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HIGHLIGHTS:

- General account of his life
- Briefly describes some of the activities of the Metis Society of Saskatchewan

Judy: Today is February 19, 1984, and I'm at the home of Mr. Lawrence Pritchard and this is in regards to Metis history that we'll be discussing. Now, Mr. Pritchard, when you think about yourself how do you see yourself as a person?

Lawrence: Oh, I don't know. I feel that I've, I'm maybe a very conscientious person. I'm a religious person -- Christian. I believe in God, I believe in treating my fellow people same as I would expect to be treated by them. And I don't know of anything else. I'd like to see myself as being liked by people

that know me. And I don't believe, I don't believe that I have an enemy that will say that, well, you know, that guy is a reprobate or something like this. I don't believe I have. But that's, that's about all I might say, that I can think of right now.

Judy: When you look back at your life and everything that has happened in it, what kind of life do you think you've had?

Lawrence: I've been very lucky, I think. I don't know whether I should go into this but I was born... like I say, I was born... my mother died when I was 3 or 4 years old -- I can't remember her. My dad was a casualty of the First World War and when he come out of the army he tried his best to look after us. Maybe I'm going off the beaten path there.

Judy: No, that's fine.

Lawrence: And he tried his best to look after us and then he couldn't, he couldn't... he done the best he could. Finally he had to get my aunt -- like my mother's, mother's sister -- to look after us. And then she couldn't, so later on my sister Eva then brought us up for a little till we were sent to a boarding school. I was brought up in the boarding schools. I was first at the mission school in Duck Lake, the Indian Industrial School -- I was there for some time. And then Catholic Orphanage in Prince Albert, and started what... When I came out of the orphanage I was given a job by the priest, priest got me a job in Battleford, which I went to the mental hospital. And then, well, my life went on, and finally I met my wife in 1930, yeah. We were married in 1932 by... in the Catholic Church. Well, I had ten children out of that marriage, lost one. And I'm very thankful, I might say, that I have the respect of my children as far as I know, and my wife. We had a very, very good marriage. We've had our troubles, yes, we've had our troubles, lots of them. But it's, it turned out to be a good marriage. And I think I have the respect of my wife and my children and that means a lot to me in my old age.

Judy: Could you tell me where you were born? Lawrence:  
Where I was born?

Judy: Yes.

Lawrence: I was born in Battleford.

Judy: And how long did you live in Battleford before you moved to Saskatoon?

Lawrence: Oh we moved, I... I come into Saskatoon in 1927, I guess it was. No, no, no, '28, '28. I think... I think I worked in the, in the (inaudible) school in 1927, eh. Yeah, I'll go by that. '28, '28 is when I come into Saskatoon here.

Judy: So until that time you lived in the Battlefords area?

Lawrence: Well, I lived in Battleford until I was about,

possibly 7, 8 years old. I was back and forth. I was at the Indian School in Duck Lake -- that's the school that's there today, same school that's there today. I went to school there for sometime. They didn't have room at the orphanage for me so they put me in the Indian school there. They didn't want to do this but they had to, you see. So then after that I was at Prince Albert Orphanage, and then I went to St. Peter's College for some time. And after I left St. Peter's College -- I guess that was in 1927, some of these dates may be just a little bit out -- but I think 1927 when I left St. Peter's College and then worked in Battleford for some time. And then come to Saskatoon after I... no, it was 1929, it was 1929 when I come to Saskatoon -- the year my dad died, 1929. It wasn't '28 it was '29, 1929.

Judy: Could you tell me what it was like? Describe to me an ordinary day when you were young, that you were growing up, from the moment you got up till the moment you went to bed. Tell me as much as you can remember.

Wife: At home or where he was living at the orphanage?

Judy: It doesn't matter.

Lawrence: I can't, I can't recollect too much of the home, outside of when I was staying at my sister's. She was... her husband was... had been in the army -- he was also a casualty of the army. He got shot, thing cut off, his chin cut off. He had been bayoneted, or whatever you call it in the army. And I stayed with them for a while. And it used to be get up in the morning, and possibly -- talking about summertime now, wintertime be a different thing altogether. But in those days they... everything was open, you know. We were on a homestead, they were on a homestead, and I was staying with them, and we'd get up in the morning and maybe go and -- we had a couple cows -- and maybe go and milk a couple of cows, and get a couple of horses and maybe go and do a little work with the horses, maybe a little plowing or something like this. Maybe go out hunting ducks, or gophers. In those days they had some, they had bounty on gophers and tails was 3 cents. We used to get these gophers and take the tails and sell them to in order to get something to eat. It was... you didn't get anything in those days for nothing, you had to go out and get it yourself. And stuff like that -- making hay in the summertime, oh...

Wife: Well, tell her about your day at the orphanage, how it started.

Lawrence: Well, at the orphanage and the Indian school at Duck Lake was something similar, they were something similar. We'd get up in the morning about 5:30 -- 5:30 in the morning we'd be up and get dressed and make our own beds, and go to mass. Go to mass, and those were usually short masses -- half an hour. Just a low mass, half an hour. And I was one of the older ones in there at that time, the time I'm talking about, and after mass we'd go and milk maybe 10, 11 cows. And then after we milked 10, 11 cows we'd have breakfast. After we had breakfast

we'd go to school. After we went to school, at dinner time we'd have a break from 12:00 to 1:30, and during that break we'd go and we'd... They had quite a lot of cattle there, milking cows, and we'd go milk some more cows, maybe two or three. We'd milk three times a day after they just freshened, if you know what I'm talking about. They just had a calf, you see, and their milk was more plentiful then if they were two or three months later, you see. So we'd go and milk maybe two or three cows that had to be milked, and feed them. We had to feed them in the morning too -- I forgot about that. We fed them at the time and cleaned the barn, and I forgot about that. And we got dinner at noon, we'd milk them again feed them, and then go back to school. Four o'clock and be out of school and go back and feed the cows again, look after them, clean the barns for the evening and milk them again. After we done that we went and had supper, had supper. After supper -- no, there was a benediction in there, come in there around, just around that time. I just forget now whether it was before supper or after supper. Before supper, yeah, we'd have benediction, if you know what I'm talking about. That's the Catholic Church see, benediction is a short sermon. And then... anyway, we would milk them again, clean them and feed them again. And then when we finished with that then we'd have supper. And then after supper we were on our own then till, oh, we had about half an hour study time to do your homework. We went back

to school for about half an hour -- that's after supper, like. And then after that we were on our own till nine o'clock. Nine o'clock we went to bed. Lights out.

Judy: I remember you saying that a winter day would be different. How would it be different from a summer day?

Lawrence: No, not there, not there. There it was the same thing, it was the same thing. And on a Saturday, on a Saturday... we had a farm, we had... the insitution there at Prince Albert had a farm. We would haul hay for the cattle from the farm, wood for the place so... Sunday we were pretty well free. We played, you know, we played around and had recreation time, I'll say. Well, couple of hours, couple of hours in the evenings, and Sunday maybe four or five hours, well we had recreation time. And then you were talking to me about, about winter being different. Well winter would be the same, the same procedure. You would go through the same thing in the school. But on my, on my sister's, or my bother-in-law's homestead, it was a little different. Oh, I don't know, maybe slept a little longer and read a little more. There was no radios, no TVs in those days. Maybe played the violin or something like this -- try to learn how to play it -- I never did learn how to play the violin but I tried, but I was too dumb, I guess. (laughs) Well, I was with my dad, my dad used to play the violin but he only knew one tune -- it was the same all the time. I tried to learn that one even and I couldn't do it.

Judy: Could you describe to me the house that you grew up in?

Lawrence: That I grew up in?

Judy: Yes, or the school where you grew up in.

Lawrence: Well, in my, in our home I can't recollect too much, you know, I can't recollect too much of our home. When I said my aunt was looking after me, I can't recollect too much about that. I guess mother's death hit me too hard or something, you know. I was just a youngster and I guess it kind of reacted on me -- I just can't remember too much. But on my brother-in-law's place, my sister's place, it was a log, a log house, log cabin on a homestead. And there was no floor -- you were on the ground, on the ground. There was no... one big room, there was no partitions. And they had a stove in there, naturally, I guess. No beds -- we slept on the floor, winter and summer. And you'd get up with the frost on your nostrils. Of course 50 years later I... about 50 years later we went through that...

Wife: No, no, no...

Lawrence: Not as bad, but it was cold in there some mornings. But anyway, that's about the way it was.

Judy: Did you have any running water or electricity?

Lawrence: In those days?

Judy: Yes.

Lawrence: At my sister's? No, never heard of it. Oh my goodness, you had to be a white man, you had to white man to have running water. And that is... I'm talking about now even in the town and we were on a homestead. But even in the town you had to be a white man have water and I guess even some of them didn't have it.

Judy: Where was your brother's homestead at? Where was it located?

Lawrence: It was, it was at Red Pheasant. There was a little town by the name of Red Pheasant -- it's just between Biggar and Battleford -- and that was about three miles south, little bit east at Red Pheasant.

Judy: Can you remember the furniture in your brother-in-law's house, what it was like?

Lawrence: Well, we never had very much furniture, not very much furniture in there. It was homemade, whatever it was, whatever it was. No (inaudible). When he had this homestead in Red Pheasant, towards the end of the time, he got, he got floors and stuff put on, you see. I'm talking about when he first went in there, when I was there, when I was there, yeah, when I was there, yeah. There was no floors till later on they had it some, a little bit better. He had siding put on it, little bit, through the Soldiers' Settlement Board at that time -- it was something like the Department of Veterans' Affairs, you know. They helped him there later on, later on.

Judy: How close was the nearest neighbor at that time?

Lawrence: Quite a ways. There was one about two miles, about two miles. There was two, I guess, two about two miles away. And then there was a store in Red Pheasant -- it was a little... not quite, order just a little bit of fur and that.

Judy: Do you remember the saying 'road allowance people' when you... road allowance people?

Lawrence: Saying that? Judy: No, do you remember hearing that term?

Lawrence: Oh yes, oh yes, yes, yes, yes. Road allowance people, you see. People.

Judy: The road allowance, the people that lived on the road allowance?

