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Brenda: What do you recall about growing up in Winnipeg?

Dorathy: Well I remember being very young and very poor,
which sounds sort of silly naturally when you're very, very
young. We didn't seem to have much of anything, in fact to
make ends meet my father did a little bootlegging on the side
-- this was back in the early '30s -- rag-picking with a wagon
and a little horse, you know, went around to get rags and sell-
ing them. In fact I remember being in kindergarden and getting
my first doll and... Of course, mind you, I was very young in
kindergarden but I'd never had a doll before. I used to play
with little logs that I dressed up with pieces of cloth.

The neighbourhood we lived in was what was called the...
the, oh, core area, if you will: it was by the tracks, and the
Higgins Avenue, Henry Avenue, Stanley Street -- we lived on

Stanley Street, 300 Stanley Street actually -- and there was this dairy across the street and we used to go over and steal milk. (laughs) Had a lot of fun, until a fellow told us there were big rats in the barn. Then, of course, we didn't go across there any more. I remember having an awful lot of fun. Nobody was concerned with whether you had more than someone else or someone else had less, because everybody shared everything. We had an area that was pretty well cosmopolitan, not just native people living there, but Chinese, a few black people, Norwegians, Ukrainians. An awful lot of French people lived there, but the majority were native in that area and we shared everything. The kids were a lot of fun. I remember having a very happy time as a youngster.

And then my father started getting slightly better work so that he could give up his bootlegging enterprises. He invested money in a restaurant and went on to get his second restaurant, and so then he bought a gigantic house on Alexander Avenue, 359 and 361. It was a duplex, (inaudible) big house, set it up as a rooming house -- not boarding, just straight rooming -- and went to work for the CN. Put some more money aside and decided he wanted to improve himself even further. He watched somebody stuccoing a house one day and building it, building another house beside it. Went and watched them and got the lot behind our house across the lane, dug out the basement himself by hand, made the footings for them, made the foundation, like the forms, himself, did the foundation, built the entire house from scratch by himself. Decided that qualified him as a building contractor, started going out for contracts and he ended up making a million within a few years. And he did very well.

But he never moved away from Alexander Avenue until he was in his 60s. Well, he died of a heart attach when he was 62 plus 3 months, but up until that time he still lived more or less in that area. He said that's where the real people were. When they left Alexander Avenue in 1960 they moved to Kate Street, which was, oh, between Notre Dame and William Avenue, which again was part of the core area but my father would never move to the other side of the river or River Heights or (inaudible) what have you. He said they weren't his kind of people. And he was right, they weren't. The real people were in the core area. Considered himself a "poor people" and always believed in them.

In fact he owned a great number of houses before he died and he always rented to people who were not well off or that were on welfare and that, because he said, "Hey, somebody had to care about them." He pioneered a project back right after the war where he would accept people that were coming off parole from the Stoney Mountain Penitentiary and they would work for him in his business. And he would only take parolees or fellows that had gotten out of jail, they had finished their time. He would give them a break. He only had one fellow ever go back to the Pen on him. I mean, I'm not saying the others didn't get into trouble and end up in the Provincial but to go back in the Pen, only one ever went back, like that broke his parole. And he's still, I think to his dying day blamed the

woman he was with. You know, he wouldn't say, but the young fellow was a problem. He would take this woman in his room.

But education-wise, my father always insisted that my sister and I get a good education. He said it was important, he said, because to a lot of people who are prejudiced you're an Indian, you're not white. To a lot of native people who do tend to be prejudiced also you're not Indian, you're white. You see, you're an Indian to the white people: you're a white person to the Indian people. This is how it was back then in the '40s. You were neither here nor there, at least in the area that we lived in. As children we didn't understand that because we played with everybody, we went to school with everybody. Heck, I remember having a terrific crush on this young Chinese fellow and my father saying, "Well, if it's meant to be, tell me about it when you're 20." (laughs) It was... my sister had a terrific crush on a young black fellow, so... and my parents said, "Well, that's up to you: it's your life, whoever you end up with." They didn't try to make us see that there was any difference.

In fact, I didn't know what discrimination was until I lived in Saskatchewan and I moved to a small town called Churchbridge and found out that the people there didn't like Indians, and I couldn't figure that out. And there wasn't very many... in fact, there wasn't any Indian families living in Churchbridge but there was some in the neighbouring town of Bredenburg and boy, they were discriminated against. But I'd never seen that before. Even in Winnipeg where a lot of people did not like Indian people, you didn't get the feeling that it was because they were Indian. You got the feeling it was because the white fellow acted, you know, or something like that. They had nothing to do with where he came from or who his mother was, or his father was or whatever. We were taught that people were all the same. In school, the school kids never taunted us or any other children from other ethnic groups. There was never a thought to saying, "Hey you little Indian, are you going to scalp me?" But I hear kids nowadays, I go past a school yard and I hear them yelling this sort of thing -- it blows my mind. My children never said things like that. If they would have they wouldn't have sat down for a long time.

