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Victoria: April 27, 1984, interviewing Roy Heron at Rosthern,
Saskatchewan. ... Roy?

Roy: In Camsell Portage.

Victoria: And how long did you live there?

Roy: Oh, I've been living up there all my life.

Victoria: You just recently moved to the south?

Roy: Yeah, just recently, moved down here last July.

Victoria: And what type of housing did you live in when you were a young boy?

Roy: Log house.

Victoria: Did you have any modern conveniences at all?

Roy: No. Everything was... well, a few homemade chairs and a homemade table.

Victoria: How many rooms were the houses that you lived in?

Roy: They had three. And then there was so many of us we used to be on double bunks.

Victoria: What was your heating? What did you use for...?

Roy: Wood.

Victoria: Wood heating eh. You know, a lot of the people, the older people, they lived in houses, you know, that had no flooring sometimes. Did yours?

Roy: Oh yeah, we had flooring, and we also had a cellar in ours. Mom used to can her stuff and put it down in the cellar. We used to cut our wood. Before that we'd go out trapping and we'd all get together and haul down a bunch of wood, you know, and go across the lake -- it was quite a ways --and then haul, and we lived away up on the hill and we used to haul up the wood on our backs. Then saw it up with a sweep (?) saw -- some of them used a cross-cut saw -- there's an old cross-cut saw.

Victoria: Did you own your own home?

Roy: Yeah.

Victoria: Was it a big yard, or was it in the town, right in the town?

Roy: No, it was just a small little village. I don't exactly remember what the population was but very small.

Victoria: So you had a fairly big yard then?

Roy: Oh yeah.

Victoria: Were your, your neighbours would be close? What nationality were your neighbours?

Roy: They were all mostly Metis. Very few whites.

Victoria: Have you ever heard the term road allowance people?

Roy: No.

Victoria: You didn't, eh? What chores did you have? Will you describe some of your chores that you had to do when you were

at home? Did you have any cattle or horses?

Roy: No, no, whatsoever, no, there's no cattle or nothing there.

Victoria: What kind of countryside do you have there? How would you describe it?

Roy: It's pretty rocky, I'll tell you that much.

Victoria: Is there much bush?

Roy: Oh yeah, there's a lot of bush. There's mostly there's all green but then we had that big fire in there and then pretty well burnt out, eh.

Victoria: Did you do special things with your family, like, you know, camping, and hunting, and picking berries, that type of thing?

Roy: Oh yeah, we used to go out picking berries every summer, Mom and I and all the sisters and brothers, we'd all go. And that time we used to, Mom used to take out a bunch of chocolate bars and tell us who would pick the most would get so many bars, and we used to work like crazy.

Victoria: Did you ever, you know, did you know anyone that used to do any storytelling?

Roy: No, not that I know of except one old man, Falger(?), he used to, but I never...

Victoria: You didn't know.

Roy: No I didn't.

Victoria: Did your relations live close around you, like your grandparents, your aunts and uncles?

Roy: No, we had two uncles here that used to stay with us, but then we lost one. Then we had one of the uncles stayed with us right to just lately, not too long ago, and he passed away after we moved to Uranium City.

Victoria: Was he young or very old?

Roy: No very old, 83 I imagine.

Victoria: Oh that's a good age. And, like, was there any family member of yours, like say, you said your uncle lived with you, was there someone especially that you really looked up to while you were growing up, somebody that was really important to you?

Roy: Yeah, it was my Uncle Benny.

Victoria: Why do you think that you remembered him the most?

Roy: Well, he used to take up for me a lot of times when I was small and I used to get just about anything from him. Also my Uncle Frank, he used to be in Chip. But during the summer we used to go down from Camsell down to Fort Chip and that's about 110 miles, I think. We used to all go down there and then we meet my Uncle Frank. Well then, he'd always take me uptown, buy me a bunch of bananas, give me a dime or something which was lots of money them days.

Victoria: So you were the pet sort of thing, eh. Was your family, were they really close together, really strong family ties?

Roy: Oh yeah, yeah.

Victoria: What did your father do for a living?

Roy: Trap most of the time. Yeah, Dad trapped all winter. Well, when he quit the Bay, after he'd worked for the Bay a long time, then, well, when he was working at the Bay he used to tell me he used to have a store in Camsell and that Chip was 110 miles and then he used to go down from Camsell Portage to Fort Chip and haul groceries with a dog team during the winter, and then sometimes deliver it on the way up in the Territories to some of the Indians up there.

