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JOSEPH R. MACAULEY SR.

Mr. MacAuley is a long-time resident of Cumberland House. He was in WWI and has since worked as a trapper as well as in various forestry jobs including 11 years as a towerman.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Cumberland House: changes that have taken place there including increase in crime and alcoholism.
 - Jim Brady: his time in Cumberland House.
- GENERAL COMMENTS:

Joe MacAuley is a long time resident of Cumberland. Remembers very little about Brady and Norris but talks briefly about the period before the war and the differences between the church school and the government schools; about the lack of drinking and crime in the early days and its prevalence now.

INTERVIEW:

Murray: I am speaking to Joe MacAuley of Cumberland House. Joe, can you remember the first time you met Jim Brady and why he was in Cumberland?

Joe: Well, I don't know exactly what time he came here but he was a field officer here at Cumberland and during the hard times when there was mostly relief work. And he gave me a job to be foreman of the pulp wood camp at McDowns Bay one summer. And everybody liked Jim, you know. He wasn't a Cree Indian, I don't think. I think he was more...

Murray: He was Ojibway, I think.

Joe: Ojibway or a Sioux Indian, part Sioux Indian. He was a well-educated man. Everybody liked him when he was up here you know. And he was a nice guy. But he had faults too, you know. He was living with a woman for a while in Cumberland and lots of people didn't like him for that. But he had a daughter; she is married now. She is married to one of the Henry kids. But Brady was a nice man.

Murray: Did he help people out?

Joe: He helped people out, yes. But he done a lot of foolish things too. He built cabins that they never used, you know, the wrong places I suppose, but just to gain work for the people. I remember he built a cabin that he never used at all. It is on the way to Sturgeon Lake.

Murray: He built it for himself and then was...?

Joe: No, he just built it for a camp, you know, for travellers. But nobody used it.

Murray: Why was that? Was it not in a good place?

Joe: He built it in a good place. There was lots of timber right there, you know, where that house is. But they never used that cabin and I guess it, I don't know what to say, whether it was money thrown away for nothing or what. But they never used it anyway. Just to give work to the men. At the time it was pretty hard them days.

Murray: So that's what he was trying to do mostly, was to get jobs for people, eh?

Joe: Yes, yeah. And he was here for quite a while. I liked him.

Murray: Did you ever have talks with him?

Joe: Oh yes.

Murray: What kinds of things would he talk about?

Joe: Well, he used to talk a lot about prospecting and so forth and he liked that kind of life.

Murray: Did he ever talk about his work in Alberta?

Joe: No, no, he never mentioned it to me, in Alberta. But that's where he came from I think, in Alberta.

Murray: Did he ever talk to you about a Metis society or association at all?

Joe: No, no.

Murray: You never heard him talk about that, eh?

Joe: No, he never mentioned anything about that.

Murray: What kinds of things would Jim help people with other than getting jobs? Would people go to him for help if they had a problem?

Joe: Oh yes, they would go to him and I think a lot of people were helped by him, you know. They got relief jobs from him, you know. Jobs wasn't plentiful in them years.

Murray: What were some of the relief jobs? What kind of jobs would they be?

Joe: Well, mostly when there was a fire. He was the fire ranger too, you know. It wasn't through him, I got a job. I worked for the department long time too but it was after that. I used to be the towerman.

Murray: Oh yeah. Were there a lot of people with these relief jobs?

Joe: Well, there was quite a few, yeah.

Murray: Would these be temporary jobs?

Joe: Just temporary jobs, yeah.

Murray: For the summer maybe?

Joe: Just for the summer.

Murray: Do you remember if he ever worked for the CCF party?

Joe: No, no I don't remember.

Murray: You don't remember or...?

Joe: No.

Murray: If he had worked for them, would you have known it, do you think?

Joe: Oh I don't think so because the CCF was a good government, you know. I can say that.

Murray: Right.

(break in tape)

Joe: The CCF government was here already then.

Murray: When he came.

Joe: When he came. You see there was no schools before that. This school that they had here was run just through the bishop, Bishop Charlebois. If it hadn't been for him, there would have been no school in the early days, you know. But it's the CCF that started that and now they are pretty well all educated now. They have nice schools ever since then.

Murray: So the CCF was the first government to really work on schools, eh?