So, yeah, in the younger years it was very good. We didn't have much until my father started his own business and then I was around 12 or 13; prior to that time we were not rich. He bootlegged to make money because he refused to go on welfare. He said, "You start on the welfare cycle, you're liable to be on it for a long, long time. I won't start it." And my mother used to say, "Yeah, you go break the law first." (laughs) And he did. The only thing is that the people that drank in his bootlegging place were judges and lawyers and policemen.

Brenda: Yeah, you can be illegal and honest at the same time.

Dorathy: Oh yeah. In fact I have a lot of clients that I call

the most honest people I know. They'd be honest crooks, and I wouldn't trade most of them for anything. I think an awful lot of them and have a lot of respect for them. But in the teen years, well of course, I went -- I finished school very young so therefore I had to do something. They wouldn't let me into the university; they said I was too young. So I went a year to college, the United College.

Brenda: You were 14 years old when you...

Dorathy: I was 14 years old when I finished grade 12, and so the following fall I went to United College and took a bunch of counselling, and how to handle money, and how to get rich quick only that didn't work for me. (laughs) I never did get rich. Then the following summer of '48 until the spring of '49 I just got on my motorcycle and travelled all over North America and saw the world, so to speak, on this continent. Well, I never did go to Mexico but I travelled all over, got to know all kinds of people and really had a great time, drove my parents crazy. The gods got even, my kids did the same thing to me.

But then I came back and I met my first husband and married him. We all make mistakes. That lasted about... oh God, how long did that last? Well, we got married in '49 and when I got divorced from him in '57 I immediately went and married my second husband. You see, I don't just make a mistake once, I continue. (laughs) But it was a good marriage in the beginning. The first 12 years were like I had it made, terrific husband, wonderful father. Then we made the mistake of moving to Humboldt and he became an alcoholic, and within two and a half years the marriage was totally destroyed.

Brenda: This is your first marriage?

Dorathy: No, my second.

Brenda: Your second marriage.

Dorathy: I lost you on the first one.

Brenda: Yeah. That just came and went.

Dorathy: Yeah, right, well so did the marriage. (laughs) And in '72, March 15, he packed. Every year I send my second husband a card on the 15th of March thanking him for the best years of my life, from the day he left until now. It gets him very angry. In fact, one year I couldn't find him so I put a little ad in the Calgary Herald, because I knew he was in Calgary, and a lot of his friends saw it. He was very angry, but he wouldn't do anything because he knows darn well I'm not scared of him. But the children and I moved here. Well, they're... My oldest son was still alive. That was... he got killed in a car accident in '73. But I had six living at the time; then they all came here with me and, well, we had to go on assistance to begin with.

My oldest boy was living in Winnipeg at the time. He came up here; he sat down with me, he said, "Okay, let's map out

what you're goin' to do with your life." So he made what he called his five-year plan. First year you stay with the kids and let them know that, alright, Dad went, but you're not. You're going to be here. You're theirs. Then you're going to look at what you want to do, even if it ends up doing volunteer work here and there till you find out, (inaudible) going to help you. You've got to handle it. Then, when you find out what you want to do, you're going to go and take further education if necessary to get this. And fourth year you're going to get that job, and probably it won't pay very much to begin with, but... We'll allow a year for drawbacks, maybe a little mistakes. He says, "Five years from today you will be totally off of welfare and you'll be doing exactly what you want to do the rest of your life." Well, it took me five years three months and ten days. I was a court worker and...

Brenda: Yeah, a five-year plan.

Dorathy: Unfortunately he died in '73 and didn't get to see the whole thing fulfilled, but he did get to see a little of it starting which made him feel good.

Brenda: A happy ending.

Dorathy: Yeah. Well, beginning for him and ending for me, you know, because he's gone, but for him it was a beginning. It was the end of his life, to me, but who knows what began for him. And... but I listened to a lot of advice that he gave me. In fact it was my son, my oldest one, taught me how not to be a hypocrite, taught me how not to judge people, because I was a touch bitter there, I became a little judgemental, and he said, "Hey, slow down. That isn't my mother talking. I'll let you think about it for awhile." And so I think about what he said. So there was the young teaching the old, or older; I wasn't old at the time, I'm still not old. I may be ancient but I'm not old. He taught me a lot of the more important values of life.

I remember when I was about 13 running off to the reserve because I wanted to be an Indian and my mother saying, "You are an Indian. You don't have to run to the reserve." I wouldn't believe her. Well, low and behold, one of my daughters at the age of 13 and 14 didn't start doing the same thing. And when I caught her out at Duck Lake Reserve I said, "Before I kill you I want to know why you keep running away to the reserves. Some of them are pretty wild places." She said the same thing I said to my mother, "I want to be an Indian. I like being an Indian." And I told her, I says, "You don't have to live on a reserve to be one. You have to live it, and feel it, and be proud of who you are, and of your roots, your ancestors -- you don't have to live on a reserve to do that. You go out and you just let people know that you like you, and where you come from." And then I gave her a good lickin' and she never ran away again. (laughs)