Victoria: So he was a manager of a store then, eh?

Roy: Yeah. Then they, he quit that manager job then he went trapping, then he'd been trapping all along right till the day he died.

Victoria: Did he do anything else? Like, you know, when he was at the store, did he ever have to do any other kind of word to help supplement his income?

Roy: Well, no, not that I know of. He never mentioned anything about it like that.

Victoria: Did he...

Roy: Probably so, though.

Victoria: Did he have, did he do much hunting, like for his own family?

Roy: Oh yeah, he did most, a lot of hunting.

Victoria: Was it strictly used for just your own family or did they sometimes sell it?

Roy: Well, at that time when we used to, long ago, anyone would kill a moose or anything like that during especially in the summer, everyone would all share in and go out and pack the meat out, and whoever packed, well, whatever he packed, well, it was his.

Victoria: Did he do much fishing at all?

Roy: No. We just fished for ourselves.

Victoria: Did your family grow a garden?

Roy: No, no there was no garden.

Victoria: And you don't remember any livestock or horses?

Roy: No, I don't remember except only when he got back to Uranium City is when he got a couple of horses.

Victoria: The dog team, did they have, did he own his own dog team?

Roy: Oh yeah, we all had dog teams. After I grew up I had my own, Dad had his own, because I started trappin' with Dad since after I quit school when I was 14.

Victoria: So did you just have, did you have a whole regular trapline or was it...?

Roy: Yeah, we had a trapline. It run all the way through Saskatchewan and into the Northwest Territories. That time you can trap both in Saskatchewan and Territories.

Victoria: How did you go about this trapping?

Roy: Well, we used to leave in Camsell Portage in the fall, sometimes around the end of September or the first part of October. And we had all these portage to go over, and we used to pack all our stuff, pack the canoes and have our dogs hooked up on a sled and then pull some of our supplies over, then cross the lake and keep on portaging until we hit the main lake where we were to spend the winter till freexe-up.

Victoria: But, you know, your trapping, what all were you trapping at this time?

Roy: Well there was quite a bit. We used to trap mostly foxes, mink, linx, otter, marten, wolves, oh, there was a lot to be trapped.

Victoria: How did you do the skins, like, what you use when you trap is the skins off the animals eh?

Roy: Right.

Victoria: How did you go about, you know, when you take the skins off, is there any special thing that you have to do to keep, you know, to keep the skins and that?

Roy: No we used to... we used to... what we used to do is to have our... like, we'd catch a bunch of furs and have them stretched all out and dried and then we'd hang them up either in a old shed or outside where nothing can get at it and have them covered. Usually we'd build a shed where they'd hang

inside.

Victoria: They had to dry though to be good, eh?

Roy: Oh yeah, they had to dry.

Victoria: And, like, you had to have stretchers, I know, where they had to be a certain shaps. Roy: Oh yeah, you had to make your own stretchers. You had to make your own fox stretchers, mink stretchers and what not.

Victoria: There was a difference between the...?

Roy: Oh yeah, there's a big difference. Yeah, I remember Dad used to sometime make mink stretchers and marten stretchers used to go out and split a block of spruce or whatever and chop it down, then plane it out and then (inaudible - interruption)

Victoria: And, like, when you have a trapline is it just in one place or...?

Roy: No, there's branches off it all places. We used to go on one line and sometimes it'd take us... we'd have two cabins and about three tents set up in between them. Then we'd run back and forth. And then I have some branch lines from my own, from the main cabin running east and west or whatever. But then we'd come back and stay at the main cabins and that's where our fur would be mostly brought, eh.

Victoria: How long of a... how many miles would you say was your trapline?

Roy: Oh I imagine it was, it would be over 100 miles anyway. But we'd go close to the barrens, eh. It was quite a ways.

Victoria: And when you got back, who did you sell the furs to?

Roy: To The Hudson's Bay. Well, there used to be another store there, another fellow he was a Jew and he had a store there too, but it all depends who was paying the better price.

Victoria: How did the prices run on the furs?

Roy: Well, like that time, I remember Dad sold a nice black fox for \$30.

Victoria: And there's a black fox?

Roy: Oh yeah.

Victoria: I've only seen a kind of reddish one.

Roy: Well, that is (inaudible).

Victoria: How about... Did you hunt beavers then too? Roy:
Oh yeah, we used to.

Victoria: How much would a beaver pelt bring in?

