters, eh. We were there and my husband was, like he was very good. He'd make bread and everything and he looked after them, he made their dinner. And I was there for supper, give them a bath and put to bed and everything, so it worked out really fine. And I'm still working seven years later.

Alma: How do you see your experience in raising your family as different from your mother's?

Olive: I found that my family... I believe... Like there's only a certain amount of years you have family, eh, so that our life revolved around our family. We did things with them all the time. Like on the weekends we would never leave them home, we would always go with them. When I was young my mother would go, maybe one time my dad would, and then they'd take turns in baby sitting, but they never went as a family, you know. So both of us decided while if we're going to do something, we'll do it with the family, because you only have them a number of years and they're gone. So maybe my outlook on raising a family was a bit different than a lot of other people. We were always very open with our children and we always had time with them.

(END OF SIDE A)
(SIDE B)

Alma: When you were growing up, did the church play an important role in your parents' life?

Olive: Oh yeah.

Alma: Or maybe your life?

Olive: Yes. Very much so. Now there's where the two different cultures come in. My grandfather gave a portion of his land to the church -- the Anglican Church was built then. And our minister always came from Sand Lake Reserve because there was a mission up there where he was. And he always held services every Sunday in Mount Nebo. And it was a must that we went to church, so we had a good basic upbringing as far as the Anglican Church was concerned.

But I would go for walks when I was getting older -- 10 or 11 years old. I lived with my grandmother a lot, and we used to go for walks and she would go and pick up this pipe tobacco, this kinnikinnik and pines, she'd go and she'd pick these up. And she would walk along and her hands behind her back, and I'd be walking behind her, you know, and she wouldn't say anything, she would just be quiet, walking along. So one time I asked her, "Grandma, how come you're quiet when we're walking in the bush?" And she says, "My girl," she said, "I believe in your grandfather's religion," she said, "the Anglican way. But," she says, "I also believe in the Indian way." And she said, "My belief is walking in the bush being close to where he is created. He creates the flowers and the trees, and everything." She said, "I feel so much closer to him." And then she says, "I pray when I'm walking with my hands and I feel so close to him," she said. "I talk to the Great Spirit," she said, "in that way." That's what we call him. So she sort of believed in the spiritual way of life. So we had an understanding of both pretty well as we were growing up.

And I remember my grandmother, like, she was a midwife in the community, and she brought in all of us, and all the community babies. And I remember if a baby was sick or a child was sick, she would go to the homes. And she used to often come to our place, and I remember she used to put blankets and everything on the table, eh, she'd darken the table. And she'd get in there with her rocks, two or three rocks in like a tub of sand, which they always kept in the house. Like, if they were travelling, they'd keep the rocks in and keep them in the (inaudible), or sleigh, or whatever they were travelling in. And she would take the baby in under there and we all have to sit very quietly and she'd pray in there and we'd here the water poured on the rocks, you know. And then she'd be there for a while and then after, then they'd grab the baby in a wool blanket and that and let it sweat -- it would sweat everything out, eh. And in a couple of days the baby would be all right again. Especially it had a very bad chest cold, that's what she'd do with them. And I remember that.

Alma: Did the priest ever visit your family?

Olive: Oh yes, he always made his visits, always. And we were... it wasn't nothing great to have the minister drive into the yard, you know, because we were used to that.

Alma: What did he talk about?

Olive: Oh just... When he was visiting at the house he'd talk about anything, eh, just see how we were doing. He didn't try and shove it on us because our parents did that themselves. (laughs) Because they were brought up that way so we were, eh. Like we were brought up to believe. My dad was a great philosopher. He was, he used to say if you bring up a child, the crucial years is from one to five. And if you instill goodness from one to five they'll always come back to that, the good that they have been taught.

Alma: Did your commitment to the church ever get weaker?

Olive: No.

Alma: To the way you were raised?

Olive: No. No, it never got weaker. We didn't go as much. We did have our children go -- they were involved in all church activities in the city. Like they were in the choir, they were... they had to go to Sunday school or to church when they got older, but we didn't send them, we went with them. And they were involved in young people's at the church, and they used to have socials at the church so they were involved in a lot.

Alma: Do you think the church is more or less influential today than it was in the past?

