

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: WALTER LAWRENCE FIDDLER
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: BATOCHÉ,
SASKATCHEWAN
INTERVIEW LOCATION: BATOCHÉ,
SASKATCHEWAN
TRIBE/NATION: FRENCH/INDIAN
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: 04/05/84
INTERVIEWER: VICTORIA ROSE RACETTE
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: HEATHER YAWORSKI
SOURCE: SASKATOON NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOC.
& BATOCHÉ CENTENARY CORP.
TAPE NUMBER: #IH-SD.17
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC #150
PAGES: 26
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Victoria: April 5, 1984, I'm interviewing Walter Fiddler of
Batoche, Saskatchewan. Where were you born, Walter?

Walter: I was born in Fish Creek.

Victoria: How far is that from Batoche?

Walter: About five miles from where I live here.

Victoria: And what type of a house did you grow up in, was it a
log house?

Walter: It was a log house.

Victoria: And did you have running water?

Walter: No.

Victoria: Electricity or anything like that?

Walter: No, didn't have no electricity.

Victoria: How many rooms did you have in your house?

Walter: There was only one room and the upstairs.

Victoria: You had an upstairs?

Walter: Yeah, we had an upstairs.

Victoria: What did you use for heating the house?

Walter: Wood.

Victoria: What type of furniture did you have?

Walter: Well, there wasn't too much furniture.

Victoria: Was it handmade though?

Walter: Oh, they're all handmade.

Victoria: And did your parents own their own land?

Walter: Yeah.

Victoria: Do you know if it was a homestead or if it was scrip?

Walter: It was a scrip.

Victoria: How many acres was it?

Walter: One hundred and sixty acres.

Victoria: Was it your dad's scrip or was it from your mom?

Walter: It was my dad's.

Victoria: And I suppose you had a fairly big area to play in and stuff when you were small?

Walter: Oh, yeah.

Victoria: The yard was quite large. Were there people that lived close around you, like neighbours and that?

Walter: Yeah, I had an uncle living close to me, Paul Desjarlais.

Victoria: And about how far away was the nearest neighbour?

Walter: About 500 yards.

Victoria: And they were Metis people?

Walter: Oh yeah. He was married to my auntie.

Victoria: Did you ever hear of what they called road allowance people?

Walter: No.

Victoria: I believe they were people that lived on a road allowance so that they never had to pay taxes.

Walter: Well, most of the people that lived there they were living on their scrips along the river.

Victoria: When you were growing up did you have any chores to do at home? Did you have your own work, like, what you had to do every day?

Walter: Well not too much in those days. There was hardly any chores to do, just bring wood in the house.

Victoria: How about your brothers and sisters did they have any special things that they had to do every day?

Walter: Well, look after the horses and cattle that's about all they had to do.

Victoria: And what about... did your family all go camping and hunting and berry picking and that together? Did they do things as a family?

Walter: Oh yeah, they done a lot of that, preserved them for winter.

Victoria: And did you know of anyone, your relatives or just somebody in the community, that told stories? You know, what they called the storyteller.

Walter: Well, all my uncles they were storytellers. They went to school in Winnipeg and they all told stories from storybooks in French, all of them they (Victoria interrupts - inaudible) when we were small.

Victoria: Do you remember any of the stories, or part of a story or something that you could tell us that they used to tell you?

Walter: Well, not too much but... I pretty near forgot them now. It was about Ti-Jean anyways. (laughs)

Victoria: Was your family, was it a close family? Did they stick together and stick up for one another?

Walter: Oh yeah, they used to stick pretty close all together.

Victoria: And was there very many of your aunts and uncles,

your grandparents or anybody that, you know, were there very many of them living in the same area?

Walter: Oh yeah, there was quite a few there living. I had five brothers in Fish Creek there, they was living. They have along the river.

Victoria: So it was sort of a Metis settlement down there then, eh?

Walter: Oh yeah, it was a real Metis settlement. When they come from Winnipeg they come straight to Fish Creek there.

Victoria: Was there very many people that came? Your father must have been one of them that came from Winnipeg, was he?

Walter: Yeah.

Victoria: Was there very many others? Was any of his family with them when they came down here?

Walter: Well, yeah, when my grandfather came -- they were pretty young, I guess -- they all settled in Fish Creek there.

