DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT:	MARGARET CHARLES
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS:	#305-335 RIVER ST. W. PRINCE ALBERT, SK
INTERVIEW LOCATION:	#305-335 RIVER ST. W. PRINCE ALBERT, SK
TRIBE/NATION:	CREE/FRENCH
LANGUAGE:	ENGLISH
DATE OF INTERVIEW:	05/01/84
INTERVIEWER:	ALMA ROY
INTERPRETER:	
TRANSCRIBER:	HEATHER YAWORSKI
SOURCE:	SASKATOON NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOC. & BATOCHE CENTENARY CORP.
TAPE NUMBER:	#IH-SD.06
DISK:	TRANSCRIPT DISC 147
PAGES:	23
RESTRICTIONS:	THIS MATERIAL IS THE

PROPERTY OF THE GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE OF NATIVE STUDIES, AND SHALL BE AVAILABLE FOR LISTENING, REPRODUCTION, QUOTATION, CITATION AND ALL OTHER RESEARCH PURPOSES, INCLUDING BROADCASTING RIGHTS WHERE APPLICABLE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN OR WHICH MAY BE ESTABLISHED BY THE GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE OF NATIVE STUDIES OR ITS SUCCESSORS FOR THE USE OF MATERIALS IN ITS POSSESSION: SUBJECT, HOWEVER TO SUCH RESTRICTIONS AS MAY BE SPECIFIED BELOW.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- General account of her life.

Alma: I'm talking to Margaret Charles, May 1, 1984. Margaret (Indian), tell me where you were born, (Indian) where your home was when you were young.

Margaret: I was born at Sturgeon Lake Reserve, and that's where we were all raised up, I guess. And there was eleven of us in the family; there was four girls and five boys.

Alma: Your father, did he ever tell you where he came from before he came to Sturgeon?

Margaret: Yeah, he used to tell us he was come from Winnipeg in Manitoba when he was young. That's where he met my mother, I guess, in Sturgeon. And they weren't married they were just living together for the longest time until they start having kids, I guess, and then they got married. And he was Anglican,

my mother was a Catholic. We used to go to church with my dad, my mother never went to church in that Anglican Church, she used to go to church at the Catholic Church. And we had a little farm, well, my dad had a farm, little farm, like, you know, and garden, he had a few cattle, chickens, stuff like that.

Alma: Is this what your family used for food, you raised your own food?

Margaret: Yeah, used to go hunting for meat and used to get a moose or something like that, you know. We ate all that, they make dry meat out of that and my mother did...

Alma: Well, your dad he came to Sturgeon, did he ever tell you why he came to Saskatchewan from Manitoba?

Margaret: He was working on logs, he used to say about something like that and he stayed up at Sturgeon. That's where he met my mother, so he stayed. So that's what he used to tell us anyways.

Alma: And your dad, he was a farmer. What else did he do for a living, was he always a farmer?

Margaret: Yeah, he used to make cord wood, and stuff like that. Make a cord wood and he'd sell them for food, you know, for us kids and all sorts of little bush cutting for other people, you know, and all that. Brush cutting like, you know, he used to make a little bit of money there and try to make it go for us kids. There's lots of times we used to have hard times, good times and hard times.

Alma: What do you remember most about your family, the kids, and your mom and dad? (Indian) Did everybody have responsibilities or different things that you had to do?

Margaret: Yeah, when we was kids and then we used to have a little house, one room house and us kids... But that house was burned down so we had another big house but it had upstairs. Us kids we used to sleep upstairs and some of them downstairs. We used to go and milk the cows with my mom, and feed the chickens, and look for eggs and stuff like that, you know. We used to help mom and dad putting up a garden, cleaning up in the garden and all that stuff.

Alma: Did you do things together, like when your dad went hunting, or berry picking, did you used to do that together?

Margaret: Yeah, together. Wherever they go we have to go because we was never left behind until my two older brothers got older. They used to stay home and we used to go pick berries and sell them and make money. Sometimes we would go and put up a tent there to pick berries to sell them to make money for food and stuff like that. We didn't have enough time to play around until we was small little kids, but when we got

bigger we have to work, we have to help them to make a living. Even making cord wood, the big boys used to go and help Dad. Then we used to walk to school about two miles when it time for us to go to school. There was no buses, no nothing, we just walked and back again. I had four brothers older than me and then they used to left me behind sometimes. And then I went to, I was about eight years old then, and then I was sent away to a boarding school in Onion Lake, Saskatchewan. I went to school there for three years.

