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HIGHLIGHTS:

- Mrs. Sanderson, now in her 80s, was raised in La Ronge where she attended school to Grade 9. Her father was a teacher. After her marriage, she learned an entirely new way of life in the bush.
- Archdeacon J.E. McKay: his role in La Ronge as teacher, preacher, school-builder.
- Life in La Ronge at the turn of the century.
- Learning to live in the bush: trapping, preparing hides, drying meat, making snowshoes, etc.
- Regrets at changes among Indian people.

I am speaking with Cora Sanderson of La Ronge.

I am Cora Sanderson, Cora Charlotte Sanderson, and I am at the old folk's home. Today I would like to tell something about my dad, how we came out to Lac La Ronge. At first he was one of the boys that got picked up in Manitoba by the archdeacon, J.E. McKay. He went around quite a number of times picking up young boys and girls and he brought them to Prince Albert, Emmanuel School. And that is where they trained these boys and girls to be teachers and storekeepers and carpenters and all kinds of other trades that they could learn. And so we had quite a few oldish men in our day that spoke good English and that went around working at their trades. And so was my father. He was Samuel Abraham and they came from Manitoba and he was in school in Prince Albert and after, he was, after he had got through his schooling, he went home for a very short

while; then he came out and was stationed at Little Hills. And there he was stationed as a teacher and also to preach in the church. So he started building a house, like. It wasn't very big. A schoolhouse and a church combined, and that is where he used to teach on the weekdays, and on Sundays he took the services. And I well remember the time when we used to go to church and hear him preach and he used to teach us how to sing and we were only little children then.

My grandfather was old Samuel Halkett and he had six sons and five daughters and he had them all there. And that is where my dad worked, amongst his future brother-in-laws, because he got married to my mother out of the Halkett family. My mother's name was Nora Halkett before she was married. And she used to help out a lot. When children were brought to school in the summertime, some of them were not too clean. The women used to bring them to our house and she used to clean them up and give them clothing to put on for the school days, and this is the way they used to go to school. And in the summertime, few of them went to school because my dad didn't teach in the summer days. But he taught the syllabics to more grown up boys and girls. And today we have a lot of these men around that can read syllabics freely and they know it so well, they can write it good too.

And that is what my father taught them in the summer months. But in the wintertime, there was quite a few of us, I remember. I'll start from there where I remember it, where we used to, when we heard the bell, we were always in a flurry to go the first part of our schooling. And of course there were many of us grandchildren that were living around my granddad and grandmother. We all used to run together to the school. Of course, in the first part of the schooling, I didn't go to school. But my father used to take me to the school and they used to babysit and I used to play in the corner. But my brother came to school as soon as he was able, too. As far back as I can remember. Many a time, my cousin Sarah Ballantine, she had lost her mother and she didn't have a mother, so my grandmother brought her up and my sister and her were the same age. So when we started going to school, we used to go together. And I remember the time we used to have little shawls. Our mothers used to make us little jackets of cloth that we got straight from England. In those days all the cloth and the dress coats came from England, before you could ever get them in Canada. So we had all the best cloth that we could have for our jackets and then our dresses too. And so we had little shawls. We never used to have caps or bonnets but we used to have little shawls and I remember the time when we used to run to school. A lot of the girls had shawls, little shawls, and we wore those instead of mufflers and caps. So that is the way we went to school in our day and many of the young people that came out in the summer months, they wanted to learn a little bit of English so my dad used to take time to teach them too. So, I used to listen on, that was before I started schooling.

One time I was listening to a man. I thought he was a dummy because I knew the English words and I knew the animals and I could name all the animals in English because I had been in school with the bigger ones. And this one guy was standing stupid before the class and he was asked to name a dog and he couldn't name a dog. And he named other animals instead of a dog and mixed them up like that. And I got tired of listening to him. So when he was asked, "What is a fox?" and he said, "Dog," I up and said, "Fox," and my dad gave me a slap. Once or twice I got a slap from my dad to keep quiet because I was letting them know before it was my turn to be even at school. So, I knew my English a bit before I started school. And then after school, my dad used to teach us many things out of school. He taught my brother to go and pick up a net, in the summertime and in the wintertime. And he taught him how to split wood and pile it up and we used to help along. And in the summertime, my mother used to go and pick berries and we used to go with her and we used to get lots of berries. And when we came home, my dad used to do the canning because my mother didn't know how. She didn't know how to can stuff in those days and my dad was taught at school, I suppose, so he took over and used to can the berries for us. And he used to can meat and fish and finally my mother could do it all alone after she was married. And then we had many instances where my dad taught us how to do other things besides outdoor work, inside work too. He used to teach us how to cook this one special pudding that they used to make in the olden days and we used to like it. He used to cook it. He used to boil it for three hours and then he used to roast the... put it in the

oven. And then after that he used to make a sauce and he used to put that on top. Sometimes it was good for a wedding, wedding cake, like. When there is a wedding and there is a feast, he used to give those up. And for Christmas dinners, for the people after Christmas and Easter services, the special services on special days, he used to make this for the people and they used to like it. Quite a few women learned how to cook that and that was our special cake and pudding. And finally, my mother started making cakes because my dad knew how. I guess they were taught cooking at school too because he used to make good cakes and that is the way my mother learned how to make cakes. And we used to have those, too, for specialties. I remember that clearly because many a time I got myself into trouble, getting into the flour and trying to bake a cake. And I still bake cakes today because I used to love to bake.

And my dad, in teaching us these things, he used to teach us about the Bible too. And we learned the Bible well from him. All the stories about the Lord Jesus. We heard all about those and the Old Testament and of course we remembered those and they were a great help to us when we landed in the other residential school that we had in La Ronge. And besides my mother teaching us how to sew and knit, we were taught how to sew when we were very small. My mother used to teach us; a whole bunch of little girls used to come around and we would play and they would make rag dolls. She used to help us. And

my grandmother used to teach us how to put up our dollies in moss bags. And we even used to go out with women that went and dragged the moss for their moss bags. We used to go into the big muskegs with our mothers and grandmothers and then they used to pluck up big square pieces of moss and they used to break a tree down and there they used to spread the moss out and let it dry in the fog. And they gathered that and then they made a little spruce tipi and they would squeeze the moss in there for the winter use. Many of them used to put up three or four little, not very little, but they used to make these spruce wigwams, and squeeze their moss in there. And that kept dry all winter. And it was used for the babies in their moss bag. And we used to play with our dollies in the moss bag and grandmother used to teach us how to use the moss. And do you know, we started using that instead of diapers for our own children. Women that were about my age and the others, we were all taught how to use the moss bag. How to dry moss in the fall and keep it through the winter until it is dry again to pick some more. And this was what grandmother taught us. And we sure took to it and we learned lots. And then after, we used that for our own use with our own children.