Lawrence: Oh yeah, yes, yes, yes, yes. Yes, I lived on the road allowance. I lived on the road allowance in 1930, 1930 with Bill Tate and Bill Tate's wife, Mrs., Mrs. Melcher (?). And she lives down near the exhibition there, near your grandmother, eh.

Judy: Yeah.

Lawrence: Yeah, Louise, sure. Sure, lived on road allowance with them.

Judy: Where was this located at?

Lawrence: On Pike Lake, just between here and Pike Lake, up by Moon Lake School there. You know where Moon Lake School is? Up on top there, you know.

Judy: How long did you live there for?

Lawrence: Pardon?

Judy: How long did you live there for?

Lawrence: Oh, it wasn't that long, it wasn't that long. But I know of a lot of others that, that lived on road allowance, road allowances around Battleford there where I come from. But I just made that comment that I also lived on the road allowance, the road allowance.

Judy: Were there any family members that you especially remember?

Lawrence: In my family you mean?

Judy: Yes.

Lawrence: Well, maybe my brother Jim was one, and my sister

Eva. They were, they were about the closest to me, I guess. They were, they were closer than my other brothers and sisters. We were... outside of, like I say, my brother Jim and my sister Eva and myself. Maybe my other, my other brothers and sisters were the same, but I was never really close to my other brothers and sisters, you know. Not like, not like she was to her brothers and sisters. They were, they were... or like I was to my children, I was never close like that.

Judy:       What did your father do for a living?

Lawrence: My father, after the, after the, after the War... Before the War, as I said, he was in the North West Mounted Police. He wasn't, he wasn't, he was on guard duty with the Royal North West Mounted Police, you see, before the War. Before, before that time I don't know what he done, see, I don't know what he done before that time. But that was, that was probably in, well, 1914 anyways. Before 1914 he was on guard duty and there was a lot of natives in those days and they had two, two native people there who were on guard duty. My father was one of them and there was another one by the name of John Ballantine -- there's a Ballantine now in Battleford, I think he's with the Metis Society, I think he's the president. Anyway, anyway, he was going on with the Royal North West Mounted Police. And then he went to war, and then when he come back he still worked for the Royal North West Mounted Police. And then he was disabled, you see, then he was disabled, and from there in he got a lot of help, he got a lot of help from the, from the town of Battleford -- he was very well liked. My father was well liked, my family were all well educated. My grandfather was a school teacher. He taught school at Red Pheasant Reserve and at Little Pine and up there by (inaudible), my grandfather, you see. And we were a pretty well-educated family. And...

Wife:       Don't brag.

Lawrence: No, I'm not bragging now, I'm just telling what... It just went out of mind there a little bit what I was going to say. Oh! He was helped, he was helped by the town of Battleford a lot. And he didn't get no pension so they helped him. And he used to be... I think my father was probably the first Metis that was ever called for jury duty in Canada -- that's in Canada, I'd say, not in Battleford or in Saskatoon. Now I'm not sure of this but I'm just thinking of this, see. Any time there was any... That's my grandfather taught at Little Pine. Any time there was jury duty he was called because... my dad would be called. Their post office there, any time there was an overflow of mail for sorting or any sorting, you know, he was called in there. Any time there was, there was anybody needed, and any of the stores, clerking or something, when they were busy he was called. So they helped him this way, you see. He was, he was a jack-of-all-trades, he would do anything. My dad could talk Cree, French, English, he could talk the three languages.

Judy:       Do you remember the date that he was first called for jury duty? As close as you can remember.

Lawrence: Oh no, I can't remember that. But I know certainly, I know certainly that it must have been before my grandfather died in 1925. It was before that. It was before 1925, but I couldn't say what date because I wasn't there, you see. I wasn't around there too much. But it was before my grandfather died, I know that, and he died in 1925.

Judy: Can you tell me what the other Metis men did for a living?

Lawrence: Down there?

Judy: Yes.

Lawrence: Well, there's, there's, there's a cultural aspect of a thing now that it is very, very... But there was a fellow, there was a fellow in Battleford by the name of Harry Stewart -- he was a white man, he was a white man. He had a, he had a big farm, he had a big farm outside of Battleford -- I forget the name of the place, just west of Battleford there. And he was a road contractor, he was a road contractor, contracted roads. And he always got contracts -- I don't know whether he was pulling strings or what, I don't know, but he always got them. And he sub-contracted these contracts, or some part of them, like, you know, anything around (name) and around Battleford, you know what I mean. There was a lot of road building, and he'd sub-contract his contracts to my three uncles, Fred Pritchard, Bill Pritchard and Sol, Sol Pritchard, he sub-contracted to them. And they would hire native people, there would be native people. And any work that that Stewart done on his own was native -- well, not all, you know, but the bulk of it was native people, you see, and he hired native people. He was, he was a benefactor for the Metis and that in that town. And then... That was during the summertime.

And then he had a bunch of horses -- all his equipment was powered by horse, it wasn't powered by power, you know, tractors. There were no tractors in those days, it was all... Well, maybe there might have been tractors too, could have been at that time too, but anyways he didn't use them. There wasn't enough of them out, they were just coming out then maybe, you see, and it was all horse power, you see. So he had to have feed for these horses, so he also contracted out to Metis to make hay in the summertime, and hundreds of tons, hundreds of tons -- it wasn't a matter of 10, 15, 20 tons, there was hundreds of tons. That kept them going all summer from the time they could make hay until they couldn't make it, even

maybe later than that when it was frozen, you see. And he contracted them anyway, and then when the fall time come when these grading outfits come in and the haymaker guys come in, then he, he had a wood business. He had hundreds of cords of wood there. A Metis would go out in the bush, or... you know



what I mean. At that time it wasn't like now, fences all over, you know what I mean. There was a lot of people, lot of open land, you see, where you can go and cut down green, green wood to season it, you see. And you weren't stuck because if you went out there and got a, got a load of wood or a cord of wood, or a cord and a half, or two cords of wood, you brought it into town -- if you couldn't sell it to somebody Stewart would buy it. See, that's the wintertime. Summertime was the other projects, wintertime was that project, you see. And he bought it and then sold it. I don't know where he, I don't know where he shipped it to, but he shipped it to where the market was, where the market was, you see.

So that's where the Metis was pretty well all working. And there's other ones, of course, that had jobs with the government. There was the one there, what did they call him, Ballantine, Jim Ballantine, he worked in the liquor store, he was the vendor of the liquor store. And then there was one, Art (name) I think they called him, he worked in the post office, he was Metis. But I think it was (name). But that's pretty well, to sum it up, the way they lived. Of course there was the odd few that didn't, maybe didn't want to work or...

Judy: How old were you when you got your first paying job? What was that job?

Lawrence: Oh, that was at the mental hospital. Sixteen years old I guess, 16, maybe not quite 16, maybe a little over 16. I just can't recollect that, it was around that time anyway, it was 1927. I was born 1911 so I would be, let's see, 1927, yeah, I would be just around 16, going on 16. Well, my birthday's in March and I think it was April or May that I got hired on there, (inaudible) so I would be just going on 16.

Judy: What other types of jobs have you had during your life?

Lawrence: Well, there's the... I mentioned that, the, the, the...

Wife: Railroad.

Lawrence: No, no, no. This one I just mentioned now, mental hospital, yeah. So after the mental hospital I, well, I don't need that. After the mental hospital I didn't do too much for some time. We got married in 1932 and I done odd jobs, done odd jobs in the city of Saskatoon after we were married. And I had a little money, I had a little money, I had saved a little money. I would have saved a lot more -- I'd worked for all summer and saved my money all summer, and when fall come he didn't pay me. I thought he was a Christian but that's in that other part. (laughs) It's one of our friends too. He wouldn't pay me anyway. But anyway I had a little money when we got married. My mother... my dad left me a little, you know, a little money. And I done up odd jobs and...

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Judy: Just what types of jobs have you had?

Lawrence: Well, I left off at... I had a little money, eh. I had a little money and I done odd jobs, you know, around the house, anything I could get I got. And I made out all all right until just before the War, eh, when I got a job over here at (inaudible). That's not in there, that was just for a little while. They just used me anyway, just for a few months. They called me when they needed me, they were calling school kids out (inaudible). I found this out so I quit and then I went to braking, you see. I went braking on the CPR and I got a job on the CPR, brakeman. And then I worked there till 1946. And then after 1946... I got that there, but I guess you want it here, eh? After 1946...

Wife: Our baby died in '46, remember?

Lawrence: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Wife: And he had hardly spent any time with the babies. He was three months old and you'd hardly seen him.

Lawrence: Well I had, I was working... I was a brakeman then, you see, and I had hardly been able to see my child. About three months old when he passed away and I hardly seen him. So I begin to take stock of myself and I said, "Well, no more, that's enough." So I quit. I quit and I got a job a couple days later, eh, at Quaker Oats. I worked for Quaker Oats till 1949. That was 1946, July 1946 when I, when I quit the railroad, and I worked here at Quaker Oats until 1949 -- about two and a half years, I guess. And then I got the job at the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. Somebody put in my name, recommended me to take over the job as warehouse foreman down there -- one

of the, one of the heads of the Quaker Oats. So they asked me if I wanted it. I said, "Sure, I'll take it." "Think you can do it?" "Sure I can do it." Oh I done it, done it for 16 years. And then after that, why I went to the post office, health. My health broke down on me -- too much dust, you see. I had an office of my own and still the dust would get into me, get into my nose and my chest and my nostrils, mouth, you know, even being in an office, my own office all day except when I went outside to maybe check things around. So my health gave away on me anyways so I, I got a job at the post office delivering mail. So I took it and then that's where I retired -- I was there 7 years. I retired, I retired a little early, about 15 months early. I had to -- that was operations I had then -- health give away completely. I was in worse shape than I am now by far, so I had to quit.

Judy: What sticks out in your mind about your community life when you were growing up?

Lawrence: Well, I don't know too much about... I never had too much community life outside...

Wife: When you were growing up. From the things you've told me, that they were... it was mostly a good life, you know. Nobody ever had it in for everybody else, they were just...

Lawrence: I...

Wife: Everybody helped.

Lawrence: You're talking about when I was growing up, you say?

Judy: Right.

