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REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN  
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\*ADELINE SPARVIER WOULD LIKE THIS INFORMATION TO BE AVAILABLE TO  
HER CHILDREN AT ANY GIVEN TIME.

Nathan: Adeline, were your grandparents Metis or were they  
new Metis, that is parents may have been Treaty Indians, or  
might have been a child of a Metis mother or white father?

Adeline: They were Treaty Indians. They were all Treaty  
Indians.

Nathan: Has the family always lived here or did they  
immigrate from, if so where? and when? and why?

Adeline: Well they all lived in Crooked Lake, you know, my grandparents. Yeah. They used to be in Belco, North Dakota, but, you know, they came and visit and then they stayed in Crooked Lake.

Nathan: So where were you born?

Adeline: In Boadview. Well, on the reserve at Crooked Lake, Cowasis Reserve.

Nathan: How large was your family?

Adeline: My mother, yeah nine boys and I'm the only one alive.

Nathan: Did they have their own home at that time?

Adeline: Who, my parents?

Nathan: Yes.

Adeline: Oh yes. We had a farm.

Nathan: What kind of farm?

Adeline: Everything, horses, pigs, you know. Four head of cattle too, cows too. We made a living on the reserve like.

Nathan: What was it made of?

Adeline: What?

Nathan: You home at that time?

Adeline: Logs. Mud shack. A log cabin.

Nathan: What kind of furniture did you have at that time? Was it handmade or was it boughten?

Adeline: Yeah, handmade. In-laws, you know, carpenter they make their own chairs, they make their own beds, everything.

Nathan: Did, how did your family make a living? Was it work like the seasonal, permanent, or did they supplement their living by hunting, trapping, cutting wood?

Adeline: Oh yes, cutting wood. Oh boy we used to cut lots of wood. And our parents...

Nathan: Did you sell the wood to?

Adeline: Oh yes, to Broadview. \$2.80 a load that time, and still you had to haul the wood in there. And you had on the farm to help you a little bit. Fishing and all that stuff. Deer hunting and everything.

Nathan: Did you have a garden at that time, did you?

Adeline: Oh yes. My husband used to have good garden.

Nathan: Did you consider yourselves as poor compared to others?

Adeline: Oh we were poor. (laughs) Scratch, right from scratch. Yeah. My dad used to have to hitch up four horses and a plow, you know. Even us too we had to farm.

Nathan: Oh, everybody pitched in eh?

Adeline: Everybody pitched in. My father-in-law, my father-in-law, my in-laws, you know, brother-in-laws try and make the farm go. Keep up the farm I mean.

Nathan: Okay. Where did you go to school?

Adeline: In Maryville. And Lebret, and I went to Lebret I went to grade eight there that's only how it was them days.

Nathan: Were there Metis in your family?

Adeline: Oh yes. (inaudible).

Nathan: But he was Metis?

Adeline: He was a Indian too, yeah.

Nathan: That's before they started putting (inaudible)?

Adeline: Yeah, before these Day Schools come out. Since the Day Schools come out everything turn like white people, eh. (laughs)

Nathan: Could you tell me more about that?

Adeline: Yeah, they wanted us to live like white people. But, you know, there's nothing like the old farm, you know. (laughs) You don't pay that much for eggs on the farm. Today now how much eggs cost, eggs and everything else. We used to make butter, dairy butter them days, we didn't color it mind you it was white, but we didn't color it there was no color in them days. (laughs)

Nathan: Natural.

Adeline: It was really, it look like lard but it's different, it was made, you know, and we seperate in these old canneries, twisting. That's what my dad had. To wash our clothes we had those you push up and down like this. (laughs)

Nathan: On a scrub board?

Adeline: Yeah. And you had to wring your clothes and hang them out, boy they used to smell good, you know.

Nathan: Did you make your own soap?

Adeline: Yes. (Indian) they call that, homemade soap.

Nathan: What was it called?

Adeline: (Indian).

Nathan: (Indian).

Adeline: Yeah. That's made with grease eh, three pounds of grease and then you put lye in there. And we used to have bare floors, oh they used to be nice to scrub the floors.

Nathan: That's what you used to wash the floors too?

Adeline: Oh yes, they come nice and white. Oh that's lye soap they call it now. (Indian) they used to call it, well it was made with grease eh and lye.

Nathan: What were some of the supplement of food diet that you had at that time besides your domestic animals?

Adeline: Besides fishing, like fish, and we used to make those gooseberries, and (Indian) we called them; us we called them Indian popcorn now today. You know, when you grind the things and we used to use two little stones, you know, to crush the berries and that was our fruit. Well, there was other things too dry apples and all that, but that's mostly what Indians it's that pemmican.

