

DOCUMENT NAME/INFORMANT: LAWRENCE TOBACCO  
INFORMANT'S ADDRESS: POOR MAN RESERVE  
BOX 219, QUINTON, SASK.  
INTERVIEW LOCATION: WATERHEN LAKE RESERVE  
SASKATCHEWAN  
TRIBE/NATION: CREE  
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: JUNE 20, 1983  
INTERVIEWER: WELSH/SNOWSILL  
INTERPRETER:  
TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD  
SOURCE: WELSH/SNOWSILL  
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OF INFORMANT ONLY UNTIL TWO  
YEARS FOLLOWING THE  
INFORMANT'S DEATH

HIGHLIGHTS:

-Lawrence Tobacco, born 1919, on Poor Man Reserve, Sask.  
Attended residential school. Now involved in traditional  
education and in counselling.  
-farming and raising cattle on the Poor Man Reserve  
-story of a trip he took to Winnipeg to sell cattle for a  
number of reserves in the File Hills area, and how Indian  
Affairs officials tried to bribe him with part of the proceeds  
of the sale  
-stories of defiance toward Department of Indian Affairs  
paternalism: butchering a cow without a permit; buying a  
tractor and establishing outside credit without a permit  
-his experiences in the Catholic residential school at  
Muskowekan Reserve, 1926-1935  
-traditional education: teaching children traditional values

Tony: Lawrence, where were you born?

Lawrence: I was born in the Poor Man Reserve.

Tony: When?

Lawrence: In 1919, October 21 - no, the 24th of October.

Tony: Is there much that you can remember about your early life on the reserve?

Lawrence: Oh, pretty well. Pretty well, like, we lived just about, oh I would say to the south, the southern part of the Poor Man Reserve right along with, there was a building there we - you call the farmer instructor's place. And at that time, there used to be a white guy that used to look after the, used to supervise the Indian people. And the purpose was to have this man to live on the reserve for agricultural purposes; to show the people how to farm, how to put up gardens, to raise cattle, and to raise horses and everything in that line so that they wouldn't be stuck how to make a living. Sure enough there is a lot of people that I heard rumours from away, way back, ever since I can remember, the old people, how they used to raise cattle. In the summer, they milked them all during the summer and they put up a lot of hay during the month of July and August and they had big herds of cattle. Like where we lived, on the east of that place, oh must have been about two miles, there used to be a flat and here my old grandfather used to tell me, "This is where we used to live in the summer. And we had big, big gardens. All big gardens. They used to supply seeds for us in the spring. Like turnip seeds, potato seeds, and so on. All kinds of little seeds. But then at that time," he said, "before that, the times were pretty hard. Like the way we used to live, we didn't have too much," he says, "in ways of hunting up in that area. But then," he says, "the people got along fine. They got along pretty good with one another and then this, then finally now we got this farm instructor and then it was an opportunity to learn in a lot of ways and a lot of areas so it was the white man's culture. And here," he says, "and here as the years went by, we were given cattle from the Indian Affairs but we weren't the owners of these cattle. We were just keeping these cattle. We were raising these cattle. From there we milked the cows and we made cream and butter and you know, we had big gardens and everybody worked right through the summer. The elderly, the ladies, they too, they used to work," he said, "look after the garden. They used to haul water for the gardens, water the gardens with pails of water. This was an every-other-day task. Every other day." And this old man used to tell me, this is my old grandfather used to tell me that, "I had my, I kept my nephew. His name was Robert Poorman." And then he says, "I kept one of my other nephews also." He says, "You are just like my boy, my brother's boy." That was old Ed Poorman. But then he says, "The way this nephew of mine, this Robert, that was my sister's boy. He was not supposed to have that name Poorman," he says, "but then since I kept him, he carried that name Poorman." He says, "At least anyway, he was a Poorman." He says, "He came off a Poorman's family so - but this other one, he was Ed Poorman and here," he says, "I had four brothers but then," he says, "they are all gone now." He used to tell me, "They are all dead. One went up to Kamsack area and then

from there he went up north," he said. "I don't know where he died," he said. "But then I had one brother and then there is another one, old Ed Poorman's father," he says. "And there was another one, my brother, they used to call - nicknamed him Tobacco." he says. "He was a Poorman," he said, "but they nicknamed him Tobacco," he says. "Today," he says, "that is why your father's name is Tobacco." He used to tell me, "Your name is Tobacco." This is what he used to tell me. So, "And you too," he says, "that is why you are called Tobacco," he used to tell me.

So anyway, there was a lot of people that had different names. There was three brothers that I knew, well, the one I knew pretty good, old Skeboss, but these other ones, I don't know at all, Strongarm and Machinanay. Well, they too, they had different names but they were all brothers, so one father.

So, now getting back now, well afterwards, the people, they were given walking plows and oxen. And some of them were given horses. And here they plowed, every day I guess, according to the old, old stories. "And come dinner time now," he says, "they used to, the cattle," he says, "you know these oxen, they were getting kind of tired and we used to unhook them and water them, the same with the horses. And here," he says, "at that time," he says, "we had a Hudson's Bay post east of here. That is about twenty miles east." He used to say, "And here this is where we got our supplies. And now," he says, "we got this, this old man here used to be the farm instructor." He says, "At that time, his name was - the very first one, his name was, uh, just a minute now, a Favel, Charlie Favel." Today, you know, there is a book about that old man in Punnichy, this Hector Brown. His wife has got that book. And here, you know, they mention the name of that old man there. I believe that old man came from Fort Garry. That is in Manitoba. "And then after that," he says, "he stayed with the Indians. He used to be the farm instructor here," he says. "He used to give out rations that time like bacon, flour, lard, baking powder, and cheese, and here," he says, "he stayed with the old, you know with the people. I don't know how many years but quite a few years," he says. "And mind you," he says, "this Favel, this old man, this old Charlie Favel, he was a halfbreed. But then after that now, afterthat now," he says. His sister got around and her name was Flora. I knew the old lady good. He had sons, he had two sons that I know of. One I don't know whether he is living or not, I don't know. His name was Victor. Victor Sinclair. You see this old lady Flora, that was the old man's sister. She got married to a Sinclair and this Victor, that was his dad. And then there was another young guy about my age, he is living in Regina right now, his name is Kirby. Kirby Sinclair. I seen him here this spring in Regina. He come and shake hands with me because mother, you know, that is my wife's relation. You know, like a distant relation, but then he is a Favel and, like, his mother was a Favel. But then there was lots, you know, there was - they used to claim there was four brothers of these Favels. There was one I went up to, uh, around Carlyle up there, Carlyle area. And then there was another one that lived around

Broadview area and then there was another one that lived up here in the Battlefords area, the North Battleford area. So from there, there was all of these Favels, boys I guess. You know they start multiplying and today there is quite a few Favels all over. We have a few boys left yet on the Poor Man Reserve that are Favels.

And then, getting back to this old man, old Charlie. See he stayed in Poor Man Reserve I guess for quite a few years and then, I don't know how he got into the reserve, what -if they voted him in, I don't know. But then he stayed, he stayed on the reserve. Quite a while, I remember, I believe he died right on the reserve there, the old man. And from there, the old people you know, the old man, see even my dad used to tell me a lot of stories about these old guys. "Finally now," he says, "everybody starts farming, breaking land. Five, ten acres, fifteen acres a year. And everybody went into farming." In the fall then they had these old types of threshing machines which were operated by horses, two horses, I guess they were going around. I don't know how they had it. I never seen a machine like that. Probably maybe I did but I wouldn't know.

So anyway, where my dad lived, he used to farm west, west of there. He had quite a few acres. Oh, I'd say maybe about forty, sixty acres, somewhere in there. That is quite a few acres. There was quite a few farmers I guess. Like my old uncle, old Ed Poorman, he used to farm west of there yet. And then there was another one, old Jim Masapas(?). I remember that old man good. He died in uh, I think he died in 1938 or 1937. No 1938, I think he died. I remember him good. I was to go and help him farming. Then there was some other ones like old Tapaquan(?), he told you, he farmed quite a bit. And old Jim Warren, my old uncle, old Naputulan(?), old Nap they used to call him, he used to farm on the east end of the reserve. So anyway, our reserve wasn't quite that big. But now, right now like, it is not quite that big. It is only about six by four. But then at that time it was fairly big. It was about six, yeah about six by six at that time. Everybody, you see there was a fraction on the north end of the reserve, but then, I think it was in 1919, or 1920 or somewhere in that area, the old chief he sold twelve sections of that to the soldiers, you know, to these vets, veterans. And today yet, there used to be an old guy, well this old Charlie Favel, that was his son. No, that was his nephew. That old house is still up there yet in that lake where they sold that. His name was Old Willie Favel. Oh they used to say that he farmed quite a bit.

So, anyway, there was two houses side by side he had. He had a house that belonged to Joe Favel. That old man is still alive yet today, old Joe. According of what I was to hear, he was a big farmer. He was pretty well, well-to-do old guy but then when they sold that land, that kind of broke him up a little bit I guess, you know. So anyway, he went and lived further north, north of the reserve, the north end of the reserve. Him and his boy, old Joe Favel. Oh, there was a lot of times I used to go and see this old man when I was in school, eh. During the summer holidays, I would ride out there and go and see this

old man. I knew him real good, Old Willie. He was a hard working old man. Hard working, all the time. And the old lady, that old lady, she was a nice old lady, but that was my wife's grandmother and also that was her grandfather, that old man, Old Willie. My father-in-law was Rod Favel. This old man, old Willie, his brother, his name was Rod and their dad's, think his dad's name was Charlie, Charlie Favel. And I believe my, I think it was in 1946, 1946 my father-in-law died. He died with this yellow jaundice in March.

