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ROWENA MCLELLAN

Rowena McLellan was a resident of Prince Albert and the first president of the Indian/Metis Friendship Centre there.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Prince Albert Indian/Metis Friendship Centre: its organization, aims, accomodation, staff, funding, etc.
- Malcolm Norris: his years in Prince Albert, his family; his involvement with the Friendship Centre.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Rowena McLellan was one of the first P.A. citizens to become involved in the Indian-Metis Friendship Centre. She was a friend of Malcolm Norris.

INTERVIEW:

Murray: I am speaking to Rowena McLellan who lived in Prince Albert during the time Malcolm (Norris) was in P.A. and was active in the Indian-Metis Friendship Centre. Mrs. McLellan, can you recall who initiated the first sort of idea of the Friendship Centre and first got it going? Who was involved in

it in the beginning? And when was the beginning, what year did it actually start happening?

Rowena: Say, I should have got better prepared. I knew there were things like this I'd... oh, isn't it awful. Dates are terrible... 1960? It was about 1958 that there were a group of people in Prince Albert who were interested. Actually, my involvement came through the YWCA and the Y initiated calling some interested people together and there were people like Fred Yiyakicoot who was around and - his name is gone - a priest from Duck Lake who was very involved at that time. (Knew him very well; it'll come.) But these were people kind of in the area. And about the same time, the committee on minority rights that Premier Douglas had set up was doing some work in this area too. And I remember it was at this time that David Knight was involved with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians and they were thinking things should be happening. These two groups, the one in Prince Albert and the one that was of a little wider scope and then they kind of came together and said we ought to have something here in Prince Albert. There is a

good-sized native population, and there is a good size of the community that really isn't too aware of the native population, or doesn't kind of know the situation or we aren't kind of getting together on this. And it was the idea of the bridge, I think, in the community. That it was felt that the Friendship Centre could provide a meeting place for native people but just as much a meeting place for the non-native people to become more familiar with the native culture and what was going on. Because I remember one local politician at one time saying, "You know, if we could just drop north Prince Albert in the river, we'd be fine." And I suppose saying it facetiously but with a fair bit of... it would certainly simplify a lot of things if part of the population didn't exist. And I think the Friendship Centre was, in a real sense, an attempt to acknowledge the fact of what the community was, but also get people working on building the community with all these things in mind.

Murray: Was there any particular incident or was there a development that prompted it? People often talk about the 'native problem,' which is a misnomer obviously, but was that happening?

Rowena: Well, there were more people coming into the city. I think this was it. Not just people who lived adjacent to it but there were upgrading classes that were bringing native young people into Prince Albert for winter courses. Then girls were coming in and being placed as domestics and there were various programs that were bringing people into the city. And this, I think, helped people recognize, "Hey, what's going on, what should we be doing?" Now, there'd always been a residential school for Indian children there too.

Murray: Up to this point, the people had been sort of separated then had they?

Rowena: There hadn't been any real need to be aware of each other, you know. Each group had kind of lived off in its own little pocket is my feeling. Now, see, we moved to Prince Albert in 1955 and we lived in an apartment downtown. And when I came to Saskatchewan in 1952 my thought was, you know, Saskatchewan had Indians. I came from Ontario and I don't know, I never seemed to see any. And when we moved to Prince Albert, my thought was, "My, there are a lot of oriental young people." (chuckles) And it took me a while to click, these are the Indians. Because these were young people who were in town, you know, well-dressed and I'd see them down in an elevator or in an office. And I just didn't kind of recognize these are the Indian people; I was wondering where they were.

Murray: You weren't expecting them to be where you found them.

Rowena: That's exactly right. And you know, I think there were more coming in, not just from the immediate area of Prince Albert but from a little further north and coming in for courses and looking for work. And I think this started the move that something had to happen with also more of the local people; the native people saying we've got to have more opportunities for our children and we've got to let people know that we have rights.