Alma: And why did you go to school in Onion Lake?

Margaret: Because my dad thinks it was too hard for me to go with my brothers because... That's why they wanted me to go to school at Onion Lake so I can be right there with the other kids. And then later on my brother came to school at Onion Lake too.

Alma: What do you remember about school, like what subjects did they teach you?

Margaret: Oh, you know, what (inaudible) like, you know, and I used to have a hell of a time to try and learn. I still didn't learn not too much because all they wanted to... piano like or organ we used to play, I used to monkey around with that too much -- try to be an organ player, I guess.

Alma: How long did you go to school?

Margaret: Four years all together. And then already when I came back for holidays my dad told me one time, I was so surprised, he said, "I want you to get married," he said. He pushed me, a long time ago them people, old people, they pushed you a man to marry, eh, so they pushed me into marriage. I was fifteen years old then.

Alma: They didn't, you didn't have a choice?

Margaret: No, I didn't have no choice at all because I never, you know, whatever my dad said I have to do it. Them days you got to listen to your parents, not like now. We never had no spending money when we was kids because it was hard times to make living. We didn't know what the money was when we was small kids.

Alma: So you got married when you were fifteen?

Margaret: Yeah, I got married when I was fifteen years old.

Alma: Where did you and your husband live?

Margaret: In Sturgeon Lake, Saskatchewan. But my marriage didn't work because the man I married he was already married twice and he had a daughter older than me. So and then it didn't work and I working so hard. He had a big farm and he had lots of cattle and horses, I usually look after everything there so I got fed up and I left. Try to make my own living.

So I started to work in P.A., in Prince Albert, dishwasher; and then I left, 1945 I left, and went west. I went to North Battleford and I worked there in a cafe.

Alma: What do you remember about living in Sturgeon Valley, (Indian) about the community? Did people do things together?

Margaret: Yeah, they used to do the community farm, they had a community farm there they used to do it all together like, you know, everybody's farm, like. They used to do all that, people used to be so good helping each other, you know. If somebody is sick even the nurse was there. She used to go on foot like, you know, walking, going to see the patients and all that, sick people. She never had no car, she used to walk around.

Alma: What did the community people do for social activities, did they ever get all together and do something?

Margaret: Oh yeah, they used to have basket socials like, you know, and then they used to have a dance and all that to collect the money. And they used to do things like that for the community farm where the money took to be used, you know, for the machinery and stuff like that.

Alma: Did you have any dances?

Margaret: Oh yeah, they used to have dances but we was too small to go to the dances.

Alma: Do you remember what they were like, or do you know anything about...

Margaret: Oh, they used to have a good times, and then... There was no drinking, hardly anything, young people, you never see young people drinking, just the old people maybe, they'll have, you know, social drinks. But young kids you don't see them smoking in the dances, you don't see them drinking, staggering and all that just, you know, having fun, good time. All of us in the fall, when the ice is on the lake, that's what we used to do -- slide down and play on the ice and nothing, no smoking, no nothing at all, just having fun.

Alma: So do you feel like you had a sort of a good beginning in your early years?

Margaret: Yeah, yes. I did until I got to the city.

Alma: Oh yeah, that's another story, eh.

Margaret: Yeah, that's another story.

Alma: What languages did you speak at home? What did your mom and dad speak at home?

Margaret: Cree, they used to talk mixed Cree and English -- my mother, but my dad used to talk Cree all the time.

Alma: What about at school, what languages did you speak at school?

Margaret: English all the time because we have to, because they didn't want us to talk Cree. But we used to talk Cree on the side.

Alma: What did they say to you?

Margaret: Oh, he said, "You come here to learn English so you don't use your language. You got lots of time for that," they used to say.

Alma: Your parents, did they ever say anything about who they were, or like halfbreed or being Metis? Did you ever hear the word Metis when you were growing up?

Margaret: No, I never heard of Metis until not long time ago. They used to say halfbreeds, yeah.

Alma: So you always knew you were a halfbreed?

Margaret: Yeah, in between there. I know I was an Indian but my mother was a halfbreed, I guess. So I was proud to be an Indian, I guess, be a Canadian Indian.

Alma: Did your parents ever say anything about this to you, about who you were?

Margaret: No.

Alma: So it was never, it's nothing that was ever discussed?

Margaret: No. Nothing at all.

Alma: What about the other families in the community, did they ever say anything about being proud that they were Metis?

Margaret: Yeah, there's lots of them, I heard them, they were proud to be a Metis because they were Canadians, I guess, just the same as an Indian. They're good people.