Victoria: So your grandfather came over when his children were young then, eh?

Walter: Yeah.

Victoria: Where did your... Your father came from Winnipeg but your mother, where was she from?

Walter: She was born in Duck Lake.

Victoria: So she was from this area too then. eh?

Walter: Yeah.

Victoria: What did your father do for a living?

Walter: Well in Fish Creek over there he used to raise horses and sell them to the new settlers that came in.

Victoria: And did he do other things to help supplement his income? Like, did he, you know, cut firewood to sell, or get meat, you know, wild game?

Walter: Well, I guess he used to... Well, he couldn't do that very well because he was partly blind.

Victoria: Oh, so he was sort of handicapped, eh?

Walter: Handicapped, yeah. But he used to freight up north in the winter sometimes, and from Winnipeg to Batoche here for Gabriel Dumont -- when is it that happened? -- that had a store in Batoche here, Batoche in town, he used to do some

freighting.

Victoria: Did he do any hunting, you know, and fishing?

Walter: Well he done some fishing but not really hunting.

Victoria: Did any of you boys do it while you were growing up?

Walter: Well, we done a little.

Victoria: Like the family use and that, was that... was it up to you boys to bring in the meat and stuff for the family?

Walter: Oh yeah, that was our job. My brothers, they were older than me.

Victoria: Your father kept horses too for trade, not for trading but he sold them. Did you have any other type of livestock?

Walter: Well we had a few head of cattle in those days.

Victoria: Were you able to keep chickens and that type of stuff?

Walter: Oh yeah, we had chickens.

Victoria: Did your parents grow a garden?

Walter: Oh yeah.

Victoria: What all were you able to grow in the garden?

Walter: Potatoes, carrots, and stuff like that.

Victoria: How did you preserve them for wintertime, how were you able to keep them?

Walter: Well, in cold storage. They used to dig a hole in the ground and put the potatoes in there and carrots.

Victoria: It would be a type of a root cellar.

Walter: A root cellar.

Victoria: Do you remember any time when you were young that your father didn't have any work at all?

Walter: Well, they used to do a little farming later on.

Victoria: But was there a time when he didn't have any work at all, there was no income at all?

Walter: Oh no he always had, not too much income, not much work to do.

Victoria: Was that a rough time for your family when you were growing up when there was no money coming in or anything?

Walter: Oh yeah, it was pretty hard.

Victoria: What did the other... like, your relatives were quite close around where you were there, what did your uncles and, you know, the other Metis people do for a living?

Walter: Well they done pretty near all the same thing.

Victoria: Was it mostly seasonal work, just any jobs that they could get?

Walter: Yeah, mostly that's all they did.

Victoria: What language was spoken in the home when you were growing up?

Walter: Well it was French and when they didn't want us to understand what they were saying they used to talk Cree.
(laughs)

Victoria: What language did you first speak when you were growing up?

Walter: French. That's what they taught us.

Victoria: Did your parents think of themselves, not just your parents, I suppose, but in your little settlement there, did they think of themselves as being Metis people?

Walter: Oh yeah.

Victoria: So then you were always aware of being Metis?

Walter: Oh yeah. I'm not ashamed to be Metis.

Victoria: They were quite proud of being Metis.

Walter: They were proud.

Victoria: Was there anyone of your family, like, the older people in your family as you were growing up, did they talk about Metis history?

Walter: Well, not too much no.

Victoria: What did they do for entertainment? Did they have parties or any social events?

Walter: Well they had parties, they had a lot of parties in winter. Used to dance a lot of Red River jig in those days.

Victoria: How about Christmas, what was it like for your family?

Walter: Oh Christmas, you know, is pretty big celebration. We used to visit from house to house, have big meals.

Victoria: What about New Year's, was it celebrated?

Walter: Oh yeah, it was the same. They used to celebrate from Christmas to New Year, a whole week straight through.

Victoria: Do lots of dancing and parties, and...

Walter: And the table was always set. The first one that came in ate whatever he wanted.

Victoria: And do you remember if your father ever wore a Metis sash?

Walter: Yeah, I remember he wore a Metis sash, yeah. I'm sorry I didn't preserve it. We had it and we lost it -- too bad.

Victoria: How about other... you know, that was classed as Metis clothing, was there anything else that he used to wear that Metis people wore back in those days that you can remember?