Lawrence: Well not, not too much community life. As I say, I never had too much of a community life until, until, well, until after I got married, I guess, till after I got married. Never had too much community life. I was too busy milking cows. (laughs) About, about... Well, what? Maybe 10 we'll say, 10 twice a day, that's 20. And then about four months, about 24 cows a day I milked besides the other stuff. So it didn't give me much chance for community life there in those days. But after I got married I had some community life. We were involved with the Nutana Welfare Organization there when we were first married. And we were, we were one of the founders of the Metis Society in 1934. My wife was on the executive and so was I in 1934. And we carried on, we carried on there for a few years until I got on the railroad, and then just work. Well I couldn't, couldn't carry on any more because I, I, I had to make a living for my family and that took all my time.

Judy: What do you remember about that organization?

Lawrence: In the, in the...

Judy: The Metis Society, the Saskatchewan Metis Society.

Lawrence: It was all for one and one for all, I'll say that.

Wife: They were all together. What one got the rest got.

Lawrence: No there was no, there was no...

Wife: There was nothing to get.

Lawrence: There was not much to get but what one had, it was what's mine is yours, you see, what's mine is yours.

Wife: They used to help each other, eh.

Lawrence: And then the... I regret to say, I regret to say that we strayed away from that path a lot, too much so, too much so. The Society, the system.

Wife: Well, remember I said that if you can't say anything nice don't say anything at all.

Lawrence: Well, I'm not saying anything nice. I'm not knocking them, I'm just saying that I'm afraid we strayed away from that too much. We've gone Cadillac.

Judy: Do you remember at that time if almost all of the Metis were involved, or were there some that just shied away from the organization?

Lawrence: Oh yes, a lot of them shied away, lot of them shied away, yes, yes, yes, yes.

Judy: Why do you think that... what do you think the reasons were for that?

Lawrence: They didn't want to get, they didn't want to admit that they were what we call half-breeds. Didn't call them Metis then days. The Metis word was known but a Metis in those days was taken more or less as a French, meaning a French half-breed from Quebec. That was the meaning, more or less, or from Manitoba, you see. But that was, they were, they just didn't want to get involved. I've asked, I had asked some in those days and they said no, they didn't want to have nothing to do with it. We don't want to class ourselves as breeds.

Judy: How often did you go to these meetings?                      Lawrence:  
Well, we were, we were underground. In those days we were underground, you might say, to a certain extent, to a certain extent. They had, they had, they had a law, Bennett government... in those days... In 1934 the Bennett government come in and he passed the law that -- what was it? -- unlawful gatherings or something, that you had to have a permit. You had to have a permit to have a gathering -- you see what I mean? -- even in the house, even in a house. So more or less, when I say underground I mean, I don't mean that we went down there, I mean that we, that we did on the sly, you see what I mean? Probably they wouldn't have done nothing to us but maybe they would have put us all in jail, I don't know. But we were, we were, we did approach government, we did approach government in those days for, for funding different things, and, and city, city of Saskatoon, city of Saskatoon in those days. And another thing, I believe, I believe if I remember right, that the, when they approached one of the premiers -- I won't say his name, I won't say his name -- he said, "What's a half-breed or what's a Metis? I never heard of a Metis," he said, "I don't know what that is. What are you fellows talking about."

Judy: What types of funding did you try and get?

Lawrence: Well it was, it was funding, funding for, for maybe welfare funding. Welfare funding -- there was no welfare in those days. I guess maybe in '36...

Wife: Nowadays we can... We didn't... writing materials we got from his... His brother worked in a press, see, Tacton (?) Press, and he used to bring us the leftover papers that we could use to write on.

Lawrence: Something like Star-Phoenix only on a smaller scale, you see. They put out some small paper then.

Wife: They had no money for stamps or... We wrote a letter, we had to use our own stamps. I remember that because I was the one that wrote the letters.

Lawrence: Yeah, she, she, she was the secretary.

Wife: I didn't last long there, I'm telling you. That's more than I could...

Lawrence: She was the secretary and I was the vice-president. But we had problems there too. With the membership and...

Wife: There was no charge for membership then.

Lawrence: No. No, there were...

Wife: And they used to meet in houses. Everybody would bring their own...

Lawrence: They were going political, too much political, politics in them days. You know, we had a meeting one time and we put in a vote of non-confidence on the ones that were there. That's where I had to manage the business for a little while -- not very long -- then they elected another president. They elected Mike Vandale then, eh. That was her cousin. Cousin? About in 1934.

Judy: What did the white people that knew the Society think about it?

Lawrence: Well, I don't think really that there was too many knew, eh, Mother? I don't really know, I don't really know, I don't...

Wife: We didn't...

Lawrence: They never, they never...

Wife: Condemned you or anything.

Lawrence: No, no, no.

Wife: They didn't, they didn't help you either.

Lawrence: No, they didn't help us...

Wife: But they didn't condemn us.

Lawrence: I don't think they knocked us, I don't think they knocked us. I don't remember them knocking us.

Wife: It's hard to remember things like that.

Judy: At the meetings, do you remember discussing Metis history or Metis scrip?

Lawrence: In those days?

Judy: Yes.

Lawrence: Oh, scrip, yes. Scrip, I remember scrip. Not history, I don't think. The people that belonged to it... I'm not saying 100 percent, but the Metis people that belonged to it knew the Metis history, you know. Like I say, not all of them, but they knew, they knew that we had our roots in the Red River Settlement. That's practically where all the roots come

from, the Red River. And that they were more or less, after 1869-70, that they were more or less -- not forced, but there was nothing there for them, so they come west, they come west. And then they settled in Batoche, St. Louis and different places, St. Laurent. And some of them... well Battleford was, before that, Battleford was a settlement for Metis there I guess long before 1869, I think. And some went further west. Well, they knew this, you see, the ones that belonged knew this, I think, anyway. Birminghams and ...

Judy: Haskins (?).

Lawrence: Haskins (?) and (name). I don't know if (name) belonged or not. But there was Ted Watt (?). They all knew that, the fundamental history, I will say, the basic history, they knew it. They didn't know it all, naturally. Well, we don't know it today. People don't even, people that think they know it don't know it all today yet.

Judy: What did you discuss about Metis scrip?

Lawrence: Well not too much, not too... We never went into, into scrip too much. We knew that they had been... our parents, our grandparents had been... in some cases, not in all cases, had been robbed, or whatever you want to call it, or had been stolen from them. The land had been stolen from them, or they left it behind, they left it behind to come and find, find brighter pastures in Saskatchewan, or Alberta, or wherever. Well we knew this, but there was not too much, not too much about scrip. No, it was mostly, it was mostly comradeship is what was the big thing, I think. Try to help each other within, within, within ourselves, with ourselves or by ourselves, trying to help each other. If I had a loaf of bread, you got nothing, I'll give you half. Or if I got two kids you got none, well I may give you quarter, see, quarter of a loaf or something. Maybe not exactly that, but I mean in those terms, in those broad terms, you see. And that was the most, that was the most, most important objective of the Society in those days, when we formed it.

Judy: When you say that people were robbed of their scrip how do you mean they were robbed?

Lawrence: Well, they, they... In the Red River they had, they had, along the Red River, not in the Red River, along the Red River they had their, their homesteads or whatever you want to call them, homesteads or pieces of land, which they squatted on or claimed, whatever. Whether they claimed it or whether they squatted on it, it's immaterial, it should be immaterial anyway. It should be immaterial. Whether they squatted on

there, it was theirs. It was their land. So they were wide, narrow strips along the river so they would have access to water, yeah, to water. And the water coming up underneath the ground, and then the grass is growing, you see, so the grass and water, you see. So what you call it come along and they surveyed this thing this way, you know. Instead of scrips this way, see, they surveyed the big lots along this way, see. That's where the Rebellion started, that's where this 1869 started, you see. So after it was over, well, their land was all... have a piece of land...

Judy: The land was divided. They had several pieces of land instead of one piece?

Wife: But they didn't have access to the...

Lawrence: No, if I had a piece of land here and somebody else had one here and somebody else had one here, so then this is my land, this is the other guy's, the other guy's, see. So that was mine, I lived there, I claimed this. Whether I squatted on it or whether I improved it, or whether I bought it, see. So they come along and they said no, we're going to, we're going to...

Judy: Who are 'they'? Is this the government?

Lawrence: The government, government, the Dominion Government. They were going to survey this land this way, see. So that's where the Rebellion started, that's where they... So then after the Rebellion, well, they lost it. They lost the battle, they lost their... they lost their scrip, whatever it is. They couldn't go in here or there. Maybe one guy could come in here, he's next to the water. I don't know, couldn't... So instead of, instead of ten people maybe having access, whatever you call it, to water, they only had maybe one, see. That's where the problem started, and that's where the problems started here too. I'm not so sure about here but it certainly... Yeah, I think here too, you see. When they come west they done the same thing, the river lots, you see. And then they come here and they want to do the same thing. But anyway they moved when they found out that the government had done this. Well, what could they do? The government took it over, they didn't give them no compensation for it, so they

moved out. They moved out. I got, I got uncles, well-to-do uncles down in (name). What's the name of that other place? (name)? Big farmers. When it come from 1869 they moved out because what's the use of staying there? So they moved out and they moved into over there. Well then they weren't bothered in the 1885, you see. They weren't on those river lots, you see.

But the ones that come, a lot of them come and then they done the same thing here. And that's where it started here. Like I say I'm not sure, but she says yes. I think it is, too, but that's where the trouble...

Wife: And they had their... There's a river there and then the government took the river, the land along the river banks that, you know, they weren't allowed.

Lawrence: It's common land, you see, and stuff like that, you see.

Judy: And they were never paid for it?

Lawrence: No, no compensation, you see, no compensation. They never give them no compensation. To this day, as far as I know, there's no compensation. That's one of the things that, that I guess the Metis alliance, or the Metis organizations, they are trying it now. This here, if I was farming in here, one of these river lots here, that's my aboriginal right. That belongs to me. They come and took it when they, when they go this way, see. That's, that's my understanding.

Judy: Getting back to the organizations. Do you remember the name Joe LaRocque?

Lawrence: Yeah. Yeah, I remember. Yeah, you do too, eh?

Wife: I thought his name was Ed LaRocque. Joe LaRocque. We got a picture of Joe LaRocque.

