

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

Tape 1

Start Time: 2:51.20.14

Peter Bishop: And anyway, my father, like I said, was, was never afraid of anybody at all, whether they were government or police or police. Although he was raised as a strong Catholic, heck we used to kneel down behind him every night to say our prayers when he was home. 'Cause lot of times he used to spend time away from home hunting, trapping and fishing so he could provide food for his family. And he also had three big gardens. There was way too much vegetables for us. Well those vegetables most of them he gave away because there were a lot of poor people in Green Lake. He'd give them away for nothing. But sometimes my mother would say, "Alec, we have to stop doing that" says, "We need a little bit of money ourselves." So when Dad was away and Mom was there she say "Oh you have to pay for it." I suppose it wasn't a heck of a lot, you know. A bag full for \$2.00 or something like that. But after that he decided that maybe his wife was right. So what he did was he contacted the 4H Club in Prince Albert to see if he could get help from them to get seeds, seed potatoes and he started a community garden in Green Lake. And sometimes there was about a dozen plots or so, where individual families were given the seeds and the potatoes. "Okay, do your own garden." It was all plowed. And there were times too as well when he defied the law, whether it was the RCMP or the game wardens.

This one time he went and set a net right in front of the game warden's house. It was up on top the hill in Green Lake. And he went to check his net the next morning, it was missing. Couldn't figure out who the heck has stolen his net. So he went up the hill and he, he said that, he said, "I like to know where my net is. Do you know where it is?" "We have it Mr. Bishop." "He says, "How come?" "Well you don't have a fishing license." And my Dad said, "Look I put that net in the water for one reason to feed my family and to feed other people in need here in Green Lake. I want my net right away." He was demanding. He says, "I want it." "Mr. Bishop we'll give you back your net. But maybe what you should do is go down the lake a little further where people won't see you and put your net there," because people had told on him that he had that net in the water. So my Dad told him "I'm going to set that net where ever I want." So he went and set it the same place that the game wardens had taken it from. Nothing more was said. And he'd leave it in there for about three nights.

Ron Laliberte: Right.

Peter Bishop: And he only took so much. That's the way of Aboriginal people. They didn't over did it, they took just enough to feed themselves. They didn't waste anything.

Ron Laliberte: Right.

Peter Bishop: With all the fish that he caught he'd tell my mother to invite her friends over to help her clean the fish and then cut them in such a way that they could dry them over the, smoke rack. Because we didn't have refrigeration in those days. Then there was a fire half way down the lake and

they recruited all the young men in Green Lake to go fight the fire. My Dad got a job to cook. So anyway after a week they were running out of provisions. So him, and the young game warden came back. They had a big boat because they needed to take back supplies from the Hudson's Bay store. On the way back Dad spotted a moose on shore, drinking and he always carried his gun with him. He told that young guy, "Stop this boat." "What are you going to do?" "I am going to shoot that moose." "Mr. Bishop you can't they're out of season. You're not supposed to. You don't even have a license." "Just do as I say and stop this boat." So my Dad took a shot, and he was a good shot. He got the moose. Pulled into shore and took his knife out right away, he was good at it. He started skinning it and gutting it. And he cut it in quarters. He told that young fella, "Now I need your help." So they put the hide inside the boat and that's where they put the meat, eh?

Ron Laliberte: Yeah.

(Video Time: 2:57.09.10) Peter Bishop: And away they went to the Hudson's Bay store. And that's where the game warden for resources was at Green Lake. He manned the radio and whatnot and but he was a head guy. So he came down to the river to the dock and he saw this meat. "So what do we have here?" "Sorry sir, it's not my fault, Mr. Bishop shot this moose." And the guy looks at him. "Well don't just leave it there. You better help him." So they loaded up this, this truck or whatever it was that they had. The hide and then the meat and they drove it to our place. My Mom saw them coming and she was petrified. My Dad's going to go to jail now. I hope they don't keep him in there too long and all that. Yeah, my, my mother was very, very

timid, eh. So anyway when they got there, my mom asked, "What was he doing here with the game wardens and all this meat?" So my Dad told her, "You better call your friends. Need somebody to help you with this. Cut it in strips and then they'd have to put it over the smoke rack. To smoke the meat and dry it. And that's what he did. And after they were finished they went back to the store, got their provisions and went right back to the fire line. That was some of the ways that my Dad exercised his Aboriginal rights in his own way.

End Time: 2:59.09.25