Murray: So it was coming from both directions, was it?

Rowena: I think it was coming from both directions and certainly, you know, there were native people and non-native people both involved in those early days of working on the Friendship Centre.

Murray: Was there a visible problem of discrimination at all or was there a racism that was developing because of this influx of native people that you were aware of?

Rowena: Oh, I think there was, you know, certainly feelings in the community that I would label as being negative. We had some young boys staying with us who took upgrading classes, Indian boys, and they used to report the things that were said to them on the street. And I'd call it discrimination, you know. They'd be taunted and yelled at and they were big husky guys so nobody payed attention.

Murray: (Inaudible)

Rowena: No, kept their distance. But it was the kind of thing, unless you happened to know somebody, I don't think you were really aware of it because, you know, we were all nice people and nice people didn't do that kind of thing.

Murray: But there was often very little opportunity for the two groups to actually get together in a situation?

Rowena: Oh, I think there was very little opportunity, yeah. And I think this was some of the things that happened when we

got together and talking about the Friendship Centre is that we got together and talked and for many of us, both native and non-native, it was the first time we'd done anything like this.

You maybe see people or talk to them but you didn't really ever have them into your homes or have a talk with them.

Murray: What was Malcolm's involvement in those first days?

Rowena: Now, in those days, Malcolm wasn't all that involved in those discussions. Malcolm was kind of like an elder statesman, it always seemed to me, because he had had a lot of experience in Alberta. And in a way, you know, they seemed to have come so much further than we had because there had been so much more in the way of organizing on the part of the native people themselves. And this hadn't happened in Saskatchewan at that point. So that Malcolm used to talk out of his experience a lot. And I think he was very impatient with developments and often thought nobody is doing anything. "Come on you fellows, what's wrong with you." He was a prodder. I was talking to my husband and saying what did he remember and he said, "Well, you know, it was kind of the philosophic discussion. That Malcolm just loved to get into a real argument and taking the ideas and tossing them around." And so at this point he wasn't so much involved in the organizing of the Friendship Centre as of really talking about the whole idea of where native people were, what should be their place in society. Not just native people, you know, what should be the place of...

Murray: Of society, period.

Rowena: Yeah, of society. And you know, what should man be doing and what was his point and what was the purpose...

Murray: So you knew him at this time then, that the Centre was being established?

Rowena: Yes. Now I think my contact with him at that point, as I say, was more just on a personal friendly basis. It wasn't through the work with the Centre. You know, he was involved with the Centre afterwards and worked for the Centre. But this was after I had left Prince Albert. So at this point, he was the kind of guy that maybe was one of the people who prodded me to be involved.

Murray: Do you recall him talking about it at all, about the Centre?

Rowena: Actually, my memories of conversations with Malcolm were not really about the Centre but would more be, oh, you know, about young people and the state of world affairs. His interests were so wide-ranging that the Friendship Centre seemed like one drop in the bucket almost, that I really don't remember talking with him that much about specifics on the Centre. I was trying to think whether it was through Malcolm that Pete Tomkins was involved, because he was the first person

who kind of worked for the Centre. He was the unpaid staff person when we first opened up in a little room in city hall and I think it was through Malcolm that we got in touch with Mr. Tomkins. But Malcolm himself, at that time, wasn't too well physically and had to be just kind of careful how much involvement... See, this would have been the late fifties and it seemed to me he was in or out of hospital and was just having to play it a little bit cool and not be too involved.

Murray: Right. Do you recall where the name 'Friendship Centre' came from? And whether there were other cities that were developing these centres at the same time?

Rowena: At that time Regina had been working on a Friendship Centre. In fact, there had been a conference of native people in Regina that had, I think, been a spur to other places in Saskatchewan. And Winnipeg, at that point, was the place where we used to hear a lot about; and the Friendship Centre was developing in Winnipeg. And people from Saskatchewan had been there and had seen what was going on and thought this had a lot of possibilities. In fact, what we called it was the Indian and Metis Service Council. We thought of this more as a group of people who were getting together to provide services. And one of the services we provided was the Friendship Centre which was to be a meeting place for native people and for other people in the community. And there hadn't been that much happening in Saskatchewan, except Regina was certainly developing.

