SOUTH DAKOTA ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Library Cataloging Service Page

Name of Informant: MRS. MAURICE (ELIZABETH) LA ROCHE

Address: Apartment 205 - Denver Terrace Apartments - 103 Denver Street

Date of Interview: 18 Jul 73

Name of Researcher: E. Hausle

Others Present: daughter - Marlys Robertson

Location of Interview: informant's home

Added Notes:

SUBJECT HEADINGS UNDER WHICH YOU FEEL THIS INTERVIEW SHOULD BE FILED:

Places lived after 1972 flood; flood aid received; no prejudice encountered; death of husband; finding a job at Sioux Pottery; preparation of Indian foods.

Age: 54 Sex: F Place: Pennington

Socio-economic Status: lower middle

Occupation: part-time worker making pottery

Education: 10th grade

Religion: Protestant

Date of Arrival of Family in South Dakota: 1921

Where? Winner, SD

From Where? Nebraska - Santee Reservation

Number of Moves in South Dakota:

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DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON INFORMANT

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Q. Rapid City, South Dakota, July 18, 1973, Earl Hausle interviewing Mrs. Elizabeth LaRoche. Uh, Mr. LaRoche, where did you live after the flood? Where did you go?

A. Uh, my daughter talked to a realestate company that had Denver cabins and, uh, they were, uh, they were condemned but, and are waiting to be repaired. But on account of the flood he opened up his cabins and he let some of us families move in. So my daughter and her five kids and my husband and I and my son that was home on furlow we all lived in Denver cabins right after the flood. 'Courseit was a few days before my husband got out of the hospital. We were both hospitalized. He, the next day after the flood he went right up to the hospital 'cause he has heart trouble. And then I went up to see him as I got cleaned up Saturday night and the doctor put me in there for shots and then let me out Sunday. He saidmy eyes were, showed that I was suffering from shock.

Q. Then you went, uh, you moved right into these Denver cabins then.

A. Yes. We lived there for a month and then these people that were helping us, you know, right after the flood. My daughter worked for some of them from the CAP office, she helped there. And, uh, they hauled us here and there and, uh, finally they took us up to Central High School and we signed up for a trailer. And it was July, I believe maybe about the first week in July that we moved into a HUD trailer. And then we lived up on uh, 831 Vanburen.

Q. Now, what's your daughter's name? You've mentioned her...

A. Marlice Robertson.

Q. And, did you each get a trailer? Did you daughter get a trailer?

A. Yes, uh-huh.

Q. And then you and your husband had a trailer also.

A. Yes.

Q. I see.

A. There was four trailerhouses on that one little place. It was, uh, it wasn't from the city. We paid rent to the, Joann Kline, Morris Kline's wife.

Q. It was on a private lot.

A. Yes. And we paid 35 a month.

Q. How was the trailer? Was it satisfactory?

A. Yes. The trailer, of course, I and my husband were alone. We didn't have any kids. My grandchildren come over but we were along most of the time. So, our trailer was good and held up. But the one my daughter was in it's about ready to come to pieces but she's going to stay in there until it's time for her to move out. Where you've got five kids you can't expect a small, you know, one of those thin trailers to hold up. And they're put together with, uh, staples 'cause I picked up a lot of them that just come loose in our place. But they were nice. They were a home, a roof over our heads.

Q. What kind of, uh, other kind of assistance did you get during this time after the flood?

A. Well, the Red Cross helped us and then we got, uh, we lost two cars in that flood but the insurance company come and gave us, uh, paid off the car and whatever cash was left, I don't remember, but they gave that to my husband. So one car was taken care of but, uh, the other car we lost. And then what little stuff we had never amounted to much but we lost it and the SBA helped us.

Q. Did you have any problems getting aid from the SBA or Red Cross or anything?

A. No. No. We, we were, we're just a family that, we always get along because we, uh, uh, we just stay in our own place. There's my daughter now.

Q. You not only lost your home then you lost almost everything that you had in the flood.

A. Yes.

Q. And, uh, what kind of changes did this make in your life?

A. Well, for us, of course, I lost my husband but for my part I believe I'm better off than I ever was. You know what I mean, uh, what I have is paid for. And I've got some nice things. I might not have much but what I've got is good. And I think I'm better off now than I was before because we had the children and all our money was going for groceries and stuff.

Q. How long have you lived in Rapid City?

A. We've been here for 21 years.

Q. Now, your husband died since the flood.

A. Yes.

Q. When was that?

A. He died, uh, December 12.

Q. Now, you, you own your own home out of New York.

A. No, huh-uh. No. We rent it.

Q. You rent it. I see. Okay. And, uh, were you working at the time?

A. No, I never worked. That's one thing that my husband wouldn't let me work. And after he died, well, uh, there was no workman's compensation or nothing I could draw from. I'm too young to get social security. And if I got, drew, uh, veteran's pension for my husband on his account well, it, death was considered, uh, service not connected. But I was married before to a white man and, uh, he got killed in World War II in action. And his name was Donald Wagner. He's from where I come from. And, uh, so the VA and the American Legion looked into it, and there's a new law went through in '70 or '71 that if you have one husband, uh, that you're married to and, and he died a veteran and then you get married again and he dies, well, you can collect from whichever one that you will get the most from. So they traced it and I'm drawing, uh, death compensation for my husband that died before, uh, died in World War II. I get 189 a month. And then when I reach 62 I can write out for my husband's social security and he filled in his 40 quarters, uh, 5 years ago. And then my son used to work out to Sioux Pottery for Dr. Arlen's wife. And I went out there with an Indian lady to buy a pair of mocassins. She wanted a pair. And Mrs. Arlen said she wondered, well, have been, she said, "I've been looking," she said, "I've been wanting to call you. See, I wanted to see if you wanted to work." And she, I went to work right away.