Walter: Well, they wore moccasins that they handmade.

Victoria: Were they the short ones?

Walter: The short ones with the tie around, wraparound.

Victoria: And how about your mother, did she dress like the Metis women did in Metis style?

Walter: Oh yeah, in those days yes she did.

Victoria: How was that, can you remember the type of clothing?

Walter: Well, it was a skirt, like, with lots of beads, and a blouse, like, on top of it. They wore pretty long dresses in those days.

Victoria: Did she do any beadwork of any kind?

Walter: Oh yeah, she used to make a lot of our own moccasins in those days.

Victoria: Did she know how to tan hides?

Walter: Yeah, she used to tan hides.

Victoria: Did you ever watch?

Walter: Oh yeah, I used to watch.

Victoria: Do you know how to do it now?

Walter: No. (laughs) Well I was pretty young when I used to see her and watch (inaudible) when we were young.

Victoria: Yeah, what I got from a lot of other ones is they used to watch but they weren't allowed to touch. Was there any fiddle players in your family?

Walter: Well, there were about six brothers. Only my dad that didn't play the fiddle and all the rest of my uncles played fiddle.

Victoria: Oh, he was the only one that didn't play, eh?

Walter: He was the only one that didn't play.

Victoria: How about jigging, could everybody step dance?

Walter: Oh, in those days everybody had his chance to go jig a little bit.

Victoria: How about you, did you learn how to step dance?

Walter: No I didn't.

Victoria: How about playing the fiddle?

Walter: No I didn't. One of my brothers though he played the fiddle.

Victoria: Do you remember if they sang any Metis songs back then about, even about Metis history, or even some of them singing Cree songs?

Walter: Well they didn't sing any Cree songs but I remember every New Year there they celebrate they used to sing a lot of songs, but I don't remember... That was in French, songs, though.

Victoria: Do you remember what any of them were about? If you can remember, you know, some of the things that they sang about?

Walter: Well, it was songs I guess that came from France mostly that they sang.

Victoria: Did they have any meaning though? Did they talk about, was the song words about what happened over there or...

Walter: Well, lots of songs they were made, some of them they made their own self when they were freighting, when they were working for the Hudson Bay Company.

Victoria: So, what happened to them, I suppose, while they worked.

Walter: Yeah, when they were freighting there on the river there.

Victoria: Yeah, that would be then the traditional Metis songs. See I think what it was that they would make up songs about the things that would happen to them during their travels.

Walter: Yeah, I suppose.

Victoria: Well, this was sort of like a history coming down. Was there any non-native people, were there any white people that lived in your community?

Walter: Well, not at the start. It all Metis there in Fish Creek to start with.

Victoria: Did any of them marry into the white people, or did they mostly stay with Metis people?

Walter: Well, in those days they mostly intermarried.

Victoria: Do you know if anyone in your family believed or practised Indian medicine?

Walter: Well, my mother did.

Victoria: And do you remember the things, the type of things that she used?

Walter: Oh, a lot of them I still remember. I know a good medicine for piles, that's one thing I... (laughs).

Victoria: And I know they used to, you know, go and dig different roots and that. Did she do that and make her own type of medicine?

Walter: Oh yeah, I used to help her pick all them herbs.

Victoria: You remember some of them and know how to make them?

Walter: Oh yeah, I remember some of them.

Victoria: Do you remember if there was ever any real serious illnesses? You know, there was... a lot of people remember typhoid and tuberculosis. Was there an epidemic like that that was around?

Walter: Well, in those days there was a lot of tuberculosis around.

Victoria: Did you know of anyone around Fish Creek that had tuberculosis?

Walter: Well, there was a few that had that.

Victoria: Were they treated with the Indian medicine?

Walter: I guess so, yeah, they were treated but I don't know if it done anything.

Victoria: What I was wondering is if... the sanitorium must have been in Prince Albert at the time, I was just wondering if they tried to treat them themselves or if they were sent to Prince Albert.

Walter: Oh yeah, well, at the end there they used to go to Prince Albert.

Victoria: Did you ever hear of a sweat lodge?

Walter: No.

Victoria: You don't know what a sweat lodge is at all?

Walter: No.

Victoria: Do you still use some of the Indan medicine that your mom used?