Nathan: Pemmican.

Adeline: That's what they call it now, pemmican today yeah.

Nathan: That was your diet then?

Adeline: Oh sure.

Nathan: Keep you from getting scurvy. (laughs)

Adeline: Yeah. (laughs)

Nathan: At that time what kind of dance, like when you had your dances or socials were they just Metis or were they mixed like Indian, Metis, and white people?

Adeline: Yeah, all people. Well, we didn't try to mix-up with white people right away that's here. Joe Laroque, my uncle, he didn't want to have the white people come into the reserve, because of the bows. You know what I mean, they try to keep all the 800 Indians together. Today you can't they're all scattered. Yeah.

Nathan: Do you know any of the, like the weddings or songs like those...

Adeline: Oh yeah. We used to sing French, you know. Oh they used to have lots of fun. They used to have those Reil of Eight they call them, they're trying to dance that today but nobody's calling out the Reil of Eight. Yeah.

Nathan: What's the word again?

Adeline: Reil of Eight.

Nathan: Reil of Eight.

Adeline: Yeah. There's eight people dancing. Yeah that was like Drops of Brandy, you know, that stuff.

Nathan: Were you good at that?

Adeline: Oh yes, I used to be. (laughs) I'd be out of wind today. (laughs) But I go, you know, watch them. Even on parade there I seen them. Indian and Me...you know, the Friendship Centre see the little kids, but they don't make the right turns. (laughs) Of course they'd all mixed, yeah.

Nathan: That was part of the social (inaudible)?

Adeline: Yeah that's true, it sure reminded me of years back when I used to run for boyfriends and all (laughs), trying to be nice to a boy. (laughs)

Nathan: That was also (inaudible)?

Adeline: Yeah, right.

Nathan: What kind of farming was there at home? (inaudible)?

Adeline: Oh yeah, they used to do that, they used to call it a dance, you know, they put up a dance after they work all day and all year round like, you know, when they cut hay and all that there's a dance at the end at night.

Nathan: Yeah, but what did they call that?

Adeline: What did they call it, well the gathering, you know. After, yeah a work dance. Yeah that's what they called it then. Yeah.

Nathan: Do you remember any stories told, or folklores told in the past the Metis hunts or other happenings that you can describe?

Adeline: Oh long ago my old father-in-law there, Joseph William Bacon, he used to go out hunting for moose. I don't know where, well I was small that time, well I was just married like so I don't know. He used to disappear for six months. (laughs) Lots of them, you know, not only my in-laws, but other ones too, Pelletiers and all...

Nathan: They were getting buffalo meat and all...

Adeline: Buffalo meat and all kinds of wild meat. You know, an Indian is allowed hunting all year round, now today you can't do that, you can't go out and go and fish or else the cop is right there.

Nathan: It's not a cop now it's a game warden.

Adeline: It's a game warden or whatever.

Nathan: The same thing.

Adeline: Yeah. They are strict today.

Nathan: Do you know...

Adeline: Years back the Indians tried to make a living with wild meat and anything, anything deer meat, (?), you know. They killed a deer and (?), they'd take a knife and make stakes, you know, and they dried them up in dry meat and they'd put them in little bags. Gunny sacks them days, no plastic things, nothing. (laughs) Now today everything is plastic.

Nathan: They salted and dried out the meat?

Adeline: Yeah. Even the fish we used to do that.

Nathan: Smoke?

Adeline: Smoke it, you know, make a fire right in here and we used that...

Nathan: (inaudible).

Adeline: Yeah.

Nathan: How did they hang them up?

Adeline: They hang them up, they make their own, you know, make a band they called them, you know.

Nathan: Make a band?

Adeline: Yeah, that's homemade, how do you call those now, homemade stuff like sticks. It's got to be green or, not poplar the other kind, willows because those don't bend. Yeah, now they tie little twine and that's the way they used to dry their meat. Make fire under there. Yeah.

Nathan: That was men's work or women's work?

Adeline: Anybody. They all got together, yeah. There was five reserves where I was raised, so we used to get all get together go sleigh and (inaudible), you know, like the white would they used to all come. We lived always close to the agency us.

Nathan: Indian agency?

Adeline: Yeah. They used to say, lets go and help this party he's going to, you know, like he's going to kill an animal. There was no deep freeze nothing them days. You had to hurry up and dry it, even the guts. (laughs) They eat liver and all that, you know, everybody had the meat there to help.

Nathan: Like if someone went out the other ones would help too?

Adeline: Yeah, well that's it. They used to invite each other. My dad used to come to Goose Lake alot, because (?) was there and all those other old people, he knew lots over there.

