

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: ARSENE FONTAINE 1
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: LA LOCHE, SASK.

INTERVIEW LOCATION: LA LOCHE, SASK.

TRIBE/NATION: CHIPEWYAN/FRENCH
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: JANUARY 21, 1983
INTERVIEWER: RAY MARNOCH
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: HEATHER BOUCHARD
SOURCE: SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD
TAPE NUMBER: IH-147
DISK: TRANSCRIPT 1a
PAGES: 48
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Describes curing by a medicine man.
- Brief description of how to make a canoe.
- Description of transportation by dog team.

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SUMMARY

Christine and brother (William) Gordon had a store in Ft. McMurray and one in West La Loche. Adopted boy, George, from Edmonton. William died in 1932 and Christine soon after. George Gordon also died about 1975 but family still in McMurray today. They had a lot of land so they sold it and made lot of money. Although Christine said she was poor, a trunk full of money was found in her house. Arsene's dad, Baptiste Fontaine, was store manager for William Gordon in West La Loche. Brought supplies by canoe and wagon from McMurray. Baptiste was kind and helped people in hard times. Over in La Loche the people were poor; then Revillon built store there. The Hudson's Bay Company warehouse is now where the Revillon store was.

There was no work in West La Loche. When back from trapping, they planted gardens then went by horse and canoe to work in McMurray at either the Bay warehouse or McInnis Fish Company. Lots of people from La Loche worked there all summer. They got about 80 /hour.

People used to work hard. Now they are living like kings on

welfare but Arsene never drew welfare in his life.

MEDICINE:

Before the La Loche hospital really sick people were taken by canoe to Ile-a-la-Crosse. It was a long trip in rough weather. When Arsene's mother, Rosalee, was sick, the family went. They stayed in a tent. The doctor came every day to check mother but there was no room for her in the hospital. She soon recovered but many people died at that time. The doctor couldn't do anything for them.

Alfred Cheecham's dad was a Cree doctor. He was given gifts when he helped a sick person. He was a good doctor. Didn't sing, just used roots from the bush to cure lots of people. Also stuck you with needle and sucked blood out, cleaned with medicine and tied paper on. Especially for sore knees. Arsene's uncle, Alec Janvier, cured Simeon's broken leg by making a wooden box for a cast. Simeon walked again after one month in cast.

Arsene's great uncle, Laboss, amputated a man's arm by using a long shaving razor. That man even made canoes and snowshoes after that using a crooked knife.

BIRCH CANOES:

(Arsene gives a detailed description of how they made birch canoes.)

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Birch canoes were light and could be packed all the way up north to Muskeg Mt. in Alberta. Lots of people carried canoes to and from that beaver country. Later Arsene took canvas and made them anywhere, 12ft. for one man and a 15 footer for two. Often if canoes were left bears destroyed them so new ones had to be built. Before when trapping no one used tents or cabins. Only made a cabin for family but when on trapline the men never used even a tent. Arsene bought his first tent from an old lady. Put a wood stove inside and found it to be like a house. In the tent he could skin the foxes instead of having to haul them frozen all the way back to West La Loche.

DOG TEAMS:

Usually had 5 dogs to a team. Arsene would pay almost anything for a good dog. He trained his own dogs. Good to train in deep snow so the dog likes those conditions. The dogs were fed moose meat because there were lots of moose before. When camp was made in the bush, he made a bed of spruce bows for each dog and fed them well.

WINTER CAMPING:

After the first cold night in fall they would get used to the cold. When ready to camp, they dug the snow away with a

snowshoe, made a bed of spruce bows and went to sleep in their good blankets. The Big Dipper was a good watch. Sometimes had to travel before dawn but the dogs knew the trail. Arsene trained his dogs not to bark. Only barked if wolf nearby because they were scared.

WOLF AND DOG STORY:

When Arsene trapped with Ed Park, his brother-in-law, one dog broke his chain and disappeared. The men heard wolves and guessed the dog was killed but then they saw him coming. The dog lost his tail. There were about seven or eight wolves but they just played with the dog. Didn't bite him at all. His brother-in-law shot his gun. Scared the wolves away and his dog came back.

Another time Ed saw wolf tracks, chased them and shot one timber wolf. When Arsene came, he packed the wolf on sled and they left. Upon stopping to make a fire, Arsene went to get his axe and wolf was sitting up looking at him. Arsene was scared, yelled, then ran and got a gun and shot the wolf again. This time they skinned it right there.

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SNOW WATER:

When they didn't have water, snow was put in pail and put on the stove. The snow under the top layers was best for making lots of water.

LOOSE TEA:

Before they had tea bags they used loose tea. The Bay manager weighed it on a scale and put one pound in a paper bag. They used to drink the tea with leaves in it but didn't mind.

THE OLD BAY STORE:

The manager was behind the counter and he served everything to the customers. One man, Blackhall, would even cut 5 worth of tobacco or measure out 10 of tea. One manager, Philip Powers, like one Ile-a-la-Crosse man was wounded in the war; went crazy sometimes. When he came to La Loche, he had prayer beads and attended church but the priest thought he was fooling and told the people that. When Philip heard what the priest had said he refused to enter the church again.

Sometimes when Philip got mad he'd chase everybody out of his store, then half an hour later, he'd open the door and call everyone back in. One treaty time he kept his store closed for three days because he got mad.

TREATY DAYS:

Treaty days were always in June. Treaty party came from Big River by canoe. A trader, Burnoff from Beauval, came right

after the treaty party with three canoes full of things to sell. Every person got a fresh \$5 bill and the next day the chiefs were given bacon, ammunition, clothes, and nets to divide amongst the people. The chief got a special black suit with brass buttons. The Gov't and the people chose a chief who could speak for the people. They were paid about \$50/year.

No one ever robbed the treaty men because everyone was good then, before the liquor. No fights or anything. When the road came and the bar at Buffalo Narrows was built, that's when liquor came. Before that people made "brew" from raisins and sugar but there was no trouble and no need for police.

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Arsene's dad, Baptiste, was a deputy law enforcement officer then (about 1931) became D.N.R. officer. He was paid \$250/month but never bothered anyone.

LIVE FOX:

People caught live foxes in the summer often and would pen them up. They were fed moose meat and were killed when their fur was prime. Arsene and his brother (Robbie) used to do that at Steep End River not far from the Clearwater River.

Ray: What about this, her name was Christina, Christine Gordon?

Arsene: Christine.

Ray: And she never got married, eh?

Arsene: She never got married. His brother never got married. Been living that way all his life. And I'm glad they went to, got no kids, you know, not one. Just two of them just by themselves. And he's got all kinds of money. They had a store, have a store himself. And he's got one store here too all the time. My dad, he worked for him, you know. So he went to Edmonton in the summertime. So he found that boy there, George Gordon. So they found him and take him to the RCMP. They don't know where it come from that kid. Couldn't find them. No mother, no dad, I don't know.

Ray: He was lost, eh?

Arsene: He was lost maybe. So the RCMP told him just take it back like that, and then sometime when his family is looking for it so we'd give him back. So they took it that way and after that he never heard about it. So it's just like his boy as far as that goes. George Gordon, he feels like his dad, something like that.

Ray: You don't remember that old, old Gordon's name, eh?

Arsene: I don't remember that.

Ray: Chistine's brother.

Arsene: No. I don't remember it. Somebody will remember that anyway, but I just forgot it. I used to know but it's a long time, you know. Never think about that after that. So, he kept that boy until he got old and got married, got a family. So help him with that money, you know, make him do things. Oh that old man, he bought lots of land.

Ray: Yeah?

Arsene: Yeah, in McMurray. He was smart guy, you know. Still they're making money right now, McMurray, I heard that. So they sold the land, you know, a big town right now. Sold the land. Sold it for a lot of money.

Ray: They must rich now, eh?

Arsene: Oh, but he died that old man, but his son was still there.

Ray: When did he die?

Arsene: I don't know, quite a long time ago, five years ago or something.

Ray: And his father died when, 1932?

Arsene: That's what he said. Yeah.

Ray: How about Christina? Did she live a long time?

Arsene: No she didn't live very long after her brother died, because just about the same age, you see. But still work and died that way. When they opened up that big trunk it is full of money right there. And the poor guy asked for money, "Where I could get the money? I couldn't find the money, I'm just like you. I have to sell my potatoes before I get my money." That's what he'd say, you know. (laughs) And my dad used to work for him all the time. Yeah.

Ray: Like in the summertime?

Arsene: Summertime and the wintertime just the same. When my dad, he hired a guy from here with about two, or three canoe, go down to McMurray and they just bring the stuff from there for trading, you know.

Ray: Over here?

Arsene: Yeah. Over here with a paddle all the way through.

Ray: And they carried things on the portage across the trail, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. Yeah, but they used the horse there, you know. My dad always had the horse.

Ray: Horse and wagon?

Arsene: Yeah, wagon. My dad has always lots of horses -- five or six horses always.

Ray: Did they live up there then?

Arsene: No West La Loche, West La Loche. They had a store there. Yeah.

Ray: Your daddy had a store?

Arsene: Yeah, they kept store for Gordon, you know.

Ray: Oh.

Arsene: Yeah, all the time.

Ray: So he didn't work for the Bay, eh, he just worked for Gordon?

Arsene: Yeah, just for Gordon, buying furs and things like that.

Ray: In his house? In his own house?

Arsene: No, he's got another house. Yeah, that's what my daddy was raised me, you know. We used to be the poor people that time. But not us like that, you know. Because my daddy always had a store. We were living out of that. That's why. We're not suffered like most people, you know. Oh those people. My dad was just like a king that time. Yeah, everybody liked us.

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: "I'll work for you, I'll work for you." Well, my dad has always got, had a good-hearted guy, you know. He told him, "All right, do that for me." In the garden, or woods, something make him do it for a winter. All give him the groceries, you know, some clothes. Help him with that. We used to be, you know...

Ray: Were they, you know, some people living here a long time ago?

Arsene: Oh yeah.

Ray: Were they poor people?

Arsene: Oh yeah.

Ray: What kind of people lived here?

Arsene: Chipewyan.

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: But they got nothing, you know. No store here. And after that...

Ray: Just stayed with the mission, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. And after that Revillon had a store here. So it turned a little better. But when the manager's no good, well, the people's no good to him, you know, because they don't get no cheque from no place. Or else he didn't get a job. He can't get anything from that Revillon, you know.

Ray: Was that the only trader over this side, Revillon?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Other people too, or no?

Arsene: No, no only one. He's got a big store there. You know that Hudson's Bay Store there and the next warehouse there?

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: That's the same place, the Revillon store there.

Ray: The warehouse?

Arsene: Yeah. That's the same place, they broke that one down and they make a warehouse right now. It was there for a long time... about... not quite ten years. Still there that old house, but it was a big house, you know. And that where's the store right now, that Revillon store right there, used to be.

Ray: Right on the corner, eh?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Part of the...?

Arsene: Yeah, that same place where's the Bay store now. Yeah, and it's right on, where he's living right that warehouse, you know. That's his own house.

Ray: Oh, the warehouse used to be the manager's house?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Oh. In the corner of the Bay was the old store, eh?

Arsene: Yeah, that's the old store.

Ray: You can still see the roof coming off, yeah.

Arsene: Yeah. Yes, that's what they used to, people that live, you know. It used to be no work here.

Ray: No.

Arsene: No. Even I was just the same. Everything will have to finish before... soon as when we come back from trapping we'll have to work in the garden right away. I want to finish that right away. So soon as when I finish that I can go down to McMurray by boat, by canoe. Take a canoe to the portage with a horse, and go down to McMurray. We stayed there all summer, because I work there all summer, you know. My brother worked too; sometimes my daddy work too.

Ray: Who did you work for there?

Arsene: The Hudson's Bay warehouse.

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: Yeah. I work for the Bay there, because they need lot of people in that big warehouse, you know. That's the only place like, you know.

Ray: And carry things and...?

Arsene: And the other places too. McInnis, you know. That fish buyer, you know.

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: So the people that work there, not only us. Lots of people go down some time and stay there all summer, and will have to come back in the fall time, sometime right to the ice. Boy, for twice I come back that way, in the rapid, you know.

Ray: Up the river, eh?

Arsene: Two big canoe. I have to tow one from the back. I got a motor, you know. My daddy is getting old so, just some... One time just by myself, my sister, and my mother, and me, my dad. There was two big... full of stuff, you know, bought lots of stuff. Every time I get paid I give it to my dad.

Ray: How much money did you get paid?

Arsene: Not very much. About eighty cents an hour or something, used to be, yeah.

Ray: That was when, long time ago, eh?

Arsene: (Indian) Hudson's Bay warehouse.