Alma: Did your parents ever tell you anything about Metis history?

Margaret: No.

Alma: Did you ever hear anything about Batoche or Louis Riel?

Margaret: Yeah, my dad used to tell us that, but you know, we was kids and I guess we never used to listen to him so close. Because he brought us very strictly like, you know, go to church and even we had no new clothes and my mother used to wash clothes on Saturdays to go to church with clean clothes. Yeah, we have to walk to church every Sunday, Dad took us.

Alma: What kind of an influence did the church have on your family? You know, like, did the preacher ever come to your house, or the priest?

Margaret: Yeah. The preacher always makes his visits around because he used to live right there on the reserve. They used to go around visiting people even on the sleigh and little buggy or on horse, used to go around all the time visiting people, giving old clothes to people, you know, he used to get a bunch of clothes from somewhere. Used to give them around to the poor people.

Alma: This was the Anglican Church?

Margaret: Yeah, Anglican Church, yeah.

Alma: And there was also a Catholic Church in the community?

Margaret: Yes there was a Catholic Church. They still have the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church there. The Catholics go to church in their own church, and we go to church where my dad goes. But lots of times I go to Catholic Church too, doesn't matter where I go, I go.

Alma: When you were telling me that you moved to the city, have you ever experienced discrimination? Like when did you first experience discrimination?

Margaret: Well, when I was in North Battleford working there, that's the time I started to know that, you know, discrimination because the attitute of people, you know, you work with and all that. It's always you think, you know, you're always alone, like. Them other people you working with, you know, they don't talk to you too much and you have to go and talk to them yourself. They don't come to you, you have to go and talk to them yourself. So I thought maybe they didn't like Indians, so I didn't bother them too much.

Alma: What about at school, did you ever experience discrimination at school?

Margaret: No, no, not at all. We got along fine over there.

Alma: So it wasn't until you moved into the city?

Margaret: Yeah, until I moved into the city and then I find out that discrimination.

Alma: Did your living standard, did it increase (Indian) or decrease when you moved into the city? Like, were you better off in the city than you were in Sturgeon?

Margaret: Well, I couldn't... I think so, because all these years I make my own living, you know, whatever I make, 'cause I have to work. If I don't work I wonder how I'm going to live, I thought, you know, and I moved in the city, so I have to keep on working. Sometimes I got a hell of a time, and sometimes...

Alma: But when you moved to the city did your ties with other Metis people, did you keep up your communication with the Indian people, with Metis people?

Margaret: Oh yeah. I get along with Metis people and Indians just the same.

Alma: It didn't weaken or didn't strengthen, eh, it just...

Margaret: No, no.

Alma: Why did the priest used to come to visit you? Like, what did he say to you, what did he talk about when he used to come and visit?

Margaret: Well, he used to come and visit and wanted to know how the things are and how you're feeling and all that, you know. And he used to tell my mother, "How is the kids behaving?" My mother say, "Oh, they good kids," and all that, you know.

Alma: Do you feel that the church helped the Metis people?

Margaret: Oh yeah, because it helped me so it must help the other people too.

Alma: Which way did it help you?

Margaret: Well, by thinking of, you know, thinking right and to try and help other people in such a way, like, you know, if you got no money to help them, well, you can help them some other way.

Alma: In other words like you built your faith? The church helped you have faith.

Margaret: Yeah.

Alma: Did your parents ever vote in political elections?

Margaret: Well, I don't think so. I don't think them days were Indians allowed to vote. I don't think them days. I don't hardly remember.

Alma: Was your father Treaty?

Margaret: Yes.

Alma: So he was an Indian?

Margaret: Yes.

Alma: But then you're not Treaty?

Margaret: I'm not Treaty.

Alma: Why is that?

Margaret: Because I was a Treaty to start with but now... when I left the reserve forty-five years ago I automatically out.

Alma: Oh, so you've lost your status?

Margaret: Yeah.

Alma: How do you feel about that?

Margaret: Oh, I don't feel. I try to get in but they can't voted me in so I feel okay about it. Just if they can't well I might as well try and be on my own, make my... I have been making my own living anyway all these years, why should I go back to the reserve now?

Alma: Do you think you'd benefit anything by being a Treaty Indian today?

Margaret: No, I don't think so.

Alma: And yourself do you vote?

Margaret: Yes.

Alma: How old were you when you started to vote?

Margaret: I think I was about thirty-nine, forty, around there someplace.

Alma: Who did you vote for?

Margaret: PCs, first time I went with them and then I switched to Liberals the next election like, you know.