Q. So you've been working at Sioux Pottery for some time then?

A. No, I've been working there for about three months now. But, uh, when it come to this, uh, getting the place here. My, uh, they go according to your income. And the lady at HUD they said that, uh, they wouldn't put that down as, uh, steady employment because, uh, if

she should get enough tourists help well, then maybe I wouldn't work this winter. So then I have been lucky. I pay rent here just 47 a month. And, uh, I don't have to pay for, I don't have to count Mrs. Arlen's wages as, uh, my income, steady income. They just want what, what I get every month from now on.

Q. How long haveyou livedin these apartments?

A. I've been here just, uh, a month, a little, going on two months.

Q. I see.

A. When my husband died then a little while after in February, I believe, they moved me out on Patton in a different trailer. And, uh, the payment was, on the trailer the ground was just 25 a month. It was cheaper but it was further out. But I lived out there.

Q. Where was this again

A. Three twenty one Patton.

Q. Now, why did they move you from one place to the other?

A. Uh, that trailer they said, uh, underneath the sewer, underneath the ground when the tractors were putting in the, they had to put in a sewer and the water. I guess in the fall they had, the tractor had cracked this great big pipe. But all winter it was all right until it froze and then, and then about, must have been February or March that I had to move out because they had to take that all apart for the main sewer.

Q. Did they put you in a different trailer?

A. Yes. They just told me to move into another trailer.

Q. How do you get back and forth to work at Sioux Pottery?

A. Uh, there's a, uh, a man from, uh, _____, oh, he's not, he's a young Indian man, he's younger than me. He, uh, he's crippled and he hauls two people to work and, uh, I ride with him. I have a car but, uh, I ride with him and then he brings me back in the evening. And I pack two lunces and I give him one lunch and that's free for my ride.

Q. I see. You, uh, you indicate that you didn't have any problems in getting help after the flood and so on. You didn't run into any prejudice or anything because you're Indian?

A. No, huh-uh. No, I, uh, well, everybody in town, uh, well, most everybody knows I and my

husband. I can go most anyplace as though hungry. Well, I can just tell them I'm hungry and there's a lot of white people that will feed me. And we go to church and, uh, I guess it's just the way you, if you look for it you'll find it. There's been some people that have been kind of snobby but I just tell them, well, there's one lady at, uh, up to Central she, uh, asked me what, what we wanted and I said well, we're trying to get a HUD trailer. I said we've been here I said for a long time. My husband works steady but he's sick now and then this flood took everything. I said we're looking for a trailer. I said they told me to come in here and sign up. And she said, "Well, you're going to have to sit down there,"and said, 'wait until I get to find time." And here another lady that knew my son--he went to school up there--well, she said, uh, well, she said, "That room is empty, just go in there and say to the girl well, you know me." So I don't know whether this woman had appointment with somebody. I figured she probably had an appointment right then 'cause I went for one. But otherwise we never, why they even come, different people come to the door and, uh, took me places where I could get, uh, a bushel basket, you know, with canned goods and canned meat and, uh, and even whole milk. I never noticed where anyone has treated us or anything. We was treated good.

Q. Well, I'm glad to hear that. Now, you said, I think you said your husband worked for Corner Construction Company for years.

A. Yes. He worked for Corner Construction and I looked it up and I guess he was with them 20 years. But that's the only thing that kind of hurt me. Uh, the rest of the work, work men or the crew, and they have some kind of, uh, I don't know how you say this now but, uh, it's some kind of, something to do with the, or the, so if one of them quit why they get so much money, you know, and like that.

Q. A retirement plan of some sort?

A. I don't know what it is but...

Q. Pension or insurance?

A. No, it seemed like it was, uh, you know when a whole outfit is together?

Q. And they all put in some money or something?

A. I suppose or something. I don't know but I know they all have, uh, I know when that one man he got 5,000. And I was just wondering how come my husband never got in on that, you know. See, my husband started out with, uh, Corner Howard Lee when they didn't have even a truck. My husband took his own hammer and, and, uh, his, uh, pick and shovel to work. And _____ along Rapid Creek there and that's where they had the office. He started working for them. And then when Corner and Howard Lee abolished well, then he went to work for Corner, Woody. ANd my husband has tied steel and he's, uh, well, he's a common laborer but he's done everything. He's tied steel. He drives the catepillar. He was working up to Jewel _____ driving _____ there when he got too sick to work.

