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HIGHLIGHTS:

- General account of her life

Brenda: March 14, 1984, I'm interviewing Rose Fleury of Duck Lake, Saskatchewan. Rose, could you tell me what type of a house you lived in when you were growing up?

Rose: (inaudible) and logs. And we always had some (inaudible).

Brenda: Did it have windows at all?

Rose: Yes.

Brenda: And how many rooms?

Rose: There were just two rooms. (inaudible).

Brenda: Did you have electricity, running water or anything like that?

Rose: No, we lived by a lake and we had to get our water from the lake.

Brenda: How did you heat the house?

Rose: With wood. (inaudible).

Brenda: What type of furniture did you have?

Rose: No furniture, just boxes for chairs, and a big table made out of 2 X 4s for the table. And the beds were (inaudible) rope for the mattress part and then they had straw mattresses with canvas.

Brenda: And how many of you were there in the family?

Rose: That time there was three when we first started in there, in that house. And then we moved away to Grandpa's, like. The three oldest moved to Grandpa's because Mom was only 10 years old when she (inaudible) me.

Brenda: Is that right? Are you the oldest one?

Rose: Yeah.

Brenda: And did your mom or dad, did they own their own home?

Rose: Well, this... wherever they worked they had a place to stay. This was on a farmer's place and they worked the land and they had the privilege of building a house there to live, which they stayed most the time. But then Mother couldn't look after us all, I guess, having kids one after the other, eh. So we went and stayed with Grandma and Grandpa -- like, myself, my brother George and my sister Doris. And then they stayed there for... there was Leonard, then Doreen, then Cecile, till they moved out of there. They came into town.

Brenda: And what was your mom's maiden name?

Rose: She was a Paul.

Brenda: Did... where did they come from?

Rose: Well the Pauls came from Grand Prairie. Well, I don't know if it's called Grand Prairie, but in French it's La Grande Prairie Ronde, like Round Prairie. That would be the place, I guess.

Brenda: That wouldn't be the Round Prairie that's outside of Saskatoon?

Rose: By Dundurn there.

Brenda: Yeah, that's Round Prairie, yeah. And so that's where they came from.

Rose: The Pauls, yes. And, well, we put it as on our family history, Paul, Trotters, LaVallees, you know. It goes back this way.

Brenda: And you say your mom was only 10 when she got married? Was she only 10 years old when she got married?

Rose: She wasn't married at the time she had us. She got married only... See, well I was born in '27, and she didn't get married till 1932, because at them days you couldn't get married till after you were 16.

Brenda: They didn't own their own house at the time, eh. So the types of houses you lived in when you were small, were they close to other neighbors?

Rose: Well not that very close, the very closest neighbors was four miles. Like from my grandpa to Mom's place was four miles. They were from one corner of the lake, they lived on the southeast corner, and Grandpa lived on the northwest corner.

Brenda: And did your grandpa own his own place?

Rose: Yes, he owned... that was his homestead.

Brenda: He homesteaded, it was not scrip?

Rose: No, just a homestead.

Brenda: And that was, where was that, by Round Prairie you said?

Rose: No, north of Duck Lake here.

Brenda: Oh, north of Duck Lake. So do you remember what year it was that your grandpa homesteaded there?

Rose: Well, I was born in '27 and I was born in (inaudible). That must have been in '29 that they took that homestead, because I was about 4 years old when I started staying with Grandpa and Grandma.

Brenda: Was there other Metis families around you, you know, that lived close around you?

Rose: Well, most of all there was the Smiths, Leon Smith was north neighbor, and the west side neighbor was Parenteau, Norbert Parenteau, and then there was Baptiste Parenteau.

Brenda: So they were maybe all French/Metis?

Rose: Yeah, most.

Brenda: Have you ever heard the term road allowance people?

Rose: Yes, because some of my, on my father's side, one of his sisters stayed on the road allowance.

Brenda: Did he describe anything about what it was like?

Rose: Well, just that they didn't have a place to stay and they built a house there and they didn't pay no taxes, no nothing and, you know, they couldn't fish them out because it was on the road allowance. And they stayed there like on, that was on the west side of Duck Lake.