Alma: Like who influenced you to vote PC, or what was it that you believed in?

Margaret: Because I don't know... Everybody was going for Diefenbaker, so I did too.

Alma: Oh, I see.

Margaret: Everybody liked, Diefenbaker was so liked, so I voted him too.

Alma: Did you ever become active in politics?

Margaret: No.

Alma: What about native organizations?

Margaret: No, I was too busy working for my living, I guess. Besides other things...

Alma: Have you ever heard of the Metis Society?

Margaret: What's that?

Alma: Have you ever heard of the Metis Society?

Margaret: Yeah.

Alma: Are you a member of the Metis Society?

Margaret: I was in Duck Lake.

Alma: What do you know about them?

Margaret: Well, they're good people, they're trying hard, especially them Dumonts they're really, you know, they're talking about this Batoche-Riel days and all that, you know. And they used to have a meetings, I used to go there. I really like them. They're real people.

Alma: Did you feel that you had a strong community where you were?

Margaret: I feel better when they were talking about Metis Society and all that, you know, because this is the way I feel. I don't know, I feel like sometimes where I'm a standing I'm an Indian or what. I always think that, you know, just like Indians don't want me, so I switched to Metis. If the Indians don't want me, well, that's that.

Alma: Today, what do you consider yourself today?

Margaret: I'm a Metis, I guess. That's what I consider myself, I guess it will be. That's what they call me at Sturgeon, they call me a Metis, so I guess I am.

Alma: Today, in your community, what do you see that's changed from the time you were there?

Margaret: Oh, I seen lots of things change there. People used to get along the time I was there. The people used to do together things, you know, just help each other. They used to do it together and now, it's away different now. Even if you go for help they won't -- "Go see this one or go see that one." So I don't bother them any more. I never did bother them since I left the reserve, I never did bother for help, nothing at all. Here, two years ago I tried to get back in the reserve, they couldn't do it. They couldn't do a thing for me, so I just stay as I am.

Alma: What do you think made that changes? What do you think caused that?

Margaret: I guess maybe it's, what will I say, people that think themselves too much, the higher ones, like. They try to beat each other.

Alma: Competition.

Margaret: Yeah, I think that's what it is. They don't try and help, they just help the few people, like, never mind the other ones. They don't go together like, you know. It's just a few there that just think about themselves, you know. They're building nice houses for themselves -- never mind the other ones. That's what they are.

Alma: Selfish.

Margaret: Yeah.

Alma: Would you like to go back to your community?

Margaret: No, I'll never go back. I went that far to make my own living for forty-five years so why should I go back now when I get my pension?

Alma: You sound proud of, you know, of leaving and looking after yourself all these years.

Margaret: Yeah.

Alma: I think you're very lucky that you could do that.

Margaret: Why should I go back now when the government is looking after me now, getting pensioned off and all that? I go there once in a while, I go and visit. My brothers are still living, three of them. I go and see them once in a while but I don't stay too long.

Alma: So your family ties today, since you've left, are not as strong as they were?

Margaret: No, no. People in the reserve they just, I don't know what to say, long time ago you don't hear them talk about, like that, you know. People now, these days in the reserve, they're just talking about this one and this one, you know, which they should be helping each other instead of talking... each of them, like that, talkin' about this one, and all that.

Alma: Earlier when we were talking about discrimination I was going to ask you, was there ever a time when you didn't like being an Indian? Did you ever wish you were anything else but an Indian? Did you ever feel that race wasn't so bad?

Margaret: Yeah. There's lots of times when I first made my own living and then a few years after I used to think I should be a... maybe I could go back to the reserve. But now my people won't like me because I left the reserve so long. Maybe they're... you know, even now when I go there, just like they

don't like me, the way their attitude like, you know, and all that.

Alma: Do you know why they do that?

Margaret: I don't know why they do that, even one of my own brothers, I don't think they care for me.

Alma: So you more or less sort of feel like an outsider from your community, you can't go back any more?

Margaret: That's right, I can't go back any more. Even one of my brothers he even said I don't belong in Sturgeon. I'm a halfbreed now, you can't come back to the reserve. So ever since I heard that I was hurt a little bit, but...

Alma: Well he's living on a reserve and he's your brother, he must be halfbreed too.

Margaret: Yeah, but he's a Treaty Indian.

Alma: You don't really know why these people have changed or their attitudes are like this, eh?

Margaret: I just can't understand people down there.

Alma: Going back to your family again, did your family believe or practise in the traditional Indian religion?