So anyway, getting back now, getting back to the old, old story, my old dad used to say, like, "We used to get hired," he says. "We used to get some supplies right from Ft. Qu'Appelle and sometimes a little further south," he says, "down to Indian Head. That is where we used to go and get these supplies for the Agency in Katawa." In Katawa, that is where they had that agency, I guess, at that time. But before that, well, they had it someplace else, I guess. I don't know where. And then they had an old Hudson's Bay post that was in Katawa, east of Katawa. About seven, eight miles east. "And then, after that," he says, "this little town, this little town started coming up." That was Punnichy. See the railroad was coming and, "The man," he says, "this old man, he used to work in the old Hudson's Bay post," he said, "and his name was Heuback.

He was the first man that ever made a store in Punnichy area. So he had a bald head," he says, "this old man, old Heuback. And everybody called him Punnichy and in Cree when you say Punnichy it means a young bird without no feathers." Yeah, that is what they call that little town there, Punnichy, or village, whatever it used to be. "And along with that," he said, "he had a hired man. His name was Gwyn, Mr. Gwyn. The old man, he talked pretty good Cree." There was a lot of times I used to go in that store. I used to go and talk to that old man when I was in school and after I was out of school, he was still running that store. Old Gwyn. He used to talk Cree. Just for the hell of it, me and some other boys used to go in there and we used to go and ask him, you know, to charge up stuff. Like this, like tobacco, but then we were just joking though and he knew it and at the end now we used to go in there just to go and joke and he used to say, " 256

. It was hard to give out credit like this," he used to tell us. And after that we used to tell him we were just joking and he used to laugh, laugh and then he used to give us some tobacco, packaged tobacco with paper. At that time, it was only ten cents, it was cheap. But that was a lot of money though at that time. A dollar, you could have bought a lot of stuff. Today with a dollar, you can't even buy nothing. Two cups of coffee and that is a dollar today. But at that time, forty cents, thirty-five cents for a pound of tea and you get a lot of cups of tea out of one pound at that time. But today, now, everything is so expensive, everything is so different.

"So," he says, "after, as the years went by," he says, "they formed this agency here in Punnichy and that there, it has been there, for a long, long time. Now it is still today, it is still there," this old man used to tell me, this old chief.

And then he said, "We had different superintendents in there, Indian agents." I recall there was a few - Harding. Harding, I remember him good. And Morrison(?), oh, there was lots. And Waddy, Davis, oh, I don't know how many there was. There was so damn many. Grant, and then there was another one there that I knew real good. I forgot his name now. Anyway, there was quite a few agents that come and live in that Punnichy area. And one time, I guess, they had a meeting. This old man, he called this council. Mind you, at that time, there was only two councillors that I knew of. Old Skeboss and old Jim Warren. There was only two, and one chief. But then, what they used to do, they used to have a band meeting. When they had a council, you know, they had a band meeting. They called all the members and they talked all afternoon, all day in fact, until they come to a decision what they were going to do. They asked the members if this was going to work right or that there is good for us and stuff like that. This is how they made decisions at one time when I was there. They had to follow the band. There were a lot of these band members. They were pretty smart heads. Some went to school already and then, like old Ed Poorman, he went to school quite a few years. Old Robert Poorman, and then there was some other old fellas like my dad and old Tapaquan(?), old Charlie Kay, Dick Lilt(?) and oh, I don't know who all. There was a lot of them.

You know, they had a day school here in the reserve but that didn't last very long. They used to claim, I guess, that teacher was too strict. I guess one day, the boys got together and give the teacher a licking, I guess, and then they went home. Oh, they stayed out of school for quite a while and he came back again. I guess the teacher went around, told the parents to send the boys and the girls back. So they went back, the same thing happened again. The teacher I guess, got a little too rough and got a licking again and that was the end of the school. This man moved away after that. He didn't want to stay there anymore. So that was, that was before that Riel's rebellion that all this happened you know, when they had that school teacher there and you could just - well, not now, that is all field now. Well, at that time, oh I say about twenty-five, thirty years ago, you could see the remains. Like holes where they had that school, you know.

Christine: Would that have been right after the people settled on the reserve then?

Lawrence: Yeah, yeah. Right after, right after, yeah.

Tony: How did these farm instructors, the agents that they brought in, how did they treat the Indian people?

Lawrence: Well, at that time, you know, I guess uh, they didn't do too darn much about the Indians, like you know, to try to, well, they instructed them to a lot of ways. I guess to try to get them onto how to farm and stuff like that with horses. But then as the years went by now, you know the farmers got big, they had tractors. I know for a fact, I farmed quite a bit but then, there was one time, I will tell

you a story. There was a guy there - this guy, I had just mentioned his name now. No, I didn't mention his name but I forgot his name. Anyway, I was chosen from four reserves, no, three reserves, no four. There was Day Star, Gordon, Muskowekan, and Poor Man. And that time I shipped eight steers. They were three-year-old steers and then I had some three-year-old heifers I didn't calf. I don't know, I shipped about twelve that year. So anyway, I had to go along to Winnipeg and there was cattle from Gordon, Day Star, Muskowekan. And there was nobody else that went, but I was the only one to look after these cattle like up in Winnipeg or St. Boniface you know. They were sold at St. Boniface anyway, stockyards. But I had to look after them over there like for two days, you know. Well the trip itself got them gaunt and then we had to kind of build them up and, so anyway, I looked after them two days.

Now that third morning, I got there kind of late. I went with a taxi there to go down to the stock yards and here, when I walked in, I could hear the auctioneer going right away, selling the cattle. I stopped and I was right along where they were selling these cattle and I stopped and I looked at these guys up, that agent was there and there was some other guys from Punnichy area, these cattle buyers, so I looked at them. By golly, you know, they wasn't paying good for these cattle so I jumped into the ring. I jumped into the ring and I talked to these men who were mostly from St. Paul and they come across to come and buy these cattle you know. They were that you could feed, you know, these feeder cattle. So I jumped in there and I said, "I am not selling these cattle," I said, "not for that price. We took the trouble to look after these cattle three winters, and now mostly all of these steers you guys are buying," I told them, "they are three-year-olds. And they are way over a thousand pounds each. Twelve hundred pounds. That is big steers," I told them, you know. Well, this went along too with heifers and cows, dry cows. And they were buying these cattle, oh, way, way below price, twenty-four cents. Well at that time that was a good price, twenty-five, twenty-six cents. So they give me the list, "Here, look here, we are paying good price. Twenty-six cents was the most." I said, "No. I am not selling these cattle." I said, "Look, I come over here on behalf of these four reserves," I said. "That agent over there, look, he is supposed to be the one to talk for the Indians but that man there, he will never, never talk for the Indians." I told that to this guy. What the heck, I knew him, he was a good friend of mine. So anyway, so I sent all of these cattle out, out of there and I went out.

I went and had coffee and there was three men that come into that - I was sitting there and I was there with this Hector Pratt, Hector Pratt from Gordon, and they come and see me. And they asked me - well, we start talking, talking. And they said, "We will start all over again. You know, we got two new men here," he says, "and he is going to come and bid on the cattle." Well I told them, "Look, I hate like hell to sell anything under thirty cents. I want it from thirty cents up." So anyway, "Well, all right." I says. So we went and I talked to

the buyers. And this man here that come and talked to me too, he done the same thing. So from there, there was nothing sold under thirty. Thirty-two, thirty-one, thirty-three, thirty-four, took thirty-four. Well, that brought a good price. Well, anyway, oh, there was about, I don't know, there was about five carloads that we sold that year.

So anyway, that night now, no that next night, I was staying in the Corona Hotel in Winnipeg. I was sitting in my room and there was a phone call. So I answered the phone and it was from downstairs and they told me that there is a taxi that is going to come and pick you up here. Men out here in the Seymour Hotel, they want you to go down there, saying there is somebody from Saskatchewan. So, I got ready and they said within an hour. I got ready, and sure enough when I got down the taxi was waiting, and I went down to the Seymour Hotel. When I got off, there was one of these boys there that look after the, you know, bell hops whatever you call them. He come down and, "Come on," he says. He took me upstairs to the second floor and I could hear music. And I was going upstairs and I could hear a band playing. So he opened the door for me and I hear the music. Oh, there was a five-piece outfit playing there, an orchestra playing there. There was, let's see there was four men and five women in there. By golly I went up there and I seen a table there just full of whisky, all kinds of drinks. And this here, this guy come to me right away. Al Nixon, yeah, Al Nixon, now I know him. He come to me and he says, "Hey, Mr. Tobacco, we are having a party here," he says. "Oh, that's good." I says. And then this other one, Tom Lilico(?), "Come on over here," he says. He sat at his table right there and they gave me a chair and poured me a shot of whisky. I drank this and I was watching and they were dancing.

After two drinks now, well, you know this guy here, Al Nixon, he must have figured I was drunk. He tried talking, talking to me like this. And he was going to give me another one and I said no. I said, "I got enough." "You know, Mr. Tobacco," he said, "I was figuring out, you know, this morning, you know you brought a lot of money in. You brought a lot of money in for the Indians."