Walter: Well, for piles there I still remember. I guess when the peoples want to try it I give them some. And it usually cures them too.

Victoria: So you said you're still following the traditions from your parents then, eh?

Walter: Oh yeah.

Victoria: When you were going to school and that, and growing up did your family get along with the white people, you know, in the communities not necessarily right where you were living but in the surrounding areas?

Walter: Oh yeah, we used to get along pretty good.

Victoria: So were you ever discriminated against? Did they ever...

Walter: Not at school.

Victoria: How about in the community was it very bad or did they, were they all getting along fine?

Walter: They get along pretty good. Years ago the school will be Ukrainian people and they were... we used to get along very nice.

Victoria: Do you know if there was, of any time that there was ever, you know, a Metis person and white person that had the same job but the Metis person got paid less?

Walter: No, I don't remember that.

Victoria: Were you ever denied a job because you were Metis, and all the time, like, that you were growing up and that were you ever...

Walter: No I was never refused a job.

Victoria: So it doesn't bother you then when you go into town or into, you know, places that white people own, it doesn't bother you at all?

Walter: No, it doesn't bother me at all.

Victoria: And how about the police or judges if you have had occasion to talk with them or anything, it hasn't bothered you a bit?

Walter: No, it doesn't bother me.

Victoria: Have you ever had any problems or, you know, when you were dealing with government agencies maybe sometimes? I know you've been quite active in your Metis Society locals here and probably have had to deal with, you know, people who were on welfare or the police or anything, have you ever had any bad problems with them?

Walter: No.

Victoria: You've been able to work out everything.

Walter: We seemed to work out everything that I wanted to do.

Victoria: Did you ever run into any problems where the people in the community tried to get Metis people to move away?

Walter: Well, I don't think so.

Victoria: Not anything that you've ever heard of, eh?

Walter: No.

Victoria: Did your parents attend, like, church regularly when you were growing up? Was there a church close around?

Walter: Well, when we used to live in Fish Creek we used to come to church in Batoche here. There was no church and just later on they built one in Fish Creek there. They attended church regularly.

Victoria: How far did you have to travel?

Walter: Well, when we used to live in Fish Creek we used to travel only a mile, but from Fish Creek to Batoche we used to travel six miles.

Victoria: So your folks attended church regularly then?

Walter: Oh yeah.

Victoria: Did the priest ever visit the homes?

Walter: Oh yeah. We used to have a visit from the priest pretty often.

Victoria: What did they talk about, do you remember?

Walter: No, I don't remember.

Victoria: Did you always, were you always going to church? Like, you never weakened from going to church? You still go?

Walter: No still...

Victoria: Still as often as you always did, eh? Do you think that the church had more influence over the people, like, back in that time than it does now?

Walter: Well I think so, yeah.

Victoria: How... what did it seem like to you? Why do you think they had more influence back then than they do, you know, today?

Walter: Well, I don't know. I guess on buffalo days, from years ago when they used to go buffalo hunting, they usually had a priest along with them. That's how they...

Victoria: Do you think that then... what you're saying is that they probably had more respect back then for the church than what they do now?

Walter: Oh yeah, they had a lot more.

Victoria: Do you think that the church, you know, has helped Metis people when they've had problems, you know, like when they had hard times and that? Do you think that the church helped them?

Walter: Oh I believe so, yeah.

Victoria: And when you were going to school do you remember what kind of things you were taught when you were going?

Walter: Well it was reading, and arithmetic, and...

Victoria: The usual things?

Walter: Yeah, the usual things.

Victoria: The reason I ask that is because a lot of the people who went -- I guess it depended on what area you were in -- a lot of them were just taught basic things without being taught reading or writing and this type of stuff, just more or less

experience. What were your schools like? Were they more than one room or just a one-room type of a building?

Walter: Yeah, it is just a one-room type.

Victoria: And was it a teacher or a nun that taught?

Walter: It was a teacher.

Victoria: Were you allowed to talk Cree in school?

Walter: No. Well, we didn't. Us young generation, we didn't use that language very much after that.

Victoria: So it would be mostly your parents that used...

Walter: Most parents, yeah.

Victoria: Did you feel comfortable at school?

Walter: Oh yeah.

Victoria: What do you think you enjoyed about school the most? Was there anything special that you enjoyed more than the others?