Ray: In 1919?

Arsene: McInnis was from a long time, you know, yeah.

Ray: Is this George McInnis?

Arsene: Yeah, George McInnis. That's from long time.

Ray: And he used to come and get the fish from...

Arsene: Yeah, the people used to work -- now they just live like a king. They get up goes there and gets a cheque. Go to the welfare and get a cheque. Only me, I think, I don't get no cheque from the welfare. That one thing the welfare never helped me yet, all my life, and I never bummed neither.

Ray: No?

Arsene: No, I never asked once.

Ray: Just worked hard, eh?

Arsene: I never asked once, no. Even if I'm sick I don't go to them. Sometimes I can use it, you know, if I don't work a long time, I don't travel something, you know. Sometimes I'm sick and they ask me to go there. When I get there, talk different way, talk different way. That's what I don't like, and so I just told them, "Never mind." Just try to make my living. They used to talk over too much about it. "I come back and forth to here like a bummer," I used to tell them that, you know. So I never get no help from the welfare all my life yet, not once yet.

Ray: In the old times when people got sick like that where did they go to? There was no hospital here, what did people do?

Arsene: Oh, just keep them here.

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: Yeah, just keep them here. Sometimes when he's really bad we'll have to take him to Ile-a-la-Crosse by canoe.

Ray: By canoe?

Arsene: By canoe. One time my mother was sick for a long time, about a year. So my dad said in the summertime -- I was small at that time -- so my dad said, "Let's to go to Ile-a-la-Crosse, take your mommy there." So we went down, all the time when we went there.

Ray: Your mother's name was what?

Arsene: Rosalee.

Ray: Rosalee?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: What was her name before she married your father? Do you remember that?

Arsene: Jeremy.

Ray: Jeremy, Rosalee Jeremy. Then she was Rosalee Fontaine.

Arsene: Yeah. So we went there. We went to Ile-a-la-Crosse. We stayed there in about a week. Big wind, you know. And after that, you know, we went down, we went back, you know. And the one man from Garson Lake there, you know, you know that Ellen Meek(?) from Garson Lake now, that old lady.

Ray: Yeah, yeah.

Arsene: Ellen, you know that, eh?

Ray: Yeah. I've talked to her.

Arsene: That his husband, and he was sick and it was headache all the time, you know. And gosh it looks like he's going to die. So my daddy took that guy too, to the hospital and that guy got something (inaudible), you know, and I don't know what they mean, in his brain. So about two or three weeks after, he just die, that guy (inaudible). My daddy took it up there.

Ray: How long did it take you to get go to Ile-a-la-Crosse in a canoe?

Arsene: Well, it wouldn't be too long if there's not wind, you know. Lots of big lakes, you know. From right to Bull's House, you know. Lots of big lakes. When the wind, you got to stay there; that's how. But when you just go there... Well if you go there right now with about twenty horse, you know, it won't take you very long.

Ray: No. But in the old days they didn't have motors, eh?

Arsene: No, we had a motor. My daddy had a motor at that time. Yeah, but a small one, you know, about five horse, or something, you know. But still we went to Ile-a-la-Crosse. We stayed there in a tent. Set the tent and lived there. My mother, every day the doctor come to check them. I wonder why he didn't took to the hospital, eh. Don't do that.

Ray: No.

Arsene: No.

Ray: Maybe too many people in the hospital.

Arsene: No, no, but the hospital wasn't big like now too, you see. It's kind of a little small. So my mother was all right after the doctor cured her, but that guy died there.

Ray: Eleanor's husband, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. He died. Lot of people went that way. You see, right now he would be lived that guy, but he died after, you know. Because no doctor, can't do nothing. When some Cree, and some Cree around here, you know, that's the time that was a doctor, really doctor. One old man is here is Alfred Cheecham; that his dad. That old man, he's a Cree, you know. That's from Alberta, that old man.

Ray: What was his name, do you remember that?

Arsene: Oh no, I couldn't say.

Ray: From Alberta though, eh?

Arsene: That's from Alberta, Alfred.

Ray: From Chard, Alberta?

Arsene: No, McMurray, yeah. From Anzac, Anzac, that's where he come from. Until he married here, you know. So that Alfred's dad, that Cree. Alfred Cheecham, his dad. Yeah, his name is Cheecham. That's right, yeah. But I don't know his name. He had a nickname, you know, Stinging Beast. Stinging

Beast in Chipewyan and that's what they call him, you know, and that was a good doctor to call him. Yeah, every time somebody's sick you have to come and get it, take it there, and give him something, you know, not with the cash but... and he helped the people. Well even the clothes give it that, roses, things like that. (laughs) That's a good doctor. That was a Doctor Hoffman(?) that time. (laughs)

Ray: He could fix the people, eh?

Arsene: Oh yeah.

Ray: Did he used to stay here too, or you have to go over there?

Arsene: Who?

Ray: To Alberta?

Arsene: No, he stayed here.

Ray: He stayed here with Alfred, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. You know that right in that school, in the side of that school there, he's got a little house there. It was where he used to live. And Alfred was living there until he was a big man. And after that he built another house. Then his mother died, so he kept that old man there for a while and he died. He was pretty old too. Yeah. That was Doctor Hoffman(?) that time. (laughs)

Ray: Did he used to sing too, when he fixed the people?

Arsene: No. Not things like that, just with the medicine.

Ray: The medicine, where did he get the medicine?

Arsene: Well, just the roots.

Ray: Roots and plants.

Arsene: From the bush. But he cured lot of guys with it, oh yeah. They cured lots of guys with it except they'll take your blood too, you know. Oh yeah, he's got a big pipe, you know, long handle, pipe, you know, smoke pipe. Brand new one, but he never smoked with it. And he just do that with a needle, you know, put a needle in right and cut in little stick like this, little willow, and put the needle like this. Sharp needle just about this long out, you know. And then he just do that with it; poke you with that. And when the blood come out, so he's got to suck the blood from there and the guys with that pipe. Put a pipe here and from the handle, you see, took the blood like that. And then after that he put the medicine and put on the paper, and just put it on, tied it on. Somebody knows, sometimes people sore knee, something, you know. Oh, he cured a guy with that lots of time. Must be good medicine. Yeah. He used to do that, that Cree. Alfred, maybe Alfred just like doctor right now, don't know. (laughs)

Ray: Maybe he learned from his father.

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: What about if you had a broken leg, something like that? Did he fix that too?

Arsene: I don't know, maybe he fix it. Well the people they used to do that. My uncle, my mother's, his brother, his name is Alec. He used to be just like doctor too, you know. When the people broke his leg, one his son, his boy, you know, broke his leg -- that guy's still here, he's in Descharme now.

Ray: Who is that?

Arsene: Simeon.

Ray: Simeon.

Arsene: Yeah, that his grandfather. And we walk in the bush, you know. We had a bow and arrow, you know. So that arrow's up there; couldn't take it down. We're small; we're about this. So he climbed there and he fall down right on the big roots there, you know, the big timber there. So broke his leg right here. So I run to the town and I told dad, and come and get with the canvas. That old man he make a box, you know, just like... he made a box right to the earth, just like that. On his feet like this, and then he put it in there and then he tied it; just kept him like that. And that guy didn't go this where.

Ray: No.

Arsene: No, eh. He must be a good doctor, eh?

Ray: So he made like a wooden cast?

Arsene: And that guy you could fit it right now, hung like this, you see. Could feel that just like this. (inaudible) broke, I guess, that's why I know. And that old man he just cured him about a month time...

Ray: He had to walk around with a big box on his leg.

Arsene: Yeah, he had a box on it just hang like that for about a month, and then he took it out, made him walk. That guy's all right, still travelling, still make his living, you see. That's what they used to do. And one of my, no the other one, that old man, my mother's dad, his brother too. That one, he's just like doctor too. They call him La Boss. They used to call him La Boss, but I forgot his name anyway. That's just like doctor. The one time the guy that shot this arm here, you know, with a shotgun, in a canoe. So he load that gun and he forgot it so he pull it this way and he shot himself with a shotgun here, right here. And they then keep him like that all summer. My mother said his arm was about that big, she says, and he was really sick, you know. And (?) brother went there he said, "If you don't mind it, I'll cut your arm and I'll cure you. If you don't cut your arm you're going to die." So that guy, he says, "All right, try it." So that bone was not together much, I guess, eh. It was rotten too, you know. So they had... you know that shave that used to be, that long shave, razor, you know, just like knife? They had it sharpened. I think they had about four, he said. So they tied him right here and one guy help him in the house, in the tent. That guy he's to keep him out, outside in the tipi, you know; so just tied him right here. "Now," he says, and that guy just like that, he said. They just cut him right through like that, and just threw his arm away and there's ready medicine right there on the paper, you know. Put the medicine ready to stop the blood with it. And then as soon as when they cut, he said, his brother told him the story, I guess. "Soon as when I cut it his arm was just like this," he says, "and the blood was just, just like a shot," he said. So he put that medicine on it, and

he just tied it there. And that guy even he make canoe after that, a birch canoe on this side, you know.

Ray: With one arm?

Arsene: With one arm. He lived long time after that. Must be good doctor, eh? Must be a brave guy, eh?

Ray: Who was the man with the one arm? You don't remember his name.

Arsene: (Indian) I just forgot. It's a long time, you know. When I was small like, my mother was giving the story.

Ray: Who was the doctor?

Arsene: Yeah, that's my uncle, that Francois Jamie.

Ray: He was the doctor?

Arsene: Yeah. That was the doctor, that his name.

Ray: Doctor Hoffman.

Arsene: That was a Doctor Hoffman too. (both laughing)

Ray: He made a birch bark canoe after that, eh?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: With one hand.

Arsene: He'd do anything after that. Make snowshoes just one side his arm like this, you know. Had a crooked knife. We call them a crooked knife. Yeah, about that long, you know, like a plane, you know. Sharp when them guys made that. I always had that. That's two years ago I gave it to my sister, in Buffalo. So that's on this side. Just make it with that, make anything with it, snowshoes...

Ray: Did many people make canoes in the old days?

Arsene: Oh yeah.

Ray: Birch canoe?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Yeah. From trees around here?

Arsene: Yeah, but not, used to be a big, big, big stick here, you know, big trees. So they got it out of this lake sometime, and sometime we go to Clearwater mostly got a better one, ones that got a better canvas. So he goes to the Clearwater and

goes down the river with a...

Ray: Better canvas.

Arsene: Yeah, that would be sixteen ounce one you get there. (laughing) So if he wants to use about eight ounce, well, just around this lake, find that. That's the way they used to do, you know. Yeah, the people they sure could work, for himself, yeah. But it didn't take long to make canoe with that.

Ray: And how did they put it together?

Arsene: Well, they put the rock like this. The way like, like canoe, you know.

Ray: Yeah, shaped like a canoe.

Arsene: About that size rock just put all around and just right up to here, and they put a mud there.

Ray: Mud?

Arsene: Yeah, and put a sand there, and little over there, and then they put that and make a stick first, you know. And then they put that...

Ray: Bend it over?

Arsene: No. And then they just put it there. That canvas, you just put it there.

Ray: The birch, eh?

Arsene: Yeah, that birch. You just put it there and sew it together, you know, the bottom.

Ray: With what? What did they use to sew it?

Arsene: Oh, the roots. They make the roots, you know. About the same size of roots as this, a little bigger than this one, a long one, you know, of the spruce, you know, in bushes. And then they peel. I don't know how they do that. But, boy, it make a good one -- soft. And they're sewing with that.

Ray: You boil it?

Arsene: No, you didn't boil it.

Ray: It was just soft, eh?

Arsene: Just, oh, really soft. But when they kept for a while have to put them in the water, I guess. So that they make that and then just make a canoe like that. Put the ribs on it, put the stick first, put two places for the ribs, you know, and then it was just like this for the men. And then the sewing there with that roots wherever, and right at the end,

you know. Boy, it looked nice. And then with a pitch, you know. He's got to get a gum from the bush.

Ray: From the trees?

Arsene: From the trees. And that one they boil it, they boil it. Boy, that made a good glue with that. And just like this they put it in his hands. No water in it. You only put it in the water and little bit of leak just put three coats like this, you know, and put a little rope there and hang it there, and put the water just a little bit like that. Where it's leak, well take something and mark it there, and take it down. And never get any water in it. That's better than canvas too sometimes they made it. Some guys they make a good one, really nice, you know. They used to do that.

Ray: And then it was light too, eh?

Arsene: Yeah, light too.

Ray: To carry.

Arsene: Yeah. I used to take it all out lots of times from here right up north in the springtime, you know. Have to pack all the way through.

Ray: You carried it?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: All the way north?

Arsene: All the way north.