Q. How long had he been off work before the flood?

A. Well, he worked maybe one or two days in, I believe, April was the last time he worked. But between January and May, no, I think May he worked last because between that time he made $1400. He got good wages. My husband drew, uh, well, he brought home 145 so he must have made 195 or 200 a week. And he was just a common laborer.

Q. Do you think that the, uh, one of the things that were done after the flood, the flood relief plans and so on were, served the people pretty well?

A. Well, those of us that was in the flood we were glad to get it but I saw a lot of people from off the reservation come and get Red Cross orders. The people that weren't in the flood that got help. But the people that were getting the help didn't know that. It wasn't their fault.

Q. This was I suppose very early right after the flood.

A. Uh, it was when they was getting the Red Cross orders.

Q. Mm-hm.

A. Because, uh, there was a lot of people that got help that shouldn't have got help. But I think those of us that were in the flood we were well taken care of. But, of course, a lot of them were, weren't looking for anything. They were just waiting to have it brought to them. They had places to go and places to be at a certain time to get what, you know, they announced it at the CAP office. And my daughter was driving a car getting ten cents a mile

and she had to haul people up there even up to West Junior High. I think the Seventh Day Adventists or one of them had things there that they were sheets and, uh, they weren't new but they were clean. And we didn't have any. And pillows and clothes. There was place to go and certain time to get there. ANd if you didn't have no way to call and you'd get free transportation. And yet so many of them griped that they didn't, it was just becuase they didn't try.

Q. You thinkthat the CAP office was quite helpful then in helping people?

A. WEll, the help of the CAP office had, uh, what they call Out Reach.

Q. Yes.

A. And,uh, they had Indian girls and white girls. ANd the white girls that knew white people that was in the, you know, in the flood area that knew them, well, they really looked out for them, and then if they knew Indian people that were in the flood, well, they looked out for 'em. I think it was whites and Indians both, you know, working there. And I think they really helped; that they gave us rides to Sioux San twice when my husband was sick. And they come right down and took us right away. The Indians, uh, the white people don't understand the Indians. Uh, now a white man and his family, a wife, when they, when their children get to be 16 or 18 years old or when they graduate from school well, they're out on their own. They get a job and they pay board room and they work. And they fly out of their nests so they say. But the Indians are different. I don't know whether we're part gypsy or what. But a mother and father wherever they live you've got to expect a daughter, grandchildren or a son or a nephew or a distant aunt or uncle, they always keep somebody. Sometimes it's in case of necessity and sometimes it's just that you don't want to be alone The Indians are like that. Like now when I lived in a trailer house alone that I had my grandchildren, two of them, take turns, the girls would take turns sleeping with me. So I could have got a place out to Lakota Homes if I had a dependent but I didn't have any. And they wanted me to go to the WElfare and, uh, take one of _____ girls. But, uh, you know I didn't think I could take the responsibility of, of, uh, raising that girl in this, the way things are now. My girls when they were smoking, when I caught them smoking that was

bad, but that was just cigarettes. Now the young kids do worse. I don't think I could put up with it. But the way people don't understand that Indians will never be alone. You can put them in one room but somebody's going to come, I, I've had a mother and her son and grandson here for two nights. I told the manager and he siad it was all right. They brought a daughter up here to St. John's. She was operated in this, on this morning and then they left. They was here for two days. And the Indian always finds another Indian. They're just like ants. So I guess that's why the, a lot of people hate to rent to the Indians because it would never be just man and wife or two kids. It's always could be couple extra. And I don't know, it's going to be like that as long as there's an Indian alive. I don't know whether it's just in us or what. White people don't understand that. That's the reason a lot of these Indians won't move in apartments. They can't...

Q. Oh, because they aren't allowed to have other people.

A. Yes.

Q. I see.

A. And here I can have company. Of course, I can't have anyone stay the year with me but I can have company. I have an extra bed. If someone comes they sleep if they want to. But the white people that's something they'll never understand.

Q. Mrs. LaRoche, you said you were a _____ Indian originally from down in Nebraska. You brought out some things here to show me that are various kinds of foods prepared in the Indian way. I'd like to have you tell a little bit about those foods.

A. WEll, the dried chokecherries. That's the Indian food what you call when you go to, well, there's a bunch of Indians and it they're going to have a white man there and give him an Indian name, well, they want to feed him Indian food. WEll, that's chokecherries or plums or, and _____. But the way they fix their chokecherries some just can it and then some take the fru, uh, chokecherries and grind it or else some have the regular little rocks that they pound it on yet. And they make them into patties and then dry them. And they dry just like brick. And then when they get ready to fix them you soak them, break them up and soak 'em and boil 'em and then you can strain the seeds off and then just stir

sugar and, and, uh, cornstarch in with it and make fried bread and you have your Indian food along with your soup.

Q. What do you call that in Indian?

A. In Indian the Warsapi. Warsapi, different kind. And if you can't chokechrries or plums well, then you buy blackberries or blueberries to make Warsapi. But at any Indian doing you, you always see Warsapi.