Margaret: My dad was, but my mother... Well, I used to see my mother joining that Indian dance, you know, that round dance they call it, I used to see her dancing. Well, they have their own Indian ways to say like, you know. My mother, when one of us kids was sick and she used to give us Indian medicine, you know, she boils something and then she gives us that medicine, and then we used to... She had a good Indian medicine and we used to get better as kids, because we never used to go to much doctor. We was brought up real healthy kids. We was all brought up, you know, grown up.

(END OF SIDE A)
(SIDE B)

Alma: Do you know where she got it from? Did she pick it herself?

Margaret: She'd pick it herself. She used to go and dig from the trees under, she used to call some kind of a root. She used to boil that and make Indian medicine and she used to strain it like, you know. We used to drink that water, that medicine. She used to put it in sealers. We used to drink that once in a while when we was sick.

Alma: Did she tell you what it was for?

Margaret: "That's for fevers," she used to tell us, you know, and all that.

Alma: Did your parents ever use a sweat lodge?

Margaret: No, not that I could remember. Maybe after I left, I don't know. That time I was there they never did. But my brothers are using it now, one of them.

Alma: So you didn't follow the practices that your mother used to do when you were growing up, eh? You don't follow them?

Margaret: No.

Alma: What about your father? Was he involved in the Indian religion?

Margaret: Not really, maybe some, like, you know, but he wasn't really, he was a working man too much. Not that I could remember, maybe after I left.

Alma: Have you ever heard of the road allowance people? Do you know, you don't know what they are?

Margaret: No, I don't know what that is.

Alma: In this community in Sturgeon, did people, do you remember people moving there from other places?

Margaret: Yeah, we used to have, they used to have a treaty like... Like you mean to go and camp other places?

Alma: No, no. Other people moving into the community, coming from other communities.

Margaret: Yes. When they were going to have a celebration, like wedding or a feast, or some kind of a powwow dance and... Long time ago they never call that powwow, they used to call it round dance. And people used to come and, from far away, from North Battleford, way up them other reserves they used to come and camp around there. And they used to have sports like Treaty Day but they used to celebrate for one week. Yeah, when people were getting their treaty money they used to celebrate.

Alma: And what did they do for a celebration during these Treaty Days?

Margaret: Well, they played ball, baseball, and football, and all that, dances. And they used to have a little stores like, you know, buying ice cream for the kids and stuff like that. They used to celebrate, on every night there used to be a dance, two dances, like, Indian dance and a fiddle dance, they used to have every night.

Alma: What kind of music did they play at these dances?

You said fiddle, and what kind of dances were there?

Margaret: Fiddle dances like waltzes and stuff like that, Red River jig and square dance. And the other part over there with drums, Indian drums, they used to have round dance, whatever you call it.

Alma: And people from other communities used to come there...

Margaret: Yeah, used to come there, we used to have a dance there, champions. They used to pick the champions who's the best dancers with bells on their, all dressed up in feathers and bells on their feet and all that.

Alma: So this was sort of like a community celebration?

Margaret: Yeah, every year they used to do that, once a year when the Treaty Day comes. They only get $5 a year. They used to celebrate on that $5, I guess.

Alma: What I was asking you before about people moving in, like people coming from wherever to move to Sturgeon. Do you remember people, like families coming in? This would be the early 1930s.

Margaret: Coming in from other reserves?

Alma: From other places, from other towns or whatever.

Margaret: Yeah. That's the only time I could remember the people used to come in. Or travelling through.

Alma: And this was the time though when there was a lot of visiting and families from different areas come to visit?

Margaret: Yeah, that's right. People used to go and visit at nights over there at the reserve, you know. After their work is done they used to go and visit each other, you know. Oh, that was... it's gone now, they don't go and visit any more, they talk about each other now. There's no more visiting of that kind now. People just like they don't like each other, I don't know, they're just fighting for something, I don't know. Which a long time ago they used to be good people, you know, and used to go and visit here and there and at night time, you know, even... Now they don't do that any more. They used to play ball, baseball -- I don't see that any more. I think they're too busy now to try and beat other... whose going to be looking the best house they're going to have in the reserve, and all that stuff now.

Alma: Yeah, I suppose that happens, eh. I'm sure it's not only with our Metis people. At the beginning here I was asking you about your home, when you were growing up at home. You said you helped with the farming, and the garden.

Margaret: Yeah.

Alma: Like what sort of things, like what was something that you did that helped to bring in, to bring in money for the family?