Murray: Could you give me the goals of the council and how the council saw the Centre and the role it was to play?

Rowena: You know, I really should get some of this stuff. I've got it. Shall I get some of those little things?

Murray: Sure.

(break in tape)

Murray: We were talking about the goals of the Centre and the council and you haven't been able to find the papers but what can you recall of the...?

Rowena: Well, I can recall that we thought this was to be a place for peoples of different backgrounds to come together and share what they had in their backgrounds. It was also to be a place for people to move ahead and to learn new things, that it could be a place where you would have an opportunity to get the skills that you might need in a new situation. And I remember we talked about it being... let me just think how we put it. I can remember we had four points on our membership card. And it was a father, whose name I have forgotten from Duck Lake. I remember we worked on these little purposes for the Friendship Centre which were very broad and, you know, not that specific but they were aimed at a...

Murray: An understanding.

Rowena: At an understanding between peoples. I think this was really the whole goal of the Friendship Centre. It wasn't specifically one thing or another at that point. It was just that there was a lack of understanding and maybe something like a Friendship Centre could promote it. There were the very practical things that people needed, a place when they came into town to stop and sit down and...

Murray: And feel at home somewhere.

Rowena: And feel at home because it was very true that they said, "Where can you go in the city?"

Murray: It's a terrifying place for people.

Rowena: Yeah, so that this was a very practical goal.

Murray: The actual physical presence of the Centre.

Rowena: Have a place that you knew you could go that you would be welcomed and that you would feel quite comfortable.

Murray: Right. Was the Centre open most of the day then?

Rowena: Well, when it first started it was just open certain hours because it was in a room on the second floor of the old city hall in Prince Albert and so this wasn't available all that time. But it was open in the evenings and in the afternoon, kind of thing. And then it was after that that it moved to a little house on River Street.

Murray: What year was that? Can you recall when it moved there?

Rowena: Well, it must have moved to River Street about 1960 or 1961. It was where that highrise apartment building and the police station is there now. And at that point, the land was being set aside for development and this little house kind of sat there all by itself. But it was really a terrific spot because it was a little old house that you didn't feel you could do any damage to.

Murray: It wasn't imposing to anybody.

Rowena: It wasn't imposing and I think people felt real comfortable coming in. It was right on River Street, it was real handy, and it was really great while it existed. It didn't stay there that long because then they tore it down and went on to other things. But in a way, it was really better than a building downtown or something like this, I think, for people to feel comfortable coming to it. And I remember that Malcolm worked for the Centre when it was there. He was a staff person there.

Murray: Was he active at all in the Centre up until the point where he was actually working for it as the director?

Rowena: I don't think he was ever, to my knowledge, a member of the committee in those days. He came to some meetings but he, as I say, he was impatient. He wasn't convinced of what the organization, ... you know, kind of, "if you want to go ahead and play with these organizations, go ahead, but I'm not sure that that's going to make all that much difference now."

Murray: So he wasn't impressed with the goals of the Centre?

Rowena: Now, that would be my memory. Now the fact that he came and worked for the Centre, I think, you know, he began to say, "Well, maybe this thing is going to do something." You know. But I think when we were first talking about it, he was a little disillusioned with the possibilities. You know, "What do these white people think they are going to do anyway?" kind of thing. And "Sure, you've got some native people there but, you know, I don't know that you're really moving that much."

Murray: Your credentials weren't good enough; was that part of it?

Rowena: Well, yes. I think that he would like to have seen native people right in there from the beginning and it was just a fact at that point that there just weren't that many native people with experience or with the desire to be involved.