Joe: Yeah, that's right, yeah.

Murray: Did people appreciate that? Did they think that was good?

Joe: Yeah, I think so. Yeah, they sure did. Yeah, I think they appreciated that.

Murray: Did people at that time want their children to go to school?

Joe: Yes, yeah. You see, before that when the other school was here, the people used to take all their families out and stay away all winter and the kids didn't have the chance to go to school because the school was just a small school. It wasn't big enough you see, the first school they had. But when they started putting them, well they passed a law that everybody had to stay in Cumberland for their kids to go to school.

Murray: They passed a law saying that the kids had to go to school, is that what the law said?

Joe: Oh yeah. You see, they are getting a lot of help now you see. The kids are going to school and that's the reason why they don't have to take their kids out.

Murray: Did some people not like that? Did they want to be able to take their kids on the trapline?

Joe: No, I don't think so. I never heard anybody complain about keeping the kids here. I think it's better this way. The kids have a better chance to...

Murray: Get an education.

Joe: To get an education. They are not any better, you know. As a matter of fact, I think the kids are worse now.

Murray: Get into more trouble don't they.

Joe: Get into more trouble. That's what I see.

Murray: Why do you think that is?

Joe: I don't know why that is at all.

Murray: Do you think it's because of education?

Joe: I think so. I don't know. I have nothing against education but that's the way it seems like. You know, they seem... whether their parents don't tell them anything, you

know. And they are up to mischief all the time. Maybe there is not enough recreation in Cumberland. They have no other place to go.

Murray: Maybe it's because they're all in one place now and it used to be they were out in the bush.

Joe: Yeah, that's what I figure. Maybe that had something to do with it.

Murray: When did that start to happen?

Joe: Only the last four years that I noticed that.

Murray: The last four years.

Joe: Yeah.

Murray: What's changed in the last four years?

Joe: Oh, there's a lot of changes. Even the grownups, everybody is getting into trouble. And the kids, they are not taught anything, you know. A lot of them, their parents don't teach them anything because their parents, they drink too much and it's a bad example to their children.

Murray: So there is a lot more alcohol than there was, eh?

Joe: Oh yeah, it was never been like that before you know.

Murray: And this is just in the last four or five years?

Joe: Yes, yeah. Just this last four or five years that it's getting worse.

Murray: So it's not only the young people but the older people too, eh?

Joe: It's the older people too, yeah. And another thing, you can see it for yourself, if you go to the lodge there, the door is always crowded with small kids and they stay up till nine and ten o'clock.

Murray: Eleven o'clock last night.

Joe: Eleven o'clock. You see, that shouldn't be like that because, you see, they are watching their parents drink in there.

Murray: And even five or six years ago, that didn't happen, eh?

Joe: No, no.

Murray: What do you think has changed to make it like that?

Joe: Well, I don't know. I couldn't answer that because the only thing that I say that... you see those kids... they see their parents... Sometimes they go to bed without supper, I guess, because their parents are drinking. They have to stay there. They are scared to go home alone or something like that, maybe. It's getting pretty dangerous too. Even you can't walk there. I've heard a lot of old people are getting robbed. They just grab the beer and run away with it. Even the small girls. And when they see a guy too drunk, well

they just take advantage and they go in the bush and they drink it, you know, and then they all come back. I seen kids drunk lots of times.

Murray: Little kids.

Joe: Little kids.

Murray: Ten years old.

Joe: Yeah, ten. Some of them younger. That never used to happen before.

Murray: Because parents would teach them better, is that right?

Joe: Oh yes.

Murray: What effect do you think welfare has had on the community?

Joe: I guess they have a lot of trouble, you know. And then lots of times they have to take the kids out and they have to be looked after outside on account of the people drinking too much.

Murray: Why do you think people drink more now? Is that because of welfare or no jobs or what would be the cause of that?

Joe: Well, I think they get their money too free now. Before they used to have to earn it, you know. I think that's one thing.

Murray: When did welfare first come to Cumberland?

Joe: It was quite a while. Twelve years anyway that I remember.

Murray: And could you start noticing more drinking and more trouble right from the beginning when welfare came or did it take time for that to...?