"I know," I says, "if it wasn't for me, you know, they wouldn't have had that much money. You," I told him, "you, Al, you are a crooked devil," I told him. "I didn't know," I said, "this is how the Indian Affairs has been operating these reserves right along," I said, "and now you want to follow their footsteps. You are going to try to beat the Indian. That is not the way. You are not helping the Indian. You are supposed to help the Indian right along but not the way you are doing it. I farm," I says, "I farm quite a bit and I lose a lot of grain every year out of that place there in the farm instructor's granary," I says. "These last two years, I bet you I must have lost about two thousand, maybe a little better, most of it is grain and that has happened before too," I says. "There was a lot of complaints but nobody seemed to, you white guys don't seem to want to do anything about it," I told him.



So he sat down and he poured me another drink. I never touched that drink. All I had was just two. "Look, Mr. Tobacco," he said, "you know, there is that money, thousands of dollars," he said. He started talking, talking and this Tom, Tom Lilico(?) was listening. He was talking now and again too. "Now," he says, "Look, I'll tell you," he says, "there is three of us here. There is Tom and myself and you," he says. "How would it be," he says, "if we take \$2,500 out of there," he says, "for our expenses, out of that Indian money eh?"

"And then what?"

"And then," he says, "we'll give you so much too. You will have \$800.00, \$830.00 worth, something like that and we will divide that money."

I told him, "Nothing doing, Al. No," I said, "I can't go with that. I wouldn't do that. I wouldn't steal from my friends," I says, "I wouldn't steal no money. My dad told me I should never take anything that doesn't belong to you. If you want something, ask. That's what I was told. Even tobacco," I said, "or a match. If you see a match that was took from you, you went over there and ask for it. Don't take it like that because that doesn't belong to you." Stuff like that I told him that time. Oh then he kept on, kept on trying. I said, "No. Look," I said, "when I get back," I said, "I got all the papers back there," I said, "the price of the cattle, how much they paid for these cattle, the whole works. And every individual," I said, "these bands, they want to know, how much did my cattle bring? How much did that bring, how much did that one bring? Stuff like that. I got them all marked. They say, look, we are going to have a meeting when I get back there. Now," I says, "you are going to take that money Mr. Nixon," I says. "I am going to tell the band on you. I am going to tell the band, you are darn right, this is what I am going to do." Thank God, now, I kind of changed the subject and I got him scared when I said that.

"Oh, Mr. Tobacco, I was just fooling you."

"No, you weren't fooling," I says. "You meant what you were saying." I told him. He dug in his pockets and give me \$50.00. "Don't say nothing to the people when you get home." I looked at him. "Look," I said, "you can have your \$50.00 back but I am going through with what I said. I want the people to know that, I want the people to know what kind of a man you are." He didn't like that. So, I was going to walk out of there.

The next evening now, we come home. I got off in Quinton. I was met there by my uncle, John Key. He had a lot of cattle, him too. Well, he wanted to know the price of what we got and I told him we got pretty good prices. From thirty cents up I said. There was an odd one that brought thirty-five I told him. So, when I got back to the farm instructor's place, his name was Steve Katella. I walked in the office, shook hands with me and then, "Well," he says, "have you got a record of that

cattle?" I said, "Yeah, for these four bands." So I handed them to him. Well, while I was on the train, I made copies you know. I made a copy for myself and then I made one additional one for anybody who wanted to know. Well, I gave that copy to my uncle John Key. So we started having a talk and there was quite a few cattlemen I got there. I didn't have the cheques mind you. I had to go and get them over there in the agency. So, and after that now, this Steve Katella, he wanted to know everything. So I told him, "By God, Steve," I says, "you know, I never once figured this, all this was that Nixon, trying to beat everybody all the time. You know what they approached me with?" I told him right there. There was five, five members of the band that were there. They listened to me and I told the same damn story from what I told this guy over there. I told him right there, "Look, you know, this Al Nixon, he was going to take \$2,500 away from these four reserves. He was going to divide that evenly for expenses. Heck," I says, "a man like that, he is making a lot of money to go, to travel all over the world." I told him, "You know, his expenses are paid wherever he goes. He's got his paid. He has got his company car and everything. Even horses," I told him. "Look at the horses you have here, Steve," I told him. "And that truck and that car, that all belongs to the agency. You don't pay for nothing. Gas you don't pay for and on top of that Al Nixon approached me with that. I didn't affiliate to that," I said. "No, no, no way. I wouldn't steal from my friends. I wouldn't do it because we work hard, we work hard every winter. In the fall for the feed, put the crops in and everything in that line. And now," I said, "during the winter, if we are short of meat we can't get out there and go and butcher an animal. We can't. You know that." I told that to Steve Katella. "Yes, that is right," he said, "because these are all I.D. cattle, these are the Department's. You can't." We couldn't sell them anytime of the year.

So anyway, when I was farming, well after that, oh, about ten years after that ...

Tony: When was that, that you went to Winnipeg?

Lawrence: Just a minute now. That would be around, about 1947. Around 1947, the year of 1947, 1948, in between there because my boy there, Freddy, he was born in 1941. He was a fairly good size already.

So anyway after that, now, after that things got a little better. Like our cattle, like we got some more cattle for the reserve and on top of that, we bought a lot of cattle. Like myself, I bought a lot of cattle from my own money. And I even bought cattle off the reserve people. Like the calves and the yearlings and then sell them and take them down to the market in Regina.

So anyway, getting back now, I had a lot of cattle and I had a lot of grain. There was one year, what I done, I had something in my, I was going to farm into a little bigger farm and I was going to buy a tractor. This was the time that Steve Katella,

when he was the farm instructor, and we used to have a dealer by the name of Sam Stern in Raymore. And he was a big dealer, he was a Jew. I went and talked to Sam one day. And I asked him, "By gosh Sam, I am farming with horses, two special horses." I had a lot of horses, twenty-two Persian horses, and I told Sam, "I would like to get a tractor, maybe in the spring or maybe next summer." So he says, "What you do, Mr. Tobacco? You got pasture and we could harvest your crop and we could haul probably maybe about three thousand bushels of your grain, or two thousand, or whatever you give us." I said, "All right." "And we will store that for you here. And come next spring," he says, "around May or June or sometime that time, in July maybe, come out here and we will make you a deal." I said, "Okay."

So, I went about my work and at that time we had this permit business going on. We had to get a permit to sell something even what you produce. But I never went to the farm house. I kept it to myself. I was working, like, away from the Indian Affairs. I didn't want to get involved in Indian Affairs. I had a lot of arguments with the Indian Affairs. So anyway, I was working right through like this and I sold, eventually, I sold all the I.D. cattle, like the Indian Affairs cattle and none of my cattle were branded I.D. I had my own, my own registered brand from Regina. You know, I had this, like this L and another bar and I had this LT. That is the brand I had. I had my own registered brand and I registered all of my cattle on my own brand and I had no I.D. cattle. But what I had in mind, in time I could sell these cattle anytime I pleased and I can butcher anytime I wanted to.

Sure enough, come spring now, I had about six, I think, six steers, six two-year-old steers, and I had grain in Raymore stacked up in the bins. So one day, I went down to Raymore. I went on foot. Oh, we started talking, I and old Sam, old Sam Stern. They had a little Ford tractor. Oh, he wanted so much for it, he said. I says, "All right, I will buy it off you but then," I said, "you got to give me a line of what you know, like a cultivator." Well there was a cultivator with that and a disc and harrows he had to put in and a trailer he had to put in. So, anyway I got him on that. Well, we made a deal. So what I had to do, we had to sell, that time we had to sell our wheat on quotas, you know, so much. So anyway, what I done, there was a guy that had a permit book, him too. You know these grain permit books. His name was George Shipikoosh(?). I talked with George. "George, look, I will sell so many bushels on your quota. Well, I will fill your quota right up and come next year, come next spring, there will be a Wheat Board cheque that will come and it will come under your name," I said, "and you can own all of that money." "Okay," he said, "all right."

Sure enough, we worked it out and I went back to Raymore again. I told Sam, "Well Sam, I guess we can sell everything." He says, "All right." So we hauled everything to the Pool and the next day I went back again and I got my Ford tractor and I got

my machinery. I come home and I brought with me four barrels of gas, some oil, and I started working. I started working in the fields. Well, this went along for about a week.

One day I see this farm instructor coming, this Steve Katella. He was driving the buggy. He stopped right there. God, I had a nice summerfallow. And he asked me whose tractor and I said, "Mine." "Well, where did you get it from?" I said, "I got it from Sam Stern." "When?" "Oh, about a week ago." "What kind of a deal did you make?" I told him what I done. "Last year," I said, "I got a truck over there, well I got 707 to haul in about oh, about 2500 bushels over there. Oh, he looked at me and he said, "You got a permit?" I said, "I don't need a permit." I got kind of hostile when I told him. "I am doing everything on my own." I said, "I don't depend on you guys anymore. Heck, I can make my own living. I got a big garden and I don't go there for assistance. Anyway, you know that yourself, Steve. I went about on my own business. I bought my own tractor and got my own fuel and here again, I established my credit," I says, "in the Credit Union in Raymore. So you don't have to bother me, I won't go and bother you." I told him.

