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SASKATCHEWAN
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STAN DUROCHER

Stan Durocher, a resident of La Ronge, was one of the original and most active members of the local Metis Association organized by Jim Brady.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Organization of the Metis Association in La Ronge.
- Speculation about Jim Brady's disappearance.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Stan Durocher was one of the first ten members of the original Metis Association local organized in La Ronge by Brady. He was one of the three most active members.

INTERVIEW:

Murray: I'm speaking to Stan Durocher of La Ronge who used to belong to the first Metis Association back in, when was it? 1964?

Stan: Yeah, 1964 when we got together, me and Jim Brady and Jimmy Izbister and John McKay and...

Mrs. Durocher: John Hastings?

Stan: Yeah, John Hastings. I don't really remember who they were. There was about ten of us got together, you know.

Murray: Can you try and remember some other names? Can you remember any of the other people that were involved? Was Ernie Izbister in it?

Stan: Well, Jimmy Izbister, Ernest Izbister. And I guess, that was it.

Murray: And was Janet Fietz there, too?

Stan: No, no, no, Janet Fietz wasn't there at that time. It was only men then.

Murray: It was later on that Janet...?

Stan: Yeah, Janet, I guess, joined it later on, you know, a later date.

Murray: Can you remember the first time you talked with Jim about organizing that? Was there just the two of you or were there two or three people?

Stan: Yeah, Izbisters were there and Jim and, Jim, Ernest. Gilbert McKay was around but he wouldn't join then, you know, because he was working for DNR. He wouldn't join with it with us but he was with us.

Murray: He believed what you were doing but didn't join.

Stan: That's right, yeah.

Murray: Where did you first meet?

Stan: Jim Brady's shack.

Murray: The one up behind Lowenburg's there, DNR.

Stan: Behind DNR, yeah.

Murray: Right.

Stan: That's where we started, you know.

Murray: What did Jim think that the Association should try and do? What was he trying to do with that Association?

Stan: Well, it was just trying to organize a Metis Society, to get in a big group so we could, you know, get something out of the Metis Society Association.

Murray: Did he want the Association to fight for native rights? Was that his idea?

Stan: Right, yeah. That was right.

Murray: Was there any particular issue that he thought was really important? Can you remember talking about different issues?

Stan: I'm not too sure now.

Murray: Like maybe housing or jobs or anything like that?

Stan: Well, jobs and like, for instance, housing too and that, you know. Because we knew every Metis had poor houses in here, you see. We still have, of course.

Murray: Right. Things haven't changed too much, have they?

Stan: Haven't changed too much since, no.

Murray: How often would you have these meetings? Do you remember that?

Stan: Well, we used to have them just about every month and finally we lost Jim Brady when he was missing over here in the north and everything broke up then, you know.

Murray: Is that right?

Stan: For a while, yeah.

Murray: So the meetings stopped when Jim died?

Stan: Yeah.

Murray: Was Jim the person who got people going and kept them interested and encouraged people?

Stan: Yeah, Jim and Norris.

Murray: Malcolm?

Stan: Malcolm Norris, yeah.

Murray: Did Malcolm come to the meetings sometimes?

Stan: That's right, yeah. He was over there with us sometimes, yeah.

Murray: He would just come once in a while or would he be there all the time?

Stan: No, no, not all the time. He was there now and then, you know.

Murray: What kinds of things would Malcolm say when he was at the meetings? What would he talk about?

Stan: Well, he was talking about mostly...

(Interrupted by someone wanting a beer.)

Murray: Would Malcolm talk differently than Jim?

Stan: No, they were talking the same. Because apparently Jim was from Alberta too, eh, originally. And I guess the Metis Society has been organized in Alberta way longer than in Saskatchewan here.

Murray: Yeah, 1927 I think they started.

Stan: That's what I hear, yeah.

Murray: What happened after 1967? Did it start up again? It slowed, it stopped for a while, and then it started again?

Stan: Well, we started again.

Murray: How long did it take to get started again? Another year or less than that?

Stan: Well, just about. Yeah, maybe a year, maybe less, you know. But we had continually been the Metis Society, you know, organization here. We've been going since. But I don't go to meetings very often, you know. In fact, I was the president last year and then I resigned.

Murray: Not enough things happening?

Stan: Well, not only that because I haven't got time to attend a meeting all the time. I'm always working.

Murray: What did the Metis Society do besides have meetings? Did it help people when they were in trouble?

Stan: Oh yeah, yeah.

Murray: What kinds of things would it do?

Stan: Well, I got help, you know, like warming up house. I got a thousand dollars from them one time. Three years ago, I guess.

Murray: What about the Metis Society, the early one that Jim was involved in? What kinds of things would it do? It didn't have money then to build houses or anything.

Stan: No, no, there was no money then. It was just started then, you see.

Murray: What kinds of things would it do? Would it help people if they were having trouble with government or the police? How would it help people before it had money? Or did it help people?

Stan: Well, as far as I see, we never got helped until five years ago. The first time I got help from the Metis Society.

Murray: As far as money was concerned.