Walter: Well, (inaudible) our captain spoke to certain young kids, and we were glad to learn how to read and write.

Victoria: So all in all you enjoyed school, you wanted to go?

Walter: Oh yeah, I liked school.

Victoria: Did your parents encourage you to attend school?

Walter: Oh yeah.

Victoria: Do you remember if they taught you anything about Metis or Indian history at all back in them days?

Walter: No, not too much.

Victoria: Did I hear you say that you attended with white students too?

Walter: Yeah, we were a mixed school.

Victoria: And you got along fine?

Walter: Yeah, we got along just fine.

Victoria: Do you remember what political party your parents voted for?

Walter: Well, I thought they always voted Liberal.

Victoria: I found that most of the Metis people did. Do you

know if they were involved in party politics at all?

Walter: No.

Victoria: Do you know if there was any special thing that influenced them to vote the way they did?

Walter: Well, I think they voted Liberal on account it was a religious party, like.

Victoria: So you're saying then that the church was involved in the politics?

Walter: Yeah, the church was involved, yeah.

Victoria: In what way? I mean, how would they be involved?

Walter: Well, I...

Victoria: Would the priest...? I know you were probably quite young then, but the priest would have been involved too in the politics?

Walter: Probably yeah.

Victoria: Did politicians ever visit your home like, when you were young?

Walter: I guess so.

Victoria: You don't remember what they talked about, eh?

Walter: I don't remember what they talked about.

Victoria: I was just wondering if it was the same, you know, then as what they do now when they come to the house.

Walter: I suppose probably it was the same thing.

Victoria: Probably persuading people to vote their way.

Walter: In those days, well, they used to have Conservative and Liberal in the red and blue pencil to mark the one that didn't know how to write their name.

Victoria: Oh, that's how they told how...

Walter: Conservative had the blue, and the Liberal had the red and you make a cross on your ballot.

Victoria: I suppose that's how when they went around talking politics they told them we're the blue pencil so...

Walter: Well, which pencil to use.

Victoria: (laughs) What do you think that Metis people, you know, in the old days -- I wonder if you would remember -- when

they talked of politics what did they think about it? Did they have a positive feeling about it or was it sort of negative? Do you think their understanding was good of what politics were?

Walter: I believe so.

Victoria: You think they were fairly well educated in politics, eh?

Walter: Well my father, they had went to school in Winnipeg over there, in Manitoba.

Victoria: So he knew quite a bit about politics and that, eh?

Walter: Oh yeah. They all went to school, mostly French though that school.

Victoria: A lot of the older people hadn't had the chance to go to school, you know. I think maybe it was because of what area they lived in when they were younger.

Walter: Well they were born in St. Boniface, Manitoba.

Victoria: Do you vote the way your parents did?

Walter: Yes. Sometimes I change, but mostly the same way.

Victoria: Yeah, I think it's mostly family tradition that it runs down. Do you ever take an active role in party politics? Like, do you campaign for any certain party?

Walter: No, I don't campaign.

Victoria: Does any of your friends that you know of, do they get really heavily involved in politics?

Walter: Well, some of them, yeah, Houston, they get really involved in politics.

Victoria: Do you think that Metis people usually see one party as the one who really speaks up for the Metis people? I mean, do you know of which political party...

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Victoria: Like, what political party that the Metis people voted for because they really were concerned about the problems that Metis people had?

Walter: Well, they voted Liberal mostly, I guess. No doubt

the Liberal had more influence on them.

Victoria: That had more to offer?

Walter: Yeah, had more to offer.

Victoria: What was one of the first paying jobs that you had?

Walter: Well, first paying job was working for a farmer for 50 cents a day.

Victoria: And where was that at?

Walter: Right on the farm.

Victoria: Was it by Fish Creek?

Walter: No, by Gabriel here, where I live now.

Victoria: And how old were you then?

Walter: I was 14.

Victoria: What other jobs did you do? Like, when you were working on the farm there, what was your jobs? What did you have to do?

Walter: Well, we used to plow, and feed for the farmer. And in the fall, well, we used to go out threshing.

Victoria: Was it steady employment? Like, did you work for him just in the spring and then again in the fall?

Walter: Oh, just in the spring and in the fall.

Victoria: So it was seasonal then, eh?

Walter: Yeah, that was seasonal.