(End of Side A, Tape IH-124)

(Side B)

Lawrence: ... visit his brother. And he told his brother, "You know," he says, "you know Fred, you know Ali Doll(?) pretty good," he said. I said, "Yeah." Well he said, "Yeah, well he is coming to be our farm instructor here." Mind you, this Ali Doll(?) he was a good man. He was a good farm instructor. And on top of that he was a good cattle man, he was a good horseman, he was good all around. So in 1937, he come down there. Sure enough, he told the people not to try to kill their cattle as much as possible if they could help it. Try to raise more cattle. Well this happened, he stayed there quite a few years. So now the, oh, about a year before he left, oh, we had, you know, we had a lot of cattle. He really brought up the cattle business quite a bit. I think there was over a thousand head on that reserve at that time, about twelve hundred head we had on the reserve at that time. So everything was all written in the books.

So one day there, oh, this was around December, I had one heifer, three-year-old heifer. We used to call her Betty. Oh, she was tame, you know, and so one evening there, that was the first part of December, my father-in-law had got to with his old lady and he said, "Well, I am going down to the farm instructor," he said. Oh, this was about two-thirty, three o'clock. So I says, "By God, Rod," I said, "Look, I will go along with you. I want to go and get a permit or something," I said. "I want to kill that dry heifer." I said. "We are short of meat." But then there was a lot of deer at that time. Heck, we had a lot of deer. But then I wanted to have some beef too, so I went along.

Sure enough, we got there and Rod wanted some drugs and one thing or another and then Ali Doll(?), he asked me, "Well, what can I do for you?" Oh, I told Ali Doll(?), "You can do a lot for me Mr. Doll," I said. That was when we had these I.D. cattle. "You can do lots," I says, "and again you can't do much." "Well, tell me. I will give you the answer." "You know that heifer I have in the barn out there. I have pastured that in there since last August, been in the barn, grain fed, and she is just as fat as a pig," I told him. "I want to butcher that heifer." Oh, God, he got up in the air right away

when I told him. "Oh, no. Good grief man" - that is what he used to say - "Good grief, you can't. No, no, no." He closed the book and put it over there and, "Anything else?" he says. "No, that is all I wanted to know," I says.

So we come back, and on the way I told my father-in-law, "You know what I am going to do, Pop?" He says, "No." "When we get back, we are going to butcher that heifer." So anyway, oh, he laughed you know, and so he put the horse in the barn and went in the house and had lunch. I took my shotgun down, I had a single-barrel shotgun and I gave him a shell and the shotgun and I said, "Well, here, you have this ready." I told him, "I am going to lead that heifer over here. There is a big tree there along the bush you know. I am going to lead that heifer right there," I said, "and you shoot him right there and we'll butcher him." "Whatever you say, you're the doctor." So I went, oh he was going to lead a team eh. I went and got that heifer and led her out there and she was out there and I had three knives. The old lady was standing right there. She had her hands back. I can just picture that old lady, she had her hands back over here, you know, and had a grin on her face. And I went right up and shot that heifer, and she went down, and I cut the throat and butchered that and I give him half of that meat.

So anyway, come spring now, this Ali Doll(?), he used to go to the members of the band you know, the ones that had cattle and had a record book. So now, one spring, oh, my boy was fairly big all ready, Freddy, and you could hear him asking Freddy, "Where is your dad?" "He is inside." Oh, this was in March. It was bare here and there all ready. The cattle were eating out, you know, that grass. "Come inside." "Well," he says, "I am coming to check on your cattle." So we had some tea. So I said, "Come out here." We go and look them over and sure enough, he went out and came back about half hour after that, "By God," he said, "there is one missing. That heifer, the one with the long horns" - he knew all the cattle too - "that one is missing." I knew darn well he would miss that heifer. "Oh, she must be out there. She was out there this morning. Probably she went out again." Like he went out again, come back. "No, she is not with the bunch," he said. "I seen four bunches and she is not there." Oh, well, "Well, I will come back later, probably be next week," he said. "Try to find her so I could make a mark here that she is here." "All right." Come next week, he came back again. Same thing, I was going about doing something and no, couldn't find that heifer. "Oh,

it must have strayed away," I said. "She must be in the reserve somewhere. We will find her this fall." So now, that next spring, he told me, "I just got to stay here one more," he says, "right through April. Come April I got to go somewhere else," he said. "They are going to transfer me." "Oh," I said, "that is good." So now that, oh, this was around February, I guess, I went up there and there was a bunch of men there talking, talking, talking. He asked me, "By God, come to think of it now, Lawrence, that heifer, did you ever find it?" "Oh, yeah," I said, "sure I found it." "Where was it?" "I gave half of it to my father-in-law," I said. "Half? What do you mean?" "I butchered that damn thing!" I told him. "Remember that time I and Rod come down here and we went back that evening, we butchered that damn thing." Oh, he kind of laughed you know, "Well," he said, "don't say nothing." Heck, what could I say. I wanted to have some meat, fresh meat and this I had. "But God," he said, "don't ever do that again. If the Indian Agent ever finds out" - because these were I.D. cattle, eh - "if the Indian Agent finds out, you know he will put you to jail for that. Three months!" he said.

Christine: How long did that permit system and stuff go on?

Lawrence: Uh, let's see now, well anyway, the time came upon that thing, the time that Al Nixon was there. That is when they started having this two-year system eh. You know, this two-year system, what I mean by that is the time they changed these chiefs in the council. That's when they started, when Al Nixon come there. Well, he was the one that come and introduced that. So, probably, now that would be around, see that was in the 1940s sometime.

Tony: When you say that two-year system, this was the two-year electoral system?

Lawrence: Two-year system.

Tony: Electoral system.

Lawrence: Yeah, yeah.

Tony: What did they have before that?

Lawrence: Well, you were supposed to have a lifetime chief and a lifetime council. Yeah, that is what is was supposed to be. Well, that is what it was supposed to be with the treaties, when they were talked by with the treaties. That is what it

was supposed to be but then, okay, now, I always say, you know, these Indian Agents are pretty damn smart heads and then they got their smartness from over there, from Ottawa. Because they were governed from over there, how to go along with the Indians eh, how to govern the Indians. So anyway, one day there was a big meeting, by God now. See, if I had my books here, I got all my books at home, records of the years and stuff like that, what happened. That could have been in the fifties too, the

early fifties. At that time, old Ed was a chief. Oh, he was a chief for about thirty years already, yeah, when this happened.

So, when this Nixon introduced this to the people, well some of the people, they really like that. They really wanted to replace old Ed Poorman, which was my uncle. And mind you, he was a good chief. He had a smart head. So, well anyway, they took a vote on that right away, right there and then. Oh, there was some old guys there, well, they weren't old either, they went to school, these boarding schools, and they wanted to see the chief changed. Probably maybe this one guy there, he wanted to be the chief probably. He wanted to change a lot of systems in the reserve. He wanted to subdivide the reserve, you know, and have this, like your own certificate of possession of land, you know, and what you could, whatever you could do with your allotment. You know, you have one big idea from one guy here, Lou Keewanan(?). He wanted to be the chief and so right away he fell for that. He wanted to put that old chief away.

Well, the old man, he gave a big speech that time and he told them, "Someday, someday," he says, "look, if I am out of here, out of the office," he says, "I tried to help you people in a lot of ways, but someday this agency is going to move. It is going to go some place but where I don't know," he said. "I always say that, you know, the Indian Affairs, they don't work for us. This two-year system, okay, now I can see it already," he said to the people, "I can see it after two years, after one year, you see, you are just learning how to go about the people on the reserve, the business, the management, how to manage a whole reserve. One year, it will take you maybe more than a year, maybe a year and a half before you are a fully qualified chief. And by that time, your time is up, comes a nomination, comes an election and you are out without knowing nothing. That is what this guy wants to do with our reserve." He pointed at Al Nixon. "And when that happens, what is going to happen we are going to see it. But they are going to change this here now. Maybe they will put it some place, some area where we don't know right now."

So, he told that Al Nixon, "Okay," he says, "if you are going to do that, you are going to change the laws of this here, this lifetime chief, lifetime council, we want to change something else too." he said. "We want to change this permit system. We don't want this permit system here. There is a lot of boys, I have a lot of boys here. They got a lot of cattle and they want to do away with them cattle. They want to buy some seed. They want to buy some horses to bring up their farming. There is a lot of times I see men out there waiting for you. You are gone to town all day and they want a permit in the worst way but you are not here and they got to go back there the next day. This thing, I want to change that." So Al Nixon never said a darn thing about that. But then in time after that, you know, they started doing away with that permit system. And a lot of boys I knew, they sold these I.D. cattle after that without... look at the squirrel, eh. He is eating around here again yesterday. He was around the camp here.

So anyway, and then after that, quite a few years after that, this guy Willerspin(?), he was the - yeah Willerspin(?) - he was the Indian Agent, one day now they call a meeting. They call a meeting in Punnichy and I went. And that time they said they were going to move this agency because it was making it hard. He said, "We had people from Nut Lake Reserve and Fishing Lake Reserve, further up north, about fifty miles north, they had a hard time to come down to our area. And now they are going to move this here down to Wynyard, the agency. It will be just about the middle part," he says, "from over there and here." So I didn't say nothing, I wasn't in the council that time. I never said nothing. Well, sure enough, they move that office and the office is down to Wynyard.

