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NOTE: Joan Stanley is a research worker with the Metis Society
of Saskatchewan.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Joan Stanley is a Metis working as a researcher with the
Metis Society of Saskatchewan. Her mother was Indian and her
father white.
- Growing up Metis in a white community.
- Metis Society of Saskatchewan.
- Personal problems.

Carol: Where were your parents born?

Joan: My mother was born in North Dakota I think. No, just a
minute, in Canada on the Black Bear Reserve and my father, he
was from Quebec.

Carol: Is your father Metis?

Joan: My father is white, my mother is a full-blooded Indian.
She was a true Indian and she isn't anymore.

Carol: What about your grandparents, do you know anything about them?

Joan: No, I don't because they - I think they were all pretty well dead before I was born or just after I was born.

Carol: Do you know anything about the history of Black Bear Reserve?

Joan: No, I don't. I have visited my cousins and this type of thing there but I just don't know the history of it.

Carol: What about Hubbard?

Joan: Well, I can just remember I grew up in it and it was just a small town and then when I was fifteen, we moved to Regina.

Carol: Was it a farming community sort of?

Joan: No, it wasn't. I wouldn't say it was a farming community, it was just a little small town. And like, there were a few farmers I guess outside. It was such a long time ago that I don't really quite remember that much about it.

Carol: What did your father do for a living?

Joan: My father was an awful lot older than my mother and when we lived in Hubbard he was drayman.

Carol: What was that?

Joan: That was when they had horses you know, and he had this big wagon and when stuff used to come off the trains, he used to deliver it to the store or places like that. And when we moved to Regina, he was retired and on old age pension.

Carol: Can you tell me something about your own job history?

Joan: My own job history is I have done office work for fifteen years. I have worked in about six different centres and I have done all types of office work.

Carol: And what about your education?

Joan: I have got grade eleven. And I got that in Regina. And I have always done office work.

Carol: The town that you are from, Hubbard, was that mostly a Metis community or was it mixed or...?

Joan: No, it really wasn't. To be quite honest I think we were the only family that was Metis in the whole community.

Carol: Do you remember, were you treated any differently than the whites? Do you remember?

Joan: Oh, I would say we were.

Carol: In what way?

Joan: Well, people used to call us dirty Indians and this type of thing. And I think it slowly sort of left a mark on me that people had sort of just, they used to always call us Indians and that we were dirty and this type of thing. And we really weren't because I can remember my mom used to really be immaculate in regards to the house and us kids. I mean we were always dressed clean. We were poor. We never had real good stuff but we always had enough. And I think, nowadays I could say we were probably fairly well off from what I have heard since I have been working with the society and seeing, you know. It is really surprising but to me, in that day and age, we weren't well off at all. My mom used to have to make our clothes and everything. We used to always be clean. We would get dirty like other kids but I personally feel that we weren't any dirtier than anybody else but because my mother was an Indian, we were always called Indians or - we used to come home crying sometimes because people used to say that to us and it used to hurt us and it used to bother us. And times they wouldn't associate with us because we were part Indian. Because my mother, you can really tell she is Indian.

Carol: What about at school, were you treated differently by the teachers?

Joan: I wouldn't say I was treated differently by the teachers. No, it was just some of the kids that I went to school with and they were the ones that used to - like you

know, sometimes they wouldn't play with us and things like that. But the teachers, no, I wouldn't say that they held anything against us because we were halfbreeds or anything.

Carol: Was there a church in the town?

Joan: No, there wasn't.

Carol: So you had no experience with nuns or priests treating you any different?

Joan: Well, we used to - when I got, I can't remember how old I was, but I used to go to Lebret to catechism in the summer time. And we used to stay there and it used to be for a two-week period. I went there for my first communion and then we used to go - we also used to take correspondence catechism. And there was a church in Ituna. It wasn't very far anyway, and every once in a while, maybe once a month I would go to church with these friends. But I never went every Sunday though.

Carol: Do you remember the priests and the nuns? How they treated you?

Joan: Do you mean in Lebret?

Carol: Yeah, and in Ituna as well.

Joan: Well, in Ituna I never really got to know them. Oh, excuse me, I went to catechism too I think in Ituna if I'm not mistaken for, like, a couple weeks in the summer time. And there I used to - the kids from Ituna really used to look down at me because I was halfbreed, but in Lebret it was great. I used to love going to Lebret because the nuns there were just terrific and so were the priests. I mean, it was just really a real nice experience. I used to always wish that I could go to school in Lebret but I couldn't. And then it used to bother me. We could go there for catechism and that in the summer.