The same with cradles, our uncles used to make us little cradles for our dollies. In those days we didn't have any

dollies, we used to have rag dolls and Grandmother used to make them for us and we used to try and dress them. We did a lot of sewing with her and she taught us how to sew. And finally, we knew how to sew and we just loved making our own dolls. And then we got the moss bags because we knew how to make them finally and then our uncles used to make us cradles and we used to learn how to use the cradle too and carry our dollies and then in later life, we used to carry our babies in those cradles.

And in our very young days, we used to learn a lot because there was no other games that we could take to and nothing else to do. But they taught us and they even taught us how to keep the Sabbath holy. My dad used to teach us that and then our grandparents were so strict that we were, after we got dressed for church, we were just to sit still. Maybe just to keep ourselves clean or maybe it was the discipline that they want us to be quiet on a Sunday. And so we took to it easily. We kept quiet in the church. And we learned hymns easily and we knew how to sing in church and today, I often long that my grandchildren were taught this. But then we had no chance to teach them this way. But we sure did appreciate what our own grandmother, my mother's mother, used to do for us to teach us everything that she knew. And she used to work for this Archdeacon J.E. McKay. When he had his wife out here, she went and kept house for them and so she learned her English there and she knew how to read and write.

And in later life, when we were at the residential school, I was telling this to the children there; they didn't believe me. They said, "No, your grandmother can't read English." So I asked one of our teachers to take us along to where

Grandmother was living in a tipi. So she took us down there and when we got there, we asked our grandmother to read the first chapter of St. John. And she started reading it right away when she found it. But if in our day we used to pronounce thee as the, but Grandmother used to pronounce it thee. So she started reading the first chapter of St. John and she said, "In thee beginning was thee word," and the children started laughing at her. They thought that she couldn't read or write because she pronounced that 'thee' too much. But that was the way they were taught. And in a way, that was the way we were taught too but then after we came to the residential school, some words had to be different. So we learned them anyway and so this is the way we were brought up. We didn't have much time to play. Of course we played some but not any special games that we know of. And of course, we didn't have anything to play with. Neither did we have any footballs or little balls or anything like that. The boys had their bows and arrows but we girls, we didn't have anything. We just learned what we could and on Sundays we had to keep still and sit down with the folks because in the morning the service used to be at

half past ten in Cree, all in Cree. And then at two o'clock in the afternoon. But when we came out of church and went to our homes for dinner, sometimes there would be two or three families in the house come to eat with us. And in other homes and there they had a little service too. And then at two o'clock, another service; and then in the evening, where all the people used to get together in one home and they had a night service, an evening service. And we all used to attend those and we were taught the way to pray and to sing. But then they didn't preach the way of salvation in those days. But we kept up what we were taught.

And then finally, my dad got word that they were going to build a residential school in Lac La Ronge. And they got my dad to get all his brother-in-laws and the other men that were able to work, to cut logs at the Bigstone Lake. So, in April, around April, they started cutting logs and in May and they hauled them down to the mouth of the river, the Montreal River, the one that starts from down here and up a ways to Bigstone and that is where they had all the logs ready. And then my dad and Miles Sanderson, my brother-in-law... Of course my father-in-law married twice and it was his first son and he was about the same age as my dad; they were in their fifties. But Miles was in his forties, I am sure. No my dad was in his forties too. They were both in their forties and they used to work together. So the Archdeacon got together his foremen and so they started digging. They made a trench, right through a point between two rapids there down Montreal River. And that is where they put up the water mill and that is where they made the saw mill for our school. And we came down there and so of course the children were not taught anything too much then because my dad was busy all of May and June and pretty near all summer.

Of course on a Sunday, the young men and women used to come out and he used to teach them syllabics after prayers and

after our church services, like. We used to have them outside. We never had a house where the mill was but we had great big tents where my mother cooked and she had other women help her and they cooked for the men and that was the mess room where they used to eat. And then we had our own big tent. I remember the time we had to be so good because they couldn't look after us and they were afraid we would fall into the fast-running rapids there. But we kept away; we knew what was good for us once we were told. In those days we kept away from it, and not one child was lost in those rapids although we lived right close along there. So I always say that in our days, children minded what their parents told them. I suppose they had more respect for their parents, that is why. They were disciplined more. And of course, Archdeacon McKay helped a lot with our discipline. And we liked staying out in the tent. After all, we had always been living in a house. We

never travelled to any place except in the summertime; we used to travel to Stanley for that great big one gathering of the people from all over at Stanley Mission. I remember the time we used to take to the canoes and paddle out on Lake La Ronge and got to the first portage and there we used to camp. And the men, some of the men would go ahead, like my uncles. They would go and set nets for the fish or hooks for the trout and after they got their fish, the women used to dry them for future consumption and the fish they used to dry. And then sometimes someone would kill a moose and they would dry the meat and we would take that all along to Stanley when we went for this big gathering.

And I remember the time when we were very small. We used to be told that a bishop would come down and stay with us. Now we didn't know what kind of a man a bishop was, but my dad used to tell us that he was a man of God and that we were to respect him; and so we did. Oh, we had a fear for the first bishop that came down. And he was Bishop Neuman, that is as far back as I could remember. And he used to be so good to us and he used to tell us a great many things because we understood English and then we used to tell the other children what he used to tell us. And he tried to talk in Cree and we used to tell him, my brother and I, we used to tell him some Cree words and we used to tell him what the meaning was. So one time he said, "What is that word, for instance? For instance like, like if you were to do this, and it said for instance like, something like that?" So my brother told him. I always remember this clearly. We used to laugh at him. And he said, "You see, when you want to say that word in Cree, you say Ah ta minsowats." That was what my brother told him. And he said, "I will remember, Ah ta minsowats," he said. So every time he wanted to use that word after that, he used to say that clearly, like, "Adam's watch." And of course, that used to make us giggle. He didn't say it right but anyway it could be understood. And so, I didn't know whether my brother gave him a good meaning but anyway he tried.