Stan: Yeah. Other than that, well, they told me that they have a lawyer in Regina. The Metis Society and any Metis who gets in trouble, you know, be sure to call this lawyer. But we never did yet because we had a free legal service here so...

Murray: You don't really need him in Regina.

Stan: No.

Murray: Do you remember if there were some Metis people who didn't want to join the society? Who disagreed with it?

Stan: Oh yeah, there was quite a few that didn't want to join it for a long time and finally they joined. Well, we got up to 68, 67 members one time.

Murray: That was when Jim was still alive, eh?

Stan: No, no, that was later.

Murray: That was later. What was the most members you had in La Ronge when Jim was alive?

Stan: Ah, about 17.

Murray: Seventeen, eh?

Stan: Yeah.

Murray: And would that have been in 1967?

Stan: No, that was 1964.

Murray: Did you keep that number? Did you keep all those members for quite a while or did it get smaller?

Stan: No, I think it was gradually increasing because five years ago they had 67, eh.

Murray: Right. But I was wondering how many would you have had at the time that Jim died?

Stan: Oh, about 21.

Murray: Twenty-one, eh?

Stan: Yeah.

Murray: So it never got smaller?

Stan: No, no.

Murray: It always grew a little bit.

Stan: Yeah.

Murray: And these 21 people, these would be people who came to meetings once in a while at least?

Stan: Yeah, yeah, once in a while at least they showed up. Now and then, you know.

Murray: Who was the president of the local Metis Society?

Stan: At the time, Jim's, Jim Brady's...

Murray: Jim was, eh.

Stan: Yeah, Jim was.

Murray: And you were secretary?

Stan: No, he was the president and secretary.

Murray: He was secretary too, was he?

Stan: Yeah.

Murray: Did you have a position on the executive?

Stan: No.

Murray: You were never the secretary, eh?

Stan: No.

Murray: It was always Jim.

Stan: Jim was the only one because nobody wants...

Murray: Nobody else had the time, eh?

Stan: Yeah, that was the idea because we didn't know, we didn't want to be anybody at the time, you see. We didn't know nothing anyway, not enough of anything. That's why I resigned last fall.

Murray: Do you think sometimes people didn't understand Jim when he talked about politics?

Stan: That's right, yeah.

Murray: Did some people understand?

Stan: That's right, yeah, that's the idea.

Murray: He tried to make them understand.

Stan: Yeah, that's what he did. He was pretty good, you know.

Murray: Do you think he made lots of people think about things and understand things better?

Stan: Oh yeah, he would. I wish he was still alive, you know.

Murray: You feel there aren't the same kind of leaders now, that Jim was?

Stan: No, no, never. No, Jim was...

Murray: And Malcolm too, eh?

Stan: Yeah. Jim was real good, you know.

Murray: Do you think Jim and Malcolm were sort of ahead of their time?

Stan: Yeah.

Murray: In terms of other Metis people, that they had a much better understanding of...

Stan: Yeah, that's the way it was. We sure missed Jim after we lost him, you know.

Murray: He was still active right up till the time he died, eh?

Stan: Oh, yeah.

Murray: Always talking to people and...?

Stan: Yeah. We just had a meeting and then they took off. Then he said when he comes back we were going to have more meeting, eh.

Murray: Do you remember if there was any particular issue, at that time when he disappeared, that he wanted to talk about or wanted to organize around? Or was he just...?

Stan: Yeah, that was the idea. We were going to try to get a president and a secretary and a vice president, everything like this, you know. And the other things like that. Housing committee and sports committee all the... and that's what we were going to try and organize.

Murray: So that spring there was going to be a real big effort to start going.

Stan: Yeah, we were going to have a real effort then, you know.

Murray: Do you remember who was most active at that time?

Just before Jim died? You and Jim and who else were really going to be active? Can you remember?

Stan: Well, Jim Izbister, Ernest.

Murray: The same people that were starting it before.

Stan: Yeah. And Hastings, John Hastings. He was right with us, you know.

Murray: John McKay? Did you mention him before?

Stan: Yeah, John McKay. Yeah, he was right with us too, you know. And Jimmy McKay.

Murray: Jimmy?

Stan: Yeah.

Murray: Can you remember any other names? Were there any women besides Janet Fietz who were active at all?

Stan: Well, I never talked to Janet then, you know. Maybe Jim Brady had talked to Janet Fietz about it but...

Murray: But you didn't talk to her at all?

Stan: She never come to the meeting, no. No, and Janet, I met her later and I talked to her after Jim Brady had passed away or what, after missing, you know.

Murray: Right.

Stan: I can't say he passed away. I don't know.

Murray: Something happened. What do most people think happened to Jim?

Stan: That's the \$64 question.

Murray: Lots of rumours, eh?

Stan: Yeah, lots of rumors, that's what it is. As far as I know, their canoe was found up on the shore and their backsacks and that, their lunches. So I don't know.

Murray: Right. Could be anything.

Stan: Could be anything. So, I don't know.

(End of Side A)

(End of Interview)

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