Lawrence: Yeah somewhere, somewhere, yeah.

Judy: How about the name Joe Ross?

Lawrence: Yeah, yeah. I remember Ross. Ross was...

Wife: I don't remember him.

Lawrence: Yes, I remember Ross. Ross was, I think he was president of organization in, well, out by Qu'Appelle there.

Wife: Lestock?

Lawrence: Lestock, yeah, Lestock Local. Not local, there was no locals then. There was no, there was no Saskatchewan, you know, Saskatchewan Metis Society. I guess...



Wife: There was no locals, it was all provincial.

Lawrence: Maybe that's what it was. But he was, he must have been local, because I think LaRocque was... or not LaRocque, Ross was...

Wife: I never heard of him.

Lawrence: Well I remember him. I remember the name but I just don't strike...

Wife: Who was he?

Lawrence: He was, he was president of..

Judy: He was one of the members that started out in the organization.

Lawrence: In?

Judy: He was, he was in with the Organization at that time.

Wife: In Saskatoon? Not in Saskatoon.

Lawrence: Not in Saskatoon, not unless it was after 1936 or '37, because that's the time we couldn't, we didn't go any more. Because, like I say, well, my work, it was interfering with my work. And like I say, I quit, I quit, I quit my job because I couldn't, well I couldn't be home with my children, see. So then I couldn't be home with my children, well I sure couldn't be involved with the Organization any more, you see. So that's the reason we dropped out. It wasn't because I was afraid of going underground or going to jail or anything like that, it was, it just interfered with my family life and I had to pull out.

Judy: Do you remember the name Tom Major?

Lawrence: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. I remember Major, too. There's an involvement there somewhere... Did you say Leuret, about Ross?

Wife: Lestock, I said.

Lawrence: Leuret, Leuret, Leuret. Ross, I think, was from Leuret. And I think Major was from Lestock. But I remember them two, I remember both names, but I can't put them where, where, where their involvement was, you know, I just can't put that together.

Judy: How about Joe McKenzie?

Lawrence: Who?

Judy: Joe McKenzie? You don't remember...

Lawrence: Unless it's this McKenzie that's...

Wife: No, no.

Lawrence: Wayne? You're not talking about Wayne?

Judy: No. This is a Joe McKenzie.

Lawrence: Joe McKenzie. I don't remember him. No, I don't recollect.

Judy: How about Sol Pritchard?

Lawrence: Yeah, I guess. He was my uncle.

Judy: And he was involved with the organization.

Lawrence: Yeah, he was president of, of Willowfield branch, or Cando, whichever you want to call it, for years. He was one of the pioneers, too, of the organization in, in, in Saskatchewan, and one of... a very strong supporter of the organization.

Wife: In 1936 or '37 they had a big convention here, didn't they, the Metis Society?

Lawrence: '41, 1941 I think, Mother.

Wife: No, it was before...

Lawrence: Was it? Well maybe you're not thinking of the same one I am.

Wife: This here was when just after Bonny was born.

Lawrence: I'm thinking, the one I'm thinking about, 1941...

Wife: He came to our place that time, he was...

Lawrence: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Wife: We lived on Fourth Street.

Judy: Who was this that came?

Lawrence: Sol.

Wife: Sol.

Lawrence: We call him Sol, Sol.

Wife: He's a little short guy with...

Lawrence: He was not really that short, Mother. He wore moccasins all the time, that was the thing that made him look short. (laughs)

Judy: Do you remember what they did in the Organization? Anything that you remember that sticks out about any one of those persons?

Lawrence: No, not really.

Judy: They just attended meetings and went to conventions?

Lawrence: Not really, not really. You see, you see, like I say, we, in 1934 we, we were the organization of this local here. We didn't do too much, like I say, here, here anyway. I don't know what they done, but here we didn't do too much outside of comradeship, you know, recreation and stuff like that. We had dances, and the odd fight. (laughs)

Judy: Card games, whist drives and penny-antes.

Lawrence: Stuff like that, you know, and we used to have a lot of fun, a lot of fun, yeah. But it was more comradeship and recreation and stuff like that, get-togethers. And we didn't seem to get no place too much, with trying to go for funding or...

Wife: We didn't get to know too many people outside of the, outside of Saskatoon.

Lawrence: We did some correspondence with Lebret and Lestock.

Wife: I don't remember that.

Lawrence: Yeah. And but what they, what the, the Willowfield branch and Cando down there, the one with Sol, what they done, I'm sure they done a lot but I couldn't, I couldn't, I couldn't tell you. You know what I mean. Because I don't know, I really don't know what happened down there. But I know, I do know this, I will venture to say this, that it was, up until the time of his death or maybe a little while before, it was one of the most active organizations in the Society. I will say that. But what they done I don't know, but I know they were active, very active. We have some letters here from Sol that was written to...

Wife: Oh, we got all kinds of material from...

Lawrence: ...to the premier of Saskatchewan when his son, Pat, joined the army, to try and get him a good job. (laughs)

Judy: Why don't we leave the organization for a bit here and go onto the religious aspect of your life. Did the church play an important role in your life?

Lawrence: Definitely, definitely, yes. Yes I, I have been, oh, maybe there's a little lapse in my life where I wasn't too involved, or forgot God, forgot that there was a God. But not, I mean by not going to church or maybe something that I done, something very foolish that I shouldn't have done, maybe my wife thought was foolish or my children thought it was foolish. But since I've been, since I can remember, my prayers, never go to bed at night without saying my prayers. I never get up in the morning without saying my prayers. And I'll say that there's never a day passes that I don't stop in the middle of a day, even when I was working, to thank God for today.

Judy: Do you remember the priest ever visiting your home?

Lawrence: Does he ever?

Judy: Do you remember when you were growing up if the priest ever visited?

Lawrence: No, no, I don't remember, no, I don't think so. Like I say, we were out in the sticks there when I was with my brother-in-law and my sister. Well, the priests, they didn't even know we were there, I guess. And when I was, later on when I worked at the mental hospital, I had no home. That was my home, you see, that was my home. And then after that, well, I lived with the priests in Duck Lake and the school there, boarding school in Prince Albert. That's when I was growing up. After that, when I started work, well, I didn't, I wasn't growing up any more.

Judy: Do you think the church has generally helped Metis people?

Lawrence: Not as much as I would like to see. I think, I think, I think the church should be involved more than, than, than they are. Of course, on the other hand, I will say this: that you can help any people only as much as they want to be helped. Some people don't want to be helped. And I'm not condemning the Metis, but there is some people that you go and talk to them and you can't talk to them.

Wife: Well, look at when they had the masses at the church, at the building there.

Lawrence: We've had masses at the... When they first had this building, when they first opened this 113, or 111 whatever it is on Avenue B, we had a priest come in there on Sunday nights and had mass, had mass. And finally the board of directors saw, in their wisdom, to stop it. Why? Didn't say why.

Wife: But anyway, there wasn't enough people coming.

Lawrence: Wasn't enough coming, I guess. but anyway, that was

in their wisdom they saw fit to stop it. And this is where I say that you can only help people as much as they want to be helped. Maybe, maybe, maybe, like I say..., I think the Church should be more involved, yes, I think so. And they're not, they're not involved as far as I know. Maybe I'm wrong, maybe I'm wrong, maybe there's more involvement in there than I know. I've been to a Catholic Church here regarding... not, not lately, but when that Sister -- what was her name? Sister ...

Wife: I know which one you mean.

Lawrence: Yeah, they had a worker there. Now she hasn't got one any more. So I don't know why...

Wife: Sister Elder (?), wasn't it?

Lawrence: Sister Elder, yeah. Now I don't know why. I don't know whether because the board was getting first base, or whether... I guess they were funded, whether funding stopped, or what, or maybe they can't get a worker, I don't know, I don't know what it is/

Judy: Do you think the church has more or less influence today than it had in the past?

Lawrence: Oh, I think a lot less. I think a lot less, I think a lot less. This is where we lost, this is where...

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HIGHLIGHTS:

- General account of his life

Lawrence: Okay?

Judy: Yeah.

Lawrence: Well, we're talking about the involvement of the church or whether anything is involved, or it should get more involved or whether it's involved enough or not, wasn't that it?

Wife: That's not what she asked you.

Lawrence: No.

Judy: No, the influence that the church had.

Lawrence: Influence, oh yeah, yeah, yeah. The influence, you see, I don't think they have any influence. Like I say again, you have to have the people involved in the church to get the church to have any influence. You have to have, you have to have the people, the people, the people that are, that are in the places, the people that are in the places that can, or in the involvement of an organization, if you get what I'm trying to tell you, is the people that have to be involved in the church in order for the church to get involved with the society, I feel. And if you haven't got that why, what's the use of, or how can they cut any ice if they go, if they go to some place, like we were talking about there, and then it's cut off, you see. So therefore you can't have any involvement, the involvement is cut off. The church was involved there and it was cut off. Because, I guess, because there wasn't enough involvement in it, but it was still doing a service to the people that were there, that were going. It was comradeship. They met each other there, they prayed together, they laughed together and whatever.

Judy: Let's go on to the subject of school and education. What do you remember about going to school?

Lawrence: Not really, not really very much. All I know is that, all I can remember is... Do you mean about going to school or during my school days?

Judy: Going to school. Describe what the school was like and...

Lawrence: Just going to school, eh?

Judy: Right.

Lawrence: Oh, it was dead. (laughs) It was dead, there wasn't, there wasn't much excitement, yeah. You felt like saying, "Come on Joe, let's go. There's no fun here," you know. (laughs)

Wife: School was boring to you.

Lawrence: Yeah, it was boring. But I had good grades, I will say that. I passed my grades. Well, you can see there I was 16 years old when I was in grade ten. Did I say nine there?

Wife: You said you started ten.

Lawrence: Yeah, ten, that's what it is. I thought maybe I was nine, but I started ten, when I was 16 years old. I was doing all right, I wasn't flunking any year, I was passing every year. Some years I took two grades, I remember, a couple of years.

Wife: You only did two.

Lawrence: Yeah.

Judy: Describe what the school was like?

Lawrence: Well I don't, I don't, I really can't think of any way I could describe it. In what way would you think, is there some way you think that maybe you could tell me to describe it? What, what went on?