Olive: I think it's coming back slowly. It's not as strong as it used to be in the past. And it seems to me that, well, I don't know, maybe I'm wrong but I believe that a lot of people now are searching and they're searching for something, eh. And I feel that it's because they haven't got strong hold of the faith that they should have in God. And they're searching for something and they don't know what they're searching for. And I think this is the missing link, because I never remember of ever feeling restless or wondering, or you know, wondering who I am or what I am or anything. I never because I felt that I had that basic instilled in me so strong, I guess, as a child. And I think today this is what's lacking in a lot of young people today, is the faith that they haven't got. And they're searching and they don't know what they're searching for, you know.

Alma: Do you think the church has helped the Metis people face the difficulties?

Olive: To a point maybe. But maybe we were very fortunate because we had a Metis minister, which understood. And the

same as when we were in P.A. like Canon Taylor was a Metis, from Winnipeg. And we didn't find it, it was just natural, you know, that we were alike. We didn't feel but... And I think the church lost a lot in the old way, but now that they're changing I think there's a lot more people going back again. And I really... Maybe I'm wrong, but I really believe that you've got to have something in your life, some stability in your life, you know, to make it work. And maybe the church at that time had a lot of influence on me. But as I say, they, the minister was a half-breed too.

Alma: What about today?

Olive: Today there are still very, very few young people going.

Alma: How influenced are you by the church today?

Olive: Well, about the same. I really believe that... Mind you, we went more the spiritual way these last 10 years, eh, in the spiritual belief, which my grandmother believed in. And... but I still, like, would go to the church. Mind you, it doesn't have to be Anglican, you know, it can be Catholic -- any church I will go into. Like I don't see that there's anything wrong in going, you know. But I still believe that it's not church so much, it's the faith that one person has within themselves, and that should strengthen in the children. That, you know, that is the basic of bringing up anybody's belief. I really believe that we've got to have something to hang onto ourselves, and our children believe the same way. They don't go to church that much, eh, but their faith is there. Like it's been instilled in them, both the spiritual and the...

Alma: Earlier we were talking about your mother and father, and how do you remember your mother?

Olive: A very timid, quiet person. She was very timid and quiet. Sort of shy. In fact she was quite shy, she wasn't a person that makes... This is why my dad had the job of taking us to the dances, eh, because she was basically shy and a very quiet person. But a good person, you know, but very quiet.

Alma: And your father, how do you remember him?

Olive: My father was a very happy person. He laughed a lot, he joked a lot, but he was very, very strict in his way, eh. Like his word was law in the house. And, like, we used to... especially when I got older I used to just admire my dad, because if somebody come in the house and started to swear or curse he'd stop them right there. Like, he didn't hesitate, eh, to say, "Eh, eh, look, watch your language, because my wife and daughters are around here, you know. Show a little respect for them." And he'd say it in such a way that he wouldn't offend the person that was doing it, eh. But I know, like, where we were concerned, where we were... like, he just wanted things so. He seemed to respect his wife and his daughters so

much that as we got older we really admired him, all of us. But he was a very happy person, a very jolly person, eh, laugh, and talk. And he loved talking Cree, like, getting somebody and telling stories and talking Cree. And he could laugh, eh, so oh, we had quite a happy home from what I can remember.

Alma: Did your mother have like any traditional skills like beadwork and tanning hides?

Olive: Oh yes. No, she didn't tan hides, they didn't tan hides -- her grandmother did. But you see, they were on the farm too, so there was so much other work to be done, eh, that they never... But she did beadwork. Oh yeah, she sewed and she did beadwork, she made moccasins and all that, like. Her grandmother taught her how to make moccasins. Then she sewed, she sewed all our clothes -- she was a beautiful seamstress. And like she was really good in that way. But she never tanned hides or anything. But I remember in the fall, like, when my dad would kill moose -- like, he'd go out hunting and kill moose and deer and that -- and he'd take them up to this old lady in Sand Lake and she tanned. So the tanning sort of... Even tanning was out when I was young, eh, because I'd never seen it. Because my grandmother Cameron never did it, because she was raised by a missionary -- she was raised by a Anglican minister in Sand Lake. She was given to this Anglican minister there in Pines and they raised her, eh. And she was only 15 when my grandfather come along and asked for her.

Alma: Asked for her?

Olive: Asked for her.

Alma: Tell me about that.

Olive: Well in those days like you didn't have a choice, eh. And my grandfather come and took a liking, I guess. Well this is a nice young lady, girl, so he asked the minister for her hand and the minister give her, give her away.

Alma: Was this common at that time?