Ray: Past the Clearwater?

Arsene: Past, yes. Muskeg Mountain, you know, there in Alberta, quite a ways there from here.

Ray: You carried the canoe?

Arsene: I carried it right to the river right there. Because there was lots of beaver in that country, you know. Still that way. And just right through there.

Ray: What river is that?

Arsene: Oh I don't know, I got no map now.

Ray: Firebag, no?

Arsene: No. The Firebag this way and that river was going this way. So you get that in Firebag River. It's quite a ways.

Ray: And you carry your canoe all the way?

Arsene: Oh yes all the... not only me it used to be lots of people. Some guys that bring it back to here, because he's got no canoe here, and hard to make it, you know, sometimes. So he have to bring it to here, but not us -- not me. When I take it up there and I just...

(END OF SIDE A)

Arsene: After that I used to make lots of time canoe. It's easy. I just buy the canvas from the store and a little paint. Sometime I don't get the paint, well I just use the candle, you know. Candle, I put it in the fire and make it melted and just paint it with that. That's a real one.

Ray: Put wax on it?

Arsene: Yeah. I used to make, well sometimes I made it in one day, the canoe. Oh yeah, that Francis Janvier here, they make it lots -- still make it like this, yeah. When I go up, after that I may go up north, I just take the canvas when I got no canoe, and I just start to make it. Get a stick and I make good. Nice too, you know, sometime when I have my time, you know. When I rushed not like that, but sometimes I make good canoe.

Ray: And what did you use to sew it up?

Arsene: Oh, just a needle.

Ray: Needles?

Arsene: I just use the needles, because it's a small canoe, you know, for a hunting like that -- sometimes about twelve feet, fifteen feet make it like that, you know. Two guy with fifteen feet is good enough. And the canvas was kind of narrow, so I have to sew it with my hands, sewing there and put them on -- just as good, yeah.

Ray: And you just leave it there?

Arsene: Oh yeah.

Ray: Come back?

Arsene: No, just leave it there. Next year I go there, sometime they very broken up when I get there -- break, torn, everything, break all the stick. I have to make another one again. (laughs) The beaver is really bad builder too, you know.

Ray: Did you have a cabin there?

Arsene: No.

Ray: No, stayed in a tent?

Arsene: The guys had never had a cabin before. Even me. How used to trap, we never had tent, never have a cabin. Everybody like that. One of the guys from here goes to Descharme or the other places with his family and they make a camp there, they make a cabin there, you know. They made big ones. Jonas Clark used to make lots of them. Go stay with his family, you know.

But from there where he's trapping between us never had it. Just outside all the time. It don't matter how cold you got to be outside, fire. It don't matter how cold.

Ray: You just make a fire?

Arsene: Not even a tent. Of course the people didn't know about that, I guess, knew a thing about that.

Ray: And never think about it since?

Arsene: No. And after that there was lots of fox one time. So I went up north and I had lots of fox there. Well, sometime I get about eighty, ninety in one trip, you know, foxes. And one guy, who's still here, that American, Herman, he was with my partner, you know. So I told him, "Your auntie's got a tent." I says, "I think we better, I think I better buy that tent. I think it would be good for the bush. I was thinking that," I said. So when we got back and I sold my fur I told that old lady, I told him, "Can you sell me your tent?" I says. "No," he says, "I can't sell it. I use it for summer to go around the lake." So I told him, "Well, when I come back I'll buy you a canvas again, and you'll make another one. You'll make a new one for yourself again." So he said, "Okay." Give me that tent. So I took a little stove, you know, but I took the wrong one stove pipe, you know. You know that little small one, I bought it from the Bay. So I took that but that was too small. That's the only thing. So we set the log like this and about this high, so we set the tent on there. Well it's just like a house. Everything never froze (inaudible) we just throw it there and just skin it. Before that, you know, when that was about that much frost, have to bring all with the dogs, frozen, right to the West La Loche. Boy, a big load sometimes, but I always had a good dog.

Ray: How many dogs did you have?

Arsene: Oh sometimes five, six, but mostly all the time five. But I always watch a dog, always had a good dog.

Ray: Where did you get your dogs from?

Arsene: Well, we raised the dog. I'd train it with what is good so I use that; my brother's is the same. So when I see a good dog somebody had it, I don't give a shit how much money, even seventy-five dollars on top of the one dog. He'll sell me that dog. But I didn't pay that much. I paid right up to fifty dollars. She will give me fifty dollars because she's got no money, you know, give me fifty dollars for the dog,

sure. Well I get a dog, one good trained dog better than skidoo anyway.

Ray: Oh yeah.

Arsene: Yeah, even lots of snow, I don't give a shit. Can just go and do it themselves. I used to have a good dog all the time, yeah.

Ray: Somebody walk in front to make a trail for the dog?

Arsene: No. When it's a good dog, good leader, you know, you don't need to go ahead.

Ray: Even in deep snow?

Arsene: Oh yeah, just do it themself. It's like that; some dogs like that, when you train them like that. One time I

raised a dog, me and my wife, about that big. I bought little pups from guys, you know; so we raised them. And it was the four of them. It was a big dog, boy, nice dog. So I train them. Well, they're all just about the same and I got a good leader from before that, you know. Big dog, you know. I bought it from that dog too, Joseph Preece's(?) dad.

Ray: Oh, that's Gilbert?

Arsene: Yeah. I bought that dog from him for forty dollars in the summertime.

Ray: When was that?

Arsene: Oh quite a long time ago. Not too long, but about ten years ago, twelve years ago. So I had that dog, you know, and that dog when I go up north and I train him there in the snow, you know.

Ray: What did you train him to do?

Arsene: Well, just put him in a harness and I just go far, just follow me, you know, for a while and after that, that dog was a strong dog and a healthy dog, you know, so he's just like that. And sure when he hit the road he doesn't like it. When he goes on the road it's hard road for him, you know. Don't feel like to go there. Soon as when he hits the lake, just leave that good road and just make his own road, don't matter how deep -- he likes that and then that's the time, boy, he travels. Even from here West La Loche has good road, when we go to the lakes he just don't want that road. Tell him to go on that road, you'd make him go, no, he'd just go ahead. Right straight to the point, you know, where's that road. He don't

like the road, but when lots of snow on the road, you know, boy, he likes that. Then he travels.

Ray: Makes his own path.

Arsene: Yeah, he travels good. When you train them on the road, you know, when he's on the road lots of snow, boy, it's kind of hard for him. But when you train them in the snow like that he likes that; he don't like to hit the hard road. Only when he get there it's just like he get tired right away; he don't like that. (inaudible) right when he's at the bushes he just break himself -- boy, he likes that.

Ray: He was your leader dog, eh?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: And the other dogs followed him?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Do they fight sometimes?

Arsene: No, no, they don't fight.

Ray: What did you feed them, fish?

Arsene: Oh, moose meat.

Ray: Moose meat?

Arsene: Yeah, with lots of bones.

Ray: So you always take it with you, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. Always carry moose meat, but I always keep a dog good, like the way I'm living. Made a good place for them when I made a cabin, make fire well, take all the snow off and put lots of spruce for them, keep them good, and feed them good. And they like me.

Ray: So when you camp you cleaned the snow off, made the spruce place for them to lie down, eh?

Arsene: Yeah, yeah. Right to the ground, had to take everything out.

Ray: Right to the ground?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Not on the snow?

Arsene: No, not on the snow. When you put it on the snow it get too cold for you. It's no good. You have to clean lots of snow right up with the snowshoes, you know.

Ray: So that's how you shovelled, eh?

Arsene: Yeah, that was the shovel. (laughs)

Ray: You made places for the dogs too like that.

Arsene: Yeah, make a place for the dogs like that.

Ray: And nothing over top of you?

Arsene: No.

Ray: Nothing, eh?

Arsene: No.

Ray: Just the sky?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: And the stars.

Arsene: Yeah, just the sky and -- but it was just like we don't care about it, because we get used to it, you know.

Ray: And you didn't get cold?

Arsene: And the first time, you know, when you go in the fall time it's kind of cold, you know, first time; it's cold. But after you get (?) even the month of January was cold at that time, you just don't care about it. As long as lots of wood that's good enough.

Ray: You keep the fire going all night long?

Arsene: No. Just leave the fire, but you got to have a good blanket, you know. And then go under the blanket and go to sleep. And the morning, before daylight, sometimes you don't have a wash like now. Well, you got to put your blanket and look at the stars and things; well, just get up. Just like, just like our watch, you know, that star. Oh yeah. When it goes this way. You know that Dipper?

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: When it goes this way, you know, and it's coming this way and right in the middle of that there you got to get up; that's before daylight. Soon as when he turned this way that's a daylight, you see.

Ray: When it comes around...

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Clockwise.

Arsene: You see, right now it's this way now.

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: And it just goes this way, you see, and then it just go right... that's a good watch. So when you see that still down, well, you got to sleep good again. (laughs) That's a good watch. And then when it's cloudy, you know, you don't know all along, so sometimes before daylight you got to get up long time, you know. But they don't care, get used to that, you know. Have to wait till daylight. Sometimes you want to make home from a long ways, well before daylight you can go and the dog he knows where the road is.

Ray: In the dark, eh?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Did the dogs ever wake you up?

Arsene: Pardon?

Ray: Did the dogs bark at nighttime?

Arsene: No.

Ray: No.

Arsene: When I had the dog in the bush never barking around even right here. When he was young he used to holler to something, you know, just take a little whip and just stop him right away. As soon as when you hear them barking just take your whip just like that and he just quit right away. You won't hear nothing. When I had dogs always that way.

Ray: You trained them not to bark?

Arsene: Yeah, I trained them that way.

Ray: What if a bear was coming?

Arsene: Well, the dogs would be barking at that time, I guess. When something, wolf or something, you know. But the wolf, you know, the dogs just hide themselves. Oh yes, they know.

Ray: They're afraid, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. When he hear the wolf call he don't want to go, stay away from you, just want to come closer, you know. And he knows it. They're darn smart, you know.

Ray: Yeah. So you know there's trouble, eh?

Arsene: Oh yeah.

Ray: When the dog comes crawling.

Arsene: Yeah. One time me and my brother-in-law, who died last fall, Edward Park, you know.

Ray: Oh yeah.

Arsene: We went up north trapping one winter. He's got a dog, you know, one big dog. Boy, that dog, you know, he broke the chains one night. I suppose he could hear a wolf, I guess, and some dog was that way, you know, was kind of wild. So he broke the chains and he went to that little lake, I suppose, but he didn't know it. So my brother-in-law told me, "Make a fire," in the morning, before daylight, you know. And I got up and started to make a fire. So when I make fire I said, "One of your dogs is not here," I said. "Broke the chains," I said. "Well, I hear the wolf from the little lake," he says. "I bet you now he got killed," I says. And it was a good dog too, you know, and my brother-in-law he doesn't like that, it was a good leader too, you know. But he said, "I wonder why he break that chain, like crazy," he said. Oh, and he was swearing, you know, (inaudible) coming, you know, seen him (tape is shut off). And he lost his tail about that long. And after that we went to the lake, you know, by the lake. But he'd been played with that dog all night. Funny they didn't kill him. They just played with it. Finally played and fight him like, you know, but they didn't bite him, I suppose. Just sweat all over, boy, just frozen. Well from his mouth, I guess, but they never touch one.

Ray: The wolf?

Arsene: Never hurt. Just playing with it, I guess, and they run, and that dog run away, you know, and the wolf would go chasing again and that's why he broke his tail, I guess, to fight him on his tail. So he broke that off. So that dog is lost half of his tail and he come back. There's nothing wrong but he don't feel good, boy. He get tired, you know. Must have played, you know. Boy, no snow in the little lake, boy, just where they're playing with him. Didn't kill him. There was eight, or seven wolves there and none of them bite him. No blood on him. Just played with it, I guess. He was lucky. (laughs) So that dog got back.

Ray: I bet you he was afraid, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. So he must have learned, you know, and my brother-in-law he took the gun and he shot him; he shot the gun, you know. He said, "Maybe the wolves still there." So he shot that gun and hear the gun, I guess. So that's why they run away and then that dog come back. (laughs) Yeah. And after that, that same road we went up there, and my brother-in-law he seen lots of wolf tracks, you know, on the road. So he chase him, fresh one, took the gun and chase him so (inaudible). I hear his shots, one shot, you know. When I get to that little lake was timber wolf was laying there, you know. I thought he shot him. So he shot somewhere right here, but he just wounded, you know. I didn't know that. So I just took his feet and put my blanket like this and put right under the blanket and I cover it. I figure it needs to be freeze, we skin it. It's too heavy. So I was waiting, you know, my

brother-in-law come to me he says, "What you do with that?" "I just put him under the blanket." He said, "Yes, well we go." And when we get to portage there and started to make fire there, you know. Not all over the fire too in that place -- no wood. Sometimes you got to go a long ways.