Brenda: When you were young and lived with your grandparents, did you have any responsibilities like chores and stuff that you had to do around the house?

Rose: Grandma was very strict with us. I can remember you had to do your certain job and if it wasn't done, well, there was privileges... You didn't do it, you didn't get what you wanted.

Brenda: So what were your responsibilities?

Rose: My responsibilities was to wash the floors, and clean up the house when I got home when, you know. If I was at Mom's, if I got there, the house was dirty, it had to be swept clean and wash the floors. In them days there was just board floors so we had to wash it with cinder lye.

Brenda: Was that a sort of soap?

Rose: No, this was the cinders from the wood, the poplar cinders, see.

Brenda: Ashes?

Rose: Yeah, ashes. You put them in a can and then put water in it, and you drain that water off and you use that in your water to wash the floors.

Brenda: What did you... You said one of your brothers lived with your grandpa too. What did he have to do, what was his responsibilities?

Rose: He had to, well, he had to chop the wood and bring it in, and take out the ashes and throw out the slop pail, and bring in the water.

Brenda: Did your grandpa and grandma own any livestock of any kind?

Rose: Oh yeah, they had a team of horses, and a cow, some goats, and chickens. Like, enough livestock for us to, you know, to live through the year. Like, we didn't have to buy milk and cheese to make the butter. The chickens would bring

the eggs.

Brenda: Did they have a big garden?

Rose: Yes, they had quite a big garden.

Brenda: What did they grow in it?

Rose: Potatoes, turnips. They didn't like tomatoes, that would be a modern food for them. The potatoes, the beets, and white turnips, and rutabagas they used to have, and carrots, peas, and beans, but not much peas and beans because they were not into that. Mostly the basic vegetable foods.

Brenda: How did they store these for winter?

Rose: Well, we had a cellar in the big house. They had a great big house. Brenda: And what was the cellar?

Rose: It was a just a sod cellar.

Brenda: Was it a hole in the...

Rose: Yeah, under the house, like. But them days they made it about four feet inside the house, eh. And they made the hole the rest of the size of the house. There was a floor and where the floor was there was a hole there, and it used to open up, like, a door to go in.

Brenda: When you were young did you live close to your other relatives? Did your grandparents have any of their family around them?

Rose: No, not really. My grandparents on my dad's side, I never... to say, really to be communicating with them, we didn't, because we never even hardly knew them. I was always with my grandpa and grandma on my mother's side, which she was an only child. So on my dad's side they never come and visit us or anything like that. It was either when there was a funeral or wedding of some kind that we did communicate with the others.

Brenda: Did you do special things together as a family, like did you go hunting, or fishing, or camping?

Rose: Well, Grandma and Grandpa, I guess, they were the nomads of the Metis, I think, because when it come Friday night they were gone. You know, winter or summer I think we used to pack up the rig and go for the weekend, go camping out in the bush, whatever, and we'd go hunting deers and everything. And in the summer, well, we go fishing or whatever.

Brenda: Did you do berry picking?

Rose: Berry picking and seneca root digging and all that stuff. And Grandma was a mid-wife so she was always on the road, you know, wherever she was needed.

Brenda: Seneca roots, where did you dig seneca roots at?

Rose: North of the homestead by what they call, now it's Rodick (?), but now it's just the siding, eh. Well we used to go back there and we used to put them in bags, dry them and send them out.

Brenda: How much did they pay for them? What did they use them for?  
Rose: They were used for medicine.

Brenda: And how much did they pay for them?

Rose: At that time we were getting paid 25 cents a pound. A pound of dried seneca roots, it's quite a bit. It's about a 20 pound bag of, you know, 20 pound bag of flour, flour bag. But most of the time we used to dry a whole big flour bag, wash the flour bag and put them all in there. They had to be washed, and cleaned, and dried and put all, pack hard as you can get, and we used to get \$5 for one bag. You know, which we thought it was a great big lot of money, because them days we did. Whatever you got for 5 cents was a lot, you know.

Brenda: What about anybody that did any storytelling, did you know of anyone that...

Rose: Oh Grandma was one that used to tell stories.

Brenda: What kind of stories, what did she tell you, do you remember?