We weren't very good at English in those days but my dad taught us, there at Little Hills, and then at the residential

school where he taught for almost two years. And after he was stationed at the new residential school there, he didn't want to be in a place where there would be better teachers coming out. We were told that we could have better teachers from England. So my dad didn't want to stand in their way so he took the post at Hudson Bay, three miles across the lake. And that is where he died.

But when they got that lumber for the school at the rapids there, he got it all ready and then they brought it out to the mouth of the river and he used to bring it out by canoes, that is, the lumber. And they used to take it over to where that Motor Hotel is. That is where they used to land and portage right across to the lakeside there, to the mouth of the river.

And we then lived with the Catholics there because that was their place. My dad pitched a big tent there and we lived right close to the Catholic priest and the Marasty's were there because they were all Catholics. And so we had services on a Sunday together with the Catholics and the Anglicans together. And nobody opposed each other. We were all in one. We knew, even as children, that we were to love the Catholics. Now, today, the Anglicans could oppose the Roman Catholics and then the Catholics would oppose the Anglicans. In our days, we were not taught that, so we lived with the Catholic priest there and the services were out in the open air. And in the evenings I could even smell right now the aroma of the spruce gum that was on those boards. Oh, the smell used to be lovely, the smell of the spruce. And we used to have more services outside. And finally we landed lumber out where the place was chosen by John E. McKay, my father....

(End of Side A, Tape IH-099)

(Side B)

Miles and my dad were telling Archdeacon McKay that the place where Robertson has his home, the place where old Ervil first resided, had his home built there, they suggested that was the best place for a school. So they went down there to look at it and the Archdeacon didn't take to it. And they said that was where the old witchcraft work used to be. That is where the old witch doctors and those that know anything about anything like that, that is where they used to pitch their tents and then they would have this big bigdo(?) where they practised their witchcraft. And so he didn't take to that place. So he said, "We'll go back again and we'll look for something better." And so we landed right in front of that hospital, where it stands now. And when we landed there, it was just thick bush and it was around three o'clock in the afternoon. I remember clearly because, my mother said, "There won't be too many flies at three o'clock." And she used to tell us about that and she used to laugh. But then the mosquitoes were out in no time. She had to make three smudges around where we were and she kept those smudges going to keep the flies away from us. We played in the water and my mother had taken something to do and she was there and getting the supper ready. And

Archdeacon McKay got my dad one pail and a trowel and he got one for himself and he gave one to Miles Sanderson. They each had mosquito netting up to their waists and they had holes for their arms but those my mother tightened up so no flies could get to them. And they had hats and from the top they hung this mosquito netting so the flies couldn't get to them too much.

But it was thick bush that they had to go through. So they went and Archdeacon said that my dad to go to the north, northeast, no, north south, like where that D & R Park is right now. That is where he sent my dad. It was northeast. And then he sent Miles to the west side and then he said he'll go to the north, like the northwest. So he said he will go up, straight up into the bush, and my dad was to go to the right side and Miles was to go to the left side; and so they started out. And I used to wonder because I used to be so inquisitive. Many a time my mother used to slap me down to keep quiet. I used to ask Archdeacon McKay so many questions that he didn't want me to. But I kept it up. So I was wondering what they were going there for. I had heard they were going to get some sand and that is all I knew about it. So we were playing there and my mother wouldn't let us know. So, finally, Miles Sanderson was the first one that came back and he had not nothing too good, he said, in his pail. He said where he went up was just rock. That is where the church stands now. He went through the forest there and got on the rock and then went right up to where the Riese's Dock is now. I guess that is as far as he went. And everywhere he looked there was rocks. So he came back. He didn't have much in his pail. He brought what he found.

And then he waited a while and then my dad came out too. He said he didn't find any rocks but he found sand and dirt. Not too much dirt, but sand. Mostly sand. And so they waited for - and they were to tell him what kind of trees they had seen. So I guess they told us what kind of trees they were and then finally, we waited for quite a while. Supper was ready. My mother had the cooked fish all around the fire on the apparmask(?) and they cooked potatoes in the coals and we had bannock, fresh bannock, and oh, we had a nice feed that evening. But then I couldn't start eating right away because I was so inquisitive, I wanted to know what were they doing. And so, Archdeacon came through and mosquitoes were after him so bad; he had gone through the dense forest. He said they were great big spruce trees and it had to take a lot of work to clear the land but he said, "I found it, I found it." And I asked him, "What did you find?" And he said, "Look, come and see." He used to call me Charlotte, he said, "Charlotte, come and see." So I went up and he showed me the good, black soil. He had it in his hand and he showed us the black soil. And he said, "Do you know, this is good for gardening. And do you know, when you have your school in that bush, you will be having gardens all around you." Oh, that was hard taken, that was hard to believe but we knew that what he talked about was always the truth.

So then we had our supper and they kept talking. They got

away from us and they sat together and talked and talked. My mother kept up the smudges and we were playing there, three of us, my brother, my sister, and myself. And finally, he came and he said we were to go back to the saw mill, to the phone.

And then he said, "Men are coming out to cut these big logs." And he told us some were big, some he just couldn't put his arm around, they were that big. And we were afraid even to go a little ways into the bush because, he said, "There might be animals lurking in the bush." So we didn't go; we were scared. And so we came away from there and they had their sample and that was a sample. And then they came home and then they got the men. They had a big meeting and a lot of men came out and then they got to work.

Archdeacon got all the men to go and pitch their tents on the Dominion Island and on any other island they liked, and they were to stay there and they were to come and work at the school grounds to clear the land. And so that is what they did. We went there and lived close to that, the place where the hospital is now. The first clearing they made, that is where we lived. And we didn't even locate that little man-made bay that they have there. That wasn't there at all, it was just straight landmark. And we used to walk down there but it didn't go very far. It was just dense bush and we never realized that it could be cleared. But we looked and learned and saw; and finally it was all cleared.