And so after two years, I was elected as a councillor and I talked with the chief at that time, was Howard Esterhorn(?). I asked him, I said, "Chief, for four years and the first meeting we had. I got all the minutes at home." I wrote all the minutes by hand. You know, we didn't have any women there to write the minutes down. I wrote them down. And this here this Woolosman(?) said, "Okay, the council take note of this now. What I am going to tell you is this. If this office doesn't work for you right now, the way it is, we could move it back to where it was at one time." Well, I wrote everything down. Joe Littletent(?), he was there. I was talking to old Joe, yeah, that was the chief, old Joe, it wasn't Howard. It was old Joe

Littletent(?). So I write that down and he come out, "I have it all written down," I said. So, enough of that, I was out. I was in the council for four years and after that I told the people that I wasn't going to run anymore. I was going to put my whole thought into farming and, so, anyway, it happened again that well, they were going to move this agency from Wynyard to Ft. Qu'Appelle again. And that is where it is now. And they told the people the same thing. "If this is not functioning nothing for the reserve, we could have these offices back to where they were before." But nobody ever said nothing about that and so everything is on its present places right now, where they are. But there is a lot of times I know the people don't kind of like that. Like these people around Maple Creek area, they are quite a ways from Maple Creek to Ft. Qu'Appelle and they have got to travel by, you know, with their own money. And here, I phoned my son-in-law here last week, of course I see him during the week here, the weekend. They were having a meeting up in Cypress Park there somewhere, you know, just to please some guys out in that area. Looks like we are going to get wet here now.

But, anyway, the things that happened before. Oh, they were pretty hard. Through that nature where an Indian didn't have full say on what, on what he produced on his farm, on his work. I know the guys, they work pretty darn hard trying to make a living. And then I have been telling my uncle, I told him here again this last winter, Christmas time I went to visit my uncle, well, he has been farming all of his life and especially now today, now he has got two boys and they are farming, I



don't know, about two, three sections of land. They got big tractors but it seems, I don't know, they are not making money, they are not making headways. I told him, "You better stop working. You are just killing yourself. And now," I said, "with the two boys you have here, they farm quite a bit but by God, you seem as if you are not making nothing, Uncle. And you are paying bills, paying bills. You got a big tractor and how many thousand, forty-five thousand for that tractor. Hell, you will never finish paying for that tractor. On top of that the machinery, the big machinery you buy and," I said, "you will never, never, never make headways. You have been farming all of your life, ever since the time you left school in 1934," I said. "You have been farming ever since then. You farmed with horses and I have no farm. And when I started a farm, I started with horses myself. And after that, there was three of us. There was Archie Littletent(?), John, and myself. We helped each other like this, like in the spring you know, three or four tractors farming can do quite a bit in a day." Oh, it has been pretty hard.

You know, to tell you the truth, the problem may be, you know, some of these guys, they make money but then, like, living on the reserve like this, especially now, there is a lot of complaints. There is too many of these guys that are farming. And now they are taking advantage of the land you know, and they can just go ahead and farm anyplace where they like. And there is a lot of these young, young people that are getting married. They got no place to go. They live right alongside their dad. They have a house right there. You see three, four houses all in one little village like this. But then there is a lot of young people now, they are starting to realize, "Look, you know, these farmers are taking too much land. They are taking too much advantage of the land. I wonder if we subdivided this piece of land over here, we could have our own area, our own say. We would be the boss for that land." Like, according to the treaties, you get so many, you know, 640 acres for a family of five. Do we have that much lands? "Heck," he says, "maybe probably I could rent it to this one guy here and then he give me a third or a quarter or whatever." I think it would be, you know like, and that system would work better. There is a lot of young people I hear talking in that manner you know.

Sure enough I said, "It would look good too," I said. "But again," I said, "I don't know. There is a lot of new things coming in on the reserve. Like now," I said, "the band itself, they make their own laws but then whoever is farming they got to pay so much an acre, a dollar an acre." Well, that goes for the band. Well, I heard that this spring. There is a guy that looks after the farmers on the reserve, happened to be my in-law, and I read there was a kind of a memo telling about the farmers, what they must do. They are supposed to go and put their money down in payment for their land, their farm, a dollar an acre. But he didn't say where that money went. Oh I told the boys, "By God," I says, "I wouldn't mind getting, get a line on this and understand better where does that money go.

You know," I said, "ever since about ten, fifteen years now, I didn't go to any of these meetings. I don't know what is going on. I don't know whether they got the record of our money, how we spent or kept our money, band money, anything in that line," I said. "You know these council and the chief, they don't tell the people anything like that. They just go ahead and run the business and that is it."

Well, especially now with these new programs, different kinds of programs coming on the reserve, I think the people, there is a lot of them, they could understand and realize what is in it.

They could make a good living out of these programs. You know, I have been trying to talk to some of the boys back there but when you live in one big family like that, you know, they don't understand, some. Some you know, they just look at you and walk away and that is it. They don't seem to realize that a lot of them living on welfare and it is a shame to live on welfare. I never lived off of welfare in my life. I feel better like this to make my, to earn my dollar. I'd sooner earn my dollars than to get a handout like this. Because this is what my old dad used to tell me, "Don't want to accept anything given to you for nothing." So I used to earn it. Sure enough when I left school, right away I went and worked for a farmer in Raymore. I went out threshing, harvest, and stuff like that and I had to earn my living. I had to earn my money. And a lot of the young people today, they don't understand that, they never seen the hard life in them days, in their days. A lot of times I tell these kind of stories to young people and I have - a lot of times I used to work for thirty-five cents a day, fifteen cents a day. They don't understand that.

Tony: They have been brought up on the welfare system.

Lawrence: Well, yeah, they are crazy. Mind you, one time we had a girl, she is going to school here right now in Saskatoon. Well, she was stricken down with this disease they call meningitis. And then along, one of our nephews, Brian, he is living in Regina. Well anyway, this girl of mine, Joyce, she went down to Ft. Qu'Appelle and that Indian hospital and also Brian went there. But Brian Crowe, he has a milder case of meningitis. And then my daughter there, Joyce, it went kind of heavy on her. She had it on her spine over here. So one day we were called, one afternoon we had a call there that our daughter was on a 50/50 basis. So we went there and sure enough our little girl was just laying there and just breathing. Her eyes were shut. Touched her hand and her hand was just cold. I thought she was going to die. So I walked out.

I went and prayed, had some sweetgrass. I went and prayed, took some tobacco and put it on the... I prayed. I wanted the Creator to bring my little girl up again. I prayed. And then my wife come there, she found me out there on the grass. I was praying. She started to cry and I said, "Don't cry. You got nothing to cry about. Look around, look how everything is nice," I said. "God created this for us and now, look, He gave

us a seed. That seed is right here. That is the one I am praying for." I went in, I took Joyce's hand and I prayed

again. Oh, her hand was warm, you know. Her arm was warm. And we stayed over that night. Four days we stayed there.

And one morning this Doctor Port came in and, "I would like to talk to you, Mr. Tobacco," he said. So we went. So when I see the X-ray, you know, on her spine, he says, "Right here. That is where she got that," he says. "And now mind you," he says, "I think your daughter might, I don't know, I am not saying, I am not one to tell you anything like this but what idea I have is that your daughter might go blind. She might just go blind like this," he says. "But she is going to live because she is way past that 50/50 mark now," he says. "We got a lot of hopes for her to survive."

Well, she did you know. She come right up and then we went there one day and my daughter said, "Dad, I am blind. I can't see." "Oh, someday my girl," I said, "put your trust into our Creator. He might give you something." Sure enough, after staying two years in the hospital, I went and see her. It happened my sister-in-law Lillian was in Lebret in high school. It was Easter and I went to get her with a taxi and I brought her there. We were going to spend the afternoon with Joyce. We were going to spend cards, I and her, and then we are going to tell her, you know, what we were playing and stuff like that. And this Lillian, she wore a blue coat, you know, blue coat but it had buttons on it, black buttons. She was standing right against the bed there. Joyce was laying on the bed. And all at once she called her aunt. She said, "Auntie!" She said, "What?" "I can see your coat," she says, "blue and it has got black buttons but just on one side," she said. "One side I can't see." And from there she started to gain her sight, you know, but on one side though.

So anyway, that next following year, Doctor Port came to us again along with a nurse and then they told us, I and the wife, "Would you like to put your daughter in school? We could send her away. We could work on that for you and then the agent will go and see you." I said, "Alright." So, I talked this matter over with Joyce and sure enough, she gave her consent and we came home. Oh sure, that Indian agent come down and he told me about this and he said, "Sure, you know, we send her down to Ontario, Brantford" - and this here was George Goodfellow - "and we will give her allowance, a clothing allowance, and enough to do her for a whole year," he says. "If she doesn't spend all that money, the money could be over there in the bank and then she could spend it like this to buy clothes." which she did.

Sure enough, she went to Brantford. She graduated over there and finished her grade twelve. She came back and she stayed in Regina for a while and worked in that Pool building, I don't know what she was doing. From there she come back, her hands were breaking up. I don't know what happened to her but her

hands were breaking up anyway, and she came home and she started taking jobs like babysitting and stuff like that. And then one day she got a job in Wynyard going back and forth every day. I don't know how many years she done that.

Now this spring, they are building an extension to the school here in Poor Man and she is going to teach these handicapped children in there. And now she is taking a course, well before that she has been going to school, course, courses after course after course like this. But now she has taken a course again in Saskatoon and prior to that time she was in Regina to a course out there. Then after she finishes, for sure she should be a qualified instructor. Then they are going to hire her here on the reserve and that is where she is right now. She is in Saskatoon. She has got about three weeks left yet. Mind you she has got a good memory that girl. Boy oh boy, I never seen a person with such a good memory. You know I have a lot of grandchildren and she knows, remembers all the dates of their birth, how old they are, even these boys here. She remembers the dates when they were born and stuff like that. Boy, she has got a good memory. But she is excited too, you know, but she gets along good. She plays ball, cooks, and she gets along with people and she is pretty well liked from the people she meets and the people she works with.