Roy: Sometimes it would be \$40., \$45., to \$50.

Victoria: It was good money then, eh.

Roy: Yeah.

Victoria: You used the dog team all the time while you were...

Roy: All the time. We used to have our own team. But it's a lot of hard work and I went through lots of hardship. Lots of times when I was just young I used to think, oh gosh, I hope I'm never going to keep this up all my life. But freeze my hands sometimes. I remember my dad used to take off his mitts and tell me, "Your hands are cold?" And I'd say, "No." Then he said, "All right, put your hands up like this." I'd try and I couldn't do it. "Your hands are cold." Take his mitts off and give them to me.

Victoria: So how old were you at that time?

Roy: I started when I was 14, by 15 I was still on the... Well, at 14 I was kinda green at trapping. (laughs) But then now, after I grew older, finally when I was, I think I was 19 years when I went on my own.

Victoria: So when is the last time that you did any trapping like that?

Roy: A year ago.

Victoria: These last years.

Roy: Yeah, I had my own line up in Uranium City. Why I built a cabin out there and my wife and I would spend most of our time out there, we put in a garden and grow our own vegetables.

Victoria: Oh, right out of Uranium city?

Roy: Right.

Victoria: About how far out?

Roy: Right, it's about nine miles from Bushell Bay. Just right on the lake, sort of, Athabasca. It was a 16 x 20 house there, and during the summer we used to, well, sometimes I used to put a net out and then catch some trout and then I'd smoke them. Then we'd catch a lot of white fish. And then if they were real good, then the wife and I would get busy and then make dried fish.

Victoria: How do you do that?

Roy: Well, you scale them and then you cut down the head and down the backside on each side and take the insides out. Then, of course, you take all the bones out. Then you just slice them down on each side, cut out the belly for sure. Then you hang them up. Like me I had, I hung up, I put four poles which are supposed to be about 30 feet up. And I read in a book saying that a fly could only go 30 feet, but after 30 feet he can land on your fish but he'll never egg them. So that I tried which was true. So we... that's what we used to do. Of course, the wife used to have an awful time pulling the fish up. I'd have 36 on one stick and (laughs)...

Victoria: When you were young, do you remember if there was a time when your dad was ever unemployed?

Roy: No, well he's never, he never did work during the summer. Just in the wintertime is the only time we ever went, because he used to make, we'd make enough to do us all, to get by the summer, eh. And then when we were leaving he'd make arrangements with the Bay to make sure that the family didn't run out of groceries or whatever and he'd be billed for all this.

Victoria: Oh, so they let you have credit then, eh?

Roy: Right. But then we'd have to work like crazy. Then when we got in, we'd come in... we'd go out and never come in until just before Christmas. Then that's when we all come in to spend Christmas.

Victoria: Now did your dad ever do anything else? You know, he did this, he had the store and then he was trapping; is there other things that he used to do besides?

Roy: Well he prospected for Eldorado for a while.

Victoria: What, what did they have to do when they were prospecting?

Roy: Well he used to pack the Geiger counter around and try and pick up uranium and to see if he can find any uranium samples and...

Victoria: Was your dad a very well-educated man?

Roy: Pretty well.

Victoria: Well, where did he go to school at, do you remember?

Roy: In Fort Rae. It's in the North West Territories.

Victoria: Fort Rae, eh. So he was pretty well educated. Was... did he... his jobs must have paid well then, eh?

Roy: Oh yeah.

Victoria: And what about any of the rest of your family, did they live close around where you were, like your aunts and uncles, your grandparents?

Roy: No. I had one aunt in Fort Chip -- well, two of them in Fort Chip -- then an uncle, then I had a uncle, two uncles in Fort Smith and then one aunt. But one of my uncles, he was a purser on a boat for The Hudson's Bay, and my other uncle, he used to have an old truck. He used to deliver water around Fort Smith.

Victoria: What's a purser?

Roy: Purser means it's checking the stuff that comes off of the... the freight that they are carrying, eh, and when they're unloading it, well, he's checking it off, making sure that everything is checked off.

Victoria: So they were pretty well all unemployed [sic: employed]. Was there lots of jobs, you know, when you were young?

Roy: Pretty well, yeah, there was quite a few.

Victoria: And they earned a fairly good living, eh? What was your first paying job?