Carol: On the whole, do you think the church has had a good influence on the Metis people or a bad influence or, what do you think?

Joan: I don't think I can honestly answer that question because I have sort of lost contact with the church. I don't really go to church anymore because it has changed so much from when I was a little girl and as I was growing up. I don't know, everything has changed because at one time it used to always be all in Latin and then it started to get all in

English. When I was living in Calgary, I used to try to go to church every Sunday and then every week they seemed to be always asking me for money or something like this. Like, asking you for money for something and it just turned me off church because to me, a church is a place to sort of go and pray and sort of get peace of mind and this sort of thing. It is not a fund-raising place or anything like this as far as I'm concerned. So, this is what has turned me against going to church because they want a certain percentage of your salary and this type of thing. And well, maybe my thinking is all wrong but I don't think a church should be like that. Because you see priests driving around and they have got the newest cars and, like you know, they drive around in the newest cars and they are not exactly suffering. And yet, when you go to church, they are always asking you for money for something. And I just used to go to church and it happened for quite a while and then I finally thought, "Well, I am not going to go to church if this is what they are going to talk about. I mean, if they are not going to talk about things in the Bible and this sort of thing, then what is the point?" So, I have just sort of given it up.

Carol: What about the RCMP in your town? Do you recall any experiences with your family?

Joan: No, not that I can recall.

Carol: What about since you left that town, do you think there is any difference in how RCMP treat native people as compared to white people?

Joan: Well, I don't - I really can't answer that question either because I don't really know because it's things I've heard. I've heard a lot of things that native and Metis people get treated worse than white people but I've never really read it and I've never really seen it in action sort of thing, so, I really don't know. I don't have that much to do with - like I know quite a few RCMP people in Regina. I even have some people who are my personal friends. But, after I got older and started working, people never - they used to just accept me sort of thing. And like, it was completely different from my childhood and I've got some pretty good friends and we have never really ever sat and talked about Metis people or anything like that.

Carol: What do you think of the question of integration between native people and whites?

Joan: Well, I think things would be an awful lot better if everybody could get together instead of sitting and hassling and fighting and everything else because it is just - this world is just getting so awful, sometimes it is just unbearable to live in really. Lots of things that go on and to me, I just wish that there was a happy medium and everybody could sort of join forces. I know that the Indian people want to have their own culture. I think they should be given the privilege because - like, Ukrainian people for instance. Well, they come over here and they keep their cultures. They have folk dancing and this type of thing and I mean, it is really nice to see their programs. So, I feel that the Metis or Indian people or whatever, they should also have the same privilege. That they should be able to keep their culture and I think they should meet halfway, sort of thing. Try to meet halfway. I mean you never can meet halfway. Somebody has to give a little bit more but that is the way I feel about it really.

Carol: Whose fault is it or why is it you say that you think it would be better if people did get together and why do you think they haven't gotten together?

Joan: I don't know really why because I haven't really been associating that much with Metis people. Because in Calgary I really never knew any and like in the last ten years, I really haven't done anything with any Metis people. The only person, that I have really seen has been my mother and really, there seems to be an awful big struggle going on now. And I am in it now too and I am beginning to see things. And...

Carol: Like what things?

Joan: Oh, like you know, the Metis Society that is going... I think it is a good thing to have a Metis Society but I think they have to, like the right people have to be working for it and doing the work that is supposed to be done. And petty things, there is so many petty things that happen. Like you know, and things I've seen, I don't like some of them.

Carol: Like what?

Joan: Oh, let me see now. I don't like saying stuff like this on tape; it bothers me.

Carol: Well, it is something nobody will be hearing.

Joan: Well, the way, like the hassle about money. Everybody is hassling about money and this type of thing. I mean, as long as you are getting a paycheque and you are getting a decent pay, then I think they should just go ahead and do their work. Like our program, they say, "Let's just get to work." Every time you talk to somebody they are talking about why is this person on our payroll, why is this person being let off our payroll? And I mean, to me, it is just one hassle after another and it is just, this is one of the examples. And like, the girls in the office, they are sort of a cliquey bunch I feel because they oh,...

Carol: In the Metis Society office in Regina?

