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# Woman, 83, preserves Cree

EDMONTON (CP) — Anne Anderson remembers when Indian people were beaten for speaking their language.

And it's the memory of those times that has driven Anderson, a Metis, to work for two decades writing and teaching Cree to ensure the language will not die.

Anderson's work started after a request from her dying mother.

"She said, 'Anne, write my language so that people will know that I was a proud Indian woman.'"

Her mother Elizabeth Callihou was a full-blood Cree who had been raised in a convent at the turn of the century. There were no teachers and the Indian children were beaten when they spoke their language.

Anderson was 61 when her mother died. Since that time she has written 92 books of Cree stories, herbal remedies, Metis history and a 35,000 word Cree dictionary.

She sits behind a desk littered with lists of words for her updated Cree-English dictionary. A stack of her books lines one wall of the Cree Productions and Heritage Cultural Centre office in Edmonton.

In another corner of the centre is the classroom Anderson still comes to every day to teach natives and white people the Plains Cree language.

Plastic jars of herbs such as sage and raspberry root are all part of the teaching Anderson

does to keep her mother's Cree remedies and stories alive.

Anderson was born in 1906 on a farm about five kilometres east of Edmonton. Her mother was Cree, her father Scotch-French.

Anderson finished Grade 10,

married and had two children.

The first of her three husbands wouldn't let Anderson speak Cree to their children. He had also been slapped at school for speaking the Cree language.

"You know that man was



CP Photo

At age 83, Anne Anderson is revising her Cree-English dictionary, a project she expects to take two years to complete.

hurting," she says. "The first people, the aboriginal people were treated so badly."

Anderson started to teach after her mother's death, with the first classes conducted in her kitchen. She has been granted an honorary doctorate of laws for her work in teaching and preserving the Cree language.

"At one time they were saying to me 'You can't teach, because you don't have a certificate to teach,'" she says. "Certificates and degrees are nothing to an Indian, to a native person. What we want is to speak Cree, to speak it properly."

language