Roy: My first paying job, well, whenever that was in 194-, I think it was 1944, yeah, in '44. I worked like a slave there for \$75 a month and I used to be cookie there for the Eldorada and I used to help the command cook. And we used to have two tents, big tents together, and I had 46 men. And I had to serve them, and put all the dishes, wash the dishes, peel the potatoes, haul in the wood, split up wood, haul water. I mean, I used to work like crazy for \$75 a month.

Victoria: Did you do that for a long period of time?

Roy: Oh yeah, yeah, I was there for three months.

Victoria: Then what did you do later on?

Roy: Later on then we went back. I was back in Camsell. Then we went back out trapping during the fall again, then the rest of the winter out in the bush.

Victoria: So it was, it was... all the jobs, like, were kind of seasonal, were they?

Roy: Right.

Victoria: But they were... you made a good living at them and

yet they were seasonal.

Roy: Oh yeah. Right.

Victoria: In the community where you were raised, you said they were mostly Metis people, eh.

Roy: Yeah.

Victoria: They talked of themselves as being Metis, did they?

Roy: Oh yeah, yeah. They used to talk about it quite a bit.

Victoria: Was there whites in the community too?

Roy: There was a few white but not very many. But it never bothered them or bothered us.

Victoria: They all got along together, eh?

Roy: Oh yeah.

Victoria: There was none of your family that ever talked anything about Metis history?

Roy: Not that I know of, no.

Victoria: What language did you speak at home while growing up?

Roy: Cree-English.

Victoria: What's the first language you learned to speak?

Roy: English was our main language. Mom was talking Cree steady all the time so we kind of...

Victoria: But you grew up, when you started talking you...

Roy: Oh yeah, the first time -- I still remember, I wasn't very big. I used to kind of get my Cree kind of a little bit haywire I guess, and they used to laugh at me. And I used to remember this, the old lady comes, Mrs. Francis Powder, she tell me about a square needle and how you say square needle in Cree and I could never tell what it was, how to say, how to pronounce it. So finally this one day she tell me, now (Indian) see that's what it's (Indian). But that really used to get me and I finally one time I was so proud of myself I went down there and now I know that (Indian). She used to laugh at me. (laughs)

Victoria: So you were more of less always aware of being Metis, eh?

Roy: Right.

Victoria: Did the families in the community where you lived, did they get together, like for social events, you know, weddings and parties and that type of thing?

Roy: Not too much partying. Where's there a wedding, yeah, they'd (inaudible) But as far as I know there's nothing much like that.

Victoria: Were the weddings celebrated very big at that time?

Roy: Not so, not so huge as... nothing like now anyway.

Victoria: No, but maybe more quiet?

Roy: Yeah, because, well, over there when we were in Camsell, it was quite hard to try to celebrate anything that's... especially when they were... after awhile there was only one store, and that was the Bay. And you couldn't just about get anything you want in the autumn because the boats would only come there -- they'd come once in June and then once in September and that's the way it was.

Victoria: So there was no other way to get in there except by boat?

Roy: Sure. They used to have... that was on the start. And then, like, a lot of times when you wanted something, or to, sure... like a big dare like Christmas and all that there, you'd get some things from the store with which you were gonna to make a cake or what type of something like that, but as far as that time we'd celebrate Christmas the same thing we'd be up

from the bush, we come in with a bunch of caribou tongues, and say ducks or whatever we have and that's what we did. The women'd make pies, cakes and what not. This would all be around Christmas season.

Victoria: Caribou tongues are they good?

Roy: They are very good.

Victoria: How do you make them?

Roy: Well, Mom used to boil them all the time, just boil them up. And you peel the skin off them. And a lot of them, I know, like her, wife here, sometimes she boil them up and then she'd put a little string through them and hang them up and smoke them.

Victoria: They're supposed to be a real delicacy, eh?

Roy: Yeah.

Wife: Before summer (inaudible). No deep freeze

(inaudible).

Victoria: Yeah, you had to find some way to cure the meat, eh?

Wife: No fridge.

Victoria: Did any of your relatives ever wear any traditional Metis clothing?

Roy: No.

Victoria: None. Moccasins, did your family make moccasins?

Roy: Oh yeah, the moccasins, yeah, I know when we used to be out trapping Mother and sisters they would make us all muckluks and moccasins and beadwork, and then when we have a dance or something like that we'd all see who had the best pair of moccasins or muckluks to show off. (laughs)

Victoria: They had beadwork and everything put on them?

Roy: Oh yeah, beadwork.

Victoria: Who did beadwork in your family?