Margaret: Like, if my dad makes a break in the land we used to pick up roots and all that, you know, the roots and things from the land. And we used to pile them up there together because all of kids work at that. And garden, we dig the garden in the fall and helping mom put in the garden and all that. Stuff like that.

Alma: And you lived, you said you lived in a big house?

Margaret: Yeah, little house first and we lived in, I could remember. But it was burned down when I was small, small little girl, I remember it was burned down. And then they build another one; it was a great big house and then it has upstairs but there was no rooms. It has one room downstairs and one big room upstairs. Yeah, that's where, and that... my mother died there and my dad died in that house and my mother, and then after that they tore down. Now they're going to build up another house there, one of these new houses.

Alma: So you father built this house, what did he build it with?

Margaret: Logs and mud.

Alma: And the furniture, what about the furniture that you had?

Margaret: Oh, we had homemade beds and some beds were given to us. And my mother make blankets out of cloths and whatever you could make. Yeah, we had a homemade furniture, my dad made a big long table, boards and lumber, we didn't have no chairs. He made beds but we had two broad beds and he made beds with boards, too. And we had a big long table, with lumber, table and benches he had made, didn't have no chairs. Stuff like that, everything homemade, homemade cupboard. But still we seemed to be so happy, we was happy.

Alma: You didn't have no Sears catalogues to know what you were missing.

Margaret: No. (laughs) I told my other brother that told me, I said, "Put it in God's hands," I said. "Let Him call me that," I said.

Alma: How does that make you feel when he calls you that?

Margaret: Well, kind of, you know, I didn't care, I was kind of broad feeling, I don't know. I didn't care to be an Indian anyway. I'm an Indian but still it doesn't matter, you know, we're all people.

Alma: What do you remember about your mother? Like if you

were to think of your mother and describe her what would you remember most about her?

Margaret: Most about her? Well, she had long brown hair, she had long eyelashes, you know, I also recall they was thick really thick, you know. I used to wonder how she got them so thick, you know... and brown hair, she used to braid them and she used to have a bun at the back. She was tall and slim. She was kind of, I don't know, she was strict, she was really strict. But my dad -- my mother talks quick, like, you know, the way I talk maybe, and my dad he used to talk slow and, "Do this." And you never heard any of us kids when my dad yelled, "Get up" in the morning. "You have to do this." We just get up. No matter how tired you are you have to get up. But my mother she yells, "Get up!" Like me, eh, "Get up! Make some bannock," or something like that, you know. She's too busy doing something else, either making fish or something, you know. My dad goes and he's fishing so early in the morning. My mother is out there and before she goes out there to make fish and then she yells at me, "Get up! Make bannock."

Alma: What about your father, what do you remember most about your father, about the way he was?

Margaret: Oh, my father -- he wasn't a talker, my dad. He was a really nice guy, like, my dad, and I used to love him. Well, he was (inaudible) see him working and going for horses, looking for horses, you know, and come back and water them. He always started working in the fields picking up roots and all that, you know.

Alma: So your parents were hard working people?

Margaret: Yeah. Never have time for nothing, you know, try to. They got to, because there was eleven of us kids. But after my brothers growed up they helped them a lot, you know. And he was walking, you know, with them walking, whatever you call them, plows, whatever you call them, making fields. My dad walk, walk, walk, day by day, and day by day, and, you know.

Alma: Do you remember any other family members, like why and who?

Margaret: What do you mean?

Alma: Well, do you remember anything special about maybe your uncles, or one of your brothers?

Margaret: Oh gee, I don't... I have two uncles. No, I don't.

Alma: But you had a strong family sort of, eh? There was loyalty amongst your family?

Margaret: Yeah.

Alma: And they, people stick up for each other no matter

what?

Margaret: No matter, if you're short of tea in the morning, we got no tea, one of kids have to run to my grandma, "Go and get some tea or sugar or something like that." No, not a word, we used to get up. Now these days you tell the kids, "You go and do this." No way, they won't do it! You have to pay them!

Alma: Oh yeah.

Margaret: Now them days...

Alma: Besides, 7-Eleven is closer than the neighbors these days. I'm talking about this city here.

Margaret: Yeah. Boy, we used to, my mother used to buy a blanket to make us underwear like, you know. Well, we used to have homemade stuff and homemade socks, homemade underwears, and homemade mitts in the wintertime with yarn. They used to have a farm instructor there giving, in the fall they're giving so much yarn for the old people and to make clothes, dresses and stuff like that. They used to give old people pants, you know, woolen pants to go and wear them for working. Boy, them days there was nothing, when the weekends come you work harder. There's nobody drinking them days long ago. Them were good days. No fights.