Olive: Oh yes, in those days, in those days, yes. And she had no choice, she had to marry him. See, that's how she married my grandfather, because the minister, the Reverend Hines, thought he was a very good man because he worked hard and he was building up, and he was going to be rich one day. So he told my grandmother, he said, "You'll have a good life." And like my grandmother used to tell us as young girls, when we were question or if... she said, "He knew what he was talking about, because your grandfather was. He give me a very good life," she said. "I was happy." And she said, "He had his ways and he never interfered in mine, you know." And she said, "I had my beliefs and I had my people come to visit me. So," she said, "we had a good life together."

Alma: Have you ever heard of some people refusing to marry the people that were chosen?

Olive: No.

Alma: So every, it was...

Olive: Everybody, yeah, oh yes. Well the old folks was wise, eh, so they listened. But I've never known of anybody refusing.

Alma: This wasn't so when you were raised, eh?

Olive: Oh no, no, no. It wasn't so then. It had already... Well my grandmother said when she was told that she was to marry this man, like she felt very bitter and very hurt, because she didn't know him and she didn't like him, because he was a white man and they couldn't communicate, eh. She talked Cree and he talked English -- she talked some English but it was very broken.

Alma: I don't think these ministers are making those sort of decisions today, are they?

Olive: No, no, no, they wouldn't.

Alma: What about the family elders? Do you think they have a role in making decisions for the younger people in the family?

Olive: Not any more, I don't think. Not even in my time. Like when we were out working, we were old enough to work then our decisions was our own. This is how we were. But mind you, my dad was brought up in the Emmanual College -- that used to be out by the Pen in Prince Albert. That's where he went to school, it's sort of a boarding school. And then from there he start... like, changing. The whole idea has changed quite a bit.

Alma: What do you remember most about your past, your life? What changes, or what stands out in your mind most?

Olive: I think it was listening to my grandmother. Well this is the way it was, you know, grand... oldest granddaughter, always pretty well lived with the grandmother. And I loved my grandmother, really, I used to miss my home, like, a lot, but when she knew I was getting lonely, like we'd take a walk and go home, eh. Then I'd be all right and I'd be ready to go back. But it was sitting by the... in the winter months, in the old rocking chair, and listening to her tell me stories and that. That is what mostly stands out in my mind.

Alma: Living with your grandmother?

Olive: Yeah. Is the attention I used to get, too, from my grandmother.

Alma: Were there a lot of other girls that lived with their grandmothers? You said first-born grandchild...

Olive: Yeah. Well I was the oldest grandaughter so I was the one. The others, like my aunts married white men, eh. And my other uncle, he didn't get married till he was way old when he got married. But my aunts married white men and moved away pretty well, so that their children wasn't as close as we were with my grandmother. Like we only lived a half a mile apart, eh. So we were the ones that was closest to our grandmother.

Alma: So it wasn't like a custom that the grandchildren lived with their grandparents?

Olive: No, no, no. Not really because... Like, she asked me, all right, to go and stay with her for the reason that she was alone. Like, she was all alone then, she had nobody at home, eh. And I think that's why she asked me if I would go and stay with her. But I always found that... By that time we'd moved down only a mile from school, and I'd still have to walk 2 miles from her place, eh, where it would only be a mile. But still I was supposed to be young.

Alma: What does the term road allowance people mean to you? This is probably when you were younger. Did you ever hear about road allowance people?

Olive: No. That, I think they were known as squatters.

Alma: When people moved to Duck Lake here, like do you know where they came from and why they came?

Olive: No, I don't know too much about Duck Lake, because I've only been here 9 years, eh. But in our community we didn't know about road allowance people, or squatters, because everybody in that community owned their own land, eh, farm. It was left to them by their fathers and that, eh, so they just carried on.

Alma: They're more established than most families.

Olive: Yeah, yeah, more established Metis families, I guess. Because in the community where we were born there wasn't one near that we even knew. And we lived in between... we were in between two reserves, we were in between Sand Lake and Mistawasis. So they were more established, I think.

Alma: So you lived quite close to the reserve, eh?

Olive: Oh yes, very close, in between.

Alma: How did the community and the reserve function together? Like, did they live together and help each other?

Olive: Oh yeah. Yeah, we used to visit. Well we all had relatives on both reserves there. Like there's my cousins married on Mistawasis and my aunts and uncles there in Sand Lake, and it was all... See that was where the mixture come in there, is Sand Lake and Mistawasis, eh. So that we were right

in the middle.

Alma: I want to talk a little bit more about the community as it was when you were growing up. How, like the neighborhood, how was it sort of spread out? Were the houses close together?