Joe: Oh, it took time. It's only lately that they are getting worse, you know. And no matter where you go, it's just the same. La Ronge and all those places you see. They can't go there at the lodge and have a few beers and come home. Lots of them, they start to drink, well they stay there until they are drunk and they fall asleep right there and nobody pays any attention to them, you know. Any of the places that I've been when I see the beer parlors in Flin Flon (I worked there for a while), well, there is nobody allowed to fall asleep in there. They just tell them to get out.

Murray: They are not supposed to even get drunk are they? They are supposed to stop serving them.

Joe: That's right. But here, you see, even if they are told not to, when they are cut off, well, they are already too drunk. They can't even walk. They just sit there and sleep.

Murray: Then they throw them out in the street.

Joe: Yeah. They have to turn them out there and it's very dangerous, you know. Sometimes it's a wonder they don't freeze to death in the wintertime.

Murray: They have to stagger home.

Joe: Yeah. Sometimes they are good enough to call a cab to come and get them.

Murray: But not always.

Joe: Not always.

Murray: What was it like years ago, like after the war? Was there much drinking in those days?

Joe: No, there was no beer or anything you know. The only time we could get liquor is we used to send for liquor at the Hudson Bay Junction. You know, you had to send away and get a few bottles.

Murray: But people didn't get drunk in those days.

Joe: No, no.

Murray: They would just drink a little bit.

Joe: They would just drink a little bit.

Murray: What kinds of things would people do in those days? Were there dances and fiddle playing and things like that?

Joe: Yeah, there used to be a lot of dances in those days you know. And now you never see a dance. Even at a wedding dance you never see the people there. They are all at the lodge there until past midnight, you know. And they always get married on a

Saturday, well they have to quit dancing at twelve and what's the use of dancing if they only dance an hour. Some of them don't even dance an hour. They are not allowed to dance on Sunday.

Murray: When did people stop having dances? Do you remember?

Joe: Not so very long ago, about four years ago.

Murray: So even four years ago, they were still having dances?

Joe: Oh yes, yeah. Yeah.

Murray: Are there people around still who can play the fiddle and the guitar or do you hear that much anymore?

Joe: Well, not very much now.

Murray: Do you think that the road coming into Cumberland years ago had a good or a bad effect on Cumberland?

Joe: No, I don't think so, no, no. I think we should have had it before, you know. We should have had that road in here before.

Murray: When did that road come in, do you remember?

Joe: When the steamboats quit running. And they had to get that road through because there used to be four boats running up and down here, the Ross Navigation, you know. They used to have big steamers going right to the Sturgeon Landing. And then the water got so low that they had to quit the river operations. So they had to have this road. It's much easier now since we had this road. The only way you could go into town is by boat before that. We were just isolated here. There was no other way unless they fly in.

Murray: Were there very many white people in Cumberland before the road?

Joe: Not very many, no. Just the Hudson's Bay and the churches and that's all. There was not very many white people.

Murray: Do you remember Malcolm Norris, ever meeting him?

Joe: Yes, he used to be here. He used to come here quite often.

Murray: What would he come for? Is that when he was working for the government?

Joe: Yeah, when he was working for the government, yeah.

Murray: And what would he be doing when he came here?

Joe: Well, it's mostly the same thing, you know, when there was meetings he used to come here. I don't know whether it was on account of the election or anything like that but Malcolm Norris used to come here quite often.

Murray: Would he campaign for the CCF?

Joe: I think so, yeah.

Murray: Did he ever come teaching prospecting?

Joe: No, not this side. But I understood that he was doing that kind of work over round La Ronge. But he never helped these people, anything here when it come to prospecting.

Murray: You don't remember what used to happen at those meetings, eh?

Joe: No. No, I didn't attend to very many meetings you know. Because I was tied up most of the time. I worked for the DNR. Well, I used to be a foreman. I put in eleven summers at that Hill Island Tower. But then they kicked me out when I was 65, you know.

Murray: They said you were too old, eh?

Joe: Yeah, well they was afraid that I might have a heart attack because I'll be 80 now, you see. I was 79 at my last birthday.

Murray: You look pretty healthy to me.

Joe: I feel pretty good yet. But I never get a job now.

Murray: You'd like to work though, eh?

Joe: Oh yes, I would like to work if I could get a job. I still can work too. I still trap but I can't use dogs any more. I'm too old for driving dogs. I use a ski-doo now in the wintertime.