Every morning the men would come over. You could see their little canoes as they paddled over, coming to work. They were weren't paid much but they knew what they were doing. They were helping out on a good cause and many of them used to say that they really wanted their children to go to school. And so that was it. They started working, clearing the land. And we were living right there. And as they cleared the land and we see the stumps all over the place, in the evenings, we used to go and play around there and jump from stump to stump. And finally, Archdeacon got after us, and he said that we were not to play there in case we got hurt. But many a time we were always glad when he got away to some other place, then we can play there at random and we got other children that were visiting to play with us. And then the Marastys had horses that the Catholic priest had brought to them to use for their own use and they started helping out, pulling out the stumps. They even helped in those days and the many people of nowadays won't have anything much to do with the Catholics. But in those days, we were all in one. They seemed to know that there was just one God that they had to worship and so they were always together. We loved each other, the old folks, and we loved them too. Because we remembered the very old David Marasty. We used to call him David. They named him David but we used to call him David. And then his wife was Susan and we used to call her Babbit Susan, in Cree. Like in a Cree way, David's Susan. And so, we loved those old people and we got to know that they could even help our school that was being built.

So in time, they got the land cleared and then the first

other minister that came out to help with the services was

Albert Fraser. And the last time I saw him was at The Pas. He was pastoring at a church there, an Anglican church, and that is when we saw him last. And we got to know them so well. And in those days, they lived in a different shack. And that is where old Mrs. Bell worked. She worked as a housegirl and that is how she got to learn her English there, too. She used to work for this minister and his wife and then after, they had to leave because the wife was going to have a baby and she had to go to Prince Albert, back to town. And so we had another Cree minister from Little Pines Reserve that came out and he was in charge of the church.

Because then, after clearing the land, they started clearing that high rock where the church is now. And that is where we used to have our services on Sundays. Oh, it used to be beautiful when it didn't rain and we used to have our services there. And all Cree services, not a word of English. And the people used to love those services. And then after that, after the school was built, this James Brown and his wife - his wife was from England and when he went to school at Little Pines Reserve, she was a teacher there. So, he married this teacher, so they came out together. And she was the school supervisor and he was the principal of the school. And my mother was the girls' supervisor and my dad was the first teacher there. But that same winter, right in that same spring, Billy Bear came out from Little Pines and he was a teacher too and he started teaching. So there was my dad and Willy Bear teaching and then their old teacher, the teacher they had there. Her name was Miss Cunningham, Miss Annie Cunningham. She never married. So, she came out as a teacher too. And then my dad wanted to sidestep away from teaching and that is when he quit and went over to the Hudson's Bay. But he taught pretty near two years because I remember the time the school was being built. The school house was just a dining room and the little kitchen and an upstairs room for the priest and his wife. And then we had another man come out from Davis, he went to that Emmanuel School and he was a carpenter. His name was Robert Bear and he was from Davis, or Leask or whatever you call it now. That is where he came out from. And he was the carpenter that helped James Brown build the school. And so they were there and my dad taught in that first school. And in that fall, we children worked hard.

There was around fifty-two pupils the first three months or four months of our school there. There was around fifty-two children. Archdeacon went to Lake Deschambault, to Pelican Narrows, to Stanley, Montreal Lake, and places all around like that. Of course, the people from Lac La Ronge, they all lived in the bush away from Lac La Ronge. There weren't very many houses or shacks that were around Lac La Ronge. But then, the people that were there, they brought their children; and those that were in the bush, they brought their children out and left

them there that fall. There was around fifty-two of us then

when we first started school. But that fall there was about seventy-two or seventy-seven and many came from Lake Deschambault because Archdeacon went out there and picked up all the orphans. All the children that had lost their mothers, he brought them out. And that is when Nancy Ross and her sisters came out. One is still living at the new reserve, her name is Rena Anderson. She came out; they were Ballantine girls. And so they came to school because they had lost their mother. Their little sister Sarah was only a small girl when she came but the three of them were brought. And that is how come Nancy got into the first school. And many of the others from Stanley, children that had lost their dads or their mothers, they were the first ones to be picked up. And so, that is the way we started school after it was built.

But then, the men after helping, clearing the land and helping with the lumber that they took up... It was all dried out and they attended to that, too. Because they used to be around the lumber so much, repiling it and changing it and putting it straight. And we used to go and talk to them because we lived right there. And then Fraser was there and he used to go around to the men and talk to them too as they were clearing the land and helping with the lumber. And in the fall, they were asked to haul how much they can of sawdust from the old mill. So, they used to haul it in canoes, and sacks were piled up at the lake. And of course, they used to dump their sacks and sacking. They got the sacking from the Hudson's Bay store and my mother used to sew them up into big bags. They used to bring up the sawdust up to the bank there and then, in the fall, after they had brought the sawdust and it was dried, they used to put it out to be dried, they used big gunny sacks. James Brown and his wife used to get after us bigger ones and he used to get us to fill up the sacks and even if we can't carry them, we used to drag them up. And then the bigger boys used to insulate the walls with the sawdust. They could climb up ladders and they used to insulate the school walls and that is the way we had our school warmed. With just two thicknesses of boards and then the sawdust insulation. But we took to it. It was short work because quite a few of us loved to pile up the sawdust to pick it up and we thought it was play. And we worked for our school, too. And after it was built, we did all the cooking in the kitchen and the baking. We used to bake bread in big pots and we used to do our own cooking and baking and then we used to empty all our morning slops. We didn't hire the boys. Two girls used to take to one pail and empty our slops. But the boys were always asked to take turns to dig trenches for us to put our slop in there. And so, they had something to look after themselves too. They had cows and they had a few pigs, so they were busy boys too. They did all the wood, all the cutting of the wood and the

splitting of the wood and bringing it into the schoolhouses, into the rooms I mean, especially into the big schoolrooms where we were. And so this is the way we began our school life and that is the way we lived. We lived helping each other from the start.

But then we had our play. We had our footballs then; that is what we used to play with. And I often recollect how we used to play football against each other. The girls and the boys sometimes, when we were allowed. Sometimes it used to be just the girls. And I remember the girls that were about my age, how they could kick the ball way up, and I always say that this is the way that we injured our legs. Like, now, myself, I walk with two canes today. But I don't think that was it but maybe we spoiled some of our veins and the muscles too. But we loved to play with the football. And so, we had other teachers coming out to teach us there and my dad went over to the Hudson Bay and he was only forty-five years old when he died and he was at the post at the Bay there when he died. And he never missed a Sunday by water or by dog team to come across before ten o'clock and he used to take the services in Cree, whether the Archdeacon was there or whether he was not there. They worked together till the end of their days. He died first and Miles died after. But I remember him, he was at my dad's deathbed when he died. And he used to be always the head man in the church next to my dad. And he used to have discipline in church.