Judy: How large was it? Were the classes separated?

Lawrence: Oh yeah, well, we had in Duck Lake... I don't remember, I don't remember in Duck Lake when I went to school in Duck Lake, I don't remember, I can't recall that. But in Prince Albert there was only two classes, there was only two rooms. I think there was from 1 to 5 and 6, 7 and 8. There was only two, and then 9 and 10, if you passed grade 8. Well, then they sent you to the college or whatever you call it, you know, collegiate, I guess, or in my case they sent me to St. Peter's College there. I went to St. Peter's College for...

Judy: And where was that located that?

Lawrence: In Muenster, in Muenster in Saskatchewan, not far from Humbolt.

Judy: Were you allowed to speak Cree in school? Do you know how to speak Cree?

Lawrence: Well, certainly Duck Lake. In Duck Lake you could speak Cree, yes, mostly Cree. If you talk English there, they'll catch you, "What's the matter with you? You crazy?" But in, in Prince Albert, well, there was no, no need to talk Cree unless you want to talk to yourself, you know. We were about the only ones, I guess, there that could talk Cree. And we didn't, we didn't use it as a first language, it was English. So we didn't have too much occasion to use it.

Judy: What do you remember about your teachers?



Lawrence: Oh, they were good. They were good. My teachers were very, very, very efficient and tried to be helpful, and oh, they were good.

Judy: Do you remember the kind of things they taught you in school?

Lawrence: Well, no, the only thing is they certainly taught us discipline. That's one thing we did... we did... I was taught all through my life was discipline. We had that in the school too, discipline. And I guess that's... Oh well, they taught you the other... your, your work, you know, they give you. If you were, if you didn't quite understand anything, well, who doesn't quite understand it, you see, well, you put up your hand. Well then, all right, the rest of you go ahead and they'd talk to you separately and then try to show it to you, you see, what you didn't understand.

Judy: Did they ever teach you anything about Metis or Indian history in school?

Lawrence: No, no. No, well, it was brought up occasionally -- it wasn't teaching, it was brought up occasionally that, like the Riel Rebellion, or the Rebellion was the word. I don't like that word rebellion, I think it was an uprising. But anyway they would, if it was in the history book they'd bring it up -- 1885 Riel, or 1869-1870, the Red River Rebellion. But that's all, they wouldn't tell you why or where about Riel, or why this was so, or try to explain why or what they thought was the cause of it or anything like this, you see. They was just going through, just like a car going through a puddle of water.

Judy: Did you feel that you belonged in school, or did you feel uncomfortable there?

Lawrence: Well, I was, I felt discrimination. Not from the teachers though, not from the teachers, not from the...

Judy: The school system?

Lawrence: Yeah, not from the school system, from the pupils, from the people themselves, from the people themselves. There's something now I don't know whether I should comment on that or not. Yeah, I guess I will. When I was going to Duck Lake I was discriminated against for being a half-breed. They called me a half-breed, you see, and I was discriminated against. I was weeded out of the system, out of the system and a loner, I was a loner.

Judy: This was by the other children in school?

Lawrence: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But not all of them, the majority of them, the majority of them, I guess. Boys, of course. We were segregated boys and girls, you see. We never played with the girls, with them, you know, kind of what they do in the school here -- boys on one side and girls on the other side. And by the boys, well, some, something happened or some boy (inaudible) probably not half-breed (inaudible) something like

this, and it was always a form of discrimination there. I ran away from, well, I wouldn't maybe, say, go into that. That's, that's, that makes it too hard for, for maybe, maybe certain people to understand or to, to absorb it. They wouldn't think that there had been things like this happen in a civilized country.

Judy: You wouldn't want to give us an example?

Wife: If it's buried in your memory, don't say it.

Lawrence: No I don't, I don't think I should. Not that I, I've got it in my other things there. But anyway, I was... I found discrimination there. There was one instance there... I have a piece of a thing here I wrote at one time about my life, just a small resume.

Wife: About St. (inaudible)?

Lawrence: Yeah. That's this, where this one instance in the school. Now I'm talking about classmates, you know what I mean, girls and boys, not teachers or priests or brothers. I was sitting out, her people were in a tent and they're in the school, in the school in Duck Lake. There was a tent parked in there and I was very, very lonesome and down and everything else. I was all by myself, I was always by myself all the time, because I was a loner, I was an outcast. I was an outcast because I was a breed. I know that's what it was. I didn't know at the time but I know now, you see. And this little girl come out and invited me into the tent. And her mother gave me a cup of tea and some bannock. I thought that was very nice, that made my day. For years, sometimes when I think about it, I want to cry.

Wife: And one time we met her here at an AA meeting. I was serving the coffee there, and she remembered him.

Lawrence: Yeah. I forget her name but...

Wife: I know her name. She used to speak at the meetings here, at AA meetings, she's from Duck Lake.

Lawrence: Well anyway, she was, she come out and invited me in and gave me this cup of tea and bannock. And that was, well, it made my day. I keep that in my mind for years when I think of this. I mean this is, this erased all the bad things that had happened to me up until that time, this one good act. And this is what I say it's, this is a kind of slur on, maybe on the Indian people. But I don't mean it as that, see, what I mean, it's just some other things that I'd rather not... Like I say, it's not, this is not, these other things was not against the Indian people, it's against the system, the system, you see. But anyway, in Prince Albert it was very good. It was very good, but I was always discrimination there too in Prince Albert, yeah. I had some things I couldn't understand what was happening to me. I asked the Sister one day, I said to her, I said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she told me,

she said some words similar to this, she said... what did she say now? "Young man, you're a fine young man," that's what she told me. "You have nothing to be ashamed of. Perhaps these people wish that maybe they have, or they would have what you've got, so," she said, "don't pay no attention to them. Some day you'll, this will be washed away or whatever, or forgotten about. You'll forget about this some day." But it still lingers in my mind. That's the only part of the thing, you know, part of the discrimination. I was set up to... not, as I say, not by the (inaudible), by the Sisters or anything, but by the children. Well, you see that today now.

Judy: Looking back at your school years, was your experience at school good or bad?

Lawrence: Experiences?

Judy: Yeah.

Lawrence: Well, outside of those cases I mentioned there, cases of discrimination, I think it was very good. I was treated very good by the people that knew better.

Judy: Do you remember anything about the politics? Do you remember what political parties...

Lawrence: Oh yeah. I guess I've been a politician all my life. I'm well versed in politics. You just ask me and I'll tell you. (laughs)

Judy: Do you remember any politicians visiting your parents' home when you lived there?

Lawrence: Oh yes. No, no, no. Not my parents.

Judy: Your brother-in-law's?

Lawrence: No, my uncle's, yes.

Judy: Do you remember what they talked about?

Lawrence: Oh, mostly what we can do for these people. Do you think maybe we could do something for them, try and see they get their -- have something, that they have work to do and this and that. Naturally there was a motive behind it. We all knew what it was, it was to get the vote, get the vote of the people. My father was a staunch Liberal. I believe that's what killed him, when the Liberals went out of power in 1929, I think it was, when the government was defeated. I think that's what hastened his life. But he was strong Liberal and all of my, those people I was telling you about were strong Liberals.

Judy: Did the Metis generally see one party as the one that spoke the best for the Metis?

Lawrence: Well, our people did, yes.

Judy: What party was that?

Lawrence: It was the Liberal party. Of course in those days there was only two parties. Those days that I'm talking about there was only two parties -- the Liberal and the Conservative. I think it was Conservatives, or did they have a different name in those days? I can't... no, it's Conservatives, that's right, J.T.M. Anderson and those fellows who were in there at that time. J.T., he was the guy who tried to do away with the Catholic schools.

Judy: Do you remember if your father got involved with the parties, or did he just go and vote? Did he ever campaign for them?

Lawrence: He was very much involved, yes, very much involved.

Judy: Do you know if the church was ever involved in politics?

Lawrence: Not that I know of.

Judy: What did most of the Metis people in your parents' day think of politics? What were their views about it?

Lawrence: Well, I don't think they had too much view. I think they only knew one party, as far as the Metis I'm talking about, you know, they all... Few, one, two, or three or four maybe, the more educated people -- there was a few well-educated in there -- they might have been... But the ordinary one, Liberal, you know, they knew the Liberal party. They knew the Liberal party was trying to do something for them. Whether they were doing it to get votes or not they were still doing it for them. What was wrong with that? Nothing. People might think it's wrong, but I don't see there's nothing wrong with it. There was no moral laws broken, or no legal laws broken by doing this. And the people were looked after better than if they weren't, if they didn't have some of these people that were trying to help them involved in politics.

Judy: Did you follow the tradition of your father to vote Liberal, or did you change your views as your got older?

Lawrence: Oh, I changed my views a few times, yes. I followed him for a while; since that I've changed. It gets to the stage now that to a person thinks, well, flip a coin, because they're all the same. Well, I won't say it. (laughs)

Judy: Did you ever get personally involved in a campaign?

Lawrence: Yeah. Yes, a little bit. My wife too....

Judy: Let's go back to some of the other things during your life. When were you first aware of being Metis?

Lawrence: Oh, I don't know. That must have been about 1924, I'd be 13 years old. Oh no, before that, it must have been. I must be approximately 10 years old.

Judy: How often did your parents or relatives think and speak of themselves as Metis? Were they proud of being Metis?

Lawrence: Well, I don't know, I know. I don't know about my mother but my father, my dad and my uncles, and my uncle Fred, and Bill and my dad and Sol, certainly they were not, they did not try to hide the fact that they were Metis. They didn't care if you know it or not. That's what we are, so be it, that's all.

Judy: What about other Metis families? Did they express pride in being Metis, or did they not talk about it?

Lawrence: You mean in Battleford or down there?

Judy: Yeah.

Lawrence: Well, I think in around Battleford there, pretty well. There was a couple of families that wouldn't really admit that they were Metis. And then probably they weren't, they were maybe what we call a half-breed and maybe they were quarter-breed, you know. They used to call them quarter-breeds, they used to say when they didn't want to say, "Well, I'm a Metis," "I'm a quarter-breed," you see. So maybe that's... there was a couple of families. We got one lawyer here in town come from Battleford, Burlingham (?) well, his father was a Metis, but they wouldn't... his dad was a white man and his generation, they wouldn't say that they were Metis.