Murray: Part of the need for the Centre itself was a result of that.

Rowena: I think this is really it. That this got people involved, got them doing things and saying, "Hey, I can do something about this and..."

Murray: Did that fit with Malcolm's sort of attitude, do you think? His general feeling of disillusionment with the native people themselves? His rejection of anything that was started by whites?

Rowena: Yes, I think so. I think that he wanted to see it happen, he didn't want to see whites do it, and yet he knew too, I think, that really it wasn't going to happen unless some white people got involved. And he was really caught. He didn't like this but he, well...

Murray: It was a frustration for him.

Rowena: It was a real frustration, yeah. And I think it really bothered him.

Murray: Did he express that explicitly to you at all, that he wanted to see native people do it? Was that something that was obvious from his...?

Rowena: I think it was obvious. Except he'd say things about native people the same as he'd say them about white people. You know, that they didn't do what they ought to do or they hadn't come forward. He was very critical of both native and white people. I remember in conversations that he'd be just as critical of what he felt were the shortcomings of the native people in there.

Murray: What was some of his expressions that he would use in criticizing? Do you recall anything specific?

Rowena: You know, the things I remember more in talking about him are words he used. I used to go home and get the dictionary out after every time I had a conversation with Malcolm. You know, I learned words like abrogate. I never used that word in my life until I met Malcolm, didn't even know it really existed. And I found that when I first met him, I really didn't quite catch what he was saying because he would come out with a real spiel and involving quite a few words that I'd think, "Now exactly what does that mean?" But I can't remember any specific things that he would say about people except my impression of his frustration, that people weren't taking hold and doing things themselves. I guess this is...

Murray: Did he ever, at the same time, express an understanding of why that was happening or did he just express his frustration at it?

Rowena: I remember the frustration much more than really... though I'm sure he must have, you know, intellectually understood why that was happening. But I think the fact that he himself had been really involved in doing something, you know, in organizing the Metis Society. This was another thing, I always had trouble with - 'Maytee,' 'Meetis,' and 'Maytis' - because when he would say it would be different. And I would think, "Now I'll remember the way Malcolm said it because he's been in on this from the beginning so that must be right." But I think that he had been involved and had done so much that he found it very hard to accept that other people weren't equally involved.

Murray: Other native people.

Rowena: Other native people, yeah. That, you know, if this had been able to happen and he'd been able to do it, why on earth couldn't other people do it.

Murray: Could you tell me, if you can recall, in sort of a chronological order, who were the staff members of the Centre from the beginning?

Rowena: Well, Peter Tomkins certainly was the very first one because I remember...

Murray: He was an unpaid...

Rowena: He was an unpaid. What we did was, I think we gave him something for transportation, for bus fare, because we didn't have enough money. I think we got a grant when we opened the Centre up of \$600 which we thought was fabulous and

we ran on this for so many months. But we didn't have enough to pay him and also he was receiving an allowance from someplace else that if we paid him a little bit, you know, it cut down. I remember we had to go through this for a long time with him so that we got it so that he could come and help us, because he wanted to. And so he came as an unpaid staff member. Joe Duquette? I'm wondering if Joe was next. He was there for a fair bit of time and I think Joe may have been paid a little bit but again it was still on a nominal... This was before there were really grants to operate centres because I know we went down to meetings in Regina to try to get grants and it took quite a while to get this operational. It was Malcolm after Joe. I kind of think so.

Murray: That is what Jean MacKenzie said.

Rowena: Now Jean would remember because she was involved in it right through, following through.

Murray: Do you recall at the time how Malcolm managed to get that position? Was it vacant at the time? Had Joe resigned or did he resign in favor of Malcolm? Do you recall that aspect at all?