Ray: Yeah?

Arsene: Yeah. Sometime before sundown there's a lot of wood You can't pass it; you got to stay there, north. Because no dry wood, no dry wood all over. Some places like that, have to watch that.

Ray: Too much muskeg?

Arsene: No, no, not too much, muskeg was the wood, you know, the high land, you know, that's why all the (?) land and up north, you know. That's why.

Ray: Not enough land?

Arsene: So we make a fire. We started to make a fire, you know. So I figure I won't take my axe and my brother-in-law took an axe, and took the snow with the snowshoes, took the snows off. When I took my blanket, boy, that wolf was just (inaudible) and just looked at me, you know. Boy, just wide open his eyes, you know. He was kind of a little dizzy yet, I guess. Boy, I just hollered, you know, and I went back to my brother-in-law's toboggan and I took the gun there and, boy, I just shot. (laughing) Boy, we sure laughed. I was sure scared. It was right here, you know. Well, when I put my blanket here and the wolf would just look at me, boy, wide open through his eyes -- boy, he sure scared me. It's a big wolf, you know. "Boy," I said, "it's alive!" But I went to that toboggan, you know, and so I just grabbed the gun and I shot him. Oh, we sure laugh about it. And after that, boy, he was fat, you know, so took the meat off and put it on the toboggan, you know. We supposed to meet Jonas Clark there. And that Clark, he ate the whole thing, the wolf. (laughs)

Ray: Big eater, eh.

Arsene: Yeah. Yeah, that's all the story I got, I think.

Ray: You just scoop the snow up in a can, or something like this?

Arsene: What?

Ray: What do you put the snow in, pail?

Arsene: Oh, just put it in a pail.

Ray: In a pot?

Arsene: In a pot, put it on the stove, make a water with that.

Ray: That's good water?

Arsene: Good water, really good. But some creek that like this water, you know, make tea with it and boil it black sometime you could see everything just like, just like a little paint, you know.

Ray: Yeah. Like gasoline on top?

Arsene: Yeah. But when the snow...

Ray: You take it right off the top of snow, or you dig down and take it underneath?

Arsene: Dig once is good.

Ray: You dig, eh?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: It gets nice and clean?

Arsene: The top snow, you know, don't make much water when you put it in a pot. That's when you dig it out and that takes a lot of snow and you get lots of water. And you take one frying pan, snow in it, it would be just full. But when from on top not very much in there. That's the way it goes.

Ray: It's wetter down below, eh?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Did you ever make tea with the plants, bushes?

Arsene: No.

Ray: Always teabags?

Arsene: No.

Ray: What did people used to use before they had teabags?

Arsene: Well, just tea, like bulk tea.

Ray: Buy a box of it?

Arsene: No, we got one pound of tea, you know, that loose tea like that, just use that. The time when I was young, that kind of tea was nothing.

Ray: Didn't cost anything?

Arsene: No, it was nothing, the store.

Ray: Oh, there wasn't any.

Arsene: But they have a big box, you know, plywood box, you

know. A thousand pound in there. Big box like that just (inaudible), and then had to put them on scales. If you want to get a one pound of tea, have to do that. Yeah.

Ray: So the manager did that, eh?

Arsene: Yeah, do that. Put them in scale and put them in a paper bag. That's one pound of tea.

Ray: How much did that cost at that time, do you remember?

Arsene: No, I don't remember, but...

Ray: Not very much, eh?

Arsene: Not very much, not much.

Ray: And you just put it in the pot?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: The leaves, eh?

Arsene: Just put them in a pot. We used that sometime too, that teabag was Blue Ribbon tea. That's what we were using,

you know. If it's nothing and sometime nothing in the store. So if there's nothing that, we'll have to use that Blue Ribbon tea. (inaudible) leaves but not (?) in another pot, so we just strain it.

Ray: Strain it, yeah. So you don't get leaves in it.

Arsene: No. Before that I never think of that, you know. Just have the leaves. You just drink like that, you don't mind it. But now I don't like that when the leaves in it. I get used to that, that tea, I guess.

Ray: Everybody used to drink it with the leaves in before, eh?

Arsene: Oh yeah. I don't think it bothered them. Even the white people drink with the leaves like that. There's lots of leaves in it. If you want another cup, well, you have to spill that and give me another cup again. They don't mind that. Yeah, that's what we used to do.

Ray: In the old store did they... could the people just go and pick out what they wanted, or did the manager have to give you everything?

Arsene: Yeah, the manager do that.

Ray: The manager give you everything, eh. Behind the counter?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Everything's behind him, eh?

Arsene: Yeah, a long counter, you know, not like this table like, long counter, you know, (?) the store. So that clerk was inside, so you have to get it from there.

Ray: You can't touch anything, eh?

Arsene: No. Well, if you want to touch it, he don't mind that. People don't like to do that. I used to do that myself. Anything I wanted to get it, just check it, check it. I pack it in and then give it to the clerk, but not everybody do that. They're scared like, you know. That guy who was here, Mr. Blackhall, you know, I was telling you about it.

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: That was a good-hearted guy too sometimes, you know, when he's good. Even this kind of tobacco, if you've got 5 he'll cut it for you right here like this way.

Ray: Cut a piece off for you?

Arsene: Cut piece off for you. He's got a sharp big knife, you know, army knife. They used to have that in the store, you know. If you've got 5 give it to him and he just cut it for you. Yeah, even tea.

Ray: That's chewing tobacco, or to make a cigarette?

Arsene: This kind of tobacco. This kind of tobacco I mean.

Ray: Cigarette tobacco?

Arsene: Yeah, this kind of cigarette tobacco, this kind of package. Just cut it for you. He knows how to cut (inaudible) tobacco. Yeah, that's what they used to do. If you had 10 he'd give you tea, just their tea, put it in paper bag, here. When he's good but when he's going this way, boy, he don't care for nobody.

Ray: He's crazy too, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. He's kind of like crazy, but when he's drink. Even he don't drink very much, because (?) was saying that, you know. That was... he'd been in the army, got a bullet somewhere right inside.

Ray: That's, that was Philip Powers you said?

Arsene: Yeah, Philip Powers.

Ray: Not the Blackhall guy, eh?

Arsene: No.

Ray: No. Yeah, you told me about Philip Powers.

Arsene: Yeah, that's the guy.

Ray: He went in the war?

Arsene: What?

Ray: He was in the war, eh?

Arsene: Yeah, he'd been in the army.

Ray: He got shot?

Arsene: He got shot somewhere inside that's why. And they figure out the bullet, something inside in it. That's what the doctor says. You know that Neil Boulanger was that way, had a bullet inside and he just went crazy. And sometimes (?) that he's a nice guy, and he used to be a good guy that guy, a good-natured people. You know Boulanger? And after that, that same guy again, he was a nice guy. He still a little cross now. He was a good guy, everybody's friend. But when he come from the army, boy, you can't drink with him. What they say in Ile-a-la-Crosse he takes about three, four times take a shot. He just go crazy like, he just want to fight right away. He'll kill you if you don't stop him, even his wife pretty near killed. Broke his rib, his wife, you know. And when his brother was outside he didn't hear him. So one little boy he went to there and seen him. So he told his brother. So his brother, you know, come down and just tied him with a rope. So they took that woman to the hospital in Ile-a-la-Crosse. That's the last time, and that guy took to the jail, you know. Leave him there for about two years.

Ray: Really?

Arsene: And they got back, he never took his wife back. His wife still at Big River, I think, somewhere. Yeah.

Ray: And that Powers guy was the same way, eh?

Arsene: Same way, same thing. But immediately after that he was all right again maybe. But he was a bad guy, you know. But he won't fight you, but just trying to scare you all the time, getting mad. (laughs) Oh he prays -- Catholic, you know.

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: Yeah, he's got a beads, mounds of beads. The time he give them to everybody the beads, free, present. Take them to the priest, use this beads. (laughs)

Ray: Gives it to everybody?

Arsene: And he's got a long beads himself. Long one, about that long, they say. I didn't see it. And that Father Ducharme was here at the time, you know. And went to the church, so he's holding that beads like this, you know. So that priest, he might say, I think he says something about that guy. He feel that maybe he don't pray, he's not Catholic but he's fooling. Maybe that's what he used to think, I guess. So he said that to the people, and told that guy, you know, priest had told you this way. So last time he went to the church and he told that priest too and he said, "That's what you told me." He said, "I'll never go to your church again. Even if I die here, don't come to me." (laughs) He don't care for nothing. Well, that priest shouldn't say that to him.

Ray: He knew he wasn't Catholic, eh?

Arsene: That's what he feel the first time when he come here, you know. So Sunday he went to the church, so he's got a beads on his hand, you know, he's carrying beads. So he said that. He said something about that. So the guy told him that (inaudible). So he got mad. That's the last time he went to church, I guess.

Ray: You told me before about sometimes that Philip Powers man, he would get mad and chase everybody out of the store.

Arsene: Oh yeah, he'd chase everybody out when he get mad. Sometime just pull his (?) like this, you know, right up to here, one side on the dress pants, you know. And one side like this. And sometimes it was a big moccasin, you know...

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DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: ARSENE FONTAINE #2

INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: LA LOCHE,
SASKATCHEWAN
INTERVIEW LOCATION: LA LOCHE,
SASKATCHEWAN
TRIBE/NATION: METIS
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: 01/21/80
INTERVIEWER: RAY MARNOCH
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: HEATHER BOUCHARD
SOURCE: SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD
TAPE NUMBER: IH-148
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC #1a
PAGES: 15
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- General reminiscences

i

SUMMARY

Sometimes when Philip got mad he'd chase everybody out of his store, then half an hour later, he'd open the door and call everyone back in. One treaty time he kept his store closed for three days because he got mad.

TREATY DAYS:

Treaty days were always in June. Treaty party came from Big River by canoe. A trader, Burnoff from Beauval, came right after the treaty party with three canoes full of things to sell. Every person got a fresh \$5 bill and the next day the chiefs were given bacon, ammunition, clothes, and nets to divide amongst the people. The chief got a special black suit with brass buttons. The Gov't and the people chose a chief who could speak for the people. They were paid about \$50/year.

No one ever robbed the treaty men because everyone was good then, before the liquor. No fights or anything. When the road came and the bar at Buffalo Narrows was built, that's when liquor came. Before that people made "brew" from raisins and sugar but there was no trouble and no need for police.

Arsene's dad, Baptiste, was a deputy law enforcement officer then (about 1931) became D.N.R. officer. He was paid \$250/month but never bothered anyone.

LIVE FOX:

People caught live foxes in the summer often and would pen them up. They were fed moose meat and were killed when their fur was prime. Arsene and his brother (Robbie) used to do that at Steep End River not far from the Clearwater River.

Arsene: In the summertime they just wet like that, just stay with it.

Ray: His pants wet?

Arsene: His pants and everything wet. Sometimes walking outside like that, you know. And that (?) he said, sometimes just go to bed like that, his big feet like that moccasin. (laughs) Sometimes he's a clean guy, he's dressed up, suit. Stay like that, you know. Not all the time but sometimes when, sometimes when he drink, you know, from his place, you know, go in the office and he'd go to the store, and a bunch of people there, you know, oh, get mad right away. "Hey, nobody home here." (laughs) I don't know why he say that. Walking around the corner in that counter, you know, start swearing and everything. Well everybody just run out. And then he just lock it, just him and clerk, that's all. Oh and about a half an hour after because the people they knows that he was that way, just watching there and just sitting there outside, you know. About half an hour after, he opened the door, "Come on, boys, buy some things." Oh, sometimes he's crazy. And they talk good with you.

Ray: Was (inaudible)?

Arsene: One treaty time, you know, the government camps there, and, boy, he just closes that store for three days. Never open it. So then the guys have to wait there, wait there.

Ray: Why did he close it?

Arsene: Well, he just got mad something about it, you know, at that guy. Well he don't want to open it. You can't stop it, you tell him and he's like this, and, "Oh never mind."

He'll just tell you that. When he's just by himself, well that's all now, well he'd just open for you again. (laughs)

Ray: So he made them wait, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. Made them wait for about three days, he was

that way one time. Nobody go to the store. Everybody out of the store, everybody. Just all by himself, he's in the office, but he's locked the door -- it's no use. Boy, he's a funny man that guy.

Ray: How did the treaty people come up from south that time, by canoe?

Arsene: By canoe. By the paddle canoe.

Ray: From where? Big River?