Q. Now you've brought up some, some tea here. Tell me about that.

A. I went to Bear Butte and saw a lot of the tea that we drink at home. And, uh, my Grandfather always picked it so I knew what it was so I asked the man at Bear Butte if I could have some or if I could pick some. And he said, "Yes, but let me see what it is." So I gave him the, part of the plant and he took it and looked it up in his book and he said that was what you call a lead plant. And when he, when he was looking in a book well, I looked over his shoulders and it says that it was, the Indians used it for tea years and years ago. So evidently the white people knew way back then what, what the Indians ate.

Q. Does it taste better than the tea you buy in the store?

A. Uh, I was telling the man that I was talking to here that, uh, the teas that, this tea you can take it and, uh, just let the water come to a boil, oh, maybe a couple of minutes with that in it and then let it sit and, uh, after you strain the leaves off well, it don't have no oil. You know, on top of the tea after it sets there will always be a little oil on top. And this tea don't have that. And this tea is just as good as what you buy down town. My husband laughed and he said, "Don't tell the white people about that tea or they'll take Bear Butte bald." And it's already bald. But it is a good tea. And, uh, white bread that the Indians make, they don't make it with the, all kinds of shortening. They just use, well, you can use two cups of flour or three cups of flour and one teaspoon of baking powder to each cup and then a little salt and just plain cold water and just mix it in to a dough just stiff. And then you roll it out and then cut it and then, and you get your grease hot or lard or whatever you use, get it hot and when it's kind of smoking like well then poke a hole in each middle of the bread and that way the heat goes up

through and the bread's done all through, and then you fry it, brown it on one side and on the other like doughnuts. And that's our Indian bread. And then if we're out where there, we can't have a lot of lard or like that we just take this dough and roll it out thin and put it in a heavy skillet and then shake it and turn it over; a little while turn it back over and it raises in to like, uh, you see, biscuits as you, oh, these,uh, what do you call them, some kind of, uh, they're biscuits that you can buy at Safeway then you cut them in half and you toast them. WEll, they're about that size and they taste like it. We don't put no leavening in our bread. But that's Indian food. And then those wild turnips, they can be dried, too. And if white people ever eat them the first time you eat them maybe theywouldn't taste good but the second time you'll know what you ate and you'll know that they're good and they're filling.

Q. How do you prepare those?

A. Well, you can dig them out and then you,uh, pull of that, uh, it's got kind of a thick hull on it, you pull that off and then you can just quarter them and just dry them, lay them out and they'll get dry. Or you can just take, quarter them or just take them out and hull them, pull the hull off and then you take the, they've got a long tail on themlike a, any kind of a plant out of the ground. Just braid those tails together and make strings of them. The Indians would do that, too.

Q. And then, uh, what do they do when they get ready to eat them how do they...?

A. They soak them like years ago during the Depression days we soak our bean to save fuel. We just soak them maybe three hours or so until they get kind of full and then boil them with salt pork or bacon or meat. And that's the Indian, I think that was what they used for potatoes years ago because they could carry them summer and winter.

Q. And, uh, then you mentioned, uh, that they, they took, uh, the stomach from an animal or something and fried it.

A. I believe that they, the stomach of a cow. Uh, they washed that out good and then they dry it and then they blow air in it, and then they hang it out to dry. And that's what they put that penniquin in. You know, they mix this dried meat and, uh, and, uh, chokecherries

and tallow, pound that together. And, and that was meat and dessert and everything. That was wholesome. And that's what the Indians lived on.

Q. Now you talk about dried meat you're talking about what we call jerkey is that right?

A. Yes.

Q. Now, how do they do that?

A. Well, the Indians will take the rump roast or, or any of the meat. They've even done it to jack rabbits. My grandma used to do it to jack rabbits--take the big part of the meat and slice it once I guess but you slice it low on the bottom. And the top part goes over it thick and then you slice it again. And you can make a big piece out of a small piece. They, and then just put salt on it and hang it up and it dries in no time and then it can packed away. And whenever they get ready for it it's ready to eat. Those are things that Indians had before the frigidaires come out. And I think there were, the old Indians on reservation I think they still fix things like that. They make this jerky out of jack rabbits at home I know. Deer.

Q. Are there any other particular Indian foods that we haven't talked about that you can tell me about here?

A. Well, I don't know. They have Indian foods that we call it _____. And to white people it'd be the, the guts out of a cow. Now, uh, white people will eat the, what they buy in a store but the Indians used to just get the whole, the whole stomach of a cow and take it home and then they wash it. And, and they used to boil that and then throw it over the line and put salt on it and dry that, too. My grandmother used to do that. And then the wintertime you had that to cook with the sweet corn, you know, this roasting ears, you dry the corn. You can dry it on the cob or take it off the cob and dry it. But that's Indian food that could be kept without frigidaires.

Q. Now, when you dried the corn on the cob then when you ate, then when you got ready to eat it in the winter how did you prepare that?

A. Just boil it.

Q. Right on the cob?

A. Uh-huh. Just boil it just the way it is. The Indians even take this, uh, plain field corn or squaw corn especially squaw corn, it's softer. They'll take it and stick it in the oven and just shake it every now and then 'til it's parts good. Then they take it out and grind it and mix, uh, tallow and, and sugar with it and they make corn balls. And when you go to Indian dance or somewhere that's always a delicacy to hand it around, too, meat balls...