Joan: Yeah. Because they, like in the Metis Society, I have always been under the impression that they hire Metis people. In that Metis office down in Regina there were, I'm not sure how many girls there are there, but out of all the girls there, there was only three girls that were Metis and the rest were treaty Indians. And like, the treaty Indians don't really care you know. They are treaty Indians, they get all their privileges from the government because I think treaty Indians are treated very well with the government. And they don't really care about the way things turn out one way or another really. And I feel that this is the Metis Society, it should be Metis girls working. Working in the Society. That is my own personal view. And just different things, like they have a workshop in Waskesiu for a week. Four days after I started, I had to go to Waskesiu for a week. I didn't want to go and that thing to me was just a waste of money.

Carol: Why is that?

Joan: Because everybody - I mean, you were supposed to attend meetings and it wasn't organized properly as far as I was concerned. It wasn't organized properly and half the people never attended the sessions. They would just go fishing or else go their own way type of thing. And to me, you were supposed to go out there and learn something because the society - it probably cost them a small fortune for all the people that were out there.

Carol: Was there any pressure on people to attend the meetings that they were supposed to be attending?

Joan: I'm not sure if there was really any pressure at the time but I know after the session, there were a few people that were let go because they didn't really attend the things.

Carol: Did the executive do what they were supposed to do out there or...?

Joan: Oh, I think they pretty well did it, yes. Because I am not sure really what that thing was for. They said it was a workshop and like, aboriginal rights. We had just started and there wasn't that much that we were going to be able to give, any type of information sort of thing, on our program. And my boss Harry Daniels, at that time, he gave a half an hour speech and then that was it for aboriginal rights and we sat and everybody else gave talks on their programs. I personally learned quite a bit in regards to the way people live and like, the percentage of Indian people in jail, for example, and the way, the type of homes people live in and this sort of thing. I, myself, got a lot of just ordinary information, I guess you would say, because it had nothing really in regards to aboriginal rights. And so I felt I got quite a bit out of it. But, to me, I still think it was a waste.

Carol: What do you think can be done about these things?

Joan: I don't know. I really don't know what can be done about them because there is going to be - well, I think they are starting to get an awful lot stricter. This is something that they have to do and I think, well, after that Waskesiu deal, I think that they sat and they talked and they said, "The next time we have a workshop, we are going to go out in the bush where there is nothing to do." And like, you know, you have your sessions and to keep the people busy, we might have night sessions sort of thing. And I think this would be very good because, if they want to have a work session, let's have a work session. If they want to have a week of fun, okay, let's have a week of fun. I mean, because some people might not want to go out for a week of fun. They might want to stay in the city and work. Or else that might not be their idea of a week of fun, type of thing. But when your boss says you have to go, well, you pretty well have to go.

Carol: Are there a lot of problems with Metis men and women getting along with each other, like, husbands and wives and stuff?

Joan: I don't know because I don't know that many people who - I am not friends with that many people who are Metis. Like, you know, odd families. I don't know too many.

Carol: You don't know if there is any difference for example with family problems, husbands and wives getting along in the Metis families as compared to white families?

Joan: I think there are quite a few - I think there would be a few problems. I don't really know how many but I think, like myself, I know I have problems because I am a very stubborn person and I think that is one of my Indian inherits. Something I sort of inherited, like; everybody in my family is stubborn. Of course, I guess anybody could be really stubborn but I have been told that this is why I - and I am a very blunt

person and like, I am trying not to be. I am a very rude person and I am trying not to be that way too. I know I have got an awful lot of bad points in me and I don't know if it is because - sometimes I think I live a very mixed up life. Sometimes I would like to live a white life and I can't because I am part Indian and I associate with Indians. So sometimes I am sort of torn between two things really. And I want to go one direction and I just fight within myself.

Carol: Is your husband Metis or...?

Joan: No, he is white.

Carol: Does that create any problems or...?

Joan: Occasionally it does, yes.

Carol: Like, would you like to share?

Joan: Oh, not really. We just have a few personal problems and we just try to figure them out by ourselves sort of thing.

Carol: What about, in general in the Metis Society for example, how the men treat the women? Do you think there are any problems there?

Joan: Oh, I don't really know because I wasn't really in the Society office that long. I started on the 22nd of May and I left the 13th of June to come to Saskatoon. And the last week I was there, I wasn't really at the office that much because they said I didn't have to be. But I was treated, I would say, fairly well by all the men. But I don't know how they really treat the other girls.