Nathan: (?).

Adeline: Yeah. That's the old, old... I think old (?) used to (inaudible).

Nathan: At that time was there any dress, special way for special occasions, or...

Adeline: Dresses, yes they had the old style they had to be white right here and a little black, you know, a little long their little feet sticking out. (laughs) You know, today they just dress up any old way. (laughs)

Nathan: Why did they have standard dresses?

Adeline: Well, they had to see the Cowasis Reserve always had grey and white, and the trouble is they had white, it had to be white on top and they had kind of green skirts, the women. And the men well they had always these slacks, what they call those slacks? Today they're still here in Regina the old time slacks, they're tight at the bottom. (laughs)

Nathan: Oh, they're baggy on the legs.

Adeline: Yeah, they fit right up here but at the bottom they were narrow. Yeah that's the kind.

Nathan: A lot of overalls too eh?

Adeline: Right. Overalls, you know, with bibs and everything. That's the old days.

Nathan: How did, like the dances there was a lot of jigging then...

Adeline: Oh yes.

Nathan: Did they have powwows then?

Adeline: Oh yes. Everybody they used to get together gatherings, you know, at the old Treaty grounds then. Just right there where we used to live right by the agency, by the

lake, Crooked Lake. But it was Agency Lake they call it, well the Crooked Lake is down, further down, yeah. And then they used to have tents sticking up and all that, tepees. Make a band.

Nathan: The Metis they were in there too were they?

Adeline: Oh yes, everybody. I think all the chiefs they got along together.

Nathan: How did that start when they started dividing up the Indians and the Metis?

Adeline: I don't know when they start, well when the people start going to school in cities and all that.

Nathan: Residential Schools?

Adeline: Yes.

Nathan: Churches?

Adeline: Churches and, they didn't care what religion they had we all worked together all the same, then when they start having those rain dances and all that I think that's the way the religion spread out. Yeah. You know what a rain dance is? They had an awful lot of them too.

Nathan: What language was spoken at home?

Adeline: Cree. All the time, boy I had a hard time when I went to school 19-- something, '21. I had to try and teach myself English, because my teacher was a French. (laughs) Cecelia was her name, Sister Cecelia. There was sisters them days. Now today they have men and wife, you know.

Nathan: Well the churches didn't have a lot of role in making up a lot of the...

Adeline: Yeah.

Nathan: ...people...

Adeline: The Catholic people and all that, but they all got together anyway no matter what religion it's like, you know what I mean. They all got together. Oh, you want a smoke?

Nathan: I'm trying to learn as much as I can about them too, because at one time everybody was together and now it's like this.

Adeline: Yeah, they're all spread out, yeah.

Nathan: That's what I want to get to this point.

Adeline: The white people spoil us today, you know what I mean. But me anybody comes to me when I try to do my best,



they want a cup of tea or something, you know, bread, bannock, anything. Yeah. (Indian) they call that, donuts or whatever. That was my dad's ways, he invited the whole five reserves if he was able. (laughs) He was always...

Nathan: A lot of sharing.

Adeline: Yeah. He didn't care.

Nathan: Did the churches, what kind of religion play in your life at that time? Like did you attend church with your parents? (inaudible) religious people, what kind of church did they have in changing, or what effect did they have with your community or your family?

Adeline: Like (?) there we were Roman Catholics all the time us. But then my mother she used to make powwows and she used to feed the people.

Nathan: Traditional.

Adeline: Yeah. Oh, she'd have about forty women helping her outside. (laughs) You had to cook outside them days.

Nathan: What did the church think about that?

Adeline: Well, they thought it was a religion, you know, what I mean they thought it was an Indian old fashioned religion they'd call it eh, long ago.

Nathan: The bell used to wake...

Adeline: That's just the way to, you know...

Nathan: Their ways.

Adeline: Yeah their ways, instead when that... What I was telling you there when they start to have those rain dances that was real, these people were sacrificing forty hours, delusions it was like. I don't know how you say that now. They were starving themselves...

Nathan: Fasting.

Adeline: Fasting. It's like Holy Week for us Catholics now. But we never laughed at their religion or they didn't laugh at the Catholic religion, nothing they all got together.

Nathan: How did the Indian agents that time try to keep the Treaty and the non-status and the Metis, like when they started doing that (inaudible)?

Adeline: Well they had to ask the chiefs. There was a chief for every reserve eh. They had to ask the chief. Well, one of them was Joe (?) that was (?) he was nine years he was the chief, that was my uncle, my mother's brother. Now the other chief was suppose to have, was gee, he had a very easy name

(Indian) I think it's something like that, but he had an Indian name too, you know. That's the name of their reserve, because that was him.