Victoria: And what other jobs did you do?

Walter: Well, we used to cut a lot of wood, make a lot of cordwood for sale. We used to sell it in the winter.

Victoria: And how much did you get paid for it?

Walter: Well, we used to get 50 cents a cord to cut.

Victoria: Did you you have to haul it for that price too?

Walter: No, we just left it in the bush, we'd pile it in the bush, for 50 cents a cord.

Victoria: Was that good money in them days?

Walter: Well in those days it was pretty good money and you could buy quite a bit with 50 cents.

Victoria: About how many cord could you have cut in one day?

Walter: Oh we used to two, three cords a day.

Victoria: That's one person?

Walter: Yeah. That was in good wood, and there was a lot of good wood in those days.

Victoria: I suppose there was a lot of bush around then eh?

Walter: Oh yeah, there was a lot of bush.

Victoria: And what other jobs did you do while growing up?

Walter: Well, it was mostly farming.

Victoria: You said you had worked in a sawmill or...

Walter: Yeah, well after I got married there I went two winters working around Montreal Lake in the sawmill. That's how I bought my first river lot here with the money I earned.

Victoria: That's how you first started, eh, with your farm here?

Walter: That's how I first started.

Victoria: How old were you when you first bought your farm?

Walter: Twenty-three.

Victoria: You were married at that time?

Walter: Yeah.

Victoria: Did you have any children then?

Walter: I had one.

Victoria: How many children do you have now all together?

Walter: I've got six. Two boys and four girls.

Victoria: They all left home?

Walter: Well I still got one at home partly. (laughs)

Victoria: So for the longest time then it was just seasonal work for you, eh?

Walter: Oh yeah, it was, just seasonal.

Victoria: And how was it like when you were unemployed? Was it bad or were you able to save enough during the time that you

worked to help tide over for when you didn't have work?

Walter: Well, pretty well, yeah. We had to save though. You couldn't play with it, play with your money.

Victoria: What kind of work did the other Metis people around have? What type of jobs?

Walter: Well, there was mostly the same thing as me.

Victoria: So it was sort of a seasonal work.

Walter: Seasonal work, yeah, that was all.

Victoria: Did you ever do any trapping at all?

Walter: I done a little trapping but not very much, no.

Victoria: What was it that you trapped?

Walter: Well, muskrats and weasels, that's about all that was... coyotes and foxes.

Victoria: Was it good money trapping?

Walter: In those days, yeah, it was. Every little bit used to help.

Victoria: Were you quite young when you were out trapping?

Walter: Well, I was around 15 when I started to trap.

Victoria: So all in all it was... you were quite busy all the while you were growing up.

Walter: Oh yeah.

Victoria: Were you ever involved in the first Metis Society, it was called then The Saskatchewan Metis Society? It would have been during the '30s and '40s.

Walter: No.

Victoria: You weren't involved at that time, eh?

Walter: No.

Victoria: Do you recall any of the older people around here that were involved, or did you know of anyone?

Walter: Well, they used to talk about it.

Victoria: Do you remember any of the things that they have said about what it was like?

Walter: Not too much. They were talking about land anyway.

Victoria: They were trying to get land for the Metis people?

Walter: Yeah.

Victoria: Was there very many people in those days that got land scrips around?

Walter: Well, mostly all the settlement, I guess, had scrips.

Victoria: That's when they came from Manitoba here, like, they settled with land scrips?

Walter: Yeah.

Victoria: It was scrips then; it wasn't homesteads?

Walter: Yeah, it was scrips. And my mother, I remember that she sold her scrip for a sewing machine at that time.

Victoria: Is that right?

Walter: Yeah.

Victoria: And how much was a scrip worth back then?

Walter: Well, it wasn't worth too much, I guess. I don't know how much a sewing machine was worth in those days.

Victoria: Well, how much land were they allowed for that?

Walter: It was 160 acres.

Victoria: The homestead, was it the same amount?

Walter: Yeah. I believe so. I don't remember, I never inquired.

Victoria: So she traded hers for a sewing machine, eh?

Walter: For a sewing machine, yeah.

Victoria: Most of the people around had gotten scrip, eh?

Walter: Yeah.

Victoria: You don't remember any of the names like Joe LaRocque, or Joe Ross, Tom Major?

Walter: No.