Alma: And in this community where you were living, were the houses, were they close together? Did you have close neighbors?

Margaret: Yeah, some places like, you know, maybe four houses here and there, and you used to go the other side of the lake

-- there used to be a village there, there used to be a bunch of people there. They still are there, they got a village, but ours is on the east side and they're on the west side. And now you go there today, now just like a little town. They got a high school, they got a store in there and all that.

Alma: Were there white families living in Sturgeon when you were growing up? It was all...

Margaret: No, there was a halfbreed settlement along side the reserve, (name ?) like, Andersons, and Nelsons... they used to be together with the Indians.

Alma: So they got along, eh, they lived together in the community?

Margaret: Yes. That's one of the Andersons downstairs, 101, they used to live at Sturgeon. They had a store, his dad had a store there. We used to run there for a package of candy, five cents. If you have five cents them days you bought lots of candy that time.

Alma: Jaw breakers for one cent.

Margaret: Yeah.

Alma: Black ones. (both laugh)

Margaret: So that Andersons -- he don't remember, he hardly remember me, this old man, because I left, you know, forty-five years ago I left. I don't know which forty-five years ago, 1945 I left the reserve. That old man, I told him my dad, you know. Oh, now you go to Sturgeon, there's nothing but Ermine, that's the Ermine family, that was my dad's name, Ermine last name. Boy all them boys had families and now their children are getting married, they're all Ermines. Full of Ermines in that Sturgeon Lake now. You hear something, Ermine is in jail. These young girls, they're running around there, they're in jail, some of them. Five Ermines were in jail at women's jail one time. And my niece, Gladys, "What do you feel about our... when you hear it?" Well, what can I feel, I can't do nothing," I said. "They're looking for that so they're in jail."

Alma: And these people you're talking about in jail, they go to jail from Sturgeon Lake or is it when they move to the city?

Margaret: They move to the city. There's no girls like, you know, as soon as they're fifteen years old they leave home and

they go to the city all over Saskatoon here and on the streets like, you know, getting into trouble, all that.

Alma: Did you ever want to do that when you were fifteen?

Margaret: No, they brought me up strict way like, you know, just work, work, work. Do this work, and look after your brothers, little sisters, and all that. And we was together -- wherever they go my parents we go, go out digging seneca root, we'd go up in the camp and go and dig seneca root, whatever you call it now, they don't see that any more. We make money on that.

Alma: Who bought this root?

Margaret: They brought it to town and they used to store, Sturgeon Valley store, they used to take it up there too.

Alma: How much did they pay? Like how much do you have to get to get money?

Margaret: Oh, maybe sometimes you get about, if you go out about two days maybe you'll make about $20. You go sell it and buy groceries out of that, all groceries. But them days you can buy $20 worth, a lot of stuff.

Alma: Your mother, well, did she ever do any native handicrafts?

Margaret: Yeah. In our own like, you know, but she never sell it.

Alma: Did she teach you how to do beadwork?

Margaret: No. She never teach me nothing, because she was too busy working in the daytime.

Alma: What about tanning hides?

Margaret: Yeah, she used to do that, her and my dad. Boy, they used to make a bunch of them.

Alma: (Indian)

Margaret: (Indian) and make mitts and gloves, and leather coats, and stuff like that, you know, and she sells them. (Indian) forget everything. Between that and now, you know, I was drinking, forget about these things.

Alma: Your memory just vague, eh?

Margaret: Yeah. But I can remember far away when I was a little kid, you know, better than twenty-eight, twenty-five...

Alma: Oh good! What do you remember?

Margaret: I don't know, I remember when somebody is going to have a baby in the middle of the night. We're sleeping, somebody come and knock on the door and said, "This one is going to have a baby." My mother used to go and deliver babies, you know, on the reserve. And here my mother used to get ready and away she goes, and she comes back in the morning. She had a little boy or a little girl, you know, I remember that plain.

Alma: What did, did she tell you about what she went to do and did you understand it?

Margaret: No, even us, if she take us to where this woman is going to have a baby, well just about at delivering time I guess and then she used to send us out. "You kids go outside and play." We didn't see nothing. All at once we hear the baby crying.

Alma: Oh, so you never heard of the story about the rabbit bringing the babies?

Margaret: Oh yeah.

Alma: When did you give that story up?