Rowena: I think Joe hadn't been well. That's my memory. That he had kind of been there and then he'd been away and he wanted to continue but he just wasn't able to and Malcolm was available. I wouldn't want to say for sure because I don't really remember, but it seemed to me that it was the problem that Joe wasn't able to continue, and to find somebody who could handle it and who was available when it wasn't a full

salaried job that you were offering somebody. I know there were different people. I remember Claude Adams being around at the time and talking about people who might be available but you couldn't just, if you were a younger person, take on this kind of thing.

Murray: Claude Adams was on the board was he, at the time?

Rowena: Yes, he was on the board, I think, at the time that Malcolm came on staff.

Murray: When was the position first paid? Do you recall that? I mean other than just bus fare?

Rowena: Well, I would think that Joe received some payment, but by payment I'm not sure that it was really a full-fledged salary because it seems to me it was more like an honorarium because we didn't have the...

Murray: Have the cash.

Rowena: Have the cash. And so you had to look for somebody that had some other way of supporting himself who was interested but could, you know, get by without...

Murray: Well, Malcolm may have had his pension at the time when he came, eh?

Rowena: I think that he had a pension at that point so this is what made it possible for him. My brother-in-law, as I say, was on the board when Malcolm was there and I heard a lot of this secondhand because we had moved to Regina just about the time Malcolm came on staff so...

Murray: Can you give me some impression of the success of the Centre over those years from say 1958 to 1964 when you left? Did it develop successfully in the direction that you'd hoped?

Rowena: I think so. It's awfully hard in retrospect; you remember all the good things, you know. But I think that there was a real ground swell at that point. Things were just beginning to develop and you got a real interest on the part of quite a bit of the community. We were getting real good input from some of the nearby reserves and I think there were a lot of good things happening that you got people involved and coming together. And it was in a very loosely organized kind of way, you know, such a different thing than once you get into the grant structure. That becomes a whole new ball game, almost. I mean, this was very much a volunteer kind of thing, where people were involved because they were interested and were spending their time just out of...

Murray: Shoestring operations.

Rowena: It was a shoestring operation, very much. But I think one kind of interesting thing was, in 1962 I was named citizen of the year in Prince Albert. But this was the Friendship Centre really that was the focal...

Murray: Getting the accolades, right.

Rowena: Yeah. And you know, I think there was a real kind of ground swell of interest at that time.

Murray: In 1962 was sort of the peak was it?

Rowena: Yeah, I think this would be, and because it was just beginning. I can remember there was an editorial in the Herald saying, "My, this was a great thing. Look at how they'd run for so long on \$600. Now if other people could just do that much with their money." And everybody thinks it's great at this point because you're really not making too many demands on them and, you know, we're really doing something.

Murray: And they're not asking us for any money.

Rowena: And they're not asking for any money, so that's great, you know. (chuckles) We may take a whole different look at things once they decide they need some money.

Murray: What was the role of city council? Did they have any input in terms of financial assistance?

Rowena: Well, I can't just remember. I'm pretty sure we didn't pay for the room in city hall, that they made this available. And Marion Sherman was a member of city council at that time and she was a real supporter and was on the service council at one point too and carried through. And I remember Jack Cuelenaere when he was mayor, trying to be helpful in finding us accomodation. But I think your point was well taken; they were very helpful as long as we weren't making demands on them for money and at that point we were really looking for things as a volunteer organization and weren't really asking city council for much.

Murray: Up to the point where you left Prince Albert, was there any grant from the provincial government at all?

Rowena: Well, we got this money. I never can remember whether it was that committee on minority rights, but it was a very small amount. And then we did start... I'm sure before I left that we started to get a grant. But again, it was a small, you know, we weren't into the big grants operational-wise. And this little house that was on River Street belonged to city council and so it was through city council that that was made available.

Murray: It would have been rent-free to you then.

Rowena: I think a dollar a year or something like this. So that it was certainly a contribution but it wasn't...

Murray: Out-of-pocket.

Rowena: No. No, it wasn't really making big demands.

Murray: Right. Do you recall the paper that the Centre put out called Moose Tracks?