I remember the time that people used to go up to take holy communion, how we would stand in the middle and get each seat, like, from each side to go up first. And lately, they have been just a jumble. People getting up from here and there and going like that with no one to guide them, to help them. But Miles was a great man in his day and he helped a lot of young people too. Although he couldn't read or write except the syllabic, but he did a lot to help with our church. The first time our church was built, he was right there. And he always opened the door for the services, rang the bell and helped with any burial services or any baptisms. He brought children, had them ready for baptism. And nowadays, where is a man to do that job now, today? We often think about the old days, how people used to love their church and love their God and nowadays, not many young people come out. Although, there are some older men that can read syllabics, freely, they don't come out much to help. And so, this is the way that we started school.

And then after that, after I got married, I didn't know next to nothing about outdoor work because I was never taught. And so, when I got married, I married a trapper, Miles Sanderson's brother, and he was never in school. He never came to school. And I married him and then I had to go out on the trapline with him. We stayed one year around here and the Archdeacon got my husband to build the stables all the way to

Prince Albert, wherever they had their stopping places for the freighters that brought out the freight for the school and for the Hudson's Bay stores. And the Revillon Brothers in those days had freight too. So, he went out there and we pitched in the wintertime in a tent and he used to build stables and Archdeacon used to supervise them. And that is what we did the first year we were together. And then after that, we went up north to trap. After we had our boy, then when he was a little

bit bigger that we could take him around with us, then we went up that first fall. And I didn't know next to nothing. When he killed a moose, I just stood there. Just took a piece of the moose meat, went and fried it. The next piece was to boil it. I didn't even know how to dry meat. And so I told my husband that I'm no good, that he had to teach me everything.

In fact, I remember the first time I got married, and I went to our house because he had built a house through Charlie Hayes. My husband and Mathew Charles, when they came courting us at school and they used to visit us in the staff sitting-room, then we told them that we needed houses before we left because we didn't like to live in tents. So Charlie Hayes, our principal then, he got them to get logs and so he got them lumber out of the logs that they got and then they used to come over and they would see us quite often. And he used to let us visit each other, the four of us would be together visiting each other. So, we were well acquainted, the four of us. I remember the time when he used to come over from way out on the lake. At night, he used to bring the logs in when it wasn't windy and we used to lean out of our dormitory windows and we used to look at them bringing in their logs. They would have a big fire on the raft like, or something that they burned and it would light up as they came along, we used to see their light and they used to bring their logs in. And we used to tell our principal that we watched them bringing the logs in and he used to laugh at us. So finally we had our houses put up and we went out and helped them build. So, finally when we got married, we had houses, Mrs. Mathew Charles and myself, because we had asked for houses to be built. But, of course, I suppose, they couldn't keep that up. And then after I got married, they used to get my husband to make hay for the school. You know, when the freighters come in, they used to have bales and....

(End of Side B, Tape IH-099)

(End of Tape)

(Side A, Tape IH-100)

...hay for the freighters and that used to bring in the freight for the school and sometimes they would bring in a teacher. And we were always so happy to see new teachers; and I used to help in the school too. By then I could make a hide, and many a time my husband would kill a moose and we would ask someone to make hides for me. And I made them into moccasins and mitts for the children at the school. And I used to help with the school too, alongside of my husband, making hay. And so we lived in the summertime this way. And the first time I went up to trap with my husband, I said I'd trap with him. I didn't know next to nothing about trapping, but we went. And so that winter, we went together.

I went out with my sister-in-law and her husband, George Bird and my sister-in-law Georgina Bird. And we stayed together and they used to babysit my boy. And my husband and

I, we used to go in the fall, as soon as the freeze up was. We used to go out skating and going to set our traps and I was so happy to set traps. The first trap that I set, I didn't set my own way but my husband helped me a lot. So he said, "You'll have your trap set on the other side of the portage and I'll have mine on this side." So when we came to this, when we went to see our traps and he went to his traps, he said, "Just take off your skates and run through the portage there and then see if there is anything in your trap." So I ran and here I seen a marten. In those days, we used to get martens and I had seen a marten there. Oh, I was glad because we have big prices on them, we thought. Forty-five to sixty-five, some of them were. And I didn't know what kind I had. And so I took up a stick I was going to because my husband had taught me how to kill but not to try and hit the trap or I would set the animal loose.

I was afraid to set the marten loose so I ran through the portage and I yelled, "I have got one in my trap!" so he came running and he told me why did I have to come back? Why didn't I take it out? And I said, "It is alive, and it looked up at me and his eyes were like a baby looking at me and I just couldn't kill it." So he said he might have gotten away from the trap already if he hadn't much of a foot in the trap; he would be loose by now, he said. So he started running and I run after him. And with one bang he hit my marten and killed it. So, I got my marten. Oh, was I ever happy! And I traded it into the Hudson's Bay in the wintertime when we came for Christmas and I got forty-five dollars for it. It was not the best but it was worth that. I was happy I made some money for myself. And then, getting to another trap, I missed three others. I was getting disappointed. Then I got a mink and he made me kill that one because it was still alive. So then I had two fur to bring home and I gave it to Angus McKay. He

was in charge of that store then. And he had married one of our teachers, a Miss Dryhurst. She was Mrs. Angus McKay now. And my, she was so happy that I could trap and she was so glad that I got my money for my fur. So, I was happy, and after that I used to want to trap all the time but my husband wouldn't let me. But the times when we went up, it was early in September we used to go up, and we used to stop at McIntosh Lake, at the end of the lake where the rapids are. And we used to stay there with my husband's sister. She got married to a Nelson and we used to stop there. We went to visit my sister-in-law and her son was there. This was Janet's father and mother. And we used to stay there and the four of us, oh we used to have great times.

And my husband and Janet's dad used to go up hunting moose and if they had the moose already, then my sister-in-law used to teach us how to stretch a moose hide, how to flesh it and how to take the flesh back, hair off as well, and how to make it even so it wouldn't be stiff. So, she taught us this and when they brought in fresh meat, she used to tell us how to cut the meat thin, make it into strips, and then she used to tell us how to put it over a stretcher like that they had and then they used to dry the meat that way.