But yeah, there were the odd little problems and that, being a single parent family and on welfare, naturally my children gravitated to children in the same position. And then

they're a bunch of lost little puppies looking for a place to go. And they want recognition, so, sometimes that recognition is breaking the law. So then you end up having a son sitting in jail, and it hurts. You wonder why it happens. It's the economic situation. It's the welfare cycle. It's a lack of education: none of them wanted to go to school. You see a lot of girls getting into trouble. You see them working as hookers down on the corner. I did a research project when I took these social work courses at Kelsey to further myself to get this job eventually, as it turned out. And at that time my research project was titled "Should Prostitution Be Legalized in Saskatoon". So I went down there and I talked to a lot of the girls along with a lot of police officers, judges, lawyers, men on the street, women on the street sort of thing, and I found out that the average young girl who worked on the street as a hooker was young. At that time very few were native, but they all had an average of a grade eight education and were either supporting a child, an old man, or a drug problem. Nowadays the majority of the girls downtown are native, but most of the guys they work for aren't. I hate that! I don't think they should be out there to begin with.

Brenda: How old are these girls?

Dorathy: The average age is 18. There are some older; there are some younger; I'm giving you averages. Breaks my heart to see them out there. They shouldn't be out there. The thing is though, who's going to give 'em a break. Most people say, "Oh hey, she's a hooker. Who wants to talk to her?" Maybe if someone talked to her, she wouldn't be a hooker, you know. And if someone would say, "Hey look, you're going to get a decent type of support. Go back to school. Further yourself." Because working on the street can be very addictive. Street life, being down there on the street, sitting and talking to the people who make their living by their wits on the street is very exhilarating. You can get your adrenalin flowing because... it's sort of like watching Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid all over again. You sit there and you hear these stories, and you hear the things that they're doing, and they make it sound so interesting, until you really listen and then quite often what you're hearing is, "Sounds great but I don't like it. Help me get out of it." Unfortunately you can't get everybody out of it. Some of them are controlled by too strong a drug habit or a liquor habit or something. What can you do?

What else would you like to know? (laughs)

Brenda: What do you see... what are the community's problems in Saskatoon here? You're a court worker and let's talk about some of the things that happen in the court-worker program. Are there any improvements that you see (inaudible) be made?

Dorathy: Well, if you've got a lifetime to sit and listen I could probably tell you quite a few. But to begin with, nobody is really doing anything. I don't care who they are and what they say after they hear this. If they don't like it, they can come and argue with me. First of all, there isn't enough money

to develop what... They don't go down there and say, "Hey, what would you like to see?" They go down there and they say, "Hey, if you don't want to go to jail, if you want to get out of this cycle, you do what we want. We want to see you in programs." And you hear programs, programs, programs! Forget it! Take it back!

These people, the majority of native people that are here originally came from the reserve, right. Okay, go back to the reserve and start your educations, put your schools back on the reserves. None of this garbage of you got to go to P.A. to go to school. You got a reserve, build the schools there. Put good, qualified teachers, and we're getting a lot of good ones out of ITEP (inaudible). It's not a case of, hey, we haven't got good educators; we have. And we've got a lot of knowledge that can be given out. They can be identified by people that are (inaudible) the teacher and then they can work on them. We have a program here out of Community College called "Native Urban Orientation", an excellent program for people that are fairly new to the city. They come in, they learn resources, they learn how to handle themselves in the city or the urban area, if you will.

You go downtown and you see people sitting in the bars and you say, "Well my God, what are they doing? Why aren't they doing somethin' with themselves?" Simply because there's nothing else to do. They talk about programs and training but they don't bother getting the people that need them or that want them. They slap them on the welfare cycle. Or they give them a mediocre training allowance to take something that they can barely exist on this allowance. You know, if I wanted to go back to school I would be classified as a single person, I don't have any dependents at this point in time. I wouldn't get enough money to survive if I wanted to go back to school. And it's the same thing with anybody and everybody else. The native person needs a better education, but to get that education they have to have a means of support and getting 385 bucks a month isn't going to do it. So some of the girls head out for the street corner, because you can make money there but it's a very dangerous way of making a living.

Brenda: Then you have a... you have a birth rate again that's going to grow putting these girls back on the street. Is that what's going to happen?

Dorathy: Oh no, no, no. No, no, no, no, no these girls don't very often have children from being on the street. They have children from uh... romantic liaisons, if you will, a fellow that maybe they started to live with, or maybe they were going around with him and he got them pregnant. Then the girl gets pregnant, she goes to have her baby, and you have this nice, neat, little social worker who comes in and says, "Well, are sure, dear, that you can take care of this child? I know a family that would love to have a darling little boy." And if you're anything like my daughter you jump out of the bed and say, "Get out of my room or I'll kill you. You're not having my baby."