Arsene: Big River, I guess. Big River to come to all over, you know, (inaudible) just go around like that, you know. And Garson people, all a bunch of them come here. Come to West La Loche with a horse and have to bring them here with a canoe.

Ray: Treaty day, eh?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: What time of year was that, summertime?

Arsene: End of June sometime. Always treaty day in June. And one guy's always behind that treaty, you know. A little trailer there. And that still it's got a grass(?) there, that family, Burnoff. You know Burnoff?

Ray: I don't know.

Arsene: Burnoff. (inaudible) Burnoff, you know.

Ray: What?

Arsene: That cafe. That's the guy, he used to be, that old man. That's his family, you know. Just came here with a bunch of stuff. Boy, he sold it for cheap. Oh, I don't know how he make his money, even you buy candy for two bits, one big paper bag about that big. Anything at all like that.

Ray: And he brought it from there by canoe, eh?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: On treaty day?

Arsene: Yeah, treaty day. He's always behind the treaty, always behind the government. Gets there and set his tent.

Ray: So the government gives them money and then he sells the things to the people?

Arsene: No. Just for his own, just for his own. But he won't get a money from the treaty people, you know. He knows he's got to buy something when he gets there. That's why, because the Hudson's Bay, something that cost a little more,

well, him look at that. Boy, he sell everything, sell anything and cheap too.

Ray: How much money did...?

Arsene: Even one pair of rubbers was about 50 that time. One pair of rubbers. That's how they sold it.

Ray: When was this?

Arsene: Quite a long time. When I was young, you know.

Ray: When you were just a little boy?

Arsene: Yeah, when I was young at that time.

Ray: That was here, or West La Loche?

Arsene: Yeah, West La Loche and here sometimes. And after that he was here too, you know, the Blackhall was here. And that old man is still here, still come here with his stuff, little store.

Ray: Burnoff?

Arsene: Yeah. So he's behind. He's always had a little store right away. He's got about two, three canoe, hired the guys, you know, paddle. And then when the people get a treaty money and then goes there and buys lots of things there. Because he charge cheap, you see.

Ray: How much money did the people get from the treaty?

Arsene: Five dollars.

Ray: Each person, or a family?

Arsene: Each, each.

Ray: Each one?

Arsene: Yeah. If there is one family is five well that's \$25. Some of them big family will get more, but \$5 each. Just cash, not a cheque. Now treaty days is not like that, they just use cheque. But them days not like that; they gave cash. (laughs)

Ray: Even now today it's still \$5?

Arsene: I think so.

Ray: But back then \$5 is worth a lot a money, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. Them days it was \$5. (inaudible) \$25. That's a lot of money, you know.

Ray: That's right. So everybody came for treaty day, eh?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Put up tents and everything, eh?

Arsene: Put up tents.

Ray: Did you used to have the big party at that time?

Arsene: No. And then after that when they give all the money in one day to the people, and the next day brought some freight too, you know. Some bacon things like that, ammunition, some clothes for treaty, you know. And then they give that to all

of the chief. And chief is ...oh, they like that, for one family like this, so much. Oh, one big bacon, one each, you know. Some of them got big families got to have two. Tea and things like that, you know, because they need that.

Ray: And sometimes some nets, too?

Arsene: Oh yeah.

Ray: Fishing nets.

Arsene: Nets. And that (?) twine, you know, they brought that lots of them too. So people they get that so they're making a net with it, you know.

Ray: So the chief, did the chief get something too for him, special?

Arsene: Oh yeah.

Ray: Some clothes?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Chief coat, eh?

Arsene: Chief coat and chief pants, big suit, you know, long coat and black one that had brass button on it, you know, right here, and a hat, black hat, you know, and tie, black tie. He's like a big officer.

Ray: Not now, eh, that was a long time ago, eh?

Arsene: No, no.

Ray: That was when you were a little boy?

Arsene: No, I was a big boy. Maybe some old people that still have that. Dress their chief, you know. Alphonse Piche was from Garson, you know, Arsene Piche's dad. Oh, they've always had that. About two or three of them had that suit,

you know, always wear out that in a way. They always use that and then, you know, when one come to you, you know it's the chief.

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: Yeah, it's got to be like that, you know. Close to some country well, some place well, you seen him, well, that's the chief. You know the chief. Yeah.

Ray: How did the people become chiefs in the old time? Who told them to be chief?

Arsene: Well, government. And all this people talk about, had a meeting, you know, and who to be the chief, whoever is the right kind of guy. So you say that, "You be our chief." And then make chief that one. But they're getting about \$50 a year, I think, that much.

Ray: Was the chief a person who is a good hunter, a good trapper, or what?

Arsene: No. (inaudible) kind of guy.

Ray: Doesn't have to be, eh?

Arsene: No. Even right now you see that Frank Piche, well he's chief, you see. That's the way it goes. Who could do the things for the people, you know, who could talk to the government. Things like that, you know. Because when that guy come here well the chief has to talk with him, you know, what the people needed, what the people wants to get help. This is the way. He'd talk about that, you know. But when the poor chief, well he can't say that. That's why, that's why we want to make a good chief, you know.

Ray: So a good chief was somebody who could talk well, eh?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Who could speak English good?

Arsene: No.

Ray: Or Chipewyan?

Arsene: (inaudible) you know.

Ray: Just somebody wasn't scared, eh?

Arsene: That Alphonse Piche there, not one word with English.

Ray: No?

Arsene: He talk Cree all right, but oh he's good carpenter, you know. My old daddy used be a carpenter for him, you know.

But he talked good with Chipewyan. I don't know, but he don't care for nothing just like Arsene. He just don't care any white people the bunch of it. He can talk just the same just as good. He don't care for nothing. (laughs)

Ray: Not afraid of anybody, eh?

Arsene: No. That's what they used to do.

Ray: Did anybody ever try to take something from the treaty people? The treaty men with all this money?

Arsene: No, I don't think so.

Ray: They come with all this cash, eh. You'd think somebody would try and take it from them, eh.

Arsene: No. Oh, they used to be good people that time, you know, not like these days. The liquor does that. You know, this town before the liquor sometime there was no liquor, a long time, you know, when no money you can't go to Buffalo well, we used to be that way. And they're all good people. I don't think anybody had fight with his son, sober like that.

Ray: Who?

Arsene: I don't think anybody, even. The boys and the girl maybe sometimes argue, you know, but the old people like, you know.

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: They never said one bad word to one child. I don't think so. Never had a fight, even the dance, no trouble. One guy says something, just don't pay no attention, just don't care about it. You wouldn't say nothing, never fight. Nobody would, nobody fight in this place. These are good people in this place. Just the liquor does that.

Ray: When did the liquor come? When did people start getting liquor? When the road came?

Arsene: The road came and Buffalo bars, you know.

Ray: Buffalo bar, eh.

Arsene: That's when it very first started here, and before that they have brew, that home brew, you know, the people.

Ray: Make it with what?

Arsene: Oh they make it with raisins, yeast cake, and little sugar. But not everybody, you know. Who's got a little money well, buy about five pounds of raisins, and a little sugar and just make a brew home made, and this (?) he just told his friend, you know. Just go there and make a little party there, you know, all night until at last well they were ready to home

(inaudible). Never had a fight, even if they were really drunk -- no trouble.

Ray: Never fight, eh?

Arsene: Never fight, never swear, just joking and fun. So it was that way. But after this liquor started and those young guys, you know, that's why it's bad this town. It used to be, it used to be good people in this place, no trouble-maker in this place.

Ray: So you didn't need any police, eh?

Arsene: No, don't need police. That's why there was no police at that time, because nobody don't care about it.

Ray: Yeah. Nobody (?) eh?

Arsene: Yeah. And after when the liquor come here and people just like this, well, (interruption).

Ray: Yeah, no RCMP except your daddy, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. No RCMPs except my dad. My daddy put one guy in jail, I told you that.

Ray: Yeah. When was your daddy the RCMP?

Arsene: I don't know what year (inaudible). That was before me. My brother Robbie was kind of small at that time. He remembered that, but not us. That was before us. I don't know when was it. When I was about fourteen, or thirteen years old at that time my daddy is (inaudible). But he never bothered nobody, everybody likes him. And they get \$75, just our money, you know, for to go some place, maybe go to Garson Lake, or go to Descharme. (laughing) He always say that, the manager that fixed the paper for him, you know, RCMP manager in La Crosse. "I went to Garson Lake, I went to Descharme." (laughs)

Ray: And he didn't go, eh?

Arsene: He didn't go, no way.

Ray: So the government paid him for going?

Arsene: Yeah. And they get about \$250 a month, I think. Two hundred and fifty a month. That's a lot of money at that time, you know.

Ray: Oh yeah, that's for sure. He was a DNR man, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. And there was the people that trapped in the summertime, you know, and before fall for fox. As soon as when you get a fox they run out in the bush, you know, make a little cabin for them and just keep them there, you know, until it's

wintertime. They feed them there. Len knows that.

Ray: Keeps a live fox?

Arsene: Oh yeah.

Ray: Oh.

Arsene: I used to do that lots of times when I go up north.
Used to keep lots of fox.

Ray: How did you catch them alive?

Arsene: Well, in a trap. Set a trap. Then catch them, well,
just put them in a sack, tie it. You got two, well, you made a
little house for them, you know. Four and three, you know.
Just put them in there and feed them with moose meat.

Ray: So they're worth lots of money, eh? Live one, eh?

Arsene: Yeah, but no you have to kill them when he's prime,
you know, when it's good hair. But you got to see him. His hair
is not much good, well, you don't have to kill him. But if it's

good hair, well, just kill him and skin it. We used to do
that, me and my brother. We used to stay there and that was
before fall, you know, stay there and just... That was a good
time trapping, not cold. But there's a lot of work looking
after fox. Still got, still got fox (inaudible) could see
that. There's some there yet, in the bush, you know. Yeah,
there's about six of them still there. There are some rotten,
but still that's... could see what that's...

Ray: The little house, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. Where I used to keep the fox.

Ray: Is that out by Muskeg Mountain, eh, where you were?

Arsene: No, not far from Clearwater where we used to stay.
They call it the Steep End River.

Ray: Steep End River?

Arsene: Steep End River, that's what they call that, where we
used to stay.

Ray: Oh yeah.

(END OF SIDE A)

(END OF TAPE)

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DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: ARSENE FONTAINE #3
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: LA LOCHE,
SASKATCHEWAN
INTERVIEW LOCATION: LA LOCHE,
SASKATCHEWAN
TRIBE/NATION: METIS
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW: 01/28/80
INTERVIEWER: RAY MARNOCH
INTERPRETER:
TRANSCRIBER: HEATHER BOUCHARD
SOURCE: SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD
TAPE NUMBER: IH-149
DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC #1a
PAGES: 38
RESTRICTIONS: NO REPRODUCTION OF THE
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HIGHLIGHTS:

- General reminiscences

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SUMMARY

MAIL:

One man walked from Ile-a-la-Crosse, camped at Bull's House (north end of Peter Pond Lake). Next day ate at West La Loche and continued to Ft. McMurray via Clearwater R. He pulled a toboggan loaded with mail. Later Fred Daniels walked with mail to meet the train at 4:30p.m. in Alberta. He made trip in one day from West La Loche to Cheecham, Alberta. The mailman from Ft. McMurray to Ft. Chipewyan used dog team but Ile-a-la-Crosse man thought dogs too much trouble, walking was faster.

Baptiste Herman from Christina, Alberta hauled freight from Cheecham by horse. He was always on time. Made two trips a month. Pay \$72/month out of which he bought hay, oats, etc. Mail in summer from Ile-a-la-Crosse by canoe because there was

no road.

Cafe owner in Ft. McMurray, when poor, walked all over looking for jobs. Walked from McMurray to Prince Albert once and wore out nine pairs of moccasins on the trip.

LAND:

West of La Loche to the railroad track and north to Clearwater R. is muskeg, muskrat country (Garson Lake area). La Loche is squirrel country and north of La Loche is all high ground.

While checking for fires from plane, Arsene could see how far they used to walk when trapping and wonders how he ever did it. They went north to McFarlane R., Cree Lake or Fond-du-Lac to trap. Sometimes by snowshoes, running in front to break trail for dog teams. Sometimes the people had no food.

CARIBOU:

One time (1951) lots of caribou were on Lac La Loche and in the excitement many were killed although the Resources officers tried to take guns away. Arsene thinks caribou don't come south any more because fires have burned the country and caribou won't cross a prairie.

Caribou Hunting Story:

Arsene went to check bear hole, found no bear but saw caribou and shot seven. Brought back tongues in bag but no one would believe that's what was in his bag.