Roy: Mom and my sisters all did beadwork.

Victoria: Did they tan hides too?

Roy: Oh yeah, we tanned them. Mom tanned a lot of hides.

Victoria: Do you know how to do it now?

Roy: Oh yeah. Her and I did most of our own hides, tanned them and make our own. I've killed quite a few moose in Uranium City when I was up there.

Victoria: What do you make out of the hides when you're...?

Roy: Well she's made muckluks, moccasins, mitts... So this is what we used to do and this is why when I moved down here I found it kind of funny. I mean, seeing the people down here, the Indian people down where I was taken, like, oh, they must know how to make moose hides. But when we got down here we were out there and neither one knew how and they were asking us if we knew. And we said we know, and then they were asking us to go and show them.

Victoria: Did you... when you had the get-togethers and that, did they do much jigging?

Roy: Oh yeah, I had a brother that he used to be good at jigging. Yeah, I lost him a few years ago.

Victoria: Did you learn how to do any jigging?

Roy: No. Yeah, my dad... Marie danced but I danced but not near... I'm not the best. (laughs)

Victoria: How about fiddle playing, did you do much?

Roy: No I've never fiddled, playing to myself, no. Dad used to, my dad used to play a little bit and then my deceased brother used to.

Victoria: Do you know of anybody that used to sing any Metis songs?

Roy: Oh yeah there's a few people up where I was, long ago up in Uranium City, I mean Camsell Portage, used to sing.

Victoria: Did you remember anything about what they were about?

Roy: No I don't. Well, the wife there still yet could sing a little bit in Cree. (laughs)

Victoria: I should have got her to sing us a song. Did anybody in your family did they practise any Indian medicine, did they use any?

Roy: No. Moms knew a few things, I guess, but I don't know. I don't remember anything about it.

Victoria: How about the use in sweat lodges and that, had you ever seen one or used one?

Roy: No, this is my first time I've ever seen one, I didn't know what was, what it was. In fact, when they mentioned that I didn't know. I thought maybe it was just some kind of a steam bath or something like that, you know, they sweat but I just didn't know. So last summer when I was down here I went over to Herb Seesequais's place, so...

Victoria: Where's that at?

Roy: That's on the reserve here. And so I saw them. And his wife kept telling me about this sweating and of course I had to go, just got to go and see what it was like, eh. So I went up and done it. I kind of had an idea then, but then I... The next time I went over to a friend of mine, a good friend of mine named John Gamble. He had one and we used to go there and... we used to go there and watch and see how it's done, eh. Nice to hear them praying. I guess they're singing or whatever inside. And I used to see this one guy come and tell the daughter, whoever was there available, I guess, would take a shovel and there'd be a big bonfire (inaudible) a bunch of rocks, and she would take this hayfork I think they use and take all these hot rocks and they'd put them all inside this

sweat what-you-call-it. And then I understood that they throw some kind of medicine water or something on it and it steams. And then we were sitting outside and they told us that they were praying for us, and then they'd bring out a cup of, I don't know what it was, it was sort of like water, and they give us this to drink.

Victoria: Did they explain what this was doing though, explain what it was suppose to do?

Roy: They explained like this is trying to help the sick, and trying to heal you.

Victoria: In case you were sick or something and didn't know?

Roy: Well, like the wife was... kind of had a bad leg and they were hoping that this thing would heal.

Victoria: It would help her, eh. In other words it was just like going in there and being... Did they think it made them closer to God to be in there praying?

Roy: Apparently. I think so.

(END OF SIDE A)
(SIDE B)

Victoria: Did they have any serious illnesses, like when you were growing up, that you can remember where people passed away?

Roy: Well, they had a few of them (inaudible) not serious.

Victoria: How about T.B., was it a very common disease?

Roy: Sure. Yeah I know a lot of people, in fact I grew up with quite a few of them, that had tuberculosis, yeah. But that time there was nothing they could do, no cure, and a lot of them that I raised up with are all gone on account of T.B. And see, like, I had quite a few of my friends there and they... And also, like, I had a sister that was in the San -- she was in there for eight years -- and then I had a brother in there. They were all right after they cured up, then I ended up in there with a spot on my right lung. I spent two years, a little over two years in the San in P.A.

Victoria: In Prince Albert eh.

Roy: Yeah. And then I got home and ever since then I've never been bothered.

Victoria: When you were going to school what kind of things did the school teach you?