Rose: Well it was mostly true stories, but which was stories that has been told from different things, you know, like people that not understanding their religion and then it would go back on them, eh.

Brenda: Do you remember any specific story?

Rose: Oh yeah, you know, lots of times I'm sorry that I didn't really listen to... You know, we'd listen to them and then forget them five minutes after, eh. But if you were, like if we would have been doing what we're doing today, like doing history stuff, we would have listened more, maybe put them down. It was mostly ghost stories and stuff like that, eh, or true incidents of something that happened and stuff like that.

Brenda: Is there anyone in your family that you remember, you know, somebody that really stood out as far as you were concerned, that you especially liked, or that was special to you?

Rose: Well I think Grandma was special to me because, I guess because I was taken away from Mom and Dad and I resented that, because the other ones had the privilege of mom and dad, eh. And then Grandma always favored us anyway -- like my brother and myself and my sister. Lots of times we'd go at home and, well, we'd be left out on everything. Well then, she'd come home and do something for us, eh. But... and she

always was one to learn us how to cook, to sew, to knit, and to crochet and stuff like that. She was never one to say, "Well, you can't do this, you can't do that." She'd say, "Well, why do you want to do it?" She'd want to know the reason first. And then when she did, well...

Brenda: Was your family, was there very strong loyalty, did they stick together, you know, stick for one another?

Rose: My grandma and my grandpa did, yeah. Well, I think my dad and mom did in a certain way, I guess. But then being taken away from Mom and Dad, you know, more or less to be shooed off, you know, to a second part.

Brenda: Were you closer to your other brothers and sisters?

Rose: Never. Never really.

Brenda: So the older three sort of stuck together?

Rose: Yeah. And the rest, well, they just called them all... Even my sister, the last time we talked was... That last week she come and visit and she said, "Oh, the other family," you know. And that's the way we relate to the others -- the other family, which is just like we're a different family altogether, eh, because we're not brought up the same way and we're not the same kind of people as they are. Because Grandma was quite a religious woman and she was set in certain ways, and she was set in the education ways of everything too, like, we're not supposed to do things. You were learned what was right and wrong, and we had certain days that we had to go to church, and certain days that we..., you know. But the other family didn't go to church, you know. They lived, more or less to say, as on their own, you know. They were not taught.

Brenda: Do you remember what your father did for a living?

Rose: Well, my father was a laborer all his life, I guess. He worked from farmer to farmer, whatever, trapping and hunting and all that.

Brenda: And what about your grandfather what did he do?

Rose: Grandpa, he was a horse trader. This is what he was, a horse trader, a hunter, and he used to feed minks. And he had a lot of minks, you know, farmed out from a storekeeper,

Rose: Grandpa, he was a horse trader. This is what he was, a horse trader, a hunter, and he used to feed minks and he had a lot of minks, you know, farmed out from a storekeeper, that he used to keep. When it came a certain time of the year they they used to kill these, clean them up, dry them up, and they had to send away the pelts for the coats and stuff like that.

Brenda: And you mentioned that your father was a slaughterer at the stock yards.

Rose: Well, that's only when he came back from the army.

Brenda: Oh, after he was in the army. He was in the service was he?

Rose: Yeah.

Brenda: How long was he away?

Rose: From '39 to '43.

Brenda: And then he came home and got a job?

Rose: See after they came back from the war, well, they had certain privileges that an unlisted man, once he was, you know, discharged, that he had privileges over jobs when they came back, eh. And they were given so many names to go there, and so many names to go there and they went and applied for jobs, and this is how he got his job at Burns.

Brenda: Oh, he was at Burns. That was in Saskatoon, was it?

Rose: In Prince Albert.

Brenda: Do you ever remember a time when your grandfather was unemployed?

Rose: He was always a guy that he always something to do. He was a really, you know, a go-getter. The only time, I guess, that I can remember that he was unemployed was when he was sick, and that was the last years of his life so that was 82, when he was 82 to 84.

Brenda: Well, then it was expected that he would be unemployed, was it? What about your father and them, did you find that there were times when things were different when he was unemployed?

Rose: Well he worked most of the time that he was... Probably, I never noticed things like that, but...