But a lot of them are scared, confused, and the social worker in her deep, great thinking says, "I don't know if you can handle this child. Perhaps we should apprehend it." Case in point, I have a young girl I'm working with now. Her baby was taken from her almost at birth, within a week of birth, and they keep saying, "Well, you have to do this and you have to do that. We want you to go see a psychiatrist, get your life together." Now the girl does have problems but the main problem is that she is totally depressed because she hasn't got her child. Give her back her baby. If you feel that she cannot handle having that child, put her in a family situation where there's someone there to help her and see how she copes. This is a very loving girl. I think that she would be a wonderful mother; I think she loves her baby very much. And I think, in the counselling sessions I've had with her, that her main problem is that they took her baby. But they don't see that.

So you have a bunch of non-native people deciding what should happen in a native person's life. Or welfare decides that these children should be apprehended and put in foster homes, so they got six months here, a year there. Maybe, maybe they're lucky and they stay two years in one house. And you know what, they haven't learned about putting down roots; they haven't learned about rules and regulations that have to be kept; they haven't learned to go to church or to respect religion, because they're never anywhere long enough to learn. It's not because they didn't want to learn, it's because nobody gave them a chance to learn. So you know what, you see them in juvenile court because, hey, what they learnt was how (inaudible), hey, that foster parent won't give me my allowance and I want a pack of smokes, or I want to try something, oh I heard about grass, I think I'll try that, all this kind of garbage. And they start drifting closer to the ones that are hanging around and trying to make a buck by breaking the law. And that's what happens.

You take the majority of young native people that are in the courts and you will find they have a history of living in foster homes. Not that the foster homes were not good but they got pushed from pillar to post so often that they never got a chance to learn about the rules of the game, meaning the game of life: that you have to keep certain rules, that getting an education is important. not being a street-wise kid but being a wise kid, and there's a heck of a big difference between the two. And if they they would instead, if they have to apprehend the child, put him in a foster home, if he or she is happy in that home -- and it's the child who should decide -- let them stay there as long as they want. Don't tell them six months down the road, "Oh, we decided to move you to another home because this family can start with another child to get them stabilized." Garbage! I had eight foster kids. I never got one of them from welfare for the simple reason that I knew if I ever got a foster kid from welfare I'd have him for a few months, he'd be gone. I would find them on the street, hanging around; nobody wanted them; I took them home. The youngest one was 4 years old when I took him back to his mother. The swear

words that she used, you don't want to hear. But she told me to get the blankety-blank kid and take him, and what I could do with him -- so I took him home. He is now an R.C.M.P. officer in the narcotics division in B.C. Where did I go wrong? (laughs) No, that's my favorite joke.

But actually, yeah, I love the eight foster kids that I had. Seven of them were native, one wasn't. That's the one that's in the R.C.M.P. there. But of the other seven, one, that was the only female, she's married to a fellow down in the States and doing quite well. The other six are also in the R.C.M.P, so I have seven foster kids in the R.C.M.P. and they're all doing very well. I see them once in a blue moon, you know, but I hear from them quite often. They're doing very well. But you see, they stayed in one home. Actually, if you could live in my crazy house for six months, you can make it anywhere. (laughs)

Brenda: You gave them (inaudible)

Dorothy: Well, I think my other kids also helped. Now, I'm not saying that they did not get into trouble as youngsters. I have never had a child be a juvenile delinquent. I mean, the one that ran away, that's the only time her involvement with the juvenile authorities. And boy, didn't they try to take her away from me and didn't I go and get a baseball bat and get her back. The same thing with my son Daryl. They decided that I couldn't control him when he was 15 going on 16; they decided to apprehend him and put him in a group home. And he showed up two days later at my house at five o'clock in the morning bleeding from head to foot because one of the other kids in the group home, one of the teenagers a lot older than him and a lot bigger -- Daryl was a runt when he was a kid -- had taken a knife and decided that he'd see how often he could make him bleed. So I just kept him. And when the social worker came down and said, "Oh, we're going to have to take him again," I said, "Well, pack your lunch and bring your army because it's going to be a long fight. You're not gettin' my kid again." And they didn't. They decided it was a lot easier to let him stay there because he was almost 16, and who wants to start a screaming yelling match, or having me go get a lawyer and maybe ending up court, and everything else. I don't know their reasoning behind it, but I think actually what it was, it was the only way to shut me up -- which is very difficult to do half the time. (laughs)

But there are other parents and these same things happen, but because there isn't someone standing there that says, "Hey, I'll help you fight for your child," they end up letting the kid go, and then fighting later, and fighting, and fighting, and fighting. Going back for hearings and, "Well, maybe we'll let you have your child." And then this kid is in a foster home for maybe a year. Then he comes home, and you know what that kid is feeling? "You didn't come and get me for a whole year because you don't love me. I don't have to listen to you. I don't have to respect you." And now you have a rebel on your hands. And meanwhile, the reason you didn't get him for a year

was because they wouldn't let you have him, not because you loved him less. You loved him so much you could die for him, but he's never going to know it because you don't know how to tell him. He thinks that that year he was gone was because you didn't want him, so he stops respecting you, he stops listening to you, and he starts turning towards breaking the law. And there you've got your potential criminal, your little law-breaker.