Q. Do they...

A. ...or cornballs they call it.

Q. ...do they cook those then?

A. Well, the corn is roasted in the oven.

Q. So you don't cook it any further.

A. Huh-uh.

Q. You just grind it and mix it up and then it's ready to eat.

A. Uh-huh. Mix it with sugar and tallow. But the, some of the Indians lately have been making it with cornmeal, you know, or corn grits.

Q. Mm-hm.

A. They parch it a little bit and then, and that's what the Indians eat. And they love meat. And they don't like meat fixed with vegetables. Indian likes just plain meat and a lot of soup. And if they don't have anything to drink well, they've had their food.

(END OF INTERVIEW)

EL Yes, and we paid $35 a month.

EH How was the trailer? Satisfactory?

EL Yes, the trailer, of course, i and my husband were alone, we didn't have any kids, my grandchildren come over, but we were alone most of the time, so our trailerwas good, it xxxx held up. But the one my daughter was in, just about ready to come to pieces, but she's gonna stay in there till they tell her to move out. When you've got five kids you

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EH Rappid City, S.D., July 18, 1973, Earl Hausle interviewing Mrs. Elizabeth LaRoche. Mrs. LaRoche, where did you live after the flood, where did you go?

EL My duaghter talked to a real estate company that had Denver cabins and they were.. they were condemened, but, and were waiting to be repaired. But on account of the flood, he opened up his cabins and he let some of us families move in. So my daughter and her five kids and husband and I and my son that was home on furlough, we all lived in Denver cabins. Right after the flood. Course it was a few days before my husband got out of the hospital. We were both hospitalized, he, the next day after the flood, he went right up to the hospital cause he has heart trouble. And then I went up to see him as I got cleaned up Staurday night, and the doctor put me in there for shock. And then let me out Sunday. My eyes were, showed that I was suffering from shock.

EH Then you went, you moved right into these Denver cabins then?

EL Yes, and we lived there for a month, and then these people that were helping us, you know, right after the flood, my daughter worked for someone from the CAP office, she helped us, and they hauled us here and there, and finally they took us up to Central high School and we signed up for a trailer. And it was July, I believe maybe about the first week in July that we moved into a HUD trailer . And then we lived up on the 831 Van Buren.

EH What's your daughter's name, you mentioned..

EL Marylys Robinson.

EH And did you each get a trailer, you duaghter get a trailer and then you and your husband get a trailer?

EL Yes, Uh-huh. There was four trailer houses on that one little place, it was..it wasn't from the city, you paid rent to this..JoAnn Klein, Morris Klein's wife.

EH It was on a privatelot.

EL Yes, and we paid $35 a month.

EH How was the trailer? Satisfactory?

EL Yes, the trailer, of course, i and my husband were alone, we didn't have any kids, my grandchildren come over, but we were alone most of the time, so our trailerwas good, it held up. But the one my daughter was in, just about ready to come to pieces, but she's gonna stay in there till they tell her to move out. When you've got five kids you

EL Yes.

EH When was that?

EL He died December 12.

EH Now, you owned your own home then, is tha t right?

EL No, huh-uh. No, we rented.

EH You rented. And were you working at the time?

EL can't expect a small, or , you know, one of those thin trailer to hold up. And they're put together with staples, cause I picked up a lot of them that just come loose in our place. But they were not. They were a home, a roof over our head.

EH What kind of other kind of assistance did you get during the time after the flood?

EL Well, the Red Cross helped us, and then we got , we lost two cars in that flood, but the insurance company come and gave us, paid off the car and whatever cash was left, I don't remember, but they gave that to my husband. The one car was taken care of, but the other car we lost and then what little stuff we had, never amounted to much, but we lost it and the SBA helped us.

EH Did you have any problems getting aid from SBA or Red Cross or anybody?

EL No, No. We , w'ere just a family that, we always get along because we stay in our own place. And..there's my daughter now.

(...)

EH You not only lost your home then, you lost almost everything that you had?

EL Yes.

EH And what kind of changes did this make in yoru life?

EL Well, for us..course, I lost my husband. But for my part, I believe I'm better off than I ever was. You know what I mean, what I have is paid for, and I've got some nice things. Might not have much, but what I've got is good. And I think I'm better off now than I was before, because we had the children and all our money was going for groceries and stuff.

EH How long did you live in Rapid City?

EL We've been here for 21 years.

EH Now, your husband died since the flood.

EL Yes.

EH When was that?

EL He died December 12.

EH Now, you owned your own home then, is tha t right?

EL No, huh-uh. No, we rented.

EH You rented. And were you working at the time?