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Lloyd Lake fire is reason why caribou don't go past there any more, Arsene figures. Now that gov't goes after fires, there's too many fires.

LAC LA LOCHE FIRE:

(pre 1936) Hay stack caught fire, burnt trees up to West La Loche all around lake. People took belongings to shore and got boats ready. When the big spruce were burning it was like fire was on top of you. On lake only safe place. Smoke could have killed everyone but luckily wind changed.

At time of first war five men came from U.S.A. to avoid the war. One named White stayed at Garson Lake three years. Jonas Clarke found him in spring. He was really nervous so they brought him by canoe to La Loche and sent him out. Heard he was okay again. Doctor said he was too long in bush alone.

One summer the people saw his dog and noticed fish taken from their nets and knew someone was in the bush. In winter Arsene's dad told him to come to their place, so he came and made a spruce tipi house.

Some of those men went north of Clearwater R., made a house inside the ground. Dug with shovel, sticks put over with mud on top, didn't need fire to be warm. Arsene's grandpa gave them a net. They caught suckers and learned to keep fish for winter and how to trap.

John Nicholson and Jack trapped all their lives. Ed Park's mother married Jack. John, in spring, after trapping, would paddle around the lakes breaking rocks. On the other side Descharme Lake he found something. Went to Ft. McMurray and sent it south. That was gold! So he hired a plane and made daily trips to and from that place. Made quite a bit of money but found no other claims. He died in Uranium City where he lived for a long while.

Pierre Lemaigre (George Lemaigre's dad) found a white man up the Clearwater River who went crazy and cut his wrists. Pierre stopped the blood and took him out south.

One white trapper, a former cowboy, came north to escape others who were after him. At his cabin on the Clearwater he became sick. On hearing people nearby he fired a shot but scared the people away. He died and was eaten by a bear. Later Joe Bag (of Turnor Lake) and an RCMP officer found his remains and a letter he'd written.

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Once there were three Frenchmen up north trapping. One got sick and died so the other two kept trapping until one of them weakened and died. After that the third man snowshoed all the way from north through deep snow without any grub and eventually made it to Turnor Lake. He froze one foot entirely. When he arrived the RCMP officer was more concerned with the accusation that the men had been using dope to trap with than with the health of the remaining man. After a month in Ile-a-la-Crosse hospital the man recovered only to be charged in court with using dope. He was furious with the court and was released. He stayed two weeks at Arsene's in West La Loche before leaving for the south via the train in Alberta.

Arsene: I met (?) when he left Ile-a-la-Crosse when everything is ready and let's go. And he just told me that, that little toboggan just had a rope right here. And he's so fast and he camped in Bull's House that night. You know the Bull's House?

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: And he camped there and sometime before daylight he come to here like that. And he slept there and just come through here. And then soon as when he had something to eat,

you know, they left. And that same day they hit McMurray.

Ray: From here?

Arsene: From here.

Ray: In one day?

Arsene: By the river. In one day from Bull's House.

Ray: Did he got out by the portage way, or did he go...?

Arsene: Yeah, by portage and then he just went by the river.

Ray: He didn't go over to Garson Lake?

Arsene: Sometimes with his snowshoes. Just by the river from here. He just goes down there and...

Ray: Did he come all the way from Ile-a-la-Crosse to the Bull's House in one day?

Arsene: Yeah, yeah in one day. Half a day I guess. It's not far there. It's just like half a day.

Ray: Pulling, pulling his toboggan.

Arsene: Yeah, pulling his toboggan.

Ray: With the mail in?

Arsene: With the mail and (inaudible) and go to (?). Boy, that guy he must be fast, eh. My dad used to say that, "Oh he must be fast." And he just left here maybe (inaudible) down to McMurray that same day. Took that mail. The next morning he'll come back with it. He left there -- McMurray to here. Camp here. Next day to Ile-a-la-Crosse. Just by walking. Sometimes a little bit snow on his route, you know, you got to have snowshoes. Snowshoes and without snowshoes, the same travel.

Ray: And he brought all the mail to the people, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. Oh some people they used to be fast, you know, even that my wife (inaudible). At one place she found me there, he gave it to me (inaudible). He took the water from me and (inaudible). (laughing) So that old man he come here, he took the mail from La Crosse in the summertime. And then that same start of the day at about four thirty or something passed down to McMurray, you know, that passenger train. He's got to get there before that train passed there. Sometimes that he'd get there at the wrong time. He goes there just by walking.

Ray: From here over to the train station?

Arsene: From West La Loche.

Ray: From West La Loche.

Arsene: Just by walking in the summertime.

Ray: Over to Cheecham, eh?

Arsene: Over to Cheecham. Must be fast, eh? Yeah. He's a good walking old man that (?).

Ray: That was Fred, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. I don't know his name, Fred Daniels or something. I don't know why (inaudible) and that woman's got no name now. (laughing) Just (?) a lot of time.

Ray: Did that man that was pulling the mail, did he get paid to do that?

Arsene: Oh yeah.

Ray: Who paid him to do that? The government?

Arsene: For the money, government I guess.

Ray: And he always picked it up at Ile-a-la-Cross, eh?

Arsene: Yeah, goes and picks it up.

Ray: Didn't go to Big River, eh?

Arsene: No.

Ray: Was there a road...?

Arsene: Somebody take it there, I guess. (Inaudible) I guess, drop the mail there and he got to get it from there. You know, he's got to go down to McMurray.

Ray: Did somebody take it from McMurray up to Fort Chipewyan?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Another person, eh?

Arsene: Another person from the other side, they used dogs there.

Ray: I wonder why that man didn't use dogs.

Arsene: Well, he don't like dogs. He's faster than a dog; he knows it. He don't want to carry the dog feed and things like that, my dad said that. Why he don't use the dogs, he said, "Dogs are too much trouble. Wherever I camp, well, I have trouble with the dogs and things like that, and when I walk I don't have no trouble. And then when I get there I just

(inaudible) in it and I finish, have a good rest." That's what he said.

Ray: Yeah. Doesn't have to worry about...

Arsene: Yeah. But I forgot his name. I forgot it, but I'll find it for you.

Ray: Maybe Charlie will remember.

Arsene: Maybe Charlie remembered that.

Ray: Yeah, I have to go talk to Charlie.

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: But I need somebody to translate for me.

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: I need a translator.

Arsene: And there's one old man is here; Baptiste Herman they used to call him. He's from Alberta. He used to haul up freight with a horse from Cheecham, you know. Once a month, he's got about three or four horse. Lots of parcels and things like that, you know. Got to bring everything, but he never missed one hour that old man, all the time he doing that job.

Ray: Always on time?

Arsene: Always on time. In the summertime he had a hell of a time getting through the muskeg with the horse, but still when time when the road goes there, you know, from West La Loche (inaudible); so he went there, you know, that old Indian road. So soon as when he get there that old man still, he's right there all the time. Never miss one. Rain, heavy rain, don't matter. It all was just the same. And he get \$72 a month that old man; made two trips in a month. Of course he's got about four or five horses, you know; he's got lots of horses. But when there's lot of parcels, well, you got to take more horses, sometimes six horses. Got one man with him, that's all.

Ray: Did he have a place to stop on the way? Did he have a building to keep the horses in?

Arsene: Well, he just, no just like...

Ray: Did he stop at Garson Lake?

Arsene: When he left the Cheecham, well have to stay in Christina. That's his place, you know. That's where he's living. So from there he's got to stop at Garson Lake overnight, and the next morning he's got to be at West La Loche.

Ray: Never put his horses inside though?

Arsene: No.

Ray: Always outside?

Arsene: In the wintertime (inaudible) sometimes he used to go there like this, when he don't keep the horse well (inaudible), but he's got to pay for the hay and things like that. And the oats, things like that. Seventy-two dollars a month, that's what he get. Just like \$700 for a rate today, all right, but...

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: Of course at the time even a package of tobacco like this, maybe could get that for 10 , you know. Oh yeah. Even a pound of lard you get that for 10 a pound. Just like he get \$700 there just like right now. (inaudible) charging a dollar. That's a low price, the rest I would owe a \$1.25, see.

Ray: It used to be 10 ?

Arsene: Yeah, it used to be 10 .

Ray: How did the man bring the mail in the summertime to Ile-a-la-Crosse? Did they walk too?

Arsene: No. Just by canoe, I guess.

Ray: Not by horse, eh?

Arsene: No. Couldn't be by horses because can't get across all the lakes there, you know.

Ray: And there was no road, eh?

Arsene: There was no road. The one guy got cafe there, McMurray, last time I went there. Jerry, I forgot his last name but Jerry, he's a great guy that. He said... he's got a good cafe there, you know. And he said, "I'm just like rich right now," he says, "I used to be poor. I know all the places. Buffalo Narrows, and (inaudible). Summertime I stayed there I was looking for jobs. And one time I couldn't get a job; so I had a little bit of money I wanted to go back to P.A. They said there was a road that was about that wide," he said, "the road from there. And I got to go back by walking. So I told one old lady to make me a moccasin to walk with." Nine pair of moccasins that what he bought, and he paid about a \$1 that time, you know, for a pair of moccasin. So he made that with the moose hide, he said. And then he left there in Buffalo all the way to P.A. That nine pair of moccasins, he spoil everything. All the big holes on it. "So I can't do nothing," he says. "So I have to rub something under that,

could hardly make that without a moccasin, P.A." he said. Just

by walking. "Boy, that's a long walk," he said. He said, "It was hard time that time," he said.

Ray: Was that a long time ago?

Arsene: Quite a long time ago, I guess. He's kind of a old man, that guy. And after that he's find a good job or something and then he's got a cafe there. He bought one cafe, so he stayed there. I told him he's just like a millionaire, joking, you know. And so he give me a story. "I used to be not a millionaire like that. We used to walk lots of times from..." And he says he knows a lot of places. He says, "I been a lot of places looking for job. Sometime I fish with the guys, we bought rope. So we get a few dollars and just keep that money, and I went back to P.A."

Ray: There must have been trails, eh?

Arsene: Oh yeah.

Ray: All the way from here to P.A.?

Arsene: Oh yeah. That's what he said.

Ray: Bush trail, eh?

Arsene: Bush trail. There's only one bush trail, he said.

Ray: And then there's lots of muskeg, eh, to go around?

Arsene: Yeah. But I don't think there was muskeg, not very much.

Ray: No?

Arsene: From Buffalo to south is not muskeg much. Not like Garson Lake country. From the Garson right up to on the Alberta side, mostly all the muskeg country.

Ray: Yeah?

Arsene: Yeah. That's a poor country. You can trap there too in the springtime. Nothing but muskeg. No dry place, dry land, that's why I don't like that place.

Ray: Lots of muskrats there?

Arsene: From Garson Lake right up to Clearwater there's all the muskeg, that same muskeg. On this side of Garson Lake, you know, and you can't cross it in the summertime, but muskeg, soft. That same muskeg right up from that river, you know, from Garson River.

Ray: Garson River?

Arsene: And then right up to that Clearwater on this side of Clearwater. There's about five miles or something right at the

end there, that muskeg. All around in that Alberta.

Ray: Over to the train track?

Arsene: Yeah. Boy, is there ever muskeg. On this side too. Wherever you go there's muskeg.

Ray: Is it good for trapping?

Arsene: Oh...

Ray: For muskrat?

Arsene: Yeah. Muskrat country, you know, in Garson country. But around here now nothing for rats. No rat country in this place.

Ray: Squirrel country, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. They're good squirrels. From here you go out north, well, it's all high land, you know. Wherever you go there's muskeg -- just about this -- that's all.

Ray: Yeah. It's pretty dry.

Arsene: One time in the summertime I went up north to the plane, you know, took it to the fire, you know, patrol. Boy I figure, you know, that's McFarlane River, you know, right up to there. Sometimes I find house, check them, you know. Oh I figured, boy, that's a long ways. And I used to walk lots of times there with snowshoes. Lots of people went like that, you know.

Ray: From here to...?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: To where?

Arsene: To McFarlane River sometimes. Jonas Clark used to trap from here right up to Cree Lake sometimes. By walking in the wintertime. Lots of guys that way. Some of the guys go to Fond-du-Lac, come back with the snowshoes.

Ray: All that way?

Arsene: Yeah. And then my brother-in-law, and one winter I was trapping with him. Oh boy, that's a long walk.

Ray: What brother was that?

Arsene: Edward. Robbie is my brother.

Ray: Yeah, Edward too, eh?

Arsene: Edward is my brother-in-law.

Ray: Oh, your brother-in-law.

Arsene: Boy, it's a long walk. And then my brother-in-law was sick. He got a mumps in here, you know. Balls about that big, couldn't walk. Four team of dogs, but I got a good dog, you know. It was behind me when I walk.