Nathan: (Inaudible)?

Adeline: Yeah.

Nathan: Like when you were growing up like a lot of people felt it was necessary, some people feel to hide their Indian ancestry they did for the result of moving away, or even far away from their Indian relatives so that they looked, means they looked Indian, for those that looked Indian that they didn't want to be considered Indians?

Adeline: No, no. They agree together, all them. It's just lately they started that, I don't know what year them wars started, you know, when they start enlisting the boys and all that. And then they had these white people start (inaudible). You don't belong here. (Indian), your not allowed here that's what it means.

Nathan: So that's what happened?

Adeline: Oh, well they started them days yeah.

Nathan: This is after they went across the seas?

Adeline: Yes.

Nathan: To fight in war...

Adeline: Yeah.

Nathan: The war won?

Adeline: 1919 or 1915 that was, I was just three year old, and that ws the one but hey talk about it lots, you know.

Nathan: So you listened to the old stories?

Adeline: Oh yes. My dad was great for that, tell everybody. You know, the young people.

Nathan: And of those stories did they tell, did they have a lot of way of helping you...

Adeline: Yeah, well I said... Yeah, well they say that and that time when all what I knew I had nine brothers, but they all died. Now I thought I'm all by myself in one this Treaty family, Sparvier. Now I try to go with the other people like, you know, and I was going to school then I ask my mother, is that alright if I go with this French man of mine? Eh, she says, French man! Well, I said, I speak French just like dad. Why sure, she says, never mind you can go. You know, that's going to school in Broadview or wherever.

Nathan: Were there like, when the Metis people think of themselves like were they separated from the whites?

Adeline: Yeah. That's when, yeah. That's when I think, you know, like you had to ask your parents if you can go with this boy. Them days they were strict eh, I was the only girl in the family I guess they were stingy of me, I don't know. (laughs) So anyway, everybody, my friends like my cousins they'd come and get me, we're going to take Adeline to a dance. So I go with them, as long as I'm with somebody to guide me, because that's how strict the laws were for dancing them days. Now today they just take off on you anyway. (laughs)

Nathan: Yeah.

Adeline: Like you don't know if they're gone.

Nathan: Like some of these, like even those Metis relatives that left the reserve or weren't in the reserve, were there still ties (inaudible)?

Adeline: Yeah that's it, they all had different reserves like they had some in the States too, you know, Montana and Poplar and all that, you know.

Nathan: They didn't recognize (inaudible)? What is asking, did you go and visit (inaudible)...

Adeline: Yeah.

Nathan: ...to a different one?

Adeline: Yeah.

Nathan: Did you guys go and visit them?

Adeline: Of course, we had to because they call us. You know, they want us to, not to, don't throw away your relations, you know.

Nathan: No matter what.

Adeline: Yeah.

Nathan: Was there any problem with the government like the department of Indian affairs for doing that?

Adeline: Oh sure. You had to have a little pass, a little, like where's my Indian card? This is my Indian card, well not this kind...

Nathan: A ticket.

Adeline: A ticket they write you just like when you're ticketed with a car they give you, of course they don't have your picture on it, they just give you forty-eight hours to go and visit.

Nathan: And you could be far away too.

Adeline: You could be far away forty-eight hours.

Nathan: And if they didn't come back...

Adeline: There was no, there was just wagons, you know, hitch up with a horse and you couldn't be right back. Then you had to hurry up there was no phones them days, you had to hurry up and complain why you stayed one week behind from your ticket.

Nathan: (inaudible)?

Adeline: No, no. Right away you had to, when you had to when you get to Broadview like when we got to Broadview sometimes we were away out down in the States, Belco, North Dakota well you can't come back in forty-eight hours. (laughs) You have to travel by wagon, there was no cars them days that was 1927 already.

Nathan: Did you have any open discrimination or hostility towards you as a Metis person? Like was it different, feel any hostility for being the way you are from other surrounding communities? Like the... Did the white people call you down and call you an Indian?

Adeline: No.

Nathan: You got along with them?

Adeline: We had to, because we were not allowed liquor them days and they were telling us that's a poor thing to do. We used to drink beer with other people. Had they had that long ago they used to make those little things, my mother even used to set some (laughs) wine like, you know.

Nathan: Homemade wine.

Adeline: Yeah. Made with, you can't believe this, them grass outside that way there, what do you call that?

Nathan: Dandelions.

Adeline: Dandelions, my mother was great for that. My dad didn't want her to do that, but, you know, that's my own use. She was like that, it was her own use.