EL No, I never worked. That's one thing that, my husband wouldn't let me work. And after he t died, well, there was no workman's compensation, nothing I could draw from, I'm too young to get Social Security. And if I got, drew Veteran's pension from my husband on is account, well, his death was considered a service-non-connected. But I was married before to a white man and he got killed in World War II. In action. And his name was Donald Wagner. Where I come from. And so the BIA and the American Legion looked into it, and there's a new law went through in 70 or 71, that if you have one husband, if you married to and he dies a veteran and then you get married again and he died, well, you can collect from whichever one you will get the most from. So they traced it and I'm drawing death compensation from my husband that died in World War II. I get 189 a month. And then when I reach 62 I can write out for my husband's Social Security, and he filled in his forty quarters five years ago. And then my son used to work out to Sioux Pottery forDr. Arnold's wife. And I went out there with an Indian lady to buy a pair of moccasins, she wanted a pair. And Mrs. Arnold said she wanted, well, said, "I've been looking, I'd been wanting to call you, I wanted to see if you wanted to work." And I went to work right away.

EH So you've been working At Sioux Pottery for some time then?

EL No, I've been working there for about three months. But when it come to this getting the place here, my, they go according to your income, and the lady at HUD, they said that they wouldn't put that down as steady income, because if she should get enough tourist help, well then maybe I wouldn't work this winter. So then I have been lucky, I have to pay rent here just 47 a month. And I don't have to pay for, I don't have to count Mrs. Arnold's wages as my income, steady income, they just want what I get every moenth from now on.

EH How long have you lived here in this apartment?

EL I've been here just..a month. Going on two months. And my husbanddied, then, little whitle after..in February, I believe, they moved me out on Patten in a different trailer, and the payment on the trailer, the ground, was just 25 a month. It was cheaper but it wad further out, but I lived out there.

EH Where was this again?

EL 321 Patten.

EH Now, why did they move you from one place to another?

EL That trailer, they said that underneath the sewer, underneath the ground when the tractors were putting in, they had to put in a sewer and a water, I guess in the fall the tractor had cracked this great big pipe but all winter it was all right until it froze and then about, must have been February, March, I had to move out. Because they had to take that all apart.. The main sewer.

EH So they put you in a different traielr?

EL Yes, they just told me that I move into another trailer.

EH How do you get back and forth to work at Sioux Pottery?

EL There's a man from (Kile), well he's, a young man, younger than me. He's crippled and he haule two people to work and I ride with him. I have a car, but I ride with him and then he brings me back in the evening and I pack two lunches and I give him one lunch and that's free for my ride.

EH You, you indicated that you didn't have any problems in getting help after the flood, you didn't run into any prejudice or anything because you're Indian?

EL No, huh-uh, no. I..well, everybody in town, well, most everybody knows I and my husband. I can go most anyplace if I'm hungry, well, I can tell them I'm hungry and there's a lot of white people thatwould feed me. I would go to church and..I guess it's just the way you.. if you look for it, you find it. There's been some people have been kind of snobby but I just tell them, well, the one lady up to Central, she asked me what we wanted, and I said, "Well, we're trying to get a HUD trailer," I says, "We'be been here," I says," for a long time, my husband worked steady, but he's sick now, and then this flood took everything," i said, "We're looking for a trailer." I said, "They told me to cme in here and find out."

A And she says, "Well, you're going to have to sit down there and wait till I find time." And here another lady that knew my son, he went to school at , well, she said, "Well, the back room is empty, just go in there and ". So I don't know whether this woman had appointment with somebody, I figured she probably had appointment right then, because I went justbefore one. But otherwise, we never, they even come, different people come to the door and took me places where I could get bushel basket, you know, of canned goods and canned meat and, and even whole milk. I never noticed where anyone

EL mistreated us or anything, we were treated good.

EH Well, I'm glad to hear that. Now, you said, I think you said your husband worked for Corner Construction Company foryears?

EL Yes, he worked for Corner Construction Co mpany and looked it up, and guess he was with them for twenty years. But that's the onlything that kind of hurt me. The rest of the work men , or the crew, they have some kind of , I don't know how you say this now, but ..it's some kind of , something to do with , for one of them quits, well, he gets so much money, you know, like that.

EH A retirement plan of some kind?

EL I don't know what it is, but..

EH Pension, or insurance, or..

EL No, it seemed like it was a..you know, where an whole outfit is together?

EH They all put in some money..

EL I suppose, or somethigg, I don't know. But I know they all have, I know when that one man quit , he got 5000. And I was just wondering how come my husband never got, you know, that, you know, my husband started out with Corner Howard Lee when they didn't have even a truck. My husband took his own hammer and his pick and shovel to work. And Ed Poweell lived along Rapid Creek there, and that's where they have the office. He started working for them, and then when Corner and Howard Lee abolished, well then he went to work for Corner. Woody. And my husband has tied steel and he's, well, he's a common laborer, but he's done everything. Tied steel, he drives a caterpillar, he was working up to Jewel Cave when ..driving caterpillar when he got too sick to work.

EH How long had he been off work before the flood?

EL Well, he was, maybe one or two days..I believe April was the last time he worked. But between January and May, no, I think May he worked last because between that time he made $1400. He got good raises. My husband drew around, or he brought home 145 so he must have made 195, 200 a week. And he was just a common laborer.

EH Do you think that the, well, the things that were done after the flood, the flood relief plans and so on, were , served the people pretty well?