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Dorothy: Now, ask me the questions.

Brenda: Those are some of the major problems you see in the community now, are there others that you see in ways that you could help or voice an opinion on?

Dorothy: You mean with children or with adults? I see, for instance, in housing, real estate agents tend to put native families into the worst kind of housing that nobody else would live in. Go take a survey sometime. Go down to some of these agencies and get a listing of the houses that they're running, or just get a list of addresses of where native people live and go look at those houses. You know something, I wouldn't put my ex-husband in one of those houses and I'd put him anywhere. But they are rotten little fire traps and native people are living in them because that's where... So there you've got your discrimination in housing. But you can't call it discrimination in housing because they didn't refuse to rent, you know. They rent it. But go and get your, your middle-class or your average white person and say, "Hey, would you live in this house?" And they'd look at you and say, "Are you crazy?" So you've got a lot of discrimination in housing.

When I used to work with welfare rights and I was involved in the housing I would go and find houses in College Park, around the university, which it was unheard of to see native people around there. And I would put them all over the place, you know, the newer developments and everything. I didn't leave them around 20th Street and Avenue H. Now there are a lot of nice houses down around there and there's a lot of really nice people living around there, but the thing is that they're kept in an area. You've got your really nice apartments up in Fairhaven, Confederation Park, but have you noticed how many native people live up that way? Why don't they let them move into Wildwood, you know, or to the -- what's it called -- the Pepper Tree in... well, it's up in that same Lakeview area? Because the average native person is either on a low income or on welfare and you got to have these references, all these nice little things that you can lie about and write. (laughs)

But you see native people are basically extremely honest. If you go to court and you have a native client and they missed court or they were late and the judge says, "Why were you late?" They don't come up with a great big garbage excuse. They tell the truth, "I slept in," "I was at my aunt's funeral so I missed court." It's the truth. I mean... Then you go and see the average other person and "Well, uh, you see, Your Honour, I was up in Edmonton. I was supposed to get this ride back and, uh, they left without me," and they've got this great big elaborate excuse. Native people very rarely lie but they're learning how to because of the system. The system is teaching them, don't be honest.

I did a documentary once for CBC, oh, years ago, and I had a guarantee from them that they'd never show it in this area because I figured I'd never be allowed in a court room again, for the simple reason that they asked me how I found justice in Saskatoon. And I said, "Under J in the dictionary or I watch Fantasy Island." See there isn't any. Some of the guilty get away with it and some of the innocent get charged with it.

I have watched investigations; I have watched actions. Go sit in the ballroom sometime and just sit quietly in a corner and watch when the police walk through. Now, what do you see? If there are certain police officers on duty you don't really see anything. They walk through, they nod their heads say, "Hi," might stop at someone's table where the person looks extremely young and ask for I.D. But then you got a couple of others that, when they come through, they are going up to people that obviously are about 35 years old and say, "I want to see your I.D. I want to know if you're old enough to be in here." I mean, like, come on. When you see charges of assaulting a police officer or obstructing a police officer and it involves a native person, you find that nine times out of ten it happened in the bar because they were being harassed by the police officer. And that's no kidding. And I have sat in the bar and watched this and tried to do something about it. Now, if I'm sitting in the bar and the cops come in and they happen to see me, they don't bother anyone. They walk right through, because, you see, there's a person sitting there that isn't going to sit and take it. They are going to get up and say, "Why are you harassing this person?" you know.

And there are a lot of other people who are more aware now of the constitution and your rights and their rights, I should say. And so you are starting to see a little less of this type of harassment, because people who are well-versed in that are sitting there and are advising people, "You have the right to remain silent. You have the right to have a lawyer present when questioned. You have the right to know what you're charged with." You know. And if they say, "You're not charged with anything. We just want to talk to you," you have the right to say, "Well, talk to me here." You're not resisting arrest. You haven't been charged with anything. The minute that police officer puts his hand on your arm and says,

"I want you to come with me," if you go against your will, you're under detention. I don't know.

You may get this tape going and review it and say, "Hey, you know what? She talked all day and didn't say a thing."

Brenda: Oh you did. You were just beautiful.

Dorathy: Well, the thing is that I do get some very strong feelings and unfortunately because of my job I can't express a lot of them publicly. Because, you see, when I express an opinion publicly I'm not just representing me, Dorathy Lavigne. People look at me and say, "Ah, that's a court worker talking." So you see, I have to be circumspect in my behavior and I have to watch what I say sometimes. I don't always do that. I suffer from foot-in-mouth disease very, very strongly. (laughs)

Brenda: Were you ever involved in Metis politics?

Dorathy: No. I was asked once to run for (laughs) Riversdale area for the provincial, you know, for the legislature. I said, "Oh yeah. I can see me as an MLA!" I refused at that time because I was court working and I won't give up being a court worker. I'm good at it and I like it, and I can't really... If I thought that I could really help a lot more people by being in government, doggone right, I'd go into it. And I wouldn't just stop at legislature: I'd go as far I could. And knowing how the police feel about me in the city, they'd probably all vote for me just to get me out of the city. (laughs) But, yeah, I had been asked about two years ago but I didn't... two years ago, yeah it was two years ago when we had the provincial elections. Yeah. And at that time I didn't know why... I felt that my place was here, that I could do a lot more for the people.

