

Nora Cummings, Peter Bishop, and Ron Laliberte:  
Métis Political Activist Interviews (Feb 28, 29, 2004)

Tape 1

**Start Time: 2:31.41.12**

**(Video Time: 2:31.41.12) Nora Cummings:** Yeah, well see this is why we were so lucky I figured being the road allowance people. We were together so we had that family connection, closeness. But when they went out into the community. That's why they felt...

**Ron Laliberte:** Yeah, yeah.

**Nora Cummings:** They were, they were never ashamed of who they were but they were always ashamed to speak because people would laugh. You know they tease them. So, so they thought they couldn't do that but I tell you come Sundays and, and the New Year's and all the gatherings I tell it, it was just like a bunch of birds chipping... **(Inaudible)**... And I remember the old people, eh, when they would speak, you know, course we could never go into the area where the old people was because you don't do that. And I learnt that at a very early age. When you walk in that door and you just get that look then you mean out, you're not supposed to be here these are for the older people. And, but we would listen I remember because, like I said, I lived with my Grandmother and these old people would come and visit and I used to remember this one old lady would come and every time they'd be talking "hhhmmmm" and I thought oh that old lady must be sick. So I said to my kohkum, "Kohkum, what's wrong with that old lady? Is she sick?" "What

old lady?" "Oh that Mrs. Anderson she comes she makes so much noise when you guys are talking she must be sick." "Go on" she said, "That's because she's listening." You know, it was intense they would into. But through all this time I thought she was ill or something. So you, you when I think about it I tell that to my kids. They get such, I tell them a lot of stories because I'm concerned, I was lucky my Grandmother told a lot of stories, lot of stories. We had a lot of story time. We'd do our work. We were all workers, you know, we learned how to work. We had to chop wood and, of course, do the gardens and pick the berries. And, and I'd like to tell a little story about my choke cherries.

**Ron Laliberte:** Oh, for sure, please do.

**Nora Cummings:** We used to do a lot of the crush the chokecherries with the big rock...

**Ron Laliberte:** Yeah.

**Nora Cummings:** ...then we'd stook them eh.

**Ron Laliberte:** Yeah.

**(Video Time: 2:33.44.21) Nora Cummings:** And, put canvass and you put them in the bush and...(inaudible)...because those were dried for the winter and those were harvest for the winter. We'd, you know, cook them up. So one time my two cousins and I decided oh well we've done our job and we dried so we thought we're going to go and eat some cherries. Did we get sick, we ate too many. Oh, well they were all worried these old people. Was something wrong with us? We were so sick. Until we brought these up. Oh boy the old red willow came out. There was no pity then. We had no business

to go and touch the chokecherries because that was for the winter. And then as we grew up I, I lived here in city, I lived up on Avenue H and I always tell that Murray Hamilton used to get a real kick out of that one. My kohkum said we're going, I love doing, I still have my chokecherries. I believe in, I love my chokecherries and I still dry them. Because I said to my Grandma **[speaks Cree or Michif]** she said my girl we should go and dry our chokecherries. But I lived in a duplex but it had a flat roof in the back so I went and put the canvas out there. My uncle come over and helped me because to grind the chokecherries. So the next morning she tied a rope around me and I went out and tied it to the bed post and I went out and I was stoking my cherries on the roof. But these neighbours were looking and couldn't figure what's wrong with this silly woman, I guess. So I, well be darned I had to go out my kids were small my cousin was babysitting the neighbours didn't forget their keys. They come on the roof, they came to the door and they said, "Somebody must be really mad at your cousin." "Why?" she said. "Cause somebody went up there and they shit all over her roof." She said, "I'm so embarrassed with you and your damn chokecherries." So that's the joke of my chokecherries. I always remember that.

**End Time: 2:35.45.03**