Roy: Well, mostly mapping and, well there wasn't very much

in school but we did a lot of reading. But the books we had that time we couldn't get no new books or any kind. The only book you can get was as far as grade four, and then we had to go back and read over and over at those same books. And I remember that teacher we had, he was, oh, you either had to get it in your head or else... He was really mean.

Victoria: Was it just a one-room school, or was it a...

Roy: Yeah, one room, just one room. There was, oh, there must have been about, close to 30 of us in there.

Victoria: Did they teach you anything about Metis history, or Indian history at all?

Roy: No.

Victoria: Nothing, eh? Were there any white students go to school there?

Roy: Gee, I think there was only about, I think there was only about maybe four or five, I think. That's about all, all the rest were Metis.

Victoria: Did you like going to school, did you enjoy it?

Roy: Well, I enjoyed it till at last. But then when I was getting kind of fed up with it, going over the same book all the time so finally I decided, well, I may just as well be out trapping and learn out there is the same thing, which I did. I used to take a book out with me and that's where I picked most of my reading.

Victoria: Did the white students in the school, did they treat you good?

Roy: Oh yeah, we all got along.

Victoria: And no name-calling or anything?

Roy: No, because there wasn't very much you can do in the school because the teacher was quite strict.

Victoria: And did your parents encourage you to go to school?

Roy: Oh yeah.

Victoria: Were you allowed to talk Cree in school?

Roy: Oh yeah.

Victoria: Oh, they allowed, you could talk Cree. Was your teacher from around the community?

Roy: No, no. I believe that the teachers were mostly from

around Prince Albert or Regina, somewheres around in there.

Victoria: He came into the community, did he?

Roy: Right. They used to get a teacher there just about every year.

Victoria: In all the time that you, you know, when you were working or the work that you done, you know, was there ever a time or an instance that you heard of where a Metis person was working and a white person was working and, you know, doing the same job but that the Metis person got paid less for it?

Roy: Oh yeah, that happens a lot. That's quite often. I noticed that a lot of times. Even where we were working there,

I remember, we were drilling there and there was one... well, we were getting \$375 I think a month and then he was only getting \$225.

Victoria: They never said why?

Roy: No, they mentioned why.

Victoria: Did he ever ask why, or question it at all?

Roy: No, he never even got into that. I don't know why. I still remember that because a lot of us, we'd be there and he's the same person as we were, I didn't see no reason for it. Then they put him on some heavier work, I don't know why they think they're givin' him more heavier job than they were, and they'd take the easiest job and...

Victoria: These were the white bosses that...

Roy: Yeah, yeah.

Victoria: And you mentioned drilling, what kind of drilling was it?

Roy: We were diamond drilling for uranium.

Victoria: And whereabouts was that at?

Roy: (Name ?) oh I'd say, it's just west of Uranium City. It's only, oh I don't know, it must be eight miles, not even six miles maybe from Uranium City.

Victoria: What was your job there? What did you do?

Roy: Drilling.

Victoria: Just doing the drilling and stuff?

Roy: Yeah.

Victoria: What do you do when you drill?

Roy: Well, you have to put the rods down a hole and then run the machine and then drill for ore.

Victoria: Is it a very big machine that you use?

Roy: Quite a size. You have to go down, you go down about 800 feet, sometimes 1,000.

Victoria: Is it a very big hole that they drill?

Roy: No, it's not very big. You only use air rods in it so it's not very big.

Victoria: And then what happens when this sinks down in there...

Roy: You bring up all the core, all the rock that's in the core bar, they call it. It runs so it goes to 10 feet down, right. Then when you're... you keep marking your rod. As you're drilling, the screw goes down, and then you keep track of how much. You know the footage and you know what the bit's doing down the hole, if it's grinding or you're not getting any ore, so you got to remember that. And then sometimes you lose your water, Then you got to mark that, just about how many feet where you lost your water, because a lot of them they call it sludge, is what when you diamond drilling the water is coming back and it's bringing all this sort of fine gravel up, eh, and then you put a pan down there. You take that, after pan down there. You take that, after the water settle the dirt settles in the bottom, and they take that and put it in cans and you mark it exact which footage you're at. And if you lose water at that, then you have that marked.

Victoria: What do you mean by losing water?

Roy: Well, sometimes when you're drilling and you hit a crack maybe, a crack in the rock way down in the bottom, then your water disappear because your water is suppose to come back. But if it doesn't, then sometime, well if you're not doing good then you have to pull up, and then you got to cement the hole. You cement that hole exactly where you lost the water.