Rowena: Moose Call.

Murray: Moose Call. Right.

Rowena: And it was put out by Helene McLellan who was no relation of mine but who lived in Prince Albert and I've lost track of her completely. She was an English girl but she was

really interested in the Centre and she was interested in publications and this kind of thing and she took a real interest in the Moose Call and really got it on the road and used it as a vehicle for communication.

Murray: When did it start? Right from the beginning?

Rowena: Yeah, it started pretty well right from the beginning. Wanting to have something to, you know, let people know what this was about. And finding that people just weren't really aware and we needed this kind of thing and so it was started as a kind of a house publication you'd say, I guess.

Murray: How was it distributed? Do you recall that at all?

Rowena: I think we did do some mailing but we didn't have much money so mostly it was just handed out. Because when she was editor she tried to get it out on kind of a regular basis so that there would be a bit of a continuity, that you'd know that you could look for it. And I'm sure I have a bunch of Moose Calls someplace.

Murray: Would it be the kind of thing that announced meetings or events or something?

Rowena: Yeah, it was pretty well telling about what the council had done and who was going where and when there was going to be another meeting and this kind of thing. Or if there was a pow-wow coming up or, you know, just information sharing.

Murray: What kinds of activities took place around the Centre, you know, out from the council, that kind of thing?

Rowena: Well, I remember we had a big pow-wow one time that was supposed to be a big money raiser but it didn't turn out to be a big money raiser. It turned out to be a fairly good pow-wow but that was more than anything else. At that time, there was a youth club. Jean Cuthand was a nurse in northern Saskatchewan and lived in Prince Albert and she was the counsellor for the youth club and this was quite a big thing. A lot of the young people from the residential school belonged and other young people who came to town for courses and were boarding in town. And this really was quite a strong organization at one point. You know, a youth club that held dances and did various activities and was a meeting place for the young people. Because the Centre was more of a drop-in thing. It wasn't so much a program centre in those days. People came and there were meetings and this kind of thing but the youth club was, I suppose, the big program thing as I remember.

And oh, for instance, I remember the Centre found out about some scholarships that were available to non-status Indian people and helped somebody find one and did this kind of thing, trying to find out what facilities were available or what things were there that people didn't know about and tried to publicize them. I think this was part of the thing in those days was just to let people know what the programs were, that not necessarily the Centre had, but that other people had. And

encouraged them.

Murray: You were saying that Malcolm didn't really get involved until after you left the Centre.

Rowena: That's certainly my memory, you know. My memories of Malcolm are not so much at the Centre as in a personal way, in talking with him and knowing his family.

Murray: Could you describe him a bit then, as you knew him, his characteristics as an individual.

Rowena: As I remember him, I think of him as a very alive, vibrant kind of person you know. Sparkling eyes that just pierced you...

(End of Side A)

(Side B)

Rowena: ...you know, like I think he was a friend of mine and he was nice to me but he wished that...(chuckles)

Murray: Your skin was a different color.

Rowena: Yeah. That there could have been more native people. And Adam Cuthand was very active at that time. He was vice-president of the council when it began and there were native people active but there were very few really. And as I mentioned, Fred Yiyakicoot had been in on the early discussions and had been quite active, and David Knight, and of course, Jean Cuthand herself was very active then. So that there were people with leadership and having input into it but still there was a lot of input from non-native people.

Murray: What was his relationship with the native people you've just mentioned, Jean Cuthand and Adam Cuthand? Was he active with them at all or can you recall that?

Rowena: I can't recall really, him having much contact with them. And you see, they were active in the organization and had leadership positions where, at that point, Malcolm didn't. Now, I don't know what their relationship was or whether there was much or not.

Murray: Much has been said by other people I've talked to about Malcolm being fully integrated into sort of white middle class society. Was that your impression as well?