Brenda: What do you see in the future for the Indian people, for Indian and Metis people? What do you see happening?

Dorathy: Well, I'll tell you, having watched a lot of the younger ones that are getting involved in their lives and how they're being (inaudible), I can visualize, not right away, but I can visualize either a Treaty or Metis person being Prime Minister of this country, and I'll be doggoned, I wouldn't be surprised if it was a female, you know, and I don't mean me either. Forget it. (laughs) Nobody's got time enough to listen. (laughs) I mean you got to (inaudible) once in a while. But I can see it happening. Young people are more concerned with their roots and they're getting prouder where they came from. They're interested in what their heritage is and where they're going. When they've been having meetings on the constitution and that, you see more people there than you have in years past. And the older leaders are beginning to realize that they're not just talking for themselves and their immediate relatives any more; they're talking for a whole nation.

Do you know that after the Second World War there were

only a few hundred thousand native people in this country. And look at us now. And it isn't just for the family allowance either. It's because we are having more children; we are beginning to think more for ourselves. And as our children grow up they are beginning to get a little more concerned with education. There are more native people now in universities than ever before. There are more good educational programs like (?) and ITEP, you know, and there are more coming. Look at that Native Law Centre. I mean, we are starting to have really good native lawyers. Instead of having to sit there and scratch your head and say, "I remember hearing about one," you can say, "Hey, there's a whole slew of young ones in the university right now," and they're coming out and we're going to have this. And yeah, I visualize an awful lot of good things.

I even visualize the time when, instead of sitting there and wondering if there's a Metis Mafia developing, I'm going to see less and less native people in court. You see, the reason that there are more native people in jail isn't because more native people commit crimes. It's because more native people are sent to jail because, either they don't have an adequate defense representation, or because they say, "Oh to heck with it. I'm not going to get a fair deal anyhow. I'll plead guilty," even though they're innocent. You would be shocked at the number of native guys that I have talked to in various penitentiaries, and I have been in the majority of penitentiaries in Canada -- visiting, of course, visiting, not as an inmate -- and a lot of them started their very long careers, if you will, in crime by pleading guilty to things that they were innocent to, being sent to jail and rubbing elbows with guys that said, "Hey kid, (inaudible). Let me show you how to crack a safe. Let me show you how to hotwire a Lincoln instead of that stupid little Chevy you took. Hey, how would you like to go with me on a bank job, you know, bang?" Or, "Hey kid, you're shaking all the time. Here take a few of these little pills." Next thing you know you got a kid that's a drug addict. Never mind the other problems he had, now he's really got problems.

This is the sort of thing that happens but it's slowing down, because there are services such as ours. There are services that involve native people helping native people -- native employment services, native outreach. Native court workers do a fantastic job and I'm not just saying that because I am one. I'm saying it because I have watched other court workers; I like what they do. You see, to me the most important ingredient of being a native court worker is you gotta really care about the person, and persons that you're trying to help. And I see a lot of caring people getting into this profession, and it is becoming very professional, too. You don't turn anyone away but you sure as heck try to help them to the best of your ability. And with programs like this you're going to see lots and lots of people go to jail. I have very rarely had mine go to jail unless it was the second conviction for .08; then they have to go, you know. And if any of my clients have ever gone to jail it's been for a very

minimal sentence. And I see that happening with other court workers too. They really care about what they're doing; it isn't just a job.

Brenda: Are the other court workers native?

Dorathy: We're all native. Well, at one time we had a black man who was up in P.A., Bob Jamieson, a very good court worker in my opinion. Now mind you, I didn't work with him so I don't know. And I believe there were a couple of others that weren't native, but I'm not too sure of that. We hired people to be court workers who were out on parole from serious penitentiary sentences and they have turned out to be excellent court workers, you know. Quite frankly I think if you've got a record you make a better court worker, but that's just my opinion... well then you can relate to what's happening to that person. No, I can see... well, let's face it, how much worse could things be? They gotta get better.

You're finding people who care, who aren't ashamed to say, "Hey, my mother was Indian," or, "My father is Indian," or whatever. A few years back, like 20, 30 years ago, you saw girls curling their hair, brushing it back and saying, "Well no, really I'm French." And you saw guys, especially a lot of them that went into the army, saying, "Well no, hey, I'm French. I'm from Montreal, I'm from Quebec," instead of saying, "Hey, I'm a half-breed or a Metis."

See, I'm not really Metis. I'm a half-breed, because my father or mother were not French and to be Metis you have to be French and Indian -- at least this is according to all that I've been told. So if you are Indian and something else you are half-breed and I'm darn proud of being one. See, somebody says, "Well, that means you're not a pure breed," I say, "Uh, uh. What it means is half of me is the best of one kind and the other half is the best in the other and you can't get better than two bests." And that's the way I feel about it. I got the best of both worlds really, you know. And if someone doesn't like it, well, like I say, "Well, if you don't like my gate, don't swing on it." And I feel that way.