Judy: Do you remember your parents or your grandparents, or perhaps your uncles ever telling you stories about Metis history?

Lawrence: Oh, my grandfather, yes. Yes, that's the man that she showed you there. Oh yes, I spoke to him. He was involved in the Massacre there at Frog Lake, him and Adolphus Nolin was... These two women there was...

Wife: There's a whole bunch of stuff about him in here.

Lawrence: There's seven or eight, I just forget how many, eight, I think, eight white men that were massacred. And then two women, and God knows what would have happened to them if him and Adolphus Nolin hadn't taken these women, and he protected them for 60 days in the camp of Big Bear. And he put himself, put his life in peril -- because he was a Metis, see, he was a Metis -- but he couldn't stand to see these women maybe massacred too, so he got them and put them in his tent. They burned his house. Big Bear's Wandering Spirit burned his house there in Frog Lake. He was interpreter for the Indian nations there in the 1885 Rebellion in that northwest, our part of the thing, you see. And that's... What was that question you asked me? I kind of wandered off there a bit.

Judy: No, you were doing good. I was just wondering if they told you about history, stories about history?

Lawrence: Yeah, oh yeah, sure. I wanted to get to there after I get to the end of this. Anyway they... he kept these women in his camp for him and his family. And Adolphus went home to Onion Lake and he took these women there for 60 days, and then protected them from the... Otherwise they would have been massacred too, possibly. And he got, he put his life in peril. Anyway, finally the troops, the R.C.M.P. or North West Mounted Police, finally caught up to him. Well, they were tracking Big Bear and they finally got him, and they released my grandfather and them. But he told me that it was Wandering Spirit who wanted to kill him for what he done. They were trying to kill him but the only thing that saved him, I guess, was on account of being married to... Well see, my grandfather was a Metis, a first generation Metis. His grandfather was a white man, he married an Indian girl, and then they had a boy, William. And then this John was a son of William, you see, that's in there. But anyway the thing that saved him was his wife was Delorme, she was a Delorme, and her dad had a lot of strings, you know, in the Riel. That's why they wouldn't, I guess that's what saved him. Her and her dad being in this kind of a position of maybe doing something, you see. But they wanted to kill him for that. He put his life in peril.

Judy: Were there other stories that you remember being told to you?

Lawrence: Well, there was the one about the... well, this one wasn't told me; this was in later years where I got this. What was his name, the guy that was in, on Bellevue there, that stole a cow.

Wife: Almighty Voice.

Lawrence: Almighty Voice, yeah. He told about that one too. I got stories about Almighty Voice but it was...

Wife: Oh, lots of stories in the old...

Lawrence: Well, there was lots of, but it's hard to recollect them.

Wife: So many things were told in them days.

Lawrence: You know, it's hard to recollect.

Wife: Just the same in our family.

Lawrence: She got more stories than me.

Judy: Do you remember the Metis families in your area getting together for social events?

Lawrence: You mean in town there, in Battleford, or here since we were married?

Judy: Those places, do you remember them getting together?

Lawrence: Oh yeah. In Battleford there, oh shucks, we used to have a fight about every week. Yeah, (laughs) but they used to have social dances, you know, and...

Wife: House parties.

Lawrence: House parties, and some one of them put one on maybe this week and invite everybody, all the Metis, and next week, maybe two weeks later, not necessarily every week. There was lots. They would go all night.

Judy: Did they ever invite any white people along with them?

Lawrence: I think so, if I recollect, not too many. But there used to be, and certainly in town here, eh, when we used to have them in the 30s, certainly we used to have lots of white people here. But in Battleford, not so many in Battleford.

Judy: Were there any special days that you remember the Metis people gathering together especially?

Lawrence: Oh yeah. On Christmas and New Year's, eh.

Wife: New Year's especially.

Lawrence: It was New Year's especially, my goodness. I guess, her... you tell her about the New Year's, what used to happen.

Wife: Oh well, they'd start in the morning and...

Lawrence: Or do you want to...

Wife: No, you tell her. This is your story not mine.

Lawrence: But there used to be about, used to start about midnight. You'd have horses, you know, team of horses and sleigh, and lots of hay in the thing and the horses' blankets. And they would, this one guy would start from his place and then he'd go to the next place, and you'd have maybe a meal there and a drink or something. And then they'd pick those up and go to the next place. Oh, and maybe in another part of the area or the town, whatever you want to call it, there would be not only... they meet over here maybe, and end up with a big dance, you see.

Judy: And this was on New Year's?

Lawrence: Yeah, yeah. And oh...

Wife: Kids and all, these kids there would...

Lawrence: Oh yes, there was...

Wife: We used to have those beams, you know, where they used to put their little swings.

Lawrence: Lots to drink, lots...

Wife: Bring their own rope. (laughs)

Lawrence: Lots to eat, you bring your own rope and your boxing gloves too. (laughs) No, there wasn't too many fights, I just...

Wife: No, nobody drank that much then, I don't...

Lawrence: No, not that bad, it wasn't that bad at all. I just put that in there just for a laugh.

Wife: And they smoke kinnikinnik and...

Lawrence: But they would, they would meet in the place, and then the dancing would start and then sometime maybe they'd go in the morning, sometime they'd maybe go to the next morning. But it was lots of fun, everybody had lots of fun.

Judy: Could I ask you what that is, kinnikinnik?

Wife: That's bark from the willow tree.

Lawrence: The old squash, well, the older native people used to smoke that.

Wife: Instead of tobacco they just scraped...

Lawrence: Yeah, they would scrape it off and then dry it and then go, you know, let it dry and put it in the pipe -- not in cigarettes. I don't know I...

Wife: I only smelled it, I've never seen it.

Lawrence: I never heard of cigarettes, but then pipe was used.

Wife: Oh, and it smells really nice.

Lawrence: And they... a lot of them used to smoke in those days. I don't know if they do now.

Wife: Old ladies even.

Lawrence: A lot of ladies used to use pipes. Yeah, go in the tent there, you'd see an old lady, with the pipe, smoking. I'm going to put a little heat on -- my feet are getting cold.

Judy: Do you remember your father ever wearing a...

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Judy: Do you remember your father ever wearing a Metis sash or any other traditional Metis clothing?



Lawrence: I don't know whether you're talking about a Metis sash, but my grandfather used to wear a thing they used to bring around here.

Judy: Yeah, that's a sash.

Lawrence: Is that a sash?

Judy: It was perhaps a leather a belt with beadwork done on it.

Lawrence: Yeah. He wore it all the time. Well, I mean, you know, he didn't wear it to bed but I mean (laughs) he wore it when he was up all the time. I don't remember ever seeing him without it. And he used to have, he used to wear a buckskin jacket.

Judy: Do you ever remember him telling you what that sash represented?

Lawrence: No. Never asked him. Never thought to ask him even.

Judy: Did your father know how to jig?

Lawrence: My father?

Judy: Yes.

Lawrence: Oh yeah.

Judy: How about your other relatives?

Lawrence: Oh yeah. My, I had a cousin that was one of the best jiggers in the world, I guess.

Wife: Babe?

Lawrence: Babe, yeah. Babe was one of the best callers for square dances and stuff. Oh, they used to go miles to get him for square dances when they were... Well, they went here one time to way the other side of Biggar to get him for a dance here at Saskatoon before he died, yeah, for caller, you know, he's a big caller. And good jigger too.

Judy: Did they teach you how to jig?

Lawrence: I used to jig a little bit but not very much. I jiggered, the last time I jiggered was in 1929, 1930. There was a wedding, Pete (name) and oh, I forget what the girl's name was, but there was, well out there near...

Wife: Where you were stoning.

Lawrence: No, where Sol is, out there. What do you call that place?

Wife: (Inaudible)

Lawrence: No, out by Cando there. Oh my God, I had it on there a little while ago.

Wife: Well, it's there anyway.

Lawrence: Anyway, yeah, that was the last time I jigged at that wedding. That was 1930.

Judy: Why was that the last time you jigged?

Lawrence: Because I was drunk.

Judy: You wouldn't jig if you weren't, if you weren't drinking?

Lawrence: Well maybe, I don't know. They asked me to and...

Wife: And he hasn't jigged since because nobody asked him.

Lawrence: Nobody asked me since then. Yeah, that was the last time. Yeah, they asked me, Bill Tate asked me. He said, "Come on there, show them your steps." I said, "Okay."

Wife: Oh, Bill Tate could jig, eh.

Lawrence: Yeah, oh God yes. That was your uncle Bill, I guess.

Wife: No, her mother's uncle, eh.

Lawrence: Louise's husband, before she married Ed.

Judy: That would be on my mother's side.

Lawrence: Louise Belcourt's husband. Oh yeah, she married him down by... He could jig that man.

Wife: He played the violin.

Lawrence: He could play the violin too.

Judy: So jigging was a part of the local dances then?

Lawrence: Oh yeah.

Judy: Quite a few Metis people did that?

Lawrence: We used to have a lot. But I don't think they drank as much then as they do now, as these people do now. I don't think so, eh, Mother? No, I don't think so.

Wife: I don't remember them drinking.

Lawrence: Not by a long ways.

Judy: So you don't think that was a large problem of the Metis people?

Lawrence: No. No, there were more, the Metis people in those

days were more, how would I put it, they were more Christian oriented, whatever you want to call it. They didn't... that wasn't part of their culture, too much drinking like they do now, you know. Is that the way to put it?

Wife: Yeah. You know, did you ever have to dance the eight hand reel and the rabbit dance, and the dance de crochet... I've seen that all!

Lawrence: I seen that but if I seen...

Judy: Are those different types of jigs or just...

Lawrence: Oh yes.

Wife: They were square dances like, not square dances, some kind of dances. It took more than one person. I think it was three or four, as far as seven or eight couples, but I've seen them.

Lawrence: ...but it was actually square dancing, I think, Mother.

Wife: Probably.

Lawrence: But if I saw today I wouldn't know whether they dance the crochet, whatever you said, I wouldn't know the difference -- it would be all square dancing to me.

Judy: Do you remember if there were any fiddle players in your family?