Nathan: Like, do you have any trouble like wages that time were the same as the white people as for jobs for you too? Like as you grew up did you see any discrimination and some people get paid more than other because of their Indian ancestry?

Adeline: No. It was always a side wages they called that. My dad used to go out and work at the agency and he got \$4.80. That's one week. (laughs) You can't do very much with, well

them days everything was so cheap eh. We could buy tobacco for ten cents a package, everything was cheap.

Nathan: What did a lot of the Indian people think about, like the, some people, like town officials every try to get you to move or try to force you off land you were on?

Adeline: No, not because the chiefs they wouldn't let their, that's why they had a passes to go around visiting.

Nathan: What about your Metis people the ones that didn't go, didn't get into the Treaty or the reserve some were voted in?

Adeline: Like half breeds you mean?

Nathan: Yeah.

Adeline: (Indian) they call them. That's what they call the half breeds. We always got along with them (?) and (?). There's a reserve over there I can't think of that reserve today, that belongs to Carl (?). He's got an Indian name, it's close to Yorkton on ths side.

Nathan: It's a settlement?

Adeline: Yeah it's a settlement now that's where the half breeds used to be. But we used to always go there.

Nathan: Well, did it feel like were the Metis, were they encouraged to feel that they should marry Metis, so did they? Or were Metis women encouraged to white men, did they or did Metis men only marry Metis women?

Adeline: Their own like, you know.

Nathan: They married their own race?

Adeline: Yeah, their own races like Cree.

Nathan: What about cousins and that?

Adeline: No, no they were against that.

Nathan: (inaudible)?

Adeline: Yeah, they were against that.

Nathan: Now today?

Adeline: Yeah, today they can marry their sister. (laughs)

Nathan: Did you have friendly relations with your neighbors, like did you barter with them, trade with them with game, firewood?

Adeline: Oh yes. We used to chop wood and lots, you know, and my dad used to tell these (?), come and haul all the wood. Well

there was no soil them days that was old time, old time always, you know. These old, my dad used to have lots they build mud shacks and everything with them carpenters. (laughs)

Nathan: So you had good relationships with the farmers eh?

Adeline: Yeah.

Nathan: Well at that time was it possible to see a doctor if you had no money? And what kind of medicare did they receive the Metis?

Adeline: Well, you know, them days we had grass and everything, today they make fun of that grass they smoke it and everything, but us we used to boil it in a kettle eh. If you have pneumonia or something they drink it.

Nathan: Medicine.

Adeline: Yeah, medicine, Indian medicine. There was lots of weeds, you know, they grow from the farm, certain place in Goose Lake and certain place in Crooked Lake right along weeds, high grass, you know, even these trees, you know, they pick. (telephone rings) We had our own Indian drugs.

Nathan: (inaudible)?

Adeline: Yeah, you know, you can take it from the grass and you...

Nathan: Roots?

Adeline: Yeah, roots and all that like seneca root that was good to drink when you had diarrhea. (laughs)

Nathan: You used to sell that too?

Adeline: Yeah they sold it oh by ten bags, oh sometimes fifteen, you know, dried up and that's medicine. Of course, today I don't know where the white people they use it for something, I don't know.

Nathan: At that time what was the best time to pick it?

Adeline: Yeah, when it was grown, you know, you had a little rod here and you have a (?), stick and a little step you just dig that root. (laughs) That seneca root, yeah. Leach Lake is that place, yeah. Now I thought of it, we used to go on big round out there lots.

Nathan: Did the people dig that too?

Adeline: Well, they asked us what it meant for us.

Nathan: They didn't know about it?

Adeline: They didn't know it and then we used to tell them,

you know, like when they (?) bloom how they are, well you tell them before the bloom falls, that little blooms we used to dig it. They used to help us white people, yeah. They didn't know (inaudible) gathering roots, well that's what they meant.

Nathan: How old were you during the depression?

Adeline: Well I was just a baby, a kid then about 1927 I was born 1915 you see here. And that time when all them all old, they called it the hungry '30s. (laughs)

Nathan: Hungry '30s.

Adeline: 1927 to 1933 then that's when that war started there.

Nathan: World war two.

Adeline: Yes. By then I had two boys going to school already there.

Nathan: Did it have an impact on a lot of the people (inaudible) like help the work, like did the people go across seas to fight?

Adeline: I don't remember. Kyser was the name of the, when I hear that was over seas, I don't know, it was someone.

Nathan: Did your family get goods, trading and buying at the time during the dirty '30s to get by?

Adeline: Yes, and my dad used to have to go and trade some things, you know, (inaudible) all the horses...

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