Christine: Where did you go to school?

Lawrence: I went to Muskowekan school.

Christine: Residential school?

Lawrence: Yeah, in, that is in Lestock.

Tony: When was that?

Lawrence: I left in 1935.

Tony: When did you start there?

Lawrence: I started in, uh, I think it was in 1926, 1926 or 1927. Come out of there ...

Tony: Do you have good memories of that?

Lawrence: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. You know, when I first walked in there, the Father, principal, his name was Father Poulette, a Roman Catholic, and this here, the guy I mentioned, Ali Doll(?), he was the farm instructor at that time and his brother, Frank Doll, he was the boys' supervisor. And along with the supervisor, we had these nuns. Well, they were mostly for girls up there. There was one cook there I knew pretty good, Sister Goiette(?) you know. She was an old Sister and she was a really good cook. And the girls' supervisor was Sister Laquaw(?) and our teacher was, uh, well the boys', senior boys' teacher was Sister Valad(?) and our boys', small boys' was Sister Craft. And there was another one, Sister

Laree(?), well she was with another Sister, Sister Bone(?). These two Sisters they were with the medicines and stuff like that for the students that were in the school. And also, we had two other Doll girls that were working with the boys. One was Philamene Doll and the other one was Evelyn Doll. And this here, this Philamene Doll, well, she used to be the barber. She would cut the boys' hair. And the other one, Sister ... not Sister but Evelyn Doll, she used to help along, supervising the boys.

Anyway, when I first went to school, that was before Christmas, oh, I would say around the 23rd or 22nd of December. But the reason why I wanted to go to school was I wanted to get some toys, you know. That was my intention of going to school. I didn't know what was in store for me when I was in school there. But my dad stayed around there, oh, about four days, five days, and all during that time, the staff, oh, they were really good to me eh.

But after, about two days after my dad left, I had braids at that time. I had my braids on. One afternoon this Father Poulette(?) called me. There was a chair in this office in the middle, a high chair. I never seen that chair there before. He told me, "Hey, Mr. Tobacco sit down there." I sat down there and " 478 ," he told me, meant "a little rat," you know, "Little rat, sit down there." I sat down. I didn't know what was up. And I looked around and he was doing something. And I looked around and I seen a scissors and a comb and the

clippers and there was a white rag. "Well, turn around here." So I turned around and looked at him.

He sat down on the chair. "You know Lawrence," he says, "you come to school now. You are going to stay in school here until you are eighteen years old," he told me. Oh, that was quite a few years ahead of me. But then he says, "Along that time," he says, "while you are in school there is rules and regulations that you got to abide with. In the morning you get up, you wash, clean up yourself. Six o'clock, no six-thirty you go down to the chapel, you go and pray. Seven-thirty you come out and you start cleaning up the play room, not only you but these other boys too. Eight o'clock you go for breakfast. Eight-thirty you are out and you have half an hour of play and then nine o'clock you go to school. And that is every day, mind you," he told me. "You come out of school at four o'clock and then you got two hours to play and six o'clock you have supper. Then you play again for two hours. Eight o'clock you go to bed. Now, will you remember that?" he says. "Yes."

"Okay, now next thing," he says, "when you stepped in here, you were an Indian. We are going to make a white man out of you. I am going to cut them braids," he says, "them plaits you got." I started crying once he said, when he told me he was going to cut my hair, you know. With that, he put the white rag and he took the scissors and snap, snap, and they were gone. Don't know what kind of a job he made but, my gosh now, I was ashamed to come to the boys' playroom now. I come in and, my God, the

boys didn't take notice right away but my brother did. I had a brother that time, brother Charlie, "Oh, you are a new boy now," he says. "You got no braids. Where is your braids?" "I don't know, I think he took them down there. I think he burned my braids." Oh, I had long hair. About like that. It come down up to here anyway. Yeah.

Oh, but then, after that it was pretty good you know. But then the rules were pretty strict. We all, the staff, they were pretty, oh, they were strict staff but then the Sisters - no, the only time we associated with the Sisters was during class but outside of that we had these two Doll girls and this Frank Doll. But after that it was different once I came in. Then we had different supervisors. We had these, some of these, uh, young men that were learning to be priests, they call them Brothers. They come and stay with us there and then we had them for supervisors also and they were pretty strict. Yeah,

they were pretty strict. And also these other priests, they were pretty strict.

Tony: Did they make you work as well as do school work?

Lawrence: Oh, good God, yeah.

Tony: What sort of things did you have to do?

Lawrence: There was a lot of, like the inside work, like what a woman does in the house, like now, I'll say like Saturday mornings. But other times we had to fix our own beds, clean up the basins, the toilet bowls in the washrooms, and sweep up the floors in the dormitories, clean up the, like on our - say, we had to clean right from the top right to the bottom. That is every morning before school. A lot of times you used to have maybe about five, ten minutes of recreation only. Everybody worked. Just these small little fellows, uh, that were five, six-year-old that couldn't do nothing. But these other older ones, everybody worked. Nine o'clock, we had to be in the class.

Until we were about fourteen years old and then from there, we had to go and do outside work. Outside work. And then sometimes probably, maybe we would be in school, maybe up a couple of hours and then we were called outside on emergency cases like they wanted extra help out there like sawing wood and one thing and another like that kind of work. Out there was a lot of work to be done. They were short of help. We had to go and assist these other boys, you know, and that kind of work. And everything was on the, everything was scheduled for each boy every day. And when these nuns, these black, you know, these black nuns came, oh boy, they were strict. Yeah, every boy had his schedule to do his own work. And you had to be right on time and when you went out to play, there were four nuns out there watching you. You gotta watch your language, you couldn't use any profane language because they were holy. But, they are not holy, I found out after that. Heck, they are not holy. They pretend to be holy but they are not. They are

human beings, they are human beings, the priests. Today, I got a brother-in-law that was a priest one time.

Tony: Were you?

Lawrence: Yeah, he is up in Edmonton. Me and him are married to sisters. Yeah, and he is Fornier. He is a Frenchman from Montreal. Oh, I used to laugh. Oh, I'll tell you after.

So, anyway, oh these Sisters, I said they were pretty strict. And then like for meals too, you know, we weren't given the best of meals. You know, they would give us something that was half-cooked or something like that, meat half-cooked. Potatoes, same thing, half-raw. And then we had this porridge what is half-cooked, it is raw, all in lumps, and we had to go ahead and eat that, eh. So one day now, we used to have that old chief there from the reserve, from Muskowekan, and along with Lucy Ambrose(?) was my councillor at that time. That time they used to come unexpected because we used to, you know, complain to the chief. You know, without these supervisors hearing us. And sometimes unexpectedly this old man used to come there, for breakfast or dinner hours, come and see what we were eating. And I guess he done his share.

There used to be an inspector that time they used to call Moyer, Mr. Moyer in Regina. One morning - like we used to have breakfast at seven o'clock - one morning we walked in and we used to, we had to pray before meals. So I just sat down. And everything was all poured out on our plates already, like porridge, all lumpy, and bread that was kind of dry, and tea, the tea was just light brown. You couldn't even taste the tea. But I was sitting down. I was just going to start eating. Who walks in but Mr. Moyer. He took a look. Well, there was one big dining hall there. He told the children, "Don't eat!" he says. "Just a minute! Don't you start eating." He come to our head table - we were the biggest boys at that time - he come and looked around, see what we were eating, and went right from table to table, went right through, and he called the staff. There was two Sisters there. "Alright," he says, "call attention to the students. March them out," he says. "And I want breakfast, not this kind of breakfast, what you have on the table." Oh, he lectured them, teach them Sisters there. "Now look, there is a big boy's table right here. How do you expect these boys to go out there and do the farm work with this type of food you got here. That is not worth to give to a dog! Look at this bread." God, the thing was just crusty, dry. "How would you like to eat that? Here," he said to her, "eat it." That was Sister St. Luke. Oh, she just went red, eh. Then he went into the Father's dining hall and he called the Principal, Father Zanette, told him the same thing. "I am sending these students out of here. I want them to make breakfast for these students and then they can come out an hour after, come and have breakfast. Throw all of these things away. Get a supply of food. Food good enough for the people. I want you to go into your office now," he said, "to go and

make a supply. Write it down! I want to see the list." So with that we were told to get out. (laughs) We come back at eight o'clock. Oh God, everything was right on, butter and bread and, well there was corn flakes there at every table eh. Yeah.

Tony: Did it stay like that?

Lawrence: Oh yeah. Now, well, I went and eat there a lot of times and everything is right on. Yeah, and they even have it better now, like you can have it in a buffet style, eh. You serve yourself as you go along, eh. Yeah, that is what I see. Oh, they were pretty hard. There are a lot of times Mr. Moyer used to come in and look, you know.

Christine: Was he an inspector from Indian Affairs?

Lawrence: No, I don't think so. No, he wasn't from the Indian Affairs, he was from a different...

Christine: The other day when we were sitting over there, you were telling us, there was a big group of us, you were telling us a story about when you and your friend were carrying wood and the Sister thought that you were trying to run away?

Lawrence: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's right. Sister Bernadette.

Christine: Could you tell us about that again?