Ray: You walked in front of the dogs?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: To break the trail, eh?

Arsene: Yeah, to break the trail, but lots of snow, boy. All the way through from there to here. Oh it's a long walk, boy. But I just don't care about it, you know. I just figure it's not far. But now when I go there with the plane, when I could see there, oh, I wonder how I make that. I wonder how the people were walking that far. Sometimes no grub, you know,

peoples. And the lakes were (inaudible), you don't kill a moose, you don't kill the caribou, things like that. Sometimes there's a herd of caribou comes just too close and then the people like that, because they could trail them, you know. Used to have that and...

Ray: Did they used to come a lot?

Arsene: What?

Ray: The caribou.

Arsene: Oh yeah. Sometimes...

Ray: People follow them? Did they used to go after them?

Arsene: Yeah. One time with the sleigh, RCMP (inaudible) chased them over here, take all their guns.

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: Sometimes we see lots of caribou on the lake, you know.

Ray: But you can't shoot them, eh?

Arsene: And the boys can't stand it, you know, can't hold themselves. So they just grab their gun -- and some old men too. Just chase that caribou and oh, they kill some, but (inaudible) or something. Just go after, then this guy just go after him and took all their guns. Because they don't want... They can kill them as much as they want for using. But when there's lots of guys like that, you know, and they just shoot 'em, shoot 'em, and they wounded and they die in the bush like

that, so the police don't like that. That's why. It's all

right. You can kill four or five anytime. (inaudible) lots of people who go after that caribou, you know, guys that run after them. Get out that gun and chase them back. (laughs)

Ray: Was it easy to, can you shoot them easy?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Just by, on your snowshoes or what? Running after them?

Arsene: No. Went on to land like this. Easy for killing, you know.

Ray: And they're not afraid, eh?

Arsene: Even that little lake, you know, you just kill them when you see them on the lake coming this way. You just go around shore and sit down there by the shore, just come close to you and shoot right there, you know, and it's easy to kill them. But when there's lots on the lake, you know, even right now when you see lots of caribou what's the boys going to do? I know damn well that every skidoo they have they just run after them. They didn't care about RCMP. They'd chase them. Of course that's the way it is, you know, everybody got (inaudible) rifle. Just sneak them there and just go there when the RCMP (inaudible) well just have to chase them. You don't stop them and kill them too much, you know. So when he gets there he's got to take all that gun and come back. We used to do that.

Ray: But they haven't come for a long time, eh?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: When was the last time the caribou came?

Arsene: Oh I don't know. Maybe my wife would remember, not too long ago.

Ray: She said 1950.

Arsene: 1950.

Ray: Yeah. But before then they used to come, eh?

Arsene: Not right up to here.

Ray: No.

Arsene: But sometime there's lots of them in Descharme, inside, you know, all over; but they never come to here very often.

Ray: Did the people used to go from here up there?

Arsene: It's only two winters. And the last time he come here, he went right into Alberta right close to Cheecham railroads. That's where he passed. Grand Prairie, you know, you can (?) Grand Prairie that chart, you know. That's the people that kill them there too. From around there too. And the last time they come this way, they never come after that. But I figure it's the burn the country too much, you know. You know when the...

Ray: Too many forest fires?

Arsene: Yeah. When the land no stick on it. Some places it was thick bush, you know, and just like prairie some place, you know. He can't cross there. They don't want to cross there, just stay there and he stop there. One time, I know that one time we went to for trapping in the fall time, my wife and that one boy, you know. So we stay there and I told them there was a bear hole there. I check for the bear, maybe the bear's there now. So I went out and my wife said, "Well, bring me a caribou tongue," she said. And that boy Ernest (inaudible). Nobody knew there was caribou. This time was a little freezing, you know. So I went and I said, "Okay." So I went out and I never suspected there was caribou, but just joking, you know. But soon when I hit that bush, you know, that thick bush and there's... right up Clearwater was just like prairie, you know, just a little stick about that long and they don't want to cross there, I guess. So he stopped there, eh. And as soon as when I get there, boy. Oh, one squirrel is climbing, you know. So I shoot that squirrel. Boy, I see something here -- wild caribou. Well, talk about a caribou in the bush. Oh, so I just killed seven right there, you know. I just shot seven. I never seen so many so close, you know. I never seen that. So I skin every one of them and I pack it in. I took all the tongues and I went to bear holes; nothing, no bear. So I come back. "Well, you were asking for caribou tongue," I said, "there's caribou tongue in the bag." Oh they don't believe me, you know. My wife and that boy don't believe me too. (inaudible). "No," he said, "you got it," he says. "Oh there's caribou tongue," I says. And they set the tables and I started eating, you know. "Why don't you boil that caribou tongue?" I says, "I brought seven of them." No, they don't believe me. At last that boy, you know, he grabbed that sack and he was checking these with his hand, you know. "Something in it," he said. So he took it out and, "Yes," he said, "that's caribou tongue," he says. And about two weeks after, that place where we stayed, two weeks after just crossed that

little prairie. Stayed right along there, don't want to go across to Clearwater. In a little brook, you know. That's what I figure. That's why maybe they won't come here, because there's too many burned country, you know. Some places there's fairly big place, you know, on the other side of that Lloyd Lake on this side, you know. Three others took planes just checking all that fire around. Boy, it's a big country burning. So we haven't had the caribou coming across just like

the lakes (inaudible).

Ray: Why are there so many fires now? In the old days there wasn't so many fires, eh?

Arsene: Yeah, I don't know why. Used to be a fire, (inaudible) used to be to sometimes. But nobody's fighting the fire at that time, and you'd see the smoke and that's all. Sometimes you couldn't see nothing. Sometimes you could hardly go across and see the land, it's full of smoke on this lake -- but nobody going after the fire and things like that. When the fire this way, the wind comes this way, you couldn't see nothing across. Heavy smoke. That's the way it used to be. But after when the government goes after the fire, and I figure -- I don't know why -- too many fires. Too much fire, but nobody did that. Can't be out in the bush like way far up north; you can't go there. Some pilot that do that all right. That Morris he used to make lots of fire; everyone knows that. Everybody know but they can't prove that Morris made that.

Ray: At Athabasca?

Arsene: Yeah. And usually when he gets here sometimes, you know, when he come here, that fire there, that fire there. (Inaudible) Oh there's about three, four places of fire at the same time. And they figure that guy does that.

Ray: You told me one time about a fire around the lake, eh?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: From West La Loche?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: How did that fire get started?

Arsene: That Max Clark(?) does that.

Ray: When was that? A long time ago, eh?

Arsene: Quite a long time ago, I don't remember.

Ray: When the Bay was over on West La Loche, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. Everybody was living up there. Boy, it's a big fire.

Ray: How did it get started?

Arsene: Well they went for a horse, to borrow a horse.

Ray: Oh.

Arsene: His daddy borrowed a horse from my dad, and my dad told him to look for the horse. Maybe it's on that little lake

around there somewhere. So he went up there with one little boy. So he went there and the hay it was half stacked there, you know. That dry hay. So he burned that, I think, that's

what that little kid said that, and naturally they put a fire on that -- crazy enough, eh.

Ray: I wonder why. Just for fun, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. And when he come back there's a big fire there. How is that fire going? Well, don't know. And after that the kids had said that. They just burned that hay. That's our hay too, you know. Right now though he'd be in jail now for six months for sure. (laughs) No fine.

Ray: And then what? It caught onto the trees, eh?

Arsene: Oh yes, right up to the town, you know, right up to the fishery there. The other side too, it burned too quite a bit. The fire sparks went across, eh, and on this side.

Ray: Went all the way around, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. All that way around that fire goes.

Ray: Were the people afraid that their houses would burn too?

Arsene: Yeah, the people took all their stuff to the lakes, to the shore, you know, that big bank there across, you know, had them, you know.

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: So they put it on the rock, all their stuff. We did that eh, everything and the ready canoes, everything ready. When the fire come too close well they could go. But at last

change the wind. That's why they're lucky -- maybe it would've killed everybody that smoke, you know. Of course that first time the wind come this way, and at night, you know, that fire that big spruce all around the point, you know, big timber, you know, went all the same time. That fire, they could see that fire through the half lake; just like right on top of you that fire. But they're lucky it changed the wind right away, this way. Blow the smoke out, you know. But we don't believe it kill the people. Of course if it's full of smoke on this lake, what the people going to do? The only thing that fire, you know, when the fire was, you know, on the lake, when we were in the bush some place, you run away out of the fire. When the fire is too close you got to be in the water, you know, the only place that's safe. The air is too strong. See that fire... But that water air is stronger than that smoke. That's what saved you. Smoke right up to the lake, but right away like this, just about this high. The only place you could

have a chance.

Ray: *This is Ray Marnoch, and I've been talking with
Arsene Fontaine at his home, in La Loche, on January 28, 1980.

(END OF SIDE A)

(DATE: February 14, 1980)

Ray: But that was the First World War?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: About 1919, eh, something like that?

Arsene: I don't know how...

Ray: I think it started in 1914 or something like that.

Unknown: 1914. I'm five years old.

Ray: And those guys, what was their names again?

Arsene: One is named Pete, one is named White, one is named
Johnny, one is named John, and one is named Jack. You know
that Edward Park, that's his mother he'd been married with
that. So this is his stepfather, you know. And that Jonas
Clarke too. So, and one is named White. He went crazy that
guy.

Ray: Is that right?

Arsene: Yeah. Out there north, Harrison Lake. He was there
for three years, stayed there all the time never come to here,
but they (inaudible) somehow, I guess. So back in the
springtime, Jonas Clarke, I think -- one of them -- he went out
trapping in the springtime for beaver. So they found him -- he
went crazy. Oh, he just nervous, not really crazy, but
nervous, you know. He couldn't even walk out of the house, he
said.

Ray: Too long in the bush, eh?

Arsene: Too long in the bush. So they brought that guy from
there by canoe right up to here, so they send help. After that
I heard he was okay. That's a long time, you know.

Ray: I wonder why he went crazy.

Arsene: Oh maybe he was alone too long or something. That's
what the doctor said, yeah. One of my brothers went that way
too one time.

Ray: Too lonely, eh?

Arsene: Too lonely in the bush, and a young guy. Pretty hard for him; that's what the doctor said. So the guy just go crazy, he's all alone. Got to have something, he said, medicine or something. And maybe that white guy got medicine, you know, so they just leave him there. And these guys when they come there right at the end of the lake, there where is my old dad's place, you know.

Ray: Fontaine's place, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. And never show up in the summertime. We seen his dog when we go for berries, or something, a big dog we seen in there. But they don't know whose dog, but they know that there's some people in the bush. They was kind of scared, I guess, the people at that time, you know, (inaudible). I don't know, maybe they stole the fish. I heard they stole the fish, something at night, you know. People used to have their nets around the shore like this, and at night they used to be coming in there and just pick up their fish. That's what I heard. Rabbits too, I guess. So, and then in the fall time can't stay in the bush in winter, you know. So he's scared to come out too. When he gets there well somebody said something. Not like today, he's crazy, eh. No phone or anything. I don't know how he could walk there to somewhere to tell them about it. (inaudible), so he just stay and in the fall time my dad said he seen him there. He called, "Just come to here. You're going suffer like that. How you going to live in the bush in the wintertime?" So he just get his partner and coming there.

He make a house with a spruce, you know, just like a tipi, you know. And he made a fire there, learned to make it. So my dad said... the old man is fishing there, you know, used to get lots of fish that time. They get back, you know, "Well, I'll take everything, he says. (inaudible) like that (?), you know, five pound of pail, that lard pail. They put everything in there. And they made a soup with that supplies (inaudible) in the fire.

Ray: With (??)?

Arsene: Yeah. They made a soup with that, it was from the side of (?). They said they just burned that, something like that. But he said, "He needed that, he liked that. He said, 'It's good, good soup.'" And then some of them go to the Clearwater River and build a cabin there. Some of them go the other side; there's a little lake there. But every time they make a house right in inside the ground.

Ray: Inside the ground?

Arsene: Inside the ground, yeah.

Ray: How did they dig it?

Arsene: They dig it with shovels, I guess.

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: Yeah. And they make a house like this.

Ray: What did they put over top?

Arsene: Well, they put a stick there and stick a mud on it, I guess. And my daddy says the houses were really... "You don't need a fire," he said. And on that little lake where he was living he made a house there, you know. There's that little hill there.

Ray: It's up by Clearwater?

Arsene: The other side of Clearwater that little river there.

Ray: By the tower?