Victoria: Or Joe McKenzie, Solomon Pritchard?

Walter: I remember some Rosses but not by that name.

Victoria: How would you say your life was? How would you

describe your life?

Walter: Well, we had a pretty happy life.

Victoria: Do you think it was interesting?

Walter: Oh yeah.

Victoria: And was it satisfying?

Walter: Yeah.

Victoria: And I suppose you had to work hard too, eh?

Walter: Oh yeah, we had to work hard. We had lots of time to visit each other and...

Victoria: You think life back then was better than it is today though?

Walter: I believe so.

Victoria: Why? What are some of the things that you think were better then than they are today?

Walter: Well, we had a lot of enjoyment. They used to gather and have dances, and violin playing, and singing. The old people loved to enjoy themselves in those days.

Victoria: And do you think that your life was better than your father's or your grandfather's? Do you think it's easier?

Walter: Oh, I believe so. I believe it was a lot easier than my grandfather's life.

Victoria: What are some of the things that have really mattered to you? What are some of the most important things that have happened to you during your lifetime?

Walter: Well...

Victoria: Was religion a very important thing for you?

Walter: Oh yeah, religion was an important thing.

Victoria: How about education?

Walter: Education, oh yeah, that's one. Education, that was, I was really involved in. I wanted my kids to be educated as much as they could learn.

Victoria: Do you wish you could have gotten more education?

Walter: Oh yes, I wish I had the chance what my kids had.

Victoria: You quit when you were quite young. Was there a

reason that you had to quit that early?

Walter: Well, I had to quit to earn money to make a living, because my father was handicapped so we had to help.

Victoria: So it was up to you to get out and help make the living for the family eh?

Walter: Make the living for the family.

Victoria: In your area here, do the Metis people have any real problems?

Walter: Well...

Victoria: Is there any special type of a problem that they have?

Walter: Well, mostly, most of the Metis around here now they got no land. That's one problem.

Victoria: Do you think that there is anything that could be done to improve that, to help them?

Walter: Well, if we could get a land settlement from the government that would be a great thing.

Victoria: If we did, is there open land around here for them if they chose to settle here?

Walter: Well, not too much. There is only the community pastures, I guess, that a person, they...

Victoria: Do you think that the people around here would be willing to move to a different place to live?

Walter: Well, I hardly think so.

Victoria: Not at this time?

Walter: Not at this time.

Victoria: That would be a very big decision probably for the people to make if they did come to some agreement about land settlement.

Walter: Yeah, it would be.

Victoria: You've never lived in a big city at all?

Walter: No, I never. I was born around this part and I stayed all my life.

Victoria: Would you like to have lived in a big city?

Walter: No, I'd rather stay on the farm.

Victoria: You're a farm boy, are you?

Walter: Yeah.

Victoria: Do you think that life would have been different for you if you would have born a white person, or maybe a treaty Indian?

Walter: I don't think so. I'm proud of my nationality, of being a Metis.

Victoria: You're happy with what you are, eh.

Walter: I'm happy the way I am.

Victoria: If you had a chance to be born all over again, start over, would you still want to be a man or would you sooner be a woman?

Walter: Well I'd rather be a man I guess.

Victoria: Why would you choose to be a man? Wouldn't you like to do something different?

Walter: Well, I don't know. That's a hard one.

Victoria: Would you do anything different than what you did already if you could be born all over again? Is there anything at all that you would have liked to have changed?

Walter: Geez, I don't know.

Victoria: Nothing that you can think of that you...?

Walter: No.

Victoria: Do you think that the future is going to be better for your children and your grandchildren?

Walter: Well, I believe so. They're getting good education. That's a great help. With no education you can't get nowhere.

Victoria: Do you think that in the future though that... Do you think that native people are going to be better off, like, away up in the far north, or maybe in the cities, or just out in the country?

Walter: Well, I hope so.

Victoria: Which do you think will be the best place for them though? Do you think that they should move north, or maybe just out in the country out of the city?

Walter: Well, I guess they'd be better off out in the country than hanging around in the city.

Victoria: So you figure the city is a bad place?

Walter: Oh yeah, I believe so. I believe the city is not a place to raise a family.

Victoria: Okay. Thank you very much for the interview, Walter.

(END OF SIDE B)

(END OF TAPE)