Lawrence: That was in the afternoon. That was Saturday afternoon. Well, in the afternoon we had to carry in wood, ten armfuls apiece. There was ten boys. We had to walk quite a ways. I would say, oh, probably about a hundred yards, I guess, we had to walk. Walked up there and there was Henry and then there was another guy there, three of us. But Henry, he was doing most of the talking, telling us what happened, like, in his holidays the year before, eh. He was telling us this story as we were carrying in wood. And all this time I didn't know there was one watching us over here and there was another one watching us from down there what, you know, what we were doing.

(End of Side B, Tape IH-124)

(Side A, Tape IH-125)

Lawrence: ...then after that, we were called to attention when we got down to our play room. In walks this one Sister, Sister Louise Phillip and I heard her saying something to this Sister but I couldn't quite make out. And Sister Bernadette, she had a strap and she gave a bang on the table. She says, "Mr. Tobacco, Lawrence Tobacco, you are called in the parlour." God, I didn't know anybody - like, we were outside, you know, I didn't see anybody. Like, there used to be a building there where our parents used to stay, like, in the winter, and I didn't see anybody. I was wondering, who in the heck would be



now? I figured. The boys here, "Oh, you are lucky," they told me. "Somebody is coming to see you."

So when I walked in there, there was another Sister that come and meet me, Sister Craft(?) and Sister Eugene, "Come on," she says, "You follow me." Oh, we went upstairs now, right to the bedroom and she told me, "Look," she says, "take off your jacket." So I took my jacket off. "Take your shirt off." So I took my shirt off. Okay, then we had these underwear that were half here, they were fleeced lined, "Take that off." So I took that off and, "Now what," I says. "Okay, come follow me," she says. So we went right across, now, right where the girls' dormitory and here is this Sister Superior, she would be a tall Sister. Oh she looked mad. She looked mad and I didn't know what was up. "You stand here," she told me. I was going to sit on a bed. "No, you stand here and listen to me. You know Lawrence," she said, "this afternoon when you were carrying in wood with Henry?" "Yeah." "And Alex?" I think it was Alex. "Yeah," I said, "yes." "You were planning to run away," she says. "You were the boss of these boys and you were planning to run away." I said, "Sister, I don't think so. I'll tell you what really happened. It was Henry that was telling us a story, what he done all last summer right through his two months' holidays. This is what he was telling us. I never said nothing. You go and get Henry and ask him." "Oh no, no, no," I couldn't put it over that Sister. "No, no, no," she said, "you were planning to run away and that Sister was watching you from upstairs and there was another one over there." "I know," I says. "Heck, we're being watched like a hawk watches for a mouse." I says.

I must have got her mad when I said that. "Come on, I am going to strap you!" Oh God, she started strapping me and my God, I was bare, eh. She started hitting me. Oh, they had a strap about this wide, eh, and about that long and, oh, about that thick, I guess. And she started strapping me and going like this. By God now, oh, she must have strapped me there for a

good hour and she was getting played out. And all at once I grabbed - oh, you know my hands and arms were just stiff, and they were turning blue color with that strapping - I grabbed that. Well, I could hear the girls coming up and I grabbed that and I pulled it away out to the end of the dormitory and I come and run out. I come down to the bedroom and I put on my... and I looked and gee, my arms were just, oh, they were just turning color already, eh. So the next morning my hands were just like I, like I couldn't move my fingers. That is how black and blue they were. That sister strapped me there for a good hour, maybe more. So they kept me upstairs for a whole week, maybe ten days, until all that blue came off and then they let me down.

Tony: Then you could come back down again.

Lawrence: Yeah, yeah. That is how mean them Sisters were you know. Oh, God, they were mean.

Tony: Did you often get punished?

Lawrence: Well, twice I know, I remember I got punished. There was one time too, you know, I and this friend of mine - he is still living, George Sheebokoosh(?) - we were playing ball, you know. We used to put three sticks against the wall like this, you know, and that meant for one, two, three, out, you know. And I would pitch over there, you know. He was batting about and if I knocked one of those out, well, that was one out, eh. All this kept up and I had one more to go and we were playing with a tennis ball - these tennis balls, you know, you can knock them far - and God, he gave it a good crack and I didn't know there was a Sister right close. "Jesus Christ!" I said, you know. (laughs) "Oh boy, she is going way far!" I yelled, "Jesus Christ, I hit it," without even taking notice of what I was saying, eh. Well, right away Sister Bernadette called me, "You come here. You too, George, come on!" Oh, we were ushered inside the prayer room. "You get in there." I went in, there was a little room there, a little coat room. And I was wondering why I come in and oh, she was mad. "Look," she told me, "what did you say over there when George hit that ball?" "My, God, now, I don't know," I said. "I don't know what I said." "You took the Lord's name in vain," she said. "You know what you said?" "No," I said, "what I told you." "You said Jesus Christ." "Well, you are saying it yourself too, Sister," I told them, eh. (laughter) "I am going to punish you," she said. "You stay here." She locked the door

and was gone about half hour. "Now," she said, "you write this down," she said, "500 times. 'Holy Mary, help me to keep my mouth clean.'" I wrote that down 500 times. It is still in my memory. (laughs) Oh, boy. God, you know, every recess time she let me go to the washroom first and then, "Go into that little room!" I had to write, write, write. Oh, I don't know how many scribblers I filled, eh. I am writing 'Holy Mary, help me to keep my mouth clean.' (Laughs) That was quite a lesson. I didn't want to say Jesus Christ anymore.

Christine: Do you think you got a good education there?

Lawrence: Uh, to an extent. I think like, the rules, you know, the regulations, what they had, you know, like with the type of work we done, I think, the school itself was pretty well disciplined. You know, like, there was a lot of areas where, like today, that you take notice in these homes, you know, there is not discipline. Lack of discipline at home. Even though some of these students that were in that school, I don't know why they don't try to act in that manner to try to discipline their children. A lot of these children today, they are drunks! Because the people themselves they are not, you know, the parents, they are not telling their children that anymore. You know, that is why there is a lot of people I got, well, they are mad at me. Like I went to my reserve and I told them that, I told them, I lectured there for a good two hours and I told them, "You are the resource people of your children. Now, the children, you got to tell them." Oh a lot of times they say, "Oh, you were in that footsteps too." "But okay, if

you were in that footsteps but now you realize what mistake you made. Now," I said, "you tell this right to your children. They got to follow that." Boy, and I always tell them too, "Get back your native tongue. Make them learn their language, their native language and the Indian way of teaching." Today with these two cultures we cannot buy these, and the technology of teaching the way the old people used to teach their children, the way my father taught me.

Tony: How was that?

Lawrence: Like an Indian way.

Tony: How was the Indian way?

Lawrence: Oh, it was pretty good. It was real good. You know that I never had a chance to talk to these students. Well, I told them that this morning. "I never had the opportunity to talk to you children, to you students, the way I want to talk to you," I said. "If you want to break and go, break and go, break and go, you will never get nothing like that. Probably maybe you would on certain items," I said. "Probably, maybe now, there is - mostly they have been talking about a sweat, talking about a pipe ceremony and there is three things. Look," I said, "I could have been here now my three weeks. I haven't talked nothing about obedience, nothing about respect, humility, happiness, and personality, and sharing, and good child-rearing, everything, all of these things." Since I was fifteen, I based my lectures on a tipi poles. And each pole represented a value, a virtue. "And now," I said - a lot of times I like these university students - I tell them, "This is how the old people used to base their lectures on, on these things. Now today a lot of you young students are taking the social work. Abide yourself with this type of learning and tell these people about that. Combine this here and this over here, combine these two cultures. Boy," I said, "you will have good families. And if you have good families, sure enough, the children will be good too. They will be obedient. Today there is nothing, there is no obedience, there is no respect. There is no discipline in these homes, in Indian homes." I bet you there is a lot of homes in the cities, when I am called to go and see these, the parents, to go and see the mothers. Boy oh boy, there is lots to be done and even though we have workers, they don't seem to, you know, they go to maybe a couple of homes. Well, they get heck from the parents, they don't want to go back there anymore. They got to keep on going, going, trying, trying all the time. Yeah, just a minute.

Tony: Don't go too far with that mike.

Lawrence: (Knocks on a door) Bring my books eh. I am going to give you a couple of these. Look, this is where... yeah.

Christine: How did your parents teach you about these things?

Lawrence: Well, you know, look, I will tell you, you know. It is an old, old picture. I guess probably maybe this was the way they were taught from their parents, their grandmothers, how to raise a good family. How to get your children to listen to you, how to respect the people, respect your property. You know, it would take a long, long time to go right through them

fifteen virtues. It takes me a long time. Like every Wednesday since I started in January in that correctional centre, this is what I talk about. And every time I, like the first time, I talk about obedience. And it took me two hours and yet I wasn't done. The next time I went down, respect. And so on, humility, and right through. And now, good child-rearing and stuff like that, kinship. You know, it means a lot to a lot of the young students to realize what is in there, what is written, what is good in the fifteen virtues. You will pride yourself of that and learn all of them and by God, this is how I got to live.

Tony: Would you be doing any of this with the students here?

Lawrence: I wanted to do that but I never had a chance. That is what I told them there this morning.

Tony: You won't have a chance for the rest of the week?

Lawrence: No, no. This is what I was going to do with them there but I never had a chance. But I will be doing this when I get back with the EOP students.

Tony: Whereabouts?

Lawrence: In Regina.

Tony: When?