Victoria: So then you can tell by what comes up when they pull the, the, the drill out if there's any type of ore in there?

Roy: Oh yeah. You see, when they have a different... a core bar on the end of these rods, and this is where it's done, it's cutting and your rock is all going up in the core bar. And then when after, when you're finished, when you pull all the rods up and then you put to one side. Then you take the tube out, and then you just knock it down and all your rock comes out. So therefore... And then, when the hole is

finished, then the engineer comes over with -- what they call it? what you call that now? -- thermometer and your reading is all on there. So they put a big probe down, it's just like an extension cord but it has a big ball on the end of it, and you let this down as you go down. And if you should hit some

uranium ore down there, well, this will tell you, gives you the reading on your instrument; so therefore they know where the vein of oar is. Therefore this is how they know.

Victoria: And how long did you work at that?

Roy: I worked at this one place here, I worked right from January till the end of May, I think it was. And then I went back again and, well, I worked there in different outfits.

Victoria: Did you attend, do you or your family, like when you were growing up, did they attend church regularly?

Roy: Quite a bit.

Victoria: Was there a church right in your community?

Roy: Yeah, there is, well in Uranium, I mean Camsell Portage there used to be... there was a priest would always come from Fort Chipewyan. I still remember him, Father Picard. He used to come over there by dog team and the dogs, they'd bring him over by dog team and 110 miles, it's a long ways. And he used to go all the way up towards the... up near the... some of the trappers where the Indians are and he'd go up and go and pray up there with them.

Victoria: He got along with the northern people then, eh?

Roy: Oh yeah.

Victoria: Did he ever visit at your home?

Roy: Oh yeah, yeah. See, before I wasn't a Catholic, I was a Protestant. And I just become Catholic here just last spring. But I don't see very much difference.

Victoria: Did your parents... was there ever voting that went on in the north there?

Roy: Voting? Now there's something now. I don't know what year it was but I remember one time, this is long time ago, in Camsell there was a voting going on but I don't remember who it was for. Maybe you were there that time. There was a plane that came there, I still remember a great big green plane, and that was the first time that a plane had come there like that. And all these people some of them would go up for a ride on it. Do you remember that? And they were voting. And I forget...

Victoria: And it was green?

Roy: Yeah, it was a big green...

Victoria: Would that have been an army plane?

Roy: No, I don't think it was a army plane. It was just like a... just was sort of like a big Norseman.

Victoria: Maybe some government official that...

Roy: Think so, I still remember that. But I was too young to vote then. .

Victoria: So you don't, you don't know if there was any, ever any politicians around up there then eh?

Roy: No.

Victoria: You don't ever remember of there ever being a Metis Society?

Roy: No, not (inaudible) Uranium City.

Victoria: It wasn't active at all in the north, eh?

Roy: No.

Victoria: When is the first time that you had heard about the Metis Society?

Roy: Well just when, oh, I don't remember what year that was when the Metis started up this in Uranium City.

Wife: In the late '60s?

Roy: Yeah.

Wife: Late '60s, early '70s.

Victoria: And who...

Roy: Oh I'd heard things about it, eh, but never got to...

Victoria: Who was the first person that ever came around up there, do you remember who it was?

Roy: No I don't remember who it was, no I don't.

Victoria: You didn't get active at all in the Metis Society eh?

Roy: No.

Victoria: What are some of the important things to you, like while you were growing up? In your lifetime, what would you say were some of the most important things in your life?

Roy: Well, the most important things in my life, gee whiz. I remember, I wished a lot of times I was... be, sometime maybe, become somebody that I can be up here and have my own farm and what not, eh, thinkin' get away from being up north and havin' an awful time trapping and freezing and that. I used to always say I wish I would be down south somewhere where I could have my own, but now that I'm down here I don't think that. (laughs)

Victoria: So you maybe wish you would have been born with money or...

Roy: Yeah, and all the times I'm still wishing for that money. (laughs)

Victoria: You have to buy more tickets, I guess.

Roy: I told my wife I said, "If I make my million," I said, "then," I said, "first thing I'm going to do is buy a nice house and all this I'm just going to throw out." (laughs)

Victoria: Do you ever wish that you would have been born like a white person or a Treaty Indian?

Roy: No, no, that's one I wish I never would be.

Victoria: Would you call your life interesting?

Roy: Pretty well.

Victoria: And satisfying? Would you say you were satisfied with the way your life is?