EL Well, those of us that were in the flood, we were glad to getit. But I saw a lot of people

EL a lot of people from ao ff the reservation come and get Red Cross orders and..people that weren't in the flood that got help. But the people that were giving the help didn't know that. It wasn't their fault.

EH This was right, I suppose very early right after the flood.

EL It was when we was getting Red Cross orders. Because there was a lot of people that got help that shouldn't have got help, but I think thoseof us that were in the flood, we were well taken care of. But of course a lot of them weren't looking for anything, they were just waiting, u p to them. They had places to go, places to be ata certain time to get what, you know, they announced it at the CAP office, and my daughter was driving a car, getting 10¢ a mile, and she got toxxxxxxxxx haul people up there, even up to West Junior High I think Seventh Day Adventist or one of them had things there that they werexxxxxx , sheets and they weren't new, but they were clean, and we didn't have any. And pillows , and clothes. There was places to go and certain times to get there, and if you didn't have no way, to call and you'd get free transportation. And yet so many of them gripe that they didn't..it was just because they didn't try.

EH Youthink xx that the CAP office was quite helpful then in helping then?

EL Well, the help, the CAP office had what they call outreach? Amd Indian girls and white girls, and the white girls that knew white people was in the, you know, the flood area, that knew them, well then, they really looked out for them, and then if htey knew Indian people that were in the flood they lookedout for them. I think it was whites and Indians both working there, and I think they really helped. They gave us rides to Sioux San twice, my husband was sick. They come right down and took us right away. T he Indians, the white people don't understand the Indains. Now, a white man znd his family, a wife, when their children get to be 16 or 18 years old, or when they graduate from school, well, they're out on their own. They get a job and they pay board and room and they work. And they fly out of the nest, so they say. But the Indians are different, I don't know whether we're part gypsy or what. But a mother and father, wherever they live , you've gotto expect, a daughter, grandchildren, or a son, or a nephew or a distand aunt or uncle, they always keep somebody. That sometime it's a case of necessity and sometimes it's just that they don't want to be alone. The Indians are like that, like now when I lived i n a

EL trailer house alone, I had my grandkxxxxxchildren, two of them take turns, the girls, take turns sleeping with me. So I could have got a xxxx place out to Lakota Homes since I had a dependent, but I didn't have any. And they wanted me to go to the welfare and take one of Marlys' girls. But, you know, I didn't think I cold take the responsibility of raising that girl, in this, the way things are now. My girls, when they were smoking, when I caught them smoking, that was bad. But that was just cigarettes. But now the young kids do worse. I don't think Icould put up with it. But the white people don't understand that Indians will never be alone. You can put them in one room, but somebody's gonna come, I've had amother and her son and grandson here for two nights, I told the manager and he said it was all right. They brought a daughter up here to St. John's, she was operated on this morning and then they left. They was here for two days. And an Indian always finds another Indian, they're just like ants. So..I guess that's why a lot of people hate to rent to the Indians, cause it would never be just man and wife, or two kids, it always will be a couple extra. And I don't know, it will be like that as long as there's an Indian alive. I don't know whether it's just in us or what. White people don't understand that. That's the reason a lot of these Indians won't move into apartments. Can't..

EH Because they aren't allowed to have other people?

EL Yes.'

EH I see.

EL And here I can have company, course I can't have anyone stay the year with me, but I can have company, extra bed, and.. and someone comes, they sleep if they want to. White people, that's something they'll never understand..

(...)

EH Mrs. LaRoche, you said you were Santee Indian originally from down in Nebraska, you brought some things out here to show me, various foods prepared in the Indian way, I'd like to have you tell a llittle bit aobut those foods.

EL Well, they're dried chokecherries, that's Indian food, what you call when you go to, well, there's a bunch of Indians and if they're going to have a white man there and give him an Indian name, well, they want to give him Indian food, well that chokecherries or plums and fried bread. But the way they fix their chokecherries, some just can it and some take

EL their chokecherries and grind it, or else some have the regular little rocks that they pound it on ~~xxxx~~ yet. And they make it into patties and then dry them. And they dry just like bricks. And then when you get ready to fix them you soak them, break them up and soak them and boil them and then you can strain the seeds off, and then just stir sugar and cornstarch in with it and then make fried bread, and you have your Indian food along with your soup.

EH What do you call that In Indian?

EL In Indian, (Washapee). (washapee). Differentkinds. And if you can't have chokecherries or plums, well then you buy blackberries or blueberries and make (washapee.) But atany Indian doings you always see (washapee).

EH Youbrought out some tea here, tell me about that?

EL I went to Bear Butte and saw a lot of the tea that we dirnk at home. And my grandfather always picked it, so I knew what it was, so I asked the man at Bear Butte if I could have some , if I could pick some. And he said, "Yes, but let me see what it is." So I gave him the part of the plant and he took it and looked it up in his book, and he said that was what you call a lead plant. And when he was looking in the book, well, I looked over his shoulder, and it said that the Indians used it for tea years and years ago. So.. evidently the white people knew way back then what the Indians ate/

EH Does it taste better than the tea you buy in the store?

