

(#1) Ethnocultural Groups of Saskatchewan: The First People, Nancy Munroe, Tape Included, Transcript found at Sask Archives, Regina- Interview conducted 5/30/2003. Born on Muskoday Reserve, 10/7/2017

Note: Majority of notes come from tape 428

(from 427)

Lucille: Was there any incidents like where the teacher strapped somebody at school and the parents got mad or something like that?

Nancy: Oh yes.

Lucille: What happened?

Nancy: Well, the parents used to come down and used to argue with the teacher and then the kids got kicked out of school?

Lucille: Did anything ever happen to the teacher, like, did any of the teachers ever get fired because of that?

Nancy: No.

Lucille: So it was just the kids who got kicked out?

Nancy: Yeah, just the kids got kicked out of school.

(double standard in punishments for kids and teachers)

Lucille: Did you go to school there?

Nancy: Yeah. I started school when I was eight years old and I went till I was fourteen.

Lucille: What grade did you get?

Nancy: Up to grade five. I was in grade five for three and half years. We didn't have any books to go any higher. So we just kept doing the same work over and over for two and a half years. And one year I worked most of the time but it was counted as school.

(from interview tape 427):

Nancy: Yes. I was in grade five for three years. We couldn't get any other books. Indian Affairs wouldn't give us any more books. They said they weren't available so I stayed in grade five for three years. Finally I gave up.

(represents a lack of quality education that was available)

Lucille: Did you have to write exams?

Nancy: Oh yeah. We used to have a school inspector come in once a year in May to ask attendance. And he used to come in and he was strict and he used to check our books every May to see how. But he never checked if we missed school. Of course, them days we didn't get family allowance and it didn't matter how much we went to school...

(colonial supervision of schooling, lack of interest to see if kids were attending)

Lucille: And how were you treated by white people?

Nancy: Well, Mr. Graves looked down on the Indians as dirt. He didn't care for us but he was happy to get our money when treaty time came or any time.

Lucille: Who was Mr. Graves?

Nancy: Graves, he was the guy that owned the store in Davis. But other than that, he had nothing to do with us.

Lucille: How about when you came to town, did you ever get play games or...?

Nancy: Yeah, we had that centre to play, you know. The children there were very friendly with the Indians. In fact, they really liked the Indians. And then we had the store; they called it the Farmer's Supply. And that store was really good with Indians, too.

Lucille: I imagine there were some stores that weren't.

Nancy: Oh yeah. The Blue Chain store, that was very good with Indians too. And like my mother, they used to go and sweep out that Blue Chain store like once a month and she used to get a lot of clothes from them and stuff that was old.

Lucille: So it was (inaudible) then?

Nancy: Yeah, but not Allan Barcy's parents. But they used to give us clothes or something they couldn't sell, that took a long time.

Lucille: Was there certain places in Prince Albert where you couldn't go? Were Indians ever banned from any store?

Nancy: No, not that I know of but I know a lot of places we were watched close if we went in. We were watched very close, it was just like we were like stealers.

Lucille: Is it worse now than it was, the way you are treated now?

Nancy: Oh no, the Indians are treated better now than they were. I don't know. The Indians now deal a lot with the white people. When we got into town, people really stared at us. They didn't know what to think about us. Especially in Birch Hills. It is just a few years of people that really broke down in their church to be prejudices against us. Even yet, they find foreign people very strange. But John Smith is (inaudible). Like in Saskatoon too.

(definite racism against First Nations people, although Nancy notes some were good)

Lucille: What were you going to say about Saskatoon?

Nancy: Like, in Saskatoon there are a lot of stores we go in, they just trail right around behind us, behind me, like you know. Being an Indian, I guess they are afraid I would be shoplifting or something.

(continuation on the previous point of Racism)

Lucille: What about police on the reserves? When did they start coming there?

Nancy: Well, they were always there when they gave out treaty. We would see the police once a year but other than that, we were very scared to see the police. We would look when they would come up to the reserve because we knew that somebody was in trouble then. But a lot of times we didn't know who it was. But a lot of times it was people that were coming in to more or less look for something. Then, we didn't have any radios or TVs or anything to know if the prisoners got loose. And the only way we knew was when the R.C.M.P. drove out on horseback out to the reserve. Because in them days, they done most of their driving on horseback. You didn't see very many cars. But even when we did see cars coming in with the police, we were very scared. In fact, a lot of young people used to run away and hide in the bush.

(mistrust of colonial police forces)

Lucille: Where did you and Dad live?

Nancy: We lived on the road allowance. We couldn't even stay in the reserve because he wasn't a treaty Indian and I wasn't a treaty Indian too. So we got kicked off the reserve and we had to stay in the road allowance they called it. Between the farmer's place and the reserve where there is supposed to be a road built. It was wide enough for our people to live there. So there was quite a few families of us halfbreeds there. And Dad had to work over there, hunting and stuff for a living. He used to get a lot of rabbits and he used

to trade them off for potatoes or flour. Milk, we had none. We just had to go to a farmer to try and get some milk and they used to give us skimmed milk.

Lucille: How did you live when Dad went and joined the army?

Nancy: Well, I stayed in the reserve until I got kicked out and then I stayed on the road allowance. And then they voted us in after Dad was in the army about three years, they took us in to be Indians, so then I stayed on the reserve.

Lucille: How did they vote you in?

Nancy: When Dad was wounded very bad overseas, they thought he was going to die, I guess. He was wounded, seriously wounded. So then I had four kids so they had a meeting, they called up a meeting when the telegram came that Dad was wounded bad. The telegram came that he wasn't expected to live very long, that he was seriously wounded. So they called up a meeting and they treated it and they run by votes and like, you know. Just by lifting hands. Twenty-two was against us and twenty-three would let us in. Just by one vote. Before it was twenty-two and twenty-two and then somebody else came in and then they revoted again and then they won so we were brought in and then we got our treaty money there right away. In them days, there was no red-tape to it, but they did make a, I don't know who has got that title now in the paper to show that we were voted into the reserve. And this lawyer, Tom Fraser, he was good. He ...(inaudible). And then Dad got better overseas and then they put him out in the war again and then he got wounded again and then he came home. The second time.

(colonial control over identity, also evidence of colonial control of population)

The main themes of this interview are as follows. First is that of poor quality education being offered at the reserve that Nancy resided. It is clear from her oral testimony that the education of people on the reserve was not a priority for the Federal government. A second theme that is evident in the interview is the control of identity by the federal government, specifically the idea of those who are and are not Indian. With that identity came support, and money, from the federal government. This in itself is a method of control that is employed by the Federal Government to this day. A third theme of this interview is that of racism. While Nancy notes that some people were decent toward her, others were not. She cites the example of a store owner who wanted nothing to do with natives, except when it came to their money. She also states people mistrusting her in Saskatoon. Finally she explains the fear that people on reserve had of the RCMP.

Keywords: Education, Indian Affairs, Colonial control, Discrimination, RCMP, Poverty, Treaty Rights, John Smith Reserve, Identity, Money Control, Metis (ethnicity)

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