Roy: I'm satisfied, yeah. I got no complaints.

Victoria: But it was a hard-working life, eh?

Roy: That's true.

Victoria: Did you ever wish that you would have gotten more education?

Roy: Yeah, a lot of times. I would have too, if I would have kept on. Today, I don't know why but they never try to send me anywhere else (inaudible). And I never got any books like that. I don't know, there's quite a few of them are still just the same grade as I am.

Victoria: So it was more or less not because there was no teachers or anything; it was because they just couldn't get the proper things in there to teach, eh?

Roy: Right. That was it. They had had them I would have

been up in grades too.

Victoria: What do you think are... you know, say in the north now, what do you think native people need more than anything else? Like, there's problems there we know, but what do you think is the biggest problem.

Roy: Gee the biggest problem up there, I think, is wishing they had a road through there, that's what, so that they can get their supplies in a lot cheaper. But this way bringing it in by boat and what not it costs a fortune, especially with one store up there.

Victoria: They're still taking it in by boat?

Roy: Oh yes. And you take like now when, just when I left there I still remember going down to the little store they had there. The wife sent me in to get her some oranges and I walked in and paid 75 cents apiece and had it crated. And what I said, \$10? What did I say the potatoes was that time?

Wife: A pound? \$1.05 a pound.

Roy: See, he gets you.

Victoria: So them oranges and stuff are just like gold up there then, eh?

Roy: Right (inaudible)

Wife: \$10.50 for ten pounds.

Roy: Yeah. And you take like, what do you call, the flour when we buy here now it's only \$4 or \$5. Up there you don't get a bag of 20 pounds for \$12.37, I think it was.

Victoria: Well then, to be charged that much for it they must have good employment up there then. They must pay good money for work.

Roy: No way.

Wife: Just about the same as what the people are making up here in Key Lake in places.

Roy: This is why I say they who's up there, the people up there are... Well, we were just lucky, us, because every summer we put in our own garden, which we'd grow our own vegetables.

Victoria: So you did manage to get a garden out there?

Roy: Oh yeah, we also had chickens, and goats, and ducks.

Victoria: You had your own chicken and that, eh.

Roy: And geese.

Victoria: Well that was out when you were by the lake there you had your own...

Roy: No I had them right in the...

Victoria: Right in Uranium too?

Wife: Rabbits and goats.

Victoria: Do you think life in the city is different than in a small town?

Roy: Oh yes. Well it's, I know it's a big difference over here I know that.

Victoria: Would you sooner be in the city or up north?

Roy: Well, that's a pretty hard question. (laughs) I like it up north. Yeah, I'm sure I would never leave there if it wasn't so expensive and we had a good hospital and a doctor there steady, I would never move. I'd sooner stay there because I was better off there. I had nothing to worry about. You got the whole big lake to yourself. When you want to go in the summertime all you do is go down to Bushnell and put the boat and you're on the lake. Camp wherever you want to.

Victoria: So you would prefer the north but then... Your reason for leaving then would be because of no doctors and that up there?

Roy: Oh yeah, this is more or less. But I'm still thinking one of these days if I make a million dollars I'm going back to Uranium City, not to stay but just to prospect.

Victoria: Do you think native people are going to be better off in the county, or in the north, or in the cities?

Roy: Well some, I guess, I don't know. But there's a lot of them, a lot of the natives now, they were raised and born up north and they don't like to be in the city. I know a lot of them that told me they're not interested. They'd sooner stay there. Well, like myself, if it wasn't for my wife here I would never leave.

Victoria: So you really prefer to be living in the north, eh.

Roy: Oh yeah, because you got everything. You can drive and go anywhere, you know. It's nice, it's a nice life. (inaudible) you can go down to Fort Chip and tour around the lake. I love it. But here, I'm not too used to this because, well I'm getting to know the people a little better here now, but the first time last summer when I came in, boy, I telling you, it was just... It was awful! I hardly couldn't go... Where we came over to Duck Lake one time and we had to go all

the way back to Saskatoon. It was quite late and, oh boy, where were we gonna camp? And I met this John Gamble and he told me, "You're going back to Saskatoon?" I said, "Yeah, we have to because we got nowhere to camp." He said, "Oh, we got a big place. Come over to my place." And he's the one that I have a lot of respect for.

Victoria: So he's been a good friend then.

Roy: Yes he sure was.

Victoria: Well, thank you very much for the interview, Roy.

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