And finally, we knew how much to roast of our meat and then cook it after by the fire and then we used to break it up and pound it and make it into beaten meat and then we had good dinner. We used to render moose fat and with the cracklings, we used to pound that dry meat in there and then we used to make pemmican with lard that we made. And we used to have rogans(?) that she used to make, great big high-necked rogans(?), baskets, and she used to make coverings on it and then we used to put our meat in there or pemmican. And do you know that kept till the cold weather set in, we used to have beaten meat like that. And it used to keep because she showed us how. And she used to teach us a lot of things. Finally, we could flesh our own moose hides and we could take the hair off our moose hides and make it just the right way to make it soft. And then we tanned our own hides. And then we smoked our own hides and we learned all that through her. We used to stop there sometimes more than two weeks, I used to stop there with my husband. And then he used to take what meat I dried up to our camp, and some of our groceries for the winter. He used to take them up there and Janet's dad used to go with him and they used to take the freight up there and then we could travel easy then on the next trip. And coming back sometimes, they would get another moose and away we would get on the moose hide again, trying to learn as much as we could. And we used to make good hides. Janet's mother used to make good hides too, like I did. And we used to sell them to the stores and we used to make moccasins and mitts and sell them too. So in all, we made our living like that and we learned. We tried to learn so hard.

Nowadays, in my day like, when my daughter was a little girl, I used to teach all my boys how to make some snowshoes. And their dad used to teach them how to make snowshoes and the axe handles and things like that. And then I taught them how to lace up the snowshoes with rawhide and they knew how to do it. Today they still know how to do it and they make their living, most of them make their living - when they are asked to make snowshoes, they make oh, sometimes fifty pairs or sixty. And they make good money on it. And paddles, they used to make good paddles too. Their dad taught them that. And I always think back on the days when we were taught what to learn. We used to take to it willingly and we didn't even object to any smell of a hide or anything that nowadays, most of our young people are opposed to even a little smell. They are so refined. At least they try to be. But my grandchildren, they won't learn how to make hides.

My daughter makes good hides because she used to learn from me, I used to teach her everything. She even made coats and even pants we used to make together and mitts, gloves and mukluks. She learned all that through me because I taught her well. But, to teach her children, they wouldn't learn. They wouldn't even climb on a mount of raw moosehide because it looked dirty for them. And I am saying this so they can hear me. They will never take to learning anything. Now, they

don't know next to nothing about tanning a hide or putting away meat for the winter. Like drying meat and pounding it. And whenever I have a piece of meat, I dry it and I pound it and I make it into a little pemmican. They want to eat it, why don't they make it themselves? They could grab any kind of meat and make it into pemmican.

It was only the other day I took a little bit of pounded meat to visit my daughter. She wasn't home. She was visiting her children at the far reserve and there was a grandson of mine there and he said, "This is what I like. This is what my mother used to make but now my sisters never make anything like this." He was living with his sisters there. And my daughter is married and out at the south end, Reindeer's; she has her home out there now. And so, what I have learned, I would always talk about it because it has been useful to me and it did help me a lot when I was just in the rental, everything in the way of outdoor living, like. And I was never in the bush, I was always at home in the house when my dad was teaching at Little Hills. And I had to stay there and I had to learn what they taught me. But we always resorted to our own grandmother and she taught us everything that we could learn, but in a way, we never seen her make a hide. Of course, we were small then. I guess she did, but even my aunts, I never saw them make up hides. But some of them did, I know, because they all learned. But when I grew up, when I was married, I wanted to learn about things like that. And so, I did. And we even walked on

snowshoes which then I never could have done at any other time. I could even run on snowshoes myself. And even when I was carrying a cradle with a baby in it, I used to walk on snowshoes travelling. And now I am, today, I am just a tired old woman. (laughs) Over my eighties, but I still enjoy thinking back on the old days where I used to be willing to learn.

And, going back to the old Archdeacon McKay again, how he used to tell us everything; everything that came to pass. And even today, whenever I turn to my Bible, I always think of things that he used to tell us and I always remember when he used to tell us that things will come to pass. And I still remember that because things came to pass that he has told us about. I remember one time when we were living at Solmes there, it was on a Saturday. The men didn't work Saturday afternoons. They used to come out to Hudson's Bay store and get their groceries and then they used to go around hunting ducks or geese or other, moose; they used to go around hunting the lake of Lac La Ronge. And the women used to come out early in the spring and they came out and set hooks for the trout; and they got a lot of trout. We were out here on Dominion Island one time with my aunts, and my uncles were out hunting, and my dad was with us and he had set the net and they got fish. And he went and set hooks for the women too and they hauled in loads of trout. And they just filleted them and dried them and they took them back for the week to be used by the men. And that helped a lot of them, the grub, like through the weeks when they come out on a Saturday to dry the fish. And sometimes they dry the moose, moose meat and had the moose

meat too.

But this was one Saturday we were coming home, Saturday evening, and around that Big Stone Reserve they have there, it was around there. We were walking through from the lake up to the camp because we didn't dare go through those portages with just the women. And then they were carrying packs of fish on their backs; and then they were carrying pots and pans; and the wee little ones had to carry something else. So we were there and all of a sudden there was a big noise ahead of us and someone said that the squirrels were chasing each other. Then they made us children sit in an open place and they gave us their packs they had and we sat down and we watched the packs and they ran after the squirrels, the women did. And they were catching the squirrels. They were chasing them from one end to the other and they were trying to get them. And I suppose Archdeacon McKay was walking down that way and he heard the noise and I guess he knew what was going on. They were chasing these squirrels; they were trying to kill them. And they were making such a racket, these squirrels, and we children were all in the open there watching. And finally, when he came through, he asked me where my mother was. And I told him she is with the women. And he, oh, he called my mother's name out and my

mother came out and he made her go into the bush and get all those women out. He wanted to talk to them. So, of course, she brought them to where the packs were and the women sat down on the ground and he started; he was going to talk to them. He started out in a nice way, and finally he got after them for chasing the poor animals and there were four or five women there and he said that they shouldn't try to kill off these animals that are running around the place, because he said, "They are all going to be fur and they are all going to be sold for money," he said. But my mother said, "Not the squirrels, not a small thing like a squirrel," she said. And the Archdeacon said, "Yes. The time is coming to pass when the squirrel will be worth some money." And did they laugh! They didn't believe him. And that is when I heard that the squirrel was to be prized as any other fur. And I had seen it in my day. That is an instance of what the Archdeacon used to tell us. And it came to pass. So any time I open my Bible "and it came to pass," I often think back.