Lawrence: Oh, my dad could play. And Fred, my Uncle Fred could play, but... My brother Jim could play, but that's about it. I don't know about Sol, I believe he could.

Wife: All those old guys used to play the violin, eh.

Lawrence: Yeah. Her dad was a good violin player.

Judy: Do you remember them playing and singing any Metis songs?

Lawrence: Oh yeah. I don't know what they were but I heard them, oh yeah. I used to sing one little song that... How would it go? (sings) You know that's -- I used to sing that -- that's French, eh, well French and Cree, I guess. But anyways, that's the way it used to start off and it used to go (sings). You know, it used to sound good with the violin. (laughs)

Judy: Do you remember what any of these songs were about, or the majority of them?

Lawrence: Well this one was, "Give me a little more to drink, that felt pretty good," or something like that.

Wife: La poutine is pudding.

Lawrence: Oh, I don't know what I was sing about, but I knew I was singing something.

Wife: You just knew the words.

Lawrence: Yeah, I knew the words, yeah. I used to talk Cree pretty good but I forget.

Wife: But that was French.

Lawrence: Yeah, that was French, yeah.

Judy: Did any non-native relative live in your community? And if so, what was the family's relationship with them?

Lawrence: Non-native relatives?

Judy: Well, white people, did any members of your family marry white people, and if so what was the relationship?

Lawrence: My family married... You mean my children?

Wife: Your brother, your two brothers.

Lawrence: Well, two of my brothers married white people and Mary... no, Mary (inaudible) she was, and Eva married... Yeah, two of my, well one of my brothers and one of my sisters -- two of my brothers.

Wife: Just two brothers.

Lawrence: Two of my brothers married white people, yeah.

Judy: What was the relationship like?

Lawrence: Well...

Wife: One brother is divorced.

Lawrence: One brother is divorced. He's been divorced for years.

Judy: Oh, I mean between the entire, like the rest of the family, the Metis family towards the white relatives.

Lawrence: I really couldn't say, we never had too much to do with them. Like I was saying a while back, I wasn't too close to -- outside of Jim. Jim, that was one of my... That part was good. Jim and his wife, that was my older brother -- he married a white woman. Their life was good. He was, he could mix with anybody, you know, he just seemed to have a knack. They knew that he was a Metis, he knew that they knew, and he just mixed right with them. But my other brother, I wasn't too close to him, never had too much to... you know, too close to him, so I really don't know.

Wife: He married a Ukrainian and she was a funny person.

Judy: Did any of the older people in your family believe and practise the traditional Indian religion?

Lawrence: No. Maybe Sol. Maybe Sol, I don't know, I don't think so, no. No, I'm sure not.

Judy: How about Indian medicine?

Lawrence: Oh yes.

Wife: We still do.

Lawrence: Yes, we still do, we do even today.

Wife: You know, like you take if you have a cut or something, you put a piece of birch bark and it draws all the dirt, the poison out, and different things like flax...

Lawrence: Like flax for...

Wife: Lots of things.

Lawrence: ...for drawing out...

Wife: If you got a boil or something.

Lawrence: ...boil or something like that. Oh we... it's hard to say, but there's quite a few things we use yet today.

Judy: Who taught you these things?

Lawrence: Well I think...

Wife: Our grandmothers.

Lawrence: I knew a little bit about it, not really that much, I wasn't taught that much. But her family I guess was, you know, it come from her side mostly. There was some in our family too.

Judy: Do you remember if any of the elderly people in your family ever used sweat lodges?

Wife: Never heard of them.

Lawrence: Yeah, I've heard of them...

Wife: What were they for?

Judy: It was to purify yourself.

Lawrence: Oh no, no, I had that wrong. No, I never run into that kind of stuff, no.

Judy: When you remember moving into the city, did you keep up with some of the practices that you were taught?

Wife: Well, you still do, don't you?

Lawrence: I don't know what you're talking about, Metis culture?

Judy: Yes.

Lawrence: I guess so, I don't know just what there would be. But one of the things is grandchildren I guess, put grandchildren in the moss bag, yeah.

Wife: No! We never put Kenny in the moss bag! We used to have a swing like, you know, like those hammocks.

Lawrence: Hammocks and stuff like that.

Wife: Lots of times he went to a place and there was... it maybe had two beds for 12 people or something, and they'd have a place for the babies, you know. And it didn't matter how small your house was, your visitors were always welcome. Didn't matter how many babies they brought, or kids, they always found a place for them.

Judy: When you moved to the city did you find you were still practising what you knew of the Indian medicine?

Lawrence: Oh yeah. Still, like I say, still do it. Maybe can't think of just all the things that we would do but I imagine something crop up, well, we can do this, we can use this, see.

Judy: When you moved to the city did your ties with other Metis people grow weaker or stronger?

Lawrence: When I moved to the city? Well, I think for some time it was stronger, I think so. You take, like, when I was in working in the Mental Hospital and that, before I moved into Saskatoon, and previous to that when I was going to school and that sort of thing, I never had too much ties with Metis, you know what I mean, outside of being mocked. And when I come into Saskatoon, well, I was involved in the Metis community. I was right in with them, that was my friends.

Judy: So you would definitely say that in the city of Saskatoon there was definitely a Metis community?

Lawrence: Oh yes.

Judy: Did you or any other Metis people that you know of ever receive less pay for the same work that white people have done?

Lawrence: I really don't know.

Judy: You've never heard of anything like that happening?

Lawrence: No I don't, I don't remember of anybody telling me that I'm working for minimum wage and there's a guy along side of me doing the same job getting more money than me because I'm a Metis or something like that. I don't remember. I never heard of it, no.

Judy: Were you ever denied a job because you were Metis?

Wife: Never.

Lawrence: No, I don't think so. And I never hid the fact that I was a Metis, I never did hide that fact. I mean I just, I felt proud of it. I was asked that on the... when I was working on the railroad one guy asked me, he said, "Do you know Sol?" They'd heard about Sol, and then he asked me if he was any relation to me. I said, "Yeah that's my uncle." He said, "He's pretty prominent in the Society down there." I said, "Yeah." He said, "Are you Metis? I didn't think you were." And I said, "Sure I am, sure, and I'm proud of it." And the same thing at the post office, I told them there and the guy said, "God," he said, "I'd have never known it," he said, "it wouldn't have made any difference," he told me. But he said, "I never, I would never have know it," he said.

Judy: Did you ever hear of anybody who was Metis being turned down because they were?

Lawrence: Not that I know, no.

Judy: When you came to the city did you feel comfortable when you went into the stores, or into different cities where there were a lot of white people?

Lawrence: Oh, for a while. But not for too long.

Judy: Oh, you felt uncomfortable at first, but then after...

Lawrence: Yeah, a little bit. That was from the... what I was getting at school. Yeah, it was there pretty deep yet, and I felt somewhat uncomfortable, yes.

Judy: Did the city authorities treat you unfairly? Like by authorities I mean perhaps the police.

Lawrence: Oh yeah. Yes, we had problems, eh, Mother?

Wife: With our children.

Lawrence: We had problems, not...

Wife: Not with you.

Lawrence: I don't think so much with me, no, but our children would... I don't know whether it was the fact that we were Metis or not, I don't know.

Wife: No, I didn't. Just because we had a big family,

they'd look for somebody and they'd pick... Well, it's either the Pritchards or the (inaudible) because they had a bunch of boys.

Lawrence: Yeah.

Wife: They took Bunny one time, Bunny, and kept him till after midnight. We didn't know where he was -- he was being questioned at the police station.

Lawrence: There was another time we were having supper, sit down to supper, the boys were, the kids were all at the table, and one of the other kids, I think, well, one of them wasn't there, eh, said, "Somebody wants to see you outside," eh. So our two boys, they went outside and the police was out there, I guess, and they took them to the police station. And I was there and I said, all of a sudden I said, "Where's Jimmy and Johnny?" And...

Wife: Rose -- there was a girl visiting at our place...

Judy: Fellow said the police took them to the police station. "Well," I said, "what the hell?" So I went down there and I raised hell. I told them, "I'm going to have you up for kidnapping," I told them, I said, "if you don't give me those kids right now." They brought them. But things like that, you see, that happened to us, that...

Wife: It was mostly because we had lots of kids and if somebody, if something went wrong in the neighborhood it was either the (name), the Pritchards, or (name).

Lawrence: Well, I don't know whether that's discrimination on that aspect, I don't know. Maybe it was on account of being Metis, I don't know. I really wouldn't say, I really couldn't say.

Judy: Were you ever treated unfairly in places of business such as banks, or grocery stores?

Lawrence: I don't think so, eh?

Wife: Never.

Lawrence: No.

Judy: Do you remember any of the towns that you lived in ever trying to force Metis people to move away?

Lawrence: No, I don't think so, eh? I think we had some problem with rent there when we were living at Avenue 0, Mother. I think that we couldn't get a place to live in. We had to live in that place, and I think that was the reason, because we were Metis. I really believe that.

Wife: But they didn't ask us to move out of town.

Lawrence: Oh no, no.



Wife: It was just during the war years and there was no houses to rent, and if you had a big family you had a hell of a time to get a house. So you stayed put till you found a place.

Judy: So you didn't think that they turned you down because of being Metis?

Lawrence: I don't know, I think they did. I think that's part of the reason that time, I think. They never said, they never come out and said it.

Judy: How was city life different from life in a small town?

Lawrence: I don't know. I don't see too much difference except it costs you more to live and you're under the gun more against crime and stuff like that than you are in a small town, I think. But I don't think there would be too much difference.

Judy: Do you think it would be different for you if you were white?

Lawrence: Today? You mean now?

Judy: Today or before. Earlier, when you were growing up, do you think it would have been quite a difference if you were white?

Lawrence: I don't think outside of my school days. I think in my school days the children there -- both the Indian school and the Catholic orphanage -- the children, not the, like I say, not the priests and the Brothers or the Sisters but the children. Outside of that I don't think it would have made... you know, I would be treated any differently whether I was white or... There was no distinction, eh. I don't think so. No, I don't think so.

Judy: If you had a chance to be born again what would you do different?