Brenda: Not how it, you know, unemployment usually affects the family in different ways? Do you remember if your grandfather, how he helped, you know, bring in money by doing different jobs, do you remember some of them?

Rose: Well some of the time he used to cut cord wood. Well they had so many cords to chop. And at one time he was getting 50 cents a cord, and that would be chopped in the bush, eh. And if he got 10 cents more, well, he had to bring it out of the bush and set it out on the outside of the bush in the pack like, you know, put them in sidings and stuff like that so the truck could come.

Brenda: Did he hunt his own meat for the family?



Rose: Yes, most of the time, like, rabbits, deer, beavers, whatever, you know, like, prairie chickens.

Brenda: How about fishing did he do much fishing?

Rose: Quite a bit. Well he used to go to the river during days, most of the time it was the suckers and, oh, sturgeon and all them kind of fish there. And usually in the evening when the day was done, when he had finished working, he used to go fishing and then we'd have fish for the next day.

Brenda: Do you remember... Oh, I think I asked you if you had any of your family lived close around. What language did they speak in the house when you were growing up?

Rose: Well, mostly Grandmother it was Cree and French, but mostly Cree, you know. Because, I guess, Grandma, my grandmother's mother, was Cree, like Trottiers, and they mostly spoke Cree. They had very little French, and when they did French it was just additives to the Cree like, you know. But most of the time they were talking Cree and French. And my grandfather, well, he talked more French, but then he was talking Cree also.

Brenda: What did you learn to speak first?

Rose: The Cree, I guess, because most of the time Grandma spoke to me in Cree. And French from Grandpa. And then when I was going on 5 years old I hated to leave Grandma and Grandpa and they always kept telling me, "Well, you have to go to the convent, you know, next year." Because them days when you went to school you were kept in a convent till the last semester and then you'd go home for two months.

Brenda: So did you go to the convent?

Rose: Yes, that's where I started learning the English.

they  
Brenda: Did your grandparents, or even your parents, did they think of themselves as being Metis?

Rose: Well, now that I think of it, I don't know. Well, they knew they were, I guess, and that's all there was to it, you know. At them days they didn't know what...

Brenda: Then if they lived, I suppose, in a community they just took it for granted, eh.

Rose: Yeah. Because most of the community it was mixed. Like, Duck Lake area is mostly Metis, French, and English and Cree. And to my extent here there was never any discrimination. I've never heard it yet, you know, face to face discrimination.

Brenda: So they were proud of being Metis?

Rose: Yeah.

Brenda: Do you know if your parents, or your grandparents, did they ever tell stories about Metis history?

Rose: Well I think this is what Grandma used to tell about the, you know, the times of Round Prairie and all that, and you know, things that happened down there. And she was trying to tell us what happened and everything. I guess maybe she thought we were knowledgeable enough for us to remember things like that. But they tried to put it into us where we came from and what kind of a nationality it was, and different things what they done for a living.

Brenda: How about the Rebellion and that, did you have relatives that...

Rose: Well, on my dad's side, I guess, like that Phillip, and Pierre Gardepuis, the ones that died side by side with Riel, Dumont and all them. Well they were... when that Riel Rebellion they just died a few minutes apart of each other, and that is one of them that has been in that grave there, in the big grave.

Brenda: Do you know what they did during the Rebellion?

Rose: Well now, I have went back to the Archives in Regina, and this is according to the Archives that I found out that they were shot for treason. And it's right in the assessment papers -- shot for treason, like, you know, Phillip and Pierre Gardepuis. But what it was all about I couldn't find out, because we had to go back and find in the registry in the court sessions, and I haven't gone back yet.

Brenda: Did the Metis families in the community where you grew up in, did they get together for any kind of social events?

Rose: Well, they had certain events. Like, I remember that when they had a wedding, they'd all get together; or else when somebody needed a house or a barn they'd build it and then they'd have a social after -- what they call house warming. And they all build it together, you know, it was all togetherness. It was not just the one person doing it.

Brenda: How about weddings, were they celebrated quite well?

Rose: The same thing, but them days was three days celebration for a wedding, eh -- it was not just a one night affair.

Brenda: How about Christmas and New Year's?

Rose: Christmas them days was not celebrated very much. The day they used to celebrate was New Year's.