And I think a lot of young people are starting to get the chip off their shoulder, too, the resentment of being part of one world and not being accepted in another. No longer do you see in the schools -- at least I haven't heard of anything -- where the Indian boys who wear their hair very, very long are teased. Years ago they were. Now, wear your hair how you want. You put the braids in or you wear it long and loose and no one laughs at you. Everybody wants to wear mukluks and moccasins, hey, that's the coming thing, right? Ten years ago only Indians wore mukluks and moccasins. Well, who's setting the fashion? You have an Indian modelling agency in Edmonton. It's one of the best in the country. We had that Princess -- whatever her name is, she's a model down in Montreal -- she was runner-up for Miss Canada or Miss Universe or some doggone thing. You know, Indian people are coming into their own and they're going to continue coming into their own.

Brenda: Going to different conventions and saying...

Dorothy: Oh yeah, you've got lawyers, you've got... Well, I harp on the lawyers because, of course, naturally I'm involved in the law field and I'm interested in that. And some day, some day we're going to make it big; we're really going to get an Indian on the Saskatoon police force when they quit rigging their tests, as far as I'm concerned. They put a test: they give you 70 question, multiple choice, and to be answered in 20 minutes. Hey, who's going to do it? Oh sure, someone will argue, well, someone must be doing it. We have over 300 police officers. I just wonder if they're doing the same test, because an R.C.M.P. officer tried that test and he failed it, so... Talk to Vance Winegarden sometime at native (inaudible), she'll tell you all about it. They had a CBC documentary on that. That's why the little sarcasm of 'someday we'll make it big and get on the Saskatoon city police force.' Of course, I'm very sarcastic about them right now. They... they probably all carry scissors and cut braids. I don't know. (laughs) I just... my little sarcasm. But then I say it to them, too, I don't just say it when I'm sitting in my office. I think that's why they don't like me. That's okay. If everybody liked me I think I'd get sick of it. And besides if the city police don't like you, you gotta be doing something right, (laughs) I feel.

Brenda: How do you remain strong -- through all these years when two... one marriage failed and you went to a second marriage and children have passed on, how do you remain strong? Did you have spiritual guidance or...

Dorothy: Well I... I... would put it mostly to the spiritual guidance. I believe that God is there even when you can't see Him, or hear Him, or feel Him and that's... you know, that'll carry me a long, long way. In fact, that'll carry me for the rest of my life. (Brenda interrupts -- inaudible) Oh yes. But also, you see, somebody has to be, you know, like somebody has to be... In fact when I die, I am having a telephone put on my grave so someone can call me if they need me. (laughs) No, actually, when I die I'm getting buried standing up. And on my gravestone they are going to put, "HERE STANDS DORATHY. SHE LIES FOR NO MAN". And if you think I'm kidding, you ought to see my instructions for my girl, that's exactly in it. Even in my will, that if this isn't done I refuse to die. (laughs) No that used to be a... that used to be a custom in some Canadian Indian tribe down East, that you were always buried standing up.

Brenda: And what was their reason for standing up?

Dorothy: Who knows? Maybe there was a shortage of ground. They had to use less. (laughs) I have no idea. But no, it really is in my instructions and I want the sound track from Grease played at the funeral home because I refuse to have anyone crying. And see it's an ending for them: it's a beginning for me. You know, like hey, I'm coming back, you know. General MacArthur said it first, "I shall return." Only

it took him a lot longer to get back to Pearl Harbour than it will take me to come back if I ever die, because I don't intend to stay away. I got too many things to do and if I leave before I'm ready I gotta come back and finish them. And my philosophy of life is I will, you know.

But actually, I think one of the reasons that I was able to have things is the spiritual thing and also I had been brought up on the belief that there isn't anything you can't do. It's just that some things will take a little longer. And if you believe in it go for it. That's my father's philosophy in life and I have lived by it, and my oldest son Bruce had the same philosophy... I raced motorcycles from when I was 16 till 24. It's one of the reasons why I rode around the country so much. My first husband used to go crazy. I think that's what broke up our marriage, I'm not sure. I used to go all over the country and people, family, used to say, "You'll get killed! You'll get killed!" I'd say, "No, because I'm not ready to (inaudible). I've got too many things to do. And if you feel that way, you're going to be around a long, long time. I have so many things I want to do, so many people that I have to see settled in their lives before I can say, "Hey, I'm finished with mine." Besides which I have two trips to make. I want to go to Mexico, see where the grass really grows and if it really exists there that everyone talks about. And I want to go to Australia and that takes too much money. So I'm not going to die yet, because I have to have enough money to go to Australia first. And the people... I'm not going to say I want to see my children settled and my grandchildren grown up, because I'm not sure about that. I might have to live to be a thousand to get all that done. But there are other things and other people. I want to see the program that I'm working in develop into where we are going back to doing trials again. I used to do trials all the time, never lost one, but so many, in greater authority than I, said, "No. They don't do them any more," so, bang, no more.