Olive: Oh no, no. They were anywhere from a mile to two miles apart, just depended on how much land they had. If they had a section, well then... Like my uncle, he lived five miles. Like there was no one farm close to the other, they were all anywhere from a mile up. I think our closest neighbor was a mile, which was a Norwegian family. But the rest was all two and three miles apart.

Alma: And was all the housing the same?

Olive: Pretty well all the same. They were all the original log houses, you know, they were all pretty well all log houses. Some was two stories -- they had upstairs in them -- and some was just everything on the floor. When we moved down to closer to the school, down to my dad's other quarter, half section, we moved down there, we had quite a big house with three, four, three bedrooms and huge front room, and a kitchen. And we had, we used to put up our own ice and everything, eh. We had a barn.

Alma: When your family needed medical attention, how did you go about that?

Olive: Well, we had a doctor. He used to make, country doctor, he used to, old doctor Ralph... And I remember he'd come around maybe every two weeks, eh. But if anything, like say, if a child had pneumonia, well it was my grandmother that looked after it. My grandmother was sort of the community doctor, eh. She always go and look after the sick kids, eh.

Alma: Is there anybody like that today?

Olive: Not that I know of. My grandmother used to always do that. She was a midwife and she was...

Alma: She knew all her medicine.

Olive: Yeah. And then Doctor Ralph used to leave her different medications that she needed, eh. And you see when Doctor Ralph comes he always stayed at my grandmother's place. And then the people would go there, or else if somebody was too sick he'd go right to the house. But my grandmother always knew. He used to have a horse and buggy, in the winter a little horse and sleigh, and she'd make a trip around the community to see if everybody was okay. She was sort of 'a help', call her now, but that's what she was. And old Doctor Ralph used to leave these different medications and then the Watkins man, or the Raleigh man came around so you got (inaudible) oil, and all this red linament and all this stuff, eh.

Alma: How much did something like that cost?

Olive: Well at that time it wasn't very much. But I remember when the Raleigh and the Watkins man come, like, my mother used to get all these pain killers that they had, and (inaudible) oil for coughs. And you mixed it in with a little bit of sugar, epsom salts, and if you had anything wrong with you, you got a dose of epsom salts, you know. And we always got sulphur and molasses every spring and every fall, and that was to clean our bloods out. Mind you, we were healthy little varmints, I'm telling you. But we lived outside a lot, eh, and I guess we must have eaten the right food because we were healthy. I can remember, like, very, very seldom I'd get sick. I think we didn't dare get sick because we'd get a dose of epsom salts if we did, you know. Oh, that was horrible. And that was always from the Watkins man or the Raleigh man.

Alma: Do you ever recall your father telling you what happened at Batoche?

Olive: No, my grandmother used to. My grandmother was living in that Riel Rebellion, eh, and, like, she used to... What she could remember about it, she used to talk about different things. But then again we were kids -- you didn't pay that much attention, you know. But I remember she used to remember very vividly different things about it.

Alma: But it wasn't something that was spoken of often in the home?

Olive: No. No it wasn't, because that was violence. See, we weren't submitted to violence or anything like that, eh. I guess as we were young, when we were young we didn't have no TVs or radios. We did have a radio but it was a battery operated and it was just for my father to hear the news, eh.

Alma: So that whole topic, it was sort of...

Olive: No, it wasn't discussed, because that... And I think today that's why I don't like violence, eh, because we never seen it as children. It was strictly just right out of our lives.

(END OF SIDE B)
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INDEX

DANCES AND DANCING				
-social	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	8
DISCRIMINATION				
-against metis	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	8
DISEASE AND ILLNESS				
-tuberculosis	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	15
EDUCATION				
-accounts of	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	6
FAMILY				
	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	13,15-17
FAMILY				
-care of elderly	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	15,16
GAMES				
-for children	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	3,4
HEALTH				
	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	18
HOUSING				
	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	3,17
LANGUAGE				
	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	5,6
MARRIAGE				
-arranged	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	14,15
MEDICINE AND CURING PRACTICES				
-prayer	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	11
MEDICINE AND CURING PRACTICES				
-sweat baths	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	11
METIS				
-attitudes toward	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	4,7
METIS				
-political organization	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	4-7
METIS				
-social organization	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	8
RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY				
	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	10,11
WOMEN				
-work of	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	13
WORK				
-for wages	IH-SD.53	O. ROBINSON	160	2,3,9