I just prefer it that way because like, oh, well, I don't know, you have probably heard about this. I just have been having nothing but a hassle ever since I come back to Saskatchewan. I went home and Howard wanted me to come here so he paid for a motel and then I went home on the weekend. I was supposed to - this guy was supposed to move me on the Sunday. He was here on Friday and he said, "I'll be there Joan, I'll

be there. I'll move you." Friday night after work, I went to Regina, packed my boxes and trunks. Sunday, I waited and he never came. I phoned his house and his children said that he wouldn't be home until ten o'clock that night. So, that was disappointing because I just wanted to get everything to Saskatoon. The following Wednesday my brother-in-law brought my boxes and he charged me \$20.00. I got it okayed by Howard because Howard said he would pay for my move. He brought my boxes and I had two trunks left in Regina. So, I was really discouraged on Thursday. I was here at the office and Bill Wilson gave me a couple names of possibly people who would be going to Regina and could possibly pick it up. I phoned this Gordon VanDale and he said he would pick up the trunks for me because he was going to pick up a truck in Regina. And I asked him if there was any charge because I didn't know the man or

nothing, you know, and he was really nice to me on the phone and everything. And he said, "Oh no, there is no charge." Well, I just about passed out. Because, I mean, my own brother-in-law charged me \$20.00 and a complete stranger saying no charge, type of thing. I thought maybe he'd say, "Well, you could buy me a bottle or else \$5.00, \$10.00," this type of thing. And oh, another thing, when my brother-in-law came in town, like Garry has very bad nerves. He has really got bad nerves and Wednesday my brother-in-law came in town and met him at the house and he unloaded the boxes and it took, I would say, roughly fifteen minutes to unload our boxes. He was really mad because Garry didn't come down. Well, Garry is under a doctor's care and he...

Carol: Garry is your husband?

Joan: Yeah, Garry was under doctor's care and he had been advised not to lift anything heavy. So, I didn't even get home yet and James had called Garry twice and he had threatened his life. He says, "I'm going to kill you, you bastard!" And like, with his nerves being bad, that didn't help matters any. So, it just shook him up completely and everything was going wrong and then on Friday night, my Mom phoned me and she was really upset. She wouldn't tell me what was upsetting her over the phone. So she finally said good bye to me and I decided I was going to find out what the heck is going on so I phoned her to ask and I made her tell me. James, apparently, was supposed to have written Howard a letter saying that he was sending back the \$20.00 cheque because - I don't really know why. He was supposed to send back the \$20.00 cheque and he was asking Howard to terminate my employment immediately. And I was really upset because - and like you know, I just don't understand the way people think. I didn't think James had

enough power to sway Howard in any way, because I felt that if I was doing my work, that there was no way Howard would fire me, and I was really upset. I tried to get ahold of Howard all weekend until I finally got ahold of him and was able to have a talk with him and then I felt better because he just told me that things like this happen and to this day, I don't think he got that cheque back. He never had a letter and he says he won't get it because this is just the way people are - like Indian, Metis people are. I don't know this. And like, when somebody says this and they threaten my job and I - we just had moved into a house and when you are living somewhere you have to give a month's notice. If I had got canned, I would really be in a pickle.

Carol: Did your husband move up here too?

Joan: Yeah, he is here with me. And like, you know, just things like that. That is what has been happening since I have come to Saskatchewan. I have just been having a hassle all the time and it is very bad for both our nerves really. And I just...

Carol: Is he working now?

Joan: No, he isn't. So, now Howard says don't pay any attention to what anybody says and just do your work and that is it. So that is exactly what I am going to do. I am just going to work under Howard's instructions and that will be it because I am not going to get in a quarrel with anybody about anything. If somebody says something to me - I am asked lots of questions and I won't answer them because I don't feel that I am the person the answer them. I know the answers but I won't answer them. I told Howard about that too today and he said, "Fine."

Carol: That is Howard Adams you are talking about?

Joan: Yeah. And like, after I had a talk with him, he just made me feel so much better and everything and he told me not to worry about it. He says he feels I am doing sufficient work.

Carol: What does it mean to you to be Metis?

Joan: It is very confusing at times. Because sometimes I think I would like to be a white person, live a white life because you can't live both lives. You can't sort of live some white and some - especially when you live with a white man, you have to go one way or the other. So, it is very hard really, I would say, being a Metis and trying to do things you really want to do. Because at one time I was very ashamed of having

any Indian blood in me but I am not any more. And, so I sometimes find it hard being Metis and I really can't explain all the reasons behind it. It is...

Carol: Does your husband's family respect and understand the fact that you are Metis?

Joan: We don't associate with his family.

Carol: Makes it easy.

Joan: Yeah. (laughs)

Carol: Okay.

(End of Side A)

(End of Interview)

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