EL I was telling the man that, talking oto here that, thistea, you can take it and let the water come to a boil, oh, maybe a couple minutes with that in it, and then let it set and after you strain the leaves off, well, it don't have no oil, you know, on to p of the tea after it quites, there'll always be a little oil on top. And this tea don't have that. And this tea is just as good as what you buy downtown. My husband laughed and said, "Don't tell the white people about that tea, or they'll pick Bear Butte bald." And it's already bald. (laughter) But it is a good tea. And fried bread that the Inidna make, they don't make it with all kindsof shortening. They just use..well, you can use 2 cups of flour or 3 cups of flour and 1 tsp of baking powder to each cup, and a little salt. And just plain cold water, and just mix ~~xxxx~~ it into dough just stiff, and then you roll it out and then you cut it and then you get your grease hot, lard, whatever you use, and get it

EL hot and when it's kind of smoking like, why, poke a hole in the middle of each bread, and that way the heat goes up through and the bread's done all through. And then you fry it. Brown it on one sideand then the other like doughnuts. And tha'=t's our Indian bread. And then if we're out where we can't have lot of lard or like that, we just take this dough and roll it out thin and put it in a heavy skillet and shake it and turn it over and little white turn it back over and it raise into like a, these here biscuits that you, or these here, wht do you call it, some kind of ..the biscuits that you can buy at Safeway and then you cut it in half andthen you toast them? Well, they're about that si ze and they tasete like that. We don't put no leavening in our bread. But that's Indian food. Adn then those wild turnips. They can be dried, too. And if white people ever eat them, the first time you eat them, maybe they wouldn't taste good. But the second time, you'll know what you ate and you'll know that they're good and they're filling.

EH How do you prepare those?

EL Well, you can dig them out and then you pull off that kind of thick hull off it, you pull that off and then you can just quarter them and just dry them, lay them out and they;ll get dry. Or you can just quarter them or just take them out, hull them, pull the hull off and then you take the, they got a long tail on them like any kind of a turnip out of the ground, just braid those tails together, make strings of them. The Indians do that too.

EH And then what do they do when they get ready to eat them, how do they..

EL They soak them, like, years ago, during depression days, we soak our beans to save fuel, well, you saok them maybe three hours or so till they get kind of full and then you boil them with saltpork or bacon or meat , and that's the Indian, I think thatwas what they used for potatoes years ago. Because they could carry them summer and winter.

EH And then you mentioned that they took the stomach from an animal orsomething..

EL I believe it's the stomach of a cow, they washed that out good and then they drie it and then they blow air in it and then they hang it out to dry it. And that's what they put that pemmican in, you know, they mix that dried meat. And chockecherries and tallow, pound that together, and that was meat, and dessert and everything. And that was wholesome. And Thatn's what the Indians lived on.

EH Now, you talk about dried meat, you're talking about what we call jerky, now, right?

EL YEs.

EH And how did they do that?

EL Well, the Indians will take the rump roast or any of the meat, they even done it to jack-rabbits, my grandma used to do it to jackrabbits. Take the big part of the meat and slice it once like this, but you slice it lower on the bottom and then top part goes over it and then you slice it again and you can make a big peice out of a small piece. And then just put salt on it and hang it up and it dries in no time, and then just can be away and then whenever they get ready for it, it's ready to eat. Those things the Indians had before the frigidairs came out. And I thinkthey're, the older Indians on hte reservations, I think they still fix things like that. They make this jerky out of jackrabbits at home, I know. Deer.

EH Are there any other particular Indian foods that we haven't talked about that you can tell me about here?

EL Well, I don't know. They have Indian food that we call (atumyeha). And to white people, it'd be the guts out of a cow. Now, white people will eat what they buy in a store, but the Indians used to just get the whole , the whole stomach of the cow and take it home and then they'd wash it and they'd boil that and throw it over the line and put salt on it and dry that , too. My grandmother used to do that. And then the wintertime, yo had that, to cook with the sweet corn, you know, roasting ears, dry the corn, dry it on the cob or take it off the cob. But that's Indian food that could be kept without frigidaires.

EH Now, when you dired the corn on the bob, then when you got ready to eat it in the winter, how did you prpare that?

EL Just boil it.

EH Right on the cob?

EL Uh-huh. Just boil it . Teh Indians even takethis plain field corn, or squaw corn. Especially squaw corn , it 's softer. They'll take it and stick it in the oven, just shake it every now and then till it's good, and then they take it out and drain it and mix the tallow and sugar with it and they make corn balls. And when you go to Indian dnaces somewhere, that's always there. Delicacy that's handed around too.Meat balls, or corn balls , it's called.

EH Do they cook those then..

EL Well, the corn is roasted in the oven.

EH So you don't cook it any further, just grind it and mix it up and it's ready to eat?

EL Yeah, mix it with sugar and tallow. But some of the Indians lately have been making it with corn meal. You know, corn grits. They a little bit and then..and that's what the Indians eat. And they love meat. And they don't like meat mixed with vegetables. Indian likesplain meat and lot of soup. And they don't have anythingto drink, well, they have this tea.

(END OF INTERVIEW)