Lawrence: Well I guess there may be two or three things that I might do different, but really... There's one thing I thought at one time if I was, if I had to do it over again, I wonder if I would have maybe went and done it this way. But really it can't be that important, it couldn't have been that important because I can't think of it now, you know. I can't think of it now so it couldn't have been made that much difference. But one thing... I just can't recollect what it would be.

Wife: It was most of it was growing up with your children.

Lawrence: I think, yeah, I think it was, she's got it -- it was my children. But I would have, I...

Wife: You were brought up in, he was brought up in an institution and he figured he could bring up his kids that way too.

Lawrence: Discipline, strict discipline and this and that you see.

Wife: Many's the problems we had over that.

Lawrence: Yeah, and I was probably a little too rough on them, and I think if I had to do it over again, if I could live my life over and I had to do it again, I could foresee what I see now, that I would have given my children more of my time, or try to at least. I didn't give them enough time. I, she brought them up, you see. I was a discipliner...

Wife: He was too strict and because he was too strict I was too lax. From one extreme to the other.

Lawrence: Yeah. That would be a change, I guess. That's the one I was trying to think about. Outside of that, I don't know. I thank God for what He's given me and what He might still give me.

Judy: Would you choose to be a woman?

Lawrence: No, no. Never.

Judy: Why?

Lawrence: A woman has got too much responsibility. I always figure, and I've said it to her and I'll say to anybody, that people say, well, I've heard people say, oh, a man come home and says, "I've worked 8 hours a day today and God I'm tired. What did you do? What you been doing?" And the woman has got five or six children to look, she's got to clean the house, she's got to wash the clothes, she's got everything, she's got to buy groceries for him and, good God Almighty, she's 24 hours a day. She's working 24 hours a day. And I come home and I got 8 hours and I think I'm crucified, you know. And I wouldn't want a woman's life. Well, maybe there's a good...

Wife: Maybe a rich woman.

Lawrence: Maybe a rich woman, they don't do nothing, but I mean an ordinary woman now. Well it's... I admire a woman for bringing up children like my wife did, nine children and then do what she done, you know. It's phenomenal, it's... well, you can't give them enough credit.

Judy: How do you see your future?

Lawrence: Well, my future is past. It's in the history books. (laughs) I hope maybe some day it might be in the history books, I don't know. It don't matter: it's immaterial altogether. But, you know, the future I got now, I can live my life without too much suffering. When I go I hope I go quick, you know, so I'm not a burden to my family or to myself and to my children, and that I can enjoy my... well, in this case, say my grandchildren for the rest of my life, and I can enjoy their company and not be... when they come around and they come to

see Grandpa or something, that he don't know them, you know.

Judy: What do you think the future of your children will be like?

Lawrence: I dread to think about it.

Wife: Our children are all grown up now.

Lawrence: Yes, but I mean the...

Judy: Your grandchildren.

Lawrence: I think the grandchildren, well, there's trouble... Even our children, it's terrific this holocaust or whatever you want to call it, this nuclear business they got coming on. The disrespect that they have for the enforcement of law, the people have, for the enforcement of law in this country, that you can't go down the streets now. I take a walk down the streets here -- I usually go in the evening; you beat me out of that tonight -- but I usually go for a walk in the evening and I'm scared, I'm scared to walk the streets in the dark. Of course my eyesight's going on me too, so I can't see too good, but I'm scared to walk the streets in the dark. Well, the policeman does something today, we talk about discrimination and this and that, still those people are protecting us. And the disrespect that they're getting today from the people, it's going to get to the stage where they're not going to get police. Then what happens? This is the future of my grandchildren: this is what I dread. I hate to think about it. And then besides, like I said, the possible chance of nuclear war. Of course, if nuclear war comes it's going to be... that's the end, I guess. And like Khrushchov said, he said, "The living will envy the dead." So that's what I think. The future of my children... I hope and pray that somebody can put a, come up with some solution for these things, but it looks bad. The politicians certainly won't.

Judy: Where do you think native people will have a better future? Should they move back to the country, up to the north, or remain in the city?

Lawrence: Well I, I do not believe that our organizations now, today, they're fighting for aboriginal rights. The Indians, yes. The Indians I can see it, because they have the land, but the... Our Society is fighting for aboriginal rights, okay, and they'll get it, maybe, when... after they assimilate all of us into the white society. After then, there may be three or four left to get their aboriginal rights, see. But anyway, this aboriginal rights, they'll get this thing, you see. I don't believe it. It's the land base they want, they want land base. Well, who wants to go into a ghetto? Do you want to go in the ghetto? Would you rather today that this organization, or society, or whatever it is, fought for compensation for aboriginal people per head, maybe \$40,000 or \$50,000 or something?

Wife: Be a start.

Lawrence: Per person or something. And then where they can do

something with it, instead of being set up in a ghetto in -- well, I don't know where, northern Alberta all segregated and, oh, stuff like that. I don't know. I think it's the wrong proposition, and they're going to fight for this land base, I think. I feel they're going to fight for this land base and it's just prolonging the settlement, it's just prolonging the settlement because it's going to take... If they went for straight compensation like the Chinese are doing and the Japanese are doing in B.C., are compensated for what was taken away from them in the last war, they're pretty near down to settlement now. How long did it take? Not very long, see. They only started about three years ago. Now we're going for a land base settlement, well it's going to take years. By the time that they get this land base settlement our people is going to be assimilated to the white society, there's not going to be any of us left. I'm not only talking about our generation, I'm talking about your generation. I'm talking about 50 years hence, 50, 60 years from now, see. That's how long it's going to take them.

(END OF SIDE B)

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 INTERPRETER:  
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BELOW.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- conclusion of interview in previous two documents

Lawrence: Okay. Yeah, the government now, you see, regarding these aboriginal land base, regarding the land base and then compensation settlement of money, you see, cash, cash settlement of money or a land base, you see. Well, this land base will take, I'd say, 50, 60 years. This is going to prolonged for the reason is, it's a simple reason to me, is you have a government now that's just about to be knocked out of power, see. The government now it will be knocked out. That's what you got to deal with, the federal first before you deal with the provincial government. Provincial government, mind you, has got the last say, I think. Anyway, we got a government now just about to be knocked out of power. They're going to hang on as long as they can, which is another year at least, see, is going to hang on. So that's a year wasted. So then you get a new government, see. Well, that's going to take three or four years before you, before they get around to where they are now, to get to where they are now, you see, with this land base settlement. See, then you got maybe change again. So you got to come to some settlement. And then if they come to a compensation settlement, they could probably settle that in maybe two, three, four years, where this other way I don't think it will ever be settled. I don't think the people will ever get anything. And that will change the whole process. They should change that, because I think before long that it will have to be that way. I think somebody is going to smarten up and they're going to come with... that's the way it will be. They'll come for a compensation settlement of money, whatever they can negotiate, you see. As far as land, I don't know. I mean, if they settle for a land base, say they settle 30 years from now and I'm still with them, I don't want to go up in the backwoods or something there, and I'm sure all the younger generation don't want to go up there. It's the ones that are there now is the ones that want this land base. Why, I don't know, there must be a reason for it.

Judy: So you think it would be best for the Metis people that they just settled their lives here wherever there are now?

Lawrence: I think so. Rather than going in a ghetto they'll be... Surely they can negotiate something with government that will... We had in... that's where Ted Ouellette went, and then, do you remember in Green Lake, eh? We had... there was a

bunch of our people went to Green Lake in 1937. They were given a chance for land base. There were three, four of them went.

Wife: From here.

Lawrence: Well from here, yeah, Ted Ouellette and Charlie (inaudible), Pete...

Wife: Well, Uncle Albert and George.

Lawrence: Five of them, I guess.

Wife: And Uncle Harry.

Lawrence: Yeah, that's right, six.

Judy: Then what were they exactly offered up there?

Lawrence: Well they were given, they were given a team of horses, land -- quarter section I think, I think quarter section, eh?

Wife: I don't know.

Lawrence: Yeah, I think quarter section. They had to prove it, mind you. They were given so much a month for, I think, one year, so much a month, you know, cash or vouchers or something for one year. Well maybe for two years, I don't know. But it was a pittance anyways, it was a pittance amount that they were given. Well, they went out there, that's at Lorenzo. I don't know whether you know that place, settlement up here. I said Green Lake, it's Lorenzo, eh, up in that area just north of Blaine Lake there, maybe 30 miles north, 40 miles north, something like that. There wasn't many of them took advantage of that. The rest of them just said, "No, we don't want up there." But if they would have offered them a settlement, they would have took it -- settle in town, maybe start up a little business or something.

Judy: Looking back at your life and perhaps the problems that you've had in it, how did you remain strong through all of those difficulties in your life?

Lawrence: Well, it was my faith in God, my family, my wife and children of course, and people that were around me. People around me I had when I was able to get around -- I don't get around too much now, I'm pretty well at home, maybe drive her to the store, I can't see too well, but I had good friends. And her brother was one of them, he's passed away now, God bless him. Oh, I had good friends and had my wife and children, they helped me. And of course God, the Almighty God, I have faith in Him and He'll do a lot for you if you just believe in Him, you know, things that man can't do.

Judy: Is there anything else that you would like to discuss with me?

Lawrence: Oh, I think that's about it, unless there's something else that you want to ask me. There's things that's in here, you know, things that's in here, but things that I wouldn't, I don't... I want to write that, you see what I mean, I don't... Some things that we like, some things we don't like, you know, about different things and different (inaudible) and procedures, like I said here about this land base and stuff like that, about organization and stuff like that, that maybe if a person don't like but it's -- in a democratic country you can speak your mind, thank God for that, see -- and things like that, but I just as well not put in that there, you know. I'd rather if I have, what I have to say I would bring it out to the people directly, like I talk to you now, you see.

Judy: Okay then, thank you very much for your cooperation.

Lawrence: Okay. I hope that I didn't hold you up for nothing.

Wife: Step on anybody's toes. (laughs)

Lawrence: Well, like I just finished off and told her, I don't want to step on anybody's toes. If I do, I want to tell them to themselves. I want to say... Well, okay, that's it. That's the way I was born. If I got something to say I'll say it, but I'll say it to the people that I want to say it to, see. I'll say it to the people that I want to say it to.

Wife: It's very embarrassing sometimes.

Judy: Okay, thank you very much.

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(END OF INTERVIEW)

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