Sometimes think back on what he said and how the people were going to be, and how they were going to behave. And many times he said, "Now the people are so loving, they help each other. A day is coming when there will be no love in the world and then people will be after one another. And they will even try to hurt each other." He used to tell us this and we never used to believe him because our older folks were so loving to each other and they taught us to be loving to the old folks so we used to love the old people. And we used to help them all we can because that is what we were taught. But nowadays, if you tell a young person to go and help an older person, no, they are shy. They might be seen, they are shy. Now, isn't that something. And in our days, we used to run and help others. There are some that got this from their parents and

they are still working on it themselves. They help the old people; they love the old people. But then the younger ones, they are too shy to help old people. What will it be in the future? Yeah, I know, I see that now.

And one thing the Archdeacon used to tell us - that you can't leave anything out in the open but there will be some thief that will come and steal it. He didn't tell us that the thieves were to have been from our own people. We used to think that it was thieves that would come out from the bush like, or from some other place and now, I remember now, in my day, that he meant our own people would even steal from us. We couldn't leave anything. I used to remember the time when we moved from Potato River, we moved our big house to the point next to Sanderson Point here where that high rock is. That is where I brought up all my children, where we brought up our children and we had gardens on each side of the house. We planted our gardens there and we fed our children, and we brought them up there, all of my five boys and my daughter. That is where we lived. And many a time I would come over in the canoe to the store here, across here, and I would buy a lot of groceries and things or anything that I needed and I put it outside. When the store is closed, I would leave it outside or put it in my canoe and leave it and go around visiting the closest people that were here. Just call on them for a little while for a cup of tea. And I couldn't see my canoe, I couldn't see what I left outside the store. But when I got there, I wouldn't hesitate to look over my stuff. I knew it was all there. And in the canoe, if I put anything in the canoe, I wouldn't hesitate to look through my stuff. It was all there because I knew no people started stealing in those days. So, we used to take home our stuff without having anything stolen. And nowadays, if you leave even your walking stick outside the store, somebody will look at it and sneak it away and take it from you and even if it is of no use to them. That is the way things are today. But in those days, it was different.

And yet, we didn't, we weren't really good Christian people. No, far from it, we weren't. And yet we realized what was right and what was bad because we loved our neighbors, we loved each other. And we loved the children so much too that we take to any child that came our way and keep them and feed them. But nowadays, who will take a child that is walking around? Against their will they won't, but it is hard to practise that now. It takes a lot of courage to look after a child so I never, never, after I had my children, I never adopted one child. Because all I could do was see my own children grow up without any learning. Their dad didn't want them taught anything. My husband was quite opposed to me learning so much and taking so much time reading. And even explaining things to my children from a book, he didn't like that. So he said, "None of my children will learn English." So, all of my boys, they went to school against his wishes, the last two, but they didn't have much of a learning. One went to grade five, one to four, and David went to almost grade three and that is how far they went.

And in my day, I went to grade nine. That is as far as we could go in school. But I was taught more by my two teachers. Sarah Ballantine's sister that married the Reverend Parker, she and myself, we used to get out of bed and go to a teacher's room and they used to teach us at nights. And that is where we got most of our learning. And I got to grade ten and she went to college. From grade ten, she went to college in Saskatoon. And she was a teacher but I didn't amount to much. All I got out of my schooling was what I learned and then I started out on my own. Like, we were taught the music, we played the organ. She played the organ and I played the organ, and for over thirty years, I have played the organ. And I don't know how many years after thirty years I played the organ for the Anglican services. Burials, weddings, and church services. I started when my dad was there. I was only maybe nine or ten or

twelve, something like that. I don't know how old I was when Mrs. Brown started me to play hymns that they had chosen that I could play. And then I mustered up courage to start playing and I never missed a Sunday. When I could, I used to come over when I had my last home. And I never realized that I could play that long but I did and I heard all over the place, different places, where my old school chums played the organ. There was Mary Subpte(?) at Montreal Lake and there was Mary McKenzie from Stanley Mission. She played the organ and she learned it, got married at Moose Lake in Manitoba and that is where she is buried. And people tell me there when I went to visit my sister there, they told me that she played the organ to the last. And she is buried out there.

And this is the way I find my old school chums all over that have played the organ with me. And there is Absolom Roberts at Sturgeon Lake, he was the first one that played the organ good. I am sure he still plays the organ. And that is one other thing that we learned. And I always appreciated that and I started teaching others but they all went to another church and started playing there. Different churches instead of the Anglican. But I think it is best that we should know something yet and that well enough to pass on something like this, we should still keep it up. Like, if anyone has good eyesight that can play the organ, why don't you teach others to play the organ? I have tried, I have asked for an organ to teach my grandchildren but I never got one. So this way, I can't - well out of La Ronge I had taught some where I used to work....

(End of Side A, Tape IH-100)

(Side B)

...was around twenty years old. I wasn't out of school then so they had kept it at home. And whenever they took us across the lake to visit them on a Saturday, I used to play there for them. And I remember the times when Mrs. Angus McKay used to come over and sing with my dad and my mother and I used to play

for them because they wanted me to play on my own little organ and I loved that little organ. But finally, I guess it was when my dad died, no it was before that, a man asked for this organ. He wanted his daughter to learn about the music so I guess my dad let go of the organ because maybe he kind of thought he could get me another one. He had always wanted a bigger one for me. But then he died soon after so I never got one and my husband wasn't able to buy an organ because we never stayed in our house for any length of time. We used to go up north. And that is why my children never went to school. He wanted them to learn more about trapping and that is what they are doing for a living now. Trapping and doing outdoor work. So we used to travel back and forth. We used to come home in

the month of June and we used to go back up north in the early part of September. And we used to come down for Christmas but then we had to go back again. So we were always travelling on snowshoes, dog teams, nothing else. Finally, when all our children were grown up and they were married, then we went by plane.

