

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

Tape 4

**Start Time: 4:49.26.19**

**(Video Time: 4:49.26.19) Ron Laliberte:** Could you talk about, you know, that whole, how you were involved and what happened there and what that was all about?

**Nora Cummings:** Well, actually Batoche when we first started in the early '70s was the celebration as well as the political grounds of the Nation, the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. As we talked about financially we didn't have money to hold in, in hotels and stuff that'd bring people in. And not only that is we felt if we took it back where, where the rebellion started and, and right at that grassroot level, that's where it would be best-suited.

**Ron Laliberte:** So was there a vision from the grassroots people here or the leadership at that time about going back to Batoche?

**Nora Cummings:** Right. That's where it originally started.

**Ron Laliberte:** Okay.

**Nora Cummings:** The first person that coordinated Batoche was Bruce Flamont.

**Ron Laliberte:** Oh yes.

**Nora Cummings:** That actually coordinated that with, along with a number of other people but I remember he was instrumental in that. And I never

knew what to expect because we had no land and they rented it from the farmers for...

**Peter Bishop:** Yeah.

**Nora Cummings:** ...the first time. They rented tents from the Armories and the first year Batoche there was over 10,000 people.

**Ron Laliberte:** Wow.

**(Video Time: 4:50.42.10) Nora Cummings:** And they came from across Saskatchewan. The majority were Saskatchewan and, of course, out across the homeland and the States. But they would, the very first one was, the where they had their elections and I remember that election it was just the tent and the people. It was raining and it was a real cold day but that never stopped our people. And that tent was full. And I remember the candidates were Sinclair, Harry Daniels, Rod Bishop...

**Ron Laliberte:** Was Wayne McKenzie involved?

**Nora Cummings:** Not at that time.

**Ron Laliberte:** Yeah.

**Nora Cummings:** He was came down later. But these fellows got up to that mic, oh and I some of the ol-, older ones now have passed on. But it was a great campaign and you listened to all of those people when they gave their speeches it was inspiring. And it was, it was a hard take to say well who are you going to support? And that's when Sinclair won his nomination and, and the Vice President I believe was Nap LaFontaine, and the secretary was Agnes Stanley.

**Peter Bishop:** Then Rose Henry was the treasurer, I think.

**(Video Time: 4:52.00.13) Nora Cummings:** But the, yeah. So that was our council and then our field workers were, were elected within the regions which was called the Twelve Regions of the Province. And of course we had no money but we had a government. And I believe they, they started getting little bits of money through the local initiative grants which was Canada Manpower at that time. Four hundred dollars a month, that's what our, that's what our people worked on, \$400 a month. To them that was big money for some because they were getting off welfare or some of them, you know, and of course, I'll never forget the Torinos, the cars.

**Peter Bishop:** Oh yes, yeah.

**Nora Cummings:** 1970 Torinos. They rented Torinos so some of the cand-, some of them could travel to go out and organize. Well, hey when you ride in a Torino you are a Métis and you're a big time. And I remember our Area Director who was, was at that time Tony Camponi ah Anthony, but we call him Tony, and he came over and he said. "I've been offered a job." We said, "What kind of a job?" He said, "Being, being the Area Director. They want to give me a Torino and they want to give me \$400 a month. But I don't want to take it." And I said, "Why?" "Well, you know how is Clarence going to feel and the rest?" and he was feeling...the solidarity was so great in them days. So we told him if you don't take that boy we'll kick you out. You, that's a beginning for us. So here's Tony and not only that he's got a Torino now, hey that's better than putting our cars in the back lane we got a car to travel in. At least we can make our lunches and so we were all excited, we were on the map now. And of course then we'd meet all over in the province and. So that

was the beginning of our Nation from Batoche. So that's what I recall from Batoche happening. Then, of course, the second years came and that's where, where our, our people then the celebrations. But still the political party would always meet and then the celebrations.

**Ron Laliberte:** And they still do to this day, right?

**Nora Cummings:** And there's now, the only thing now a days it's celebration, culture celebrate. You don't have the meetings there anymore.

**End Time: 4:54.17.00**