Arsene: The other side of the tower. There was lots of suckers there, you know, in that little shallow lake, someplace. So they had a net, they found a net. My old grandpa gave them a net. So the suckers net like that was walking in the water, right up to here, in the fall time. Boy, it's darn cold, and he said there lots of suckers in here (inaudible). So he kept that fish for winter. And they would be trapping around there. And some of them lives up north. And John Nicholson, he used to be trapping all his life.

Ray: Up north, eh?

Arsene: Yeah, and Jack too. Take all his family up north.

Ray: Did he marry somebody from here?

Arsene: Yeah, that was Edward Park's mother.

Ray: Oh, that's right.

Arsene: Yeah. No that was Jack. John, he never got married.

Ray: And those guys, those six men they came from the States, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. Came from the States.

Ray: And why did they come here?

Arsene: They said they're scared of the war. Don't want to be in the army; that's why they run away. And my old grandpa had asked him why, how he come here. Well, he say he don't want to fight, don't want to be in the army. "So that's why we run away. So that nobody knows where we run away," he said. So they lived here and John Nicholson used to be good trapper, used to make anything; moose hide like that, make them, smoke them. Everything he could do, that man. Jack was just the same. He's like old Joe's family like that making moose hide,

and everything he made. And when they build a house up north, after that, big house, boy, bigger than this with a (?). There's still some of the house there, I guess. (inaudible)

Ray: And he went to Uranium City?

Arsene: John Nicholson. He was looking for a mine here, you know. All they made doing that, come here in the springtime and go back with a -- no planes at that time -- just go back there where the... just go back there with a horse, pack, you know, hire the people. Of course he made a lot of money with the trapping, took lots of fur in the wintertime. For a lot of years he stayed, you know, in winter. And then go back and stay there all summer. Just paddle around the lakes, hit the rocks, break the rocks looking for mine. At last he found it. On the other side of Descharme Lake. That big fish lake. That's where he found something, and then he went down to

McMurray. So this thing got out that that was gold. So he hired a plane, back and forth, and he stayed in Clearwater. Boy, back and forth every day. That's what he broke himself, and what he found there. And after there, there's nothing left. Didn't find anything after that. He made quite a bit of money in the first place. But he hired a plane, he hired a plane, (inaudible) just broke himself.

Ray: (inaudible)?

Arsene: Yeah. And after that he went to Uranium City that's where he lived all his life, and then he was dead. (inaudible). That's the way they used to...

Ray: When did he die, a long time ago?

Arsene: Quite a long time. Yeah, that's why he lived long time. Maybe if he joined the army maybe he would've got killed. (chuckles)

Ray: Yeah, I guess so.

Arsene: That's the only guy, Johnny, in the colony, you know, Johnny Russian. I mean, that's the Russian people that, these guys.

Ray: Yeah.

Arsene: Yeah. That's Russian people. So that's why Johnny Laprise, they called him Johnny Russian, you know. That's what they called him, sort of nickname he got, because that Johnny, when he get here and he's got a cripple in here, you know.

Ray: In his back?

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Hunchback?

Arsene: And he was a small little guy too, and that was Johnny Russian's, his dad.

Ray: That was Johnny Laprise's dad?

Arsene: Yeah, Johnny Laprise's dad. He must have got a woman. (laughs)

Ray: I guess so, eh.

Arsene: Yeah.

Ray: Was there any other people that went a little bit crazy up in the bush? Do you remember?

Arsene: Yeah. One guy to here, on this Clearwater, (inaudible). This is his brother, Joseph Lemaigre's dad. Pierre Lemaigre is the guy who found him. He went crazy. He cut his veins here, you know, right here.

Ray: This was Chipewyan guy, or white man?

Arsene: No, white people from the south that cut his vein here. He was sucking blood from there. That's how they found him in his cabin. So he stopped that bleeding and took him like that to here. Did he die? I don't remember that. So

they took it out like that. And when he went to on this Clearwater, he's not crazy that guy, but he'd been a cowboy, you know, out south. He said he used to go down to McMurray, you know, and farmed there, taking him down to his own people, you know. And that guy he just make (?), you know, that old man. Then I took him down to McMurray. He's got a little canoe. So he give us a story there. He said it was out south, and he's a cowboy. And everybody hate him, he says. "I used to kill lots of, lots of Indians," he says. "For the government," he said. "I used to kill lots of Indians for the government," he says. "That's what I used to do," he said, "used to make money like that. And of course the cowboy he hate me. I'm a good shooter guy, that's why they hate me." Boy, he made a good story when he gave me that, you know. "And then at last, them cowboys they're trying to kill me," he said. "Everytime, in the hotel or something, (inaudible) just come to, trying to kill me. Well, my sister told me, 'You better go up north. I don't want you to die. So you better go up north and live there.'" So that's why he came here, you see. And so he stayed in that, wherever. He trapped.

Ray: Did he have a horse?

Arsene: No. Just from Ile-a-la-Crosse you could go by the river all the way, you know. To the Clearwater.

Ray: I thought if he was a cowboy he would have brought his horse up here.

Arsene: Yeah, should have brought his horse. (both laughing)

And then, and then he lived there. And in the springtime, you know, I guess he was sick and these guys from here was trapping rats, you know, and he hear somebody, I guess. Boy, these

people they're crazy. You can make him laugh that old man, you know. And he hears somebody shooting, I guess. That's what he said. That's what he mark on the paper, you know, what he said. "I hear somebody shooting and I started to shoot with a rifle. So maybe those guys don't hear me, or maybe don't want to come to me, maybe scared." He said that on paper, you know. He wrote like that. "If that guy comes to me, he give me a pepper, and he feed me something with a pepper, I would have been all right and I would have been alive." And he didn't see nobody. That guys, they run away; they run back to here. He said, "So that white man was there; he was shooting (inaudible). Boy, they were crazy. And them guys could come to here I could give them everything what I got," he says. "(inaudible) trapping," he says, "everything. I could give them my land and everything. I don't know why they never come to me to save my life to take me down somewhere." That's what he said on the paper. And then he died there, you see, in that house. When they pass in the springtime they smelled, I guess. So it was a bear. He broke the windows off so the bear eat him up, that old man. Just take it out like that, eat him up.

You know that Joe Bag, from Turnor? You know that guy? That's the guy that went there with the RCMP. Boy, he was laughing about that time, you know, right now. "He eat everything," he says. "Just nothing but the bone, couldn't find some of the bone too. He ate the whole thing, but his ass. The only thing he didn't eat is the ass," he says. Boy, that old man, he's laughing too, you know. But the RCMP look at it, he says, "Joe," he said, "look at that bear. Funny he don't like the ass. Don't eat his ass." (laughs) So that old Joe Bag he said, "Must be that a bad thing," he says, "the bear don't want it. He just left that (inaudible). That must be bad thing to have," he says. (laughs)

So see and got a ring on his hand, you know. He says it's five thousand dollar ring. (inaudible) too, but when that bear he must have swallowed it up, you know, the ring. So just looking for that for quite a long time. The people went there and try to find that, tried to find that but couldn't find it. It must have been the bear ate him up, you know.

Ray: And he wrote everything on a letter?

Arsene: He wrote everything on there until he died.

Ray: And the RCMP took that letter?

Arsene: Yeah. He put that on the table there.

Ray: Where were the RCMP from?

Arsene: From Ile-a-la-Crosse.

Ray: Ile-a-la-Crosse, eh. And that man's name was what? What was his name?

Arsene: Joe.

Ray: Joe, eh.

Arsene: I forgot his last name. I knew it one time, but I forgot it now.

Ray: And he was a cowboy, eh?

Arsene: He was a cowboy. He was a good shooter too. He's right to that. He's got a gun, you know, got all kinds of guns. Sometimes he go down, you know, "Come on, boys, put something," you know. You know you put something, a little stick, boy...

Ray: Throw it up in the air, eh?

Arsene: Just through here. You shoot lots of ducks when we go down, with a .22, oh yeah. You'd see the ducks, you know, (inaudible). Well, he's a good shooter.

Ray: He's a good shot, eh?

Arsene: Yeah, he's a good shot. He said, "I'm a good guy for that. That's why the cowboys hate me. Trying to kill me." Yeah. But he's been trapping all his life there up north, you know. He must have. He told me a good story about that.

Ray: Three Frenchmen.

Arsene: Three Frenchmen. And two of his brothers had died. They'd been suffering (inaudible) days, you know. They lose about three dog, I think. And a little cabin up north. So one of them sick. Well at last he died. So he makes something on his, with a stick, you know; he put it on top there. And another brother he had, so they went for trapping and his brother started to get sick again. Something I guess with the food or something, you know. So at last his brother died, right in the bush, outside. He made a camp, he made a fire there and he said he sleep with his brother. And it really is cold, he said. So he took the blanket this way and he died. I don't remember exactly, you know. I think that's what happened. And then I see that guy he's...

Ray: Two died, eh?

Arsene: And two brothers died, and that guy he walked there with the snowshoes, you know, all the way here from way up north. Lots of snow, no grub, nothing, but he made it to Turnor, he get there. But he froze all his leg, the bottom here. And somebody take a letter or something from there to Ile-a-la-Crosse, and that DNS guy, you know, that old man

there, that old guy, Naysmith that's what they called him.

Ray: He made it to Ile-a-la-Crosse?

Arsene: Yeah. And they bothered him about that dope, you know, that medicine, poison. He must have used that. So that as soon as he went there and check everything before that. Well it made him mad like, you know, and check all the floor and everything, he said. Just checking everything but couldn't find anything. Well, somebody said he had a poison. The Indians, Chipewyan, I guess, they say that, you know. They're scared.

Ray: You mean he poisoned his brothers?

Arsene: No. Just by somebody said... Well they kill fur, you know, with that trapping and things like that. Maybe they used the poison all right, but them guys don't have to talk about it. Right today somebody helped them, nobody could talk about it. (inaudible) he just put a poison all over for a wolf now, see. But this here is (inaudible) now. See, and they said that guy had a poison. That DNS guy he went there -- check everything, but he didn't find anything. And then them guys just trapping like that. Two brothers he had they died. And, you know, he got to Turnor Lake and somebody took the letter, I guess. And them guy he come, and still, you know, "He want to try and make me walk," he said. He told me, he put an outside toboggan in the back and go and sit down there. Look at the

way he froze his feet. He was a young guy, too, you know. He was about 25 years old. And he says, "I got mad," he says, and I told him, "I'm going to kill you," he said.

Ray: Who was he talking to?

Arsene: He was talking to that DNS guy. "I sat behind you," he says, "like I'm sit right now. You put me there and take me like that. I'm going to kill you on the road," he said. "That's what I told him," he said. "And he got scared, you know. So he said, 'I'm going' and he put me inside the blanket, with the dogs, you know." So took him like that to Ile-a-la-Crosse. He'll be there for about a month. And they put him in court about that medicine, you know. And he lost two brothers and I bet you he don't give a damn about anybody else, you know. "Boy," he said, "I was sure swearing in court. I just figured let them kill me. I wouldn't mind if they killed me right there, the way I get mad," he said. So they just let him go like that. Well then he come back this way with somebody. So he pass here and he stayed in West La Loche. He stay with us again.

Ray: Do you remember his name? That French guy.

Arsene: No, I don't remember his name.

Ray: So his two brothers died and they didn't even worry

about that, they worried about if they had that poison, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. Still worry about that, and that guy just about starving when he get there. He said, "I'm just about starving. I could see the light across the lake from that island. Not far, but I don't figure I could make there," he

says, "because I could hardly walk. Sometimes I just fall down. But still I tried." And of course he made it. So the people, they just help him right away, you know, lots of old people there.

Ray: He had no dogs?

Arsene: He's got three dogs but they're starving, I guess. Them dogs starving so he just, just by walking, just with a nothing he said, he's got a gun in his hand that's all, he says. "That's one thing I made mistake," he says, I should take rifle. Yeah, take a rifle right across the lake there. I shoot lots of time maybe somebody could hear me," he says. "But I make mistake. I figure that's too heavy so I (inaudible). I figure I couldn't make that light I seen, and I fall in the snow sometimes and lay there for a while, but I don't try to move the dogs so I just walk again. At last I made it," he says. And that old man was there. "So I get there," he says. So that old man was just startled. Help him right away, you know, (inaudible).

Ray: That was at Turnor?

Arsene: Yeah. Somebody sent a(?) to Ile-a-la-Crosse, you know.

Ray: So he was okay after that, eh?

Arsene: Oh yeah.

Ray: He went back up north to trap again?

Arsene: No. (inaudible).

Ray: Oh to McMurray, eh?

Arsene: Yeah. Boy (inaudible).

Ray: This is Ray Marnoch I have been talking with Arsene Fontaine, in his home, in La Loche, Saskatchewan, on February 14, 1980.

(END OF SIDE B)
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