Brenda: And how did they go about celebrating that?

Rose: Well, most was like what they call meatballs, and ragout, and, you know, with onions and potatoes, and that was the great meal. And then they had meat pies, and blueberry pie or saskatoon berry pie most of the time, you know. Because it was mostly wild meat and wild berries that they used -- they didn't have like cows and stuff. The cows they kept for the milk and the stuff, you know. They were not one to go farming because they had to have such a big area for the hay and all that stuff. As long as they had four or five of them so they could maybe butcher one in the fall and that would go to the next fall, and the same with everything else.

Brenda: On New Year's when they celebrated, did they go visit from house to house?

Rose: Well, they'd get all in a sleigh and they had sleigh bells and they'd be singing carols or old songs, whatever. And they'd go from house to house and they'd celebrate there, and have a pot of tea or whatever, and go to the next house and do the same.

Brenda: Do you remember if your father or your grandfather and grandmother, did they wear traditional Metis clothing?

Rose: Well, I don't know if it's traditional but Grandma always wear long dresses, you know. It was with a bodice, no collar, just little buttons all the way down the bottom up to the middle, and then just a black skirt. I never seen her wear anything else but a black pleated skirt.

Brenda: The kerchiefs they didn't have?

Rose: No kerchief, she never wore a kerchief. All she wore was a bonnet all the time.

Brenda: And what about your grandfather or father, did they wear Metis sashes?

Rose: Well, I never seen my grandpa wearing a sash but he always wore a belt made out of twine, you know. Whether he wanted to have his own belt of his own kind, I don't know, but this was kind of a pompom at the end. But on my husband's side, like, his grandpa always wore a Metis sash and it was the traditional one, like, the silk one, not the woven cloth one.

Brenda: How about moccasins, did they wear moccasins or leggings?

Rose: Yeah, Grandma and Grandpa always wore moccasins.

Brenda: Were they the long ones or short?

Rose: Well Grandma always wore the long ones, but Grandpa always just the ones with the... about five inches above the rubber like, you know. They were just like a flap-over, they called them. And they tied them and then they put their sock on top or whatever, their pants and then their sock on.

Brenda: Did any... like your grandmother or mother, did they do any beadwork or tanning hides?

Rose: Grandma tanned hides and she beaded them and she made moccasins. This is where I learned all my crafts and trades. You know, all the beading was done with the quills, she done it with the quills plus -- that's porcupine quills -- and she done it with the slough grass, they called it. And you wove it with, and you sewed it with the beads. And she always done the birch bark cossettes, they called them. They were round ones and square ones, oblong ones.

Brenda: What were they called?

Rose: Birch bark cossettes like, you know.

Brenda: What were they used for?

Rose: For bread and stuff. Like your bread, your rice, your...

Brenda: Were they sort of bowls like?

Rose: It was like a little basket-like affair, eh, but it wasn't a woven one but it was sewed back and forth. And it was done with the slough grass, they used long slough grass.

Brenda: And the quills, how did they prepare the porcupine quills, like, for...

Rose: Well when that... I seen Grandpa used to... because I was so... because we couldn't touch them, eh, because if they're alive and you touch them they just stick to your hands. But when he killed it he used to turn over the porcupines on a board and then he'd cut all the edge, you know, the top edges, like the ends, off, and then he'd just take them off. Because he said if you don't take them off they won't come off, like, you know. You have to take the air out and then it releases them. Then he put them all in a tobacco can and that would be aired out, like, you know, in the open can, like, in the sun and they'd dry. And then Grandma would cut the other end, then you pass the needle through.

Brenda: Did your parents or your grandparents, did they do any jigging in the family?

Rose: Well not... Grandma was crippled, eh. She only had one good leg, the other one was just a gimp leg. They called it a gimp leg. She had to use a crutch, just a one-side crutch made out of a birch bark stick, and the top was made just a little arm thing under, and that's all she used.

(END OF SIDE A)

(SIDE B)

Brenda: ...if there was anyone in your family that played the fiddle?

Rose: On my dad's side my uncles, three of them played fiddle. They played in dances, I guess, which I never heard them, really, but only in the later years. But they usually played for other weddings and stuff.