Murray: Do you remember much about the Legion in the old days, the kinds of things the Legion would do? What kinds of activities was it involved in?

Joe: Oh not very much, no. I belong to the Legion too but this Legion here is dying out, you know.

Murray: But it used to be more active, eh?

Joe: Most of the members have quit the Legion.

Murray: Some are dead too, I guess, eh?

Joe: Lots of them are dead too. Yeah. Yeah, I'm a life member of the Canadian Legion.

Murray: You were in the First War?

Joe: In the First World War. But I didn't go overseas, you know. I wasn't old enough. They found out I lied on my age but I was doing guard duty in Canada. Mostly home guard, you know. Guarded the elevators at Thunder Bay, what they call Thunder Bay now. Used to be Port Arthur, Fort William. I used to guard the elevators there.

Murray: Did the Legion start things like recreation and things like that at all after the war, the Second World War?

Joe: No, not at all.

Murray: They didn't do much, eh?

Joe: They didn't do much. The only thing they have here is picture show. You know, they always have a projector and they have the chance to have a picture show. And that's all there is. That's all they have now. And them bingos, they run bingos, you know. But I don't intend to, I never go to those bingos.

Murray: Do you think things are better now than they were just after the war?

Joe: Oh yes, everything is much better now.

Murray: Except the kids are getting into trouble, eh?

Joe: Yeah, that's the only thing. But they can't help it. Their parents don't teach them anything you know. You can't blame the kids. I know when I was a kid we used to do some mischief too but not near as bad as what they do now. They can't even have a decent window in Cumberland now. You notice that the stores and the pool rooms and everything is closed in now. You know, it looks like hell. Before that they used to have windows and big windows in the stores and now they can't display anything, you know.

Murray: Because kids will break them all the time.

Joe: Yeah, they are breaking them all the time. And not only kids, even the grown ups. Young girls are the worst. It's too bad.

(break in tape)

Murray: After the war, were things pretty tough for people?

Do you remember that? Was it hard to...?

Joe: Oh yes, in the thirties, I used to take my family out. I would leave here about the end of September and I wouldn't come back until open water in the spring. I used to take all the kids and stay out all winter and we were living on mostly wild meat, just moose meat. Fur was no good. No price of fur. A mink was only worth \$7 them days and now you get about \$30 now for a large one. And see, that's the difference. Even a red fox used to be worth \$25 and now everything is down, you know. It's only these last couple of years that the long-haired fur is picking up again. A few years ago, just about three years ago, well a fox was only worth about \$3.

Murray: Not worth getting.

Joe: Not worth catching it, no. Now the fox are scarce and now the price has gone up. I don't know what happened to the foxes but they are disappearing altogether. There is very, very few now. There was a lot of coyotes, you know. Maybe they ate them up. But they are very scarce now.

Murray: So people in the thirties couldn't stay in town. They had to go in the bush to work?

Joe: They had to go in the bush in order to live. Just living on straight meat almost, you know. Well the only thing that helped me out, I used to even sell moose meat. Take it to Pine Bluff and The Bay used to buy it.

Murray: And you'd be able to get some flour or something.

Joe: Flour. Just to trade it, you know, for flour and baking powder and sugar and stuff like that. And the school teacher, Paul Seacott, I used to take some meat to him too, you know. And you didn't have to have a license them days to kill a moose. But we didn't slaughter the moose for nothing. We just made every use of it, you know, every bit of it. And then there used to be women that could tan hides in them days and now you can't get a woman to tan a moose hide here. They throw all the hides out in the bush now. Nobody ever bothers picking them up. That's another thing that we used to have.

Murray: So people don't work the hides any more, eh?

Joe: No, no, just an odd one. And then, you try and get the moose hide tanned someplace. Well, my Mrs. sent some to (inaudible) and she paid money in advance to get them and she lost them all. She never got the hides back. So it's not worth it.

Murray: So now they just use the meat.

Joe: Yeah, that's all they use now. They never pick the moose hide up. They just let the coyotes and stuff like that eat them up, you know.

Murray: Can you remember any stories about Jim at all that would be interesting?

Joe: No, no.

Murray: You don't remember him very well, eh?

Joe: No.

(End of Side A)

(End of Tape)

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