Rowena: Well, he was certainly part of the society and his family was, I guess you'd say, a well accepted unit in the community. He had, at that point, very attractive, talented young girls who were in high school and elementary school and who were taking part in things and they were very much part of the community as another family would be. And I remember he had really high expectations for those kids. They weren't just

to be as good as anybody else. They were to be better, you know. And one of the girls who baby-sat for me - I never had anybody who did things more perfectly, you know. The children's clothes were all folded up at night and placed. They weren't just left, like most times happened, thrown on a chair. But they were neatly folded and, you know, it was almost a perfectionist as though...

Murray: This was Malcolm's influence you'd think, eh?

Rowena: This was my feeling. Now I just know that he had great hopes for these girls and was very proud of them and rightly he should be. They really were, I think, pretty special people. But you know, I always had the feeling that he had really high expectations and that now, by golly...

Murray: Did those expectations extend to other people he knew, as well?

Rowena: I often felt that this was part of his frustration. That he really wanted us all to have such a breadth of knowledge and of sympathy that a lot of us didn't have. And this really disappointed him and made him bitter, kind of.

Murray: He wanted everyone to be as dedicated as he was.

Rowena: Yeah, I think so. And you know, this just wasn't the case. Some people were at some points, or you know, you had some understanding but with different background. So many people just had no experience to kind of get this kind of feeling. So, you know, I think he had a lot to offer but I think he was impatient.

Murray: And it was obvious.

Rowena: I think so, yeah. I know when I talked to my husband he said this was the thing Malcolm just dearly loved, to get in to a real discussion with him and toss ideas back and forth. And you know, he'd talk like the church was, you know, opate of the people. But he'd come.

Murray: He went to church?

Rowena: Yeah. (chuckles) And you kind of said, well, you know, he's...

Murray: Did you ever ask him why? How to fit that in with his comments about the church?

Rowena: Well, you know, I think it was kind of, "Well, maybe there is something here I haven't found out yet. I'll..."

Murray: Did he proclaim himself an atheist at any point that you recall?

Rowena: I don't know. I should ask my husband. This was

kind of the tenor of his talk and yet he encouraged his children, too, to attend. Which, you know, was kind of a contradiction. What he said was, "They are just a bunch of hypocrites and..."

Murray: I'm just guessing but do you think it might have been that he wanted his children to have all the proper accoutrements in society? Would that be part of it?

Rowena: I think it could be part of it. On the other hand, I think Malcolm was enough of a searcher that, if there is something here I haven't found or if there is something here that my kids haven't found, I don't want to cut them off from it.

Murray: He wasn't dogmatic in that sense.

Rowena: No, I think that he would sound so dogmatic but really, I don't know. I had the feeling when he came that he was kind of saying, "Yeah, I'm really dogmatic but on the other hand, gosh, maybe you have something here I should take a look at."

Murray: We've got so many impressions of Malcolm as being always aggressive and always talking, but could he listen as well when people expressed their opinions?

Rowena: In talking to him, I remember him listening but I don't remember him in meetings and this kind of thing so I don't know how he was with other people, you know, really. But in just a small group discussion, I remember him listening. I felt he was intellectually curious enough that he wanted to learn from other people. I don't really know what his formal background was but you felt he was the kind of person who absorbed a great deal from people around him and that he did pick their brains so to speak.

Murray: What impression did you get of Malcolm's feeling about his Indian ancestry? How did that affect Malcolm's personality? If you can remember that at all.

Rowena: Well, I felt he was proud of his ancestry. And I maybe felt, too, that he was a little confused about accepting so much that was really not part of the Indian culture. You know, that he was so much part of the non-Indian culture, that this was a bit of ambivalence, that he kind of had come to terms with it and yet, maybe, he was just a little confused as to whether he had accepted too much of the non-Indian culture. Because he had a comfortable living and had all the things that went along with so-called middle class society, and accepted these, and yet maybe kind of said, "Ought I really to be in this as deep as I am?" (chuckles)

Murray: Could you elaborate on that at all? Can you recall any comments that he might have made along those lines?