Margaret: Oh boy, never even thought. Yeah, the rabbit was running here... Oh yeah, I remember the time Mother had my sister Mabel. I didn't even know my mother was pregnant, you know. She was making hides and all at once she slips. You know, they were stretching it like that, and she fell. So we went for a horseback riding one time and my mother was laying there, she wasn't feeling good, and we went around for a long

time me and my brothers and we come back, we seen this swing -- somebody was in there and my mother was laying there on the bed covered up, you know. And she said, "We seen a rabbit delivered this baby. Look, he came and dropped this baby off." We looked -- it was my little sister Mabel. See that didn't take long. We wasn't away, maybe five hours we was away fooling around, playing.

Alma: Were there other women who came out to have babies?

Margaret: Yeah, there was some women there to deliver the baby, I guess, what the rabbit had brought. Yeah, there used to be

women... They never used to go to a hospital, they used to deliver babies right there.

Alma: So there wasn't, you don't remember anyone sort of like coming to, say Prince Albert, just to have a baby?

Margaret: No, not that time. Now they can't do that, they have to come to P.A., they have to come to the hospital now. Boy, long time ago they used to deliver babies right in the reserve. And none of us used the bottle, none of, breast feed all of us.

Alma: So these mixed marriages, you don't see them as (Indian)?

Margaret: No. I don't know why in the first place a white man marries an Indian woman, they always call them down. (Indian) When you married a white man (Indian). White people, they look at you and they look at this man, "He married that Indian woman," and all that, you know.

Alma: Did you ever hear that yourself?

Margaret: Yeah.

Alma: What did you used to say, or how did you feel?

Margaret: Oh, I feel bad when they call him down like, you know, because it's me that, they call me down like, you know. I always thought that (Indian). But you can't do nothing, you can't say nothing.

Alma: And it seems like the less you say, sort of, like, the more sort of naive or the more silly, or the more ignorant a person sort of looks, eh.

Margaret: Yeah. (Indian) Like these girls -- that's what I was telling my niece last night, sitting on the bus, that (Indian) coming home. And then I said to my niece I said, "(Indian). Cars, just driving around try to pick up drunken girls, the white people only. The Indians don't do that too much," I said. (Indian) you know, Indian girls. (Indian) that's my feelings. (Indian) for a bottle of beer. They know that Indians are weak, you know, in drinking. They can give them a bottle of beer or ask them, "Come and have a bottle of

beer with me," and then she gets in the car. She gets nothing out of it. (Indian) not even, "Hello," you know. They just look at them like a piece of dirt.

Alma: So I guess in a way you've experienced a lot of racism and it's made you sort of feel that you don't want to go

back to your reserve. You're happy and content where you are today.

Margaret: Oh yeah.

Alma: But I'm sure it wasn't an easy road.

Margaret: No, it was really hard.

Alma: Independence is very, very hard for anyone, I think. It doesn't matter whether you're Indian or non-Indian, independence is hard to get.

Margaret: Right.

Alma: (Indian)?

Margaret: Oh boy, I don't know. I guess they're working now. There's some women are picking up names (Indian). That's that Lorna Bird, my niece is working on that too, you know, for low rental housing, but the Indian's way (Indian). Because one of the, I told somebody to go and see Lorna. They were looking for a low rental house, and then she got turned down because she wasn't a Treaty Indian, she was a Metis. I thought maybe, you know, she was both working for Metis and Indians, but she didn't.

Alma: So what do you think about this -- all of a sudden, you know, you can get help if you're an Indian here; but if you're Metis you can't, is this what's happening?

Margaret: Yeah, that's just what is happening.

Alma: So what do you think we should do?

Margaret: I guess we got to fight, that's all.

Alma: Get together and fight?

Margaret: Get together and fight. That, like that Mr. Dumont they're doing, the Dumonts in Duck Lake. Boy, they're really fighting for their rights. I don't think the Metis should put down at all. I don't know, I just, I'm with them all the way.

(END OF SIDE B)
(END OF TAPE)

INDEX

INDEX TERM	IH NUMBER	DOC NAME	DISC #	PAGE #
MARRIAGE				
-and loss of Status	IH-SD.06	M. CHARLES	147	9
MARRIAGE				
-arranged	IH-SD.06	M. CHARLES	147	4
MEDICINE AND CURING PRACTICES				
-and plant remedies	IH-SD.06	M. CHARLES	147	13
CHILDREN				
-work of	IH-SD.06	M. CHARLES	147	3,16
DANCES AND DANCING				
-social	IH-SD.06	M. CHARLES	147	14,15
EDUCATION				
-accounts of	IH-SD.06	M. CHARLES	147	3