But I want to live long enough to see that native Prime Minister of Canada. I want to see a Senator, not just Gladstone from the past but of the new generation. I want to see a Senator in the house. I want to see that in the Commons, when you see members of parliament that there is at least a scattering of native people and I don't mean the Inuit representative, the one who is in so much trouble now, the poor baby, but others. And why not? We had wonderful people running at that last provincial election. We had Freda Moosehunter, was one of the most wonderful women that ever lived. Nora Sifiter (?) would be a wonderful politician. This lady is very smart. She is a real nice lady; she's a sweetheart of a person; she's been through a lot of hell in her life; she would fight for the people; she is a fantastic person; she'd be wonderful in politics. Just two women off the top of my head. If you ask me to think about a man I'd start thinking crazy thoughts. Let's not talk about men. That was a joke, of course. There are males that could run for government and everything. But a woman would be running because she cares and wants to do something for her people. A man would be

running probably because he wants the money and the prestige. You see, there are two different principles involved there. I sound like a female chauvinist and I'm not. I like men -- somewhere. You know it's... it is true and I intend to be around long enough to see this.

Brenda: (inaudible)

Dorathy: Actually aside from my father dying at 62, I have my mother, and my father had told me before he died that the previous ancestors, if you will, her grandparents, great grandparents, lived for, you know, in their 90s; and on my father's side over in Rumania they lived to be in their 100s. It was very unusual for my father to be one person that died so young, 62 was very young. He was just more or less getting into his prime when he had heart trouble. You know, he died of a heart attack. Well, when he had his first series of heart attacks, that was back in '60, and they said any one of the five heart attacks that he had he should have died. And when he started to get better the doctor said he couldn't understand why my father didn't die. And my father said, "Listen, I'm still building that house. I can't go until I finish that house. And I have a few other things to do. But when I go, it will be one good, sharp pain and I'm gone. I'm not going to suffer in the hospital." And that's exactly how he went. And incidentally he did finish the house first. I mean, it was a year and half later but, you know. And these are the things, I'd like to be like my dad. He was such a nice man. Not that I want to be a nice man. I'd like to be a nice woman.

Brenda: You have fond memories of your dad.

Dorathy: Oh yeah, I not only love my parents, I like them. And I use the present tense when I talk about my dad because I don't consider him gone. You know, I settled Mon and Dad in Winnipeg, I'm in Saskatoon, so as far as I'm concerned they're still in Winnipeg, I'm in Saskatoon, but they're not gone, you know.

Brenda: But you don't dwell on (inaudible)

Dorathy: Oh no, I got too many nice things to remember. You know, like if and when I die, I (inaudible) motorcycles in heaven because I am going to race my son Bruce and for once I'm going to beat him. I could never beat that kid in a motorcycle race, no kidding. I think it was very unfair of him to die so young so that I could never beat him in a race. No, I have some... I have too many good memories to dwell on a loss, because if you, if you worry or if you wrap yourself up in self-pity that somebody's gone, you're not going to be a very happy person. And when my... my first boy died when he was a few days old, I was very depressed and my father sat down and said, "I'm going to tell you an old Rumanian proverb." Years later I found out he made it up at the time, but at the time I didn't know that. And he said, "There's this little boy that died. And he was standing at the bottom of the stairway to heaven. He was holding his candle and it wasn't lit. The guardian angel came down and said, 'Baby Lavigne, why don't you

come to heaven?' And he said, 'I can't. My mother keeps crying and putting out the candle.'" I didn't cry any more then. But it taught me that if you keep crying you might spoil somebody else's (inaudible).

If you have to cry, you cry in private. I will not cry in public. If I ever do, you better believe me I must be terribly hurt, you know. I'm not saying I haven't cried in private or that I haven't been hurt. I have been hurt to the point of almost no return, more than once. I remember one time walking to the bridge and thinking of jumping into the river. And I stood there and I looked at the water, and water always calms me, and you know what I thought of? What if I change my mind halfway down -- I can't swim. So I went back home. And I didn't do it. So I couldn't have been as desperate as I thought I was at that time. You never really are if only there's someone to listen to you or someone to talk to. I mean, like, if you are a person who is spiritual (inaudible) God and talk to Him. You may not think He's listening but you watch, hang in there. There is some help. That's like the calvary, they're on their way, wait. You know, but a lot of people feel that because there isn't an answer, poof, like that, He's not there. He's not going to help me. So therefore I'm too desperate, I'm going to go and blow my brains out or... I can't do that I haven't got any. (laughs) But, you know, the thing is that this is desperation and I can understand desperation, because one time someone spread some terrible gossip about me and it hurt me so terribly that I contemplated loading a rifle and killing that person or letting the rifle kill myself. I was that terribly hurt, I was that desperate to get my name cleared, to survive that hurt somehow...

(END OF SIDE B)

(END OF TAPE)