Rowena: Just really thinking in terms of helping his family to

identify, you know, wondering if he had helped them to become part of society so much that it was hard for them to really see their native heritage. Because their acceptance was probably not as native people but, you know, they were Norrises. And I just can't think of anything he'd say but just that he was really proud of the Indian heritage but just wondering how do you hang on to that.

Murray: How to get the best from white society and yet remain an Indian.

Rowena: Yeah.

Murray: Was that a later development when you knew him or did he have that feeling right from the time you first met him?

Rowena: I'd say I remember that really from the time... Now partly it may have been that he wasn't too well and he began to think about, you know, what am I leaving my children, kind of thing, and how am I helping them to really establish their own identity. I just can't think any more specifically than that.

Murray: Was it important to Malcolm to be on top of things?

Rowena: Oh, I think so, yeah. Yeah, I don't think he could accept kind of just being in the background or not knowing what

was going on. Maybe from his own background and experience, having been involved, it just was very hard to sit back, and also because of the kind of person he was. He found it difficult just to sit still and let it go by and I think this is really why he often didn't come to some of our early service council meetings because he just couldn't sit back and say nothing.

Murray: And he knew that, perhaps.

Rowena: And he knew that. And so, if he wasn't ready to become involved, he just said, "Okay, I guess I won't go."

Murray: He let it go.

Rowena: Yeah. Yeah, I can remember him kind of saying this, that, you know, "I don't know that you're doing the right thing but I know that I can't just go and listen. If I go, I'm going to get myself entangled." And at that point he just knew that it wasn't a wise thing for him to do.

Murray: Do you think that part of his sort of being on top, and I don't want to put anything into your mind that isn't there, was a result of his viewing himself as a native person? That he wanted people to see a native person on top as opposed to just Malcolm Norris on top?

Rowena: I don't know. No, I really don't know. I couldn't sort that out one from the other.

Murray: What kind of social activities took place in Prince Albert when you were there that Malcolm might have been

involved in? Such as, you know, get-togethers or dances or little parties or anything like that. Do you recall him being active in that kind of social circle?

Rowena: Not that I was involved in but that doesn't say that he wasn't. But I don't really remember him. I remember him more just being in their home or being with a few people.

Murray: Would he drop over to your place for example? And sit and chat?

Rowena: Yeah, and I remember his older daughter used to come often and chat too. And just to talk. She used to come and talk to my husband and...

Murray: What was her name?

Rowena: Betty. This is Betty who is Betty Profitt now. And I guess she lives in Alberta, I think. She was at the thing in Prince Albert, I remember. This is when I caught up with her. But she was either away from home or had taken her training or was older at the point we knew her, but she used to come back and used to come over and chat and they were, you know, they were thoughtful kids. Kids who, like Malcolm, seemed to like to share their thoughts and I suppose, maybe, trying to sort out who they were and this kind of thing.

Murray: Did you ever get the impression of how they reacted to, or how Malcolm's political activity affected them? Was there any tension in the family that you could tell from that?

Rowena: Not that I really was aware of, you know. I suppose you heard comments that Malcolm was a this or a that and that people took a very dim view of him if you happened to be on one side of the fence or the other side, but I don't really remember hearing comments related to the family. Because the kids were such personable people in their own right that I think they were pretty well accepted for what they had to offer. But again, you know, that could or could not be true. That was just my impression.

Murray: Did any of the children ever talk about discrimination or that kind of thing at all? Were they at all political like Malcolm was?

Rowena: At that point, I don't remember that. Now, as I say, the older girl used to talk with my husband quite a bit but I think it was more in relation to the things that she was concerned about herself rather than...

Murray: Her own personal...

Rowena: Yeah, than political questions. But I couldn't say.

(End of Side B)

(End of Interview)

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