It was easier to go in and out by plane. Many a time my husband and I just came out, the two of us, for Christmas and Easter and sometimes, some of our children used to come out to church. But then aside from that, we used to travel up and down by canoe and then by engine. The first time I went out with my husband, we went out in a canoe. And in a canvas-covered canoe. And we paddled all the way. We fought the rapids together. Went up with all of our freight and our dogs. And then when we came home, the last time we were out there, we travelled part way paddling our canoe. Our boys weren't done with their trapping but my husband wasn't at all well and I wanted to come closer to civilization because I didn't know how far - they had a very bad chill that spring and he was very, very ill and we didn't know what to do. So when he felt a little better, I told him that we would come in a canoe down part way and stay with my other son. On the other side of Paull Lake. So, as we started out, we got into the canoe. This wasn't in my mind but he said, "We are going to paddle our canoe part way." He told Lionel, "The way I brought up your mother the first time we were married, we came by canoe, paddling, just the two of us and then I am taking her home. Back home, just the two of us in the canoe. Because this is my last trip," he said. And true enough, it was the last spring that we stayed out there and we came out and he died that summer. So I went up there in that canoe, paddled the canoe with my husband all the way and then coming back, we paddled our canoe halfway.

Oh, I often think of that and I am ever so glad that I did that. Because that is what he wanted to do. And that, in a way, in my own days, I just smile and think that I did that for my husband, he wanted it so. And now that I am just alone, I often think of the many times that we had fun together travelling and then portaging and packing, portaging. We used to be together and travel together till we had a number of boys and then they used to take our freight right through the

portages and help us with the canoes and the engines. But before that we used to be just together; at the last, the last part of our journey back home was together.

And I think this is beautiful to think back on. Like the sunset of my days is so near that I am glad that I did all this so that I could pass it on to whoever wants to learn about life. And this is the way I learned from my earliest recollections, how my dad taught us things and my mother taught us what to do and our grandmother and granddad taught us and even our uncles and aunts. Sarah Ballantine was brought up

with us and our grandmother brought her up and that is why she was brought up with us. She is so close to me it seems as if she is my sister, although my one sister lives at The Pas. She got married at Moose Lake and then she is in a care home at The Pas. And if anyone goes to that care home it is called Fair Deal Care Home and her name is Jenny Martin. She was Jenny Abraham, my sister, and I was Charlotte Cora Abraham before we were married. And our dad was Samuel Abraham and our mom was out of the Halketts. It was Norah Halkett and she married an Abraham. So, that is our family. And there were four of us. There was my older brother, our oldest brother Andrew, but he died when he was very small. And then our brother George Henry, and he was four or five years older than I was, then my sister. So there is four of us in the family. But we lost the boys and just the two of us are living yet and we are both in our eighties. I am eighty-three, going on to eighty-three and my sister is in her eighties. So I think the Lord has been through with us.

There was many, many times that we know we would be gone or we were hurt so bad and then the operations that I have gone through, all through this the Lord has brought me to this day of which I am always thankful. And I always praise the Lord and I always thank him for what he has done for me and I quite believe that he has forgiven me all my sins when I turned to face him, when he hung on the cross, when he died for me. I knew then that he saved me and I know that I can trust him to the end of my days and I am always happy. You can come to me if you want to ask me something sometime, I'll be here. And I am willing to tell you if you want to ask me something else, I am right here. I have told this many a time to my children, that they have to learn about life in the earliest days and they have to do it and they have to do it in the right way with God's help. And I hadn't turned to God until I was old, too old to do any work for the Lord out in the mission field, although that is where I should have been. But I went out and worked instead with people, for the people, for older people.

And then I took to a boarding house where I used to receive patients from all over the place and I worked there alongside of [?] through the Indian department and I used to receive these patients, kept them there until they were ready to go to the hospital. And after any operation or any length of stay in the hospital, I would be told by the doctors that they had to come to the boarding house and from there we had to

take trips for them. On the bus when it started running and then on the planes. Different places, to Uranium City, to South End, to Pelican Narrows, Lake Deschambault, and all around Melfort there I used to have patients come to me this way. A lot of people know me and a lot of people are great, great friends of mine. I have never disagreed with any of my dear friends. Everywhere I met them, a face that I remember,

and they remember my face. Oh, how we think back on the old days of how we used to love each other and work for each other and I worked there for seven, a little over seven years at this boarding house. And I worked through the Indian department. Quite a few doctors know me yet. There is Dr. Green there that is still living. He knew me because he used to phone to me to take the patients in and because I talked Cree fluently and I could interpret for the ones that didn't understand. And so I am getting tired of life. All I do now is sit and knit and knit. Mitts and socks and men's heavy mitts and then I knit socks and then I do patchwork quilting. And I am starting on mats and I am still willing to do that if I am well enough to do that. And I knit, knit, knit and think back on the old days and I praise the Lord. Thank you. For when I get to that grave, I won't have a chance to praise him. And when I am dead, how can I thank him for what he has done? He has done a lot for me and I know that and I love my Saviour and I know that once I get too sick, not able to help myself, he'll be my only strength and stay till the end.

And I wish and hope that many of you will look at our Saviour that was hung on the cross for us, and he died for us sinners even though we have messed up our lives so much. He can forgive everything. He can forgive. He has said in his holy word that he will forgive and forget. Isn't that lovely? If any of my grandchildren are listening to this, I compel you to come and receive my Saviour as well because he is my only stay now and I thank him. I'll thank him to the end of my days and I do appreciate that I have a chance to talk and I compel you again to try and learn whatever is taught to you. Even if it doesn't seem possible for you to learn, don't take it like that. Just try and try. I tried and tried. And see, many of you know how I used to make moose hides and how I used to make moccasins and things like that. And nowadays, I used to teach many and many a woman in the handicraft there how to sew. And I had that handicraft for quite a while too. And so I advise you, learn, learn all you can. It will help you in your future life.

And parents, if at any time, you don't agree with your children asking questions, I think it is far better to answer them, like I used to do. I used to answer my children's questions because they want to know. And they take the thought away and they think on it. And finally it comes to pass and they see it, what you have told them. It is a beautiful verse in the Bible there that says, "And it came to pass." Yes, everything comes to pass. So let us pass on the good word so it will come to pass. Truly for our children's good and for our great-grandchildren. And for mine, I have twenty-two

grandchildren and I have thirty-three, with the last two twins, I have thirty-three great-grandchildren and I have one great-great-grandchild. And I am so thankful for everything to God. Thank you.

(End of Side B, Tape IH-100)

(End of Interview)

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