Lawrence: Well, starting, I'll say maybe in, on the seventh of July because I told them I will be back in the office on the sixth of July.

Tony: Why don't we come along and put a microphone on you?

Lawrence: Yeah, okay.

Tony: And then you could have it, you know, you could have a copy of it on tape yourself that might be useful to you as well.

Lawrence: Sure, that is good. That is right. Yeah.

Tony: We will do one and make a copy for you.

Lawrence: Right, very good. Well, it takes a long time to talk right through that because there is a lot of expressions

and that you want to say, eh. Sometimes I talk in Cree, you know, say, about being obedient. (Speaks Cree) Try to be a

good listener. Listen to what you are being told because this, in time to come, this is what you are going to do to your grandchildren, your children or somebody else's children and you are going to teach that. You know, it takes a lot of time too.

I think, and then, what I was really working at when I talked to them here last spring, not this spring but a year ago, last spring, we had some elders in the university come there. We had a whole week there to discuss about what I wanted to do. I wanted along with me about five or six elders to go into these reserves - like we have sixteen reserves back there, eh - to go right around like this every week, once a week. By God, during that one year the kids would learn something. Here now, when I was doing field work, I done quite a bit of that in the school, Poor Man school here. And we had an instructor there, uh, Jerry Smith, used to let me come to the school there to his class twice a week. And boy, I'll tell you, I really put something into the minds of these young people. A lot of these young fellows now, they were, you know, they would have been juvenile delinquents, eh. By God, there a lot of times they come to me there. My own little nephews, "Dad, oh gee," he says, "my dad never tells me nothing like that, of that nature, what you tell me. Boy, it sounds good, you know, like I could have got into trouble and stuff like that but now you come at a time that you correct me." You know, ...

Tony: Well we'll do that. I think that would be useful for you to have that too, wouldn't it?

Lawrence: It sure would, it sure would. Yeah.

Tony: We'll do that in July.

Lawrence: See, like, where we went over here, at La Loche here two weeks ago when we first started here, well, I had a brief talk with the students concerning about this here and they sure went for that and they wanted a copy. Well, I had the copies. Wherever I go, I take copies of that, you know. When I went to Toronto and I went down to Manitoba and all of them places, I give the students each one. "Study this. See how you can understand it and try to work with it. Tell your parents about this." Yeah, they seem to like that.

Tony: When you came out of that residential school, you had really been brought up as a Roman Catholic then, eh?

Lawrence: Yeah, yeah.

Tony: So, how did you get back to the real Indian spiritual life?

Lawrence: Like, during holidays, eh, I done a lot of service, being a servant to my dad. Not only him, these different elders also.

Tony: You mean a pipe servant?

Lawrence: Yeah, yeah. I done a lot of that. I used to sit down by that stove, by that fire, sometimes that side, sometimes on this side. Oh, one time I would sit over here. Oh, it would be burning over here because the fire was big, eh. Go on the other side, it would be burning over there. It was old man, old man Tapaquan(?) used to tell me, "Sit down there my boy. You are burning," he says, "but some day you are going to get something out of that by doing this, by putting your time into this. I think what you are doing - in time to come, I think you are going to understand something." That is what he used to tell me, that old man Tapaquan(?). Even the day when my father died. My dad died right on my chest here. And the last word my dad said was, "Listen to your uncle Tapaquan(?)." That is what he told me. That was that old man Tapaquan(?) right there. And that is that old man that lectured me for four days, four nights without sleeping and already he was paralysed. But you know, we used to pull him up and he would be okay. Once he started talking, he was alright. But he stayed like that, oh, I don't know how many years, about three winters I think, before he died. He was just paralysed, you know. He couldn't walk, he couldn't get up, you know, and oh, he was really a burden to his old lady, you know. But boy, he was good. He was a good lecturer. He was pretty well known for his words and lecture. He could sure lecture the people.

Tony: When he gave you these four days and four nights, where did that take place?

Lawrence: Right on the reserve, right in my house. Well, not in my house but in my father-in-law's house. But then my father-in-law passed that house on to us, me and my wife, my present wife here. See, I only had one wife. Oh, he meant a

lot to me, you know. And the last night he started showing me these songs, now different type of songs - rain-dance songs and smoking-hut songs and so on, horse songs, bear songs. "Try to remember them all," he told me. "In time to come, you are going to sing these songs." Sure enough, I know them songs. And he is not the only one that learned me songs. My old godfather, he learned me songs, and old Archie Littletent(?), my dad, my uncle and my cousin, old Wally. I know a lot of songs. Yeah, I have a good memory for songs and then what I was told, I have it all over here.

My old grandfather used to tell me, he used to have a little stick about this long just to make me sit close. "Sit over here, face me," he used to tell me. "Listen to me. Someday you might learn something, someday you are going to do this." And sometimes he used to give me a tap on my head, "Look here," he said, "that one over here. You put something in your head here." (Cree) He didn't give you a pencil to write with. He didn't give you a piece of paper where you are going to memorize things as he is going to say. But he is going to give you this. Sure enough, by God, I have a good memory. I will read something once today, by God, tomorrow, I can just about

say the very words of what I read yesterday.

Like, when, I go to these meetings over here, you know, in the university, they don't see me there with paper. And them, they come there with, you know... A lot of times they tell me, "How come, Mr. Tobacco," this Chuck Hodgson, "how come you come in here, nothing? You don't have no pencil, no paper to write what the words, what the these people are saying." I tell him over and over, "I don't have to Chuck. I memorize these things. Look," I said, "when I was in school, I used to memorize fifteen, twenty catechism questions for the next morning's hearing. And that was just within one hour. I tell you, boy, I used to put everything black and white in my mind because I wanted to memorize my work. I didn't want to get a strapping."

And now I hear the words. When I was in school, I used to hear that old man saying that. He used to tap me on my head. He used to tell me that I got a mind. That mind has got to work. "You got to function with your mind." (Cree) He used to tell me that. "And in the morning, towards sunrise, pray. That sun over there will tell you. He is a reminder there is a God over here. Ask that God, our Creator, to give you a true mind, to work with your true mind. (Cree) Something good will go in

your mind and stay with you all the time," what that old man used to tell me. Sure enough today, what I tell the young people, "Pray to the Creator every morning. Ask him for a guidance. We had a lot of problems today. We are faced with a lot of problems. No matter where we are, no matter where we go, we see problems all over and that is only One up here, that is the only One that could correct all of these problems, solve all of these problems for us." But then we got to have a lot of workers that work hard.

Tony: So really as soon as you came out of school, you went back to living what you might call an Indian life so that your spiritual life has gone and continued on.

Lawrence: Like I said here, I don't know whether you heard me, when I left school, see, we lived right with the people over here. You know, there is a lot of people whose houses were right close, eh. And one day my dad left, oh, for a whole week, probably, till one day now I asked him, "Dad, where do you go every day?" I said, "You are gone in the morning, back late in the evening." He told me, "Over here," he says, "up north, oh about three miles north. I go and cut logs and I haul them." he says. "I am starting to build a house over there. That is where I am going to take you. I am going to learn you how to be a hunter. How to be a trapper, anything in that line and I want to learn you to live a spiritual life. There is a lot of hills over there, big hills. I want you to fast, to suffer yourself, suffer your body." That is what the old man used to tell me.

A lot of times I tell these stories to young people they don't understand, they don't believe me. Once during February, it

was really cold, I seen my Dad walking. I was playing cards on the table, the window right here on the south side, I was playing solitaire and I seen my dad going that way. Oh, about an hour after that he walked in. And I asked him, "Where did you go, Dad?" "Oh, I went over here," he said. And that is all he said. I seen him carrying a shovel and after that he was getting something ready there and he called me. I seen coals, lighted coals, a little smudge there, pipe and there was some print there. "Come and sit down here with me," he says. I sat down. "Now, you are going to listen to me. Look, I made you do this already, in time already. But this is going to be a little harder now. I am going to pray now," he says. "After I pray," he says, "this evening, before the sun is down, you follow my tracks over there. Look, you are going to take one

blanket only and this print. Take your pipe," he says. "Take that pipe along, tobacco, sweetgrass, matches. Follow my tracks over here, over here just on the slope here. On the other side there is the slope of the hill. And there is a big drift there and I want you to go and fast there two nights, two days." I looked at him, "Dad, I will freeze in there." "No you won't. Now you listen to me," he says, "what I am doing, what I am telling you to do, you listen to me." I never used to disobey my dad. I said, "Alright, Dad, I will do it."

So after I kept on playing and after that, oh, I don't know what time it was, it was in the winter, about three-thirty I guess, I started praying. Now I started getting ready. And I went out, took my little grey blanket. Sure enough, I come to that place there and there was a hole there big enough, about like this or maybe more like that, enough to crawl in there. Just big enough for me to lay down. About like this. Big enough to move around. I stayed there two nights and two days and I done that twice. I done that twice, two winters. And there was one time too, he was going to take me down to, over here, Broadview area.

And I heard - there were some people that came down from over there - Harvey Kenney, he died. But his boy is living yet, Marlow. I am going to go and see him here Sunday. And that old man, well, along with him there was other ones that done that. You know, they are, you know they make a ... out of birch covering, like, you know, they have a tube from there and they go in the water there. For two nights, some of them four nights they stay under water there. This is in the winter. It is pretty hard to believe what these are, these things are done. Yeah. Oh, that is it today. That is all for now.

Tony: Okay.

(End of Side A, Tape IH-125)

(End of Interview)

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