Brenda: Did you ever hear anyone sing, you know, Metis songs?

Rose: Not that I know of. Grandma used to sing but not Metis songs, it was more religious songs, and songs of traditions. When you got married to this man and everything like that there were songs, special songs for that. But otherwise Metis songs I never heard. She used to sing a lot but not...

Brenda: Did she sing in English or...

Rose: In French.

Brenda: Was there anybody that was... Did very many white people live in your community?

Rose: Not when I was young. There were more Metis than white people. There was a few, like the storekeepers and, you know, odd... And most of the farmers were -- just one odd here and there. There was no such thing as farmer to farmer, you know. It was one odd farmer here and there. But the rest of the Metis people had their scrip land or homesteading, eh. But that's where the farmers came in and took over the Metis land. Like, if they couldn't pay for their scrip land, well, they had a certain time to make progress on it, and if they didn't, well, it was taken over, and it was taken as crown land, eh. And then the French or whatever people wanted it, they'd buy it from the crown land and then they'd set up their own farming.

Brenda: That was the homesteading, was it?

Rose: Yeah.

Brenda: What about scrip? Was there any in those times?

Rose: Well, my work in the Metis Society, when we went to find out about the scrips and all that, we found out that a lot of people sold their land for mere, you know, few things. Some of them, that we found out, just for a couple bags of flour and some of them for a horse, and some of them it was for different things like, you know, like bottles of liquor. Most of them they sold it for liquor.

Brenda: Was there any of the elder women or men in, that you knew of, that practised Indian medicine?

Rose: Well Grandma did. She was a midwife and she used mostly Indian medicine.

Brenda: Do you know what she used or what types of things?  
Rose: Some things yes, you know, when she doctored and I'd always be with her, you know. Whenever she'd go someplace I'd go with her, and my brother and little sister, because Grandpa was out working someplace so then we had to tag along with her. Which maybe I should have listened more and looked what she was doing, but most of the time I knew... Then she'd say something about this medicine goes for the kidneys, like. Lots of times she'd tell me what it was and where you picked because she'd go picking in the fall before the snow would come.

Brenda: What it was that she picked?

Rose: Well, there was a little root that's for the heart, and that's a little wee orange flowers, and they are only about four inches high, that herb, like, and you could see it most in the prairies. But it's just a wee little orange flower -- there's just four petals on the flower and it's just like a bunch of little flowers on the top. And that root, you take the root and wash it up and you can chew on it if you have heart problem or anything like that.

Brenda: Was there anything else that she used?

Rose: Well, like the white fuzzy stuff in the grass, that is for fever, and same with mint, they use it a lot. I use it most of the time. I pick it, you know, and we boil it for fever and headaches and stuff like that. And muskeg tea, well, for diarrhea and stuff like sore stomach.

Brenda: So you still use it today?

Rose: I still use it today.

Brenda: What types of illnesses... do you remember any real serious illnesses that people had that, you know, that quite a few people died from?

Rose: Well the only thing that I remember Grandma was saying, because I guess it was so severe at that time, it was that cholera. It was a black diarrhea that they got and no matter what they did to, what kind of medicine they used, they couldn't stop it. And you had that diarrhea till you had nothing, I guess, and you know, it just got you and then there was nothing in your body to make you survive. And this is how come they called it the black..., they called it cholera. And at them days that's the only thing that... And diphtheria, which is another thing, that's a type of... You take that sickness from water, drinking dirty water that's not been sterilized, or dirty pot or something that had been used for something else, and then used for water.

Brenda: How about tuberculosis? Do you remember if there was very much around the area?

Rose: Well not in our immediate family. But then in my husband's family they had a lot of tuberculosis. But them, they said it was lack of nutritional needs, like they didn't

have the certain vitamins they should have had when they were young. And they should have had more milk and stuff for the bones and stuff, which I guess they didn't have then. And the kids that had T.B., they had because their mother died when she was early age, then just the father looked after them, eh.

Brenda: Do you know of any times that Indian medicine was used on these illnesses?

Rose: Well, the only time that I know that was used and without success was that cholera. Grandma used, you know, all what she could think of to stop that, but it didn't. And I know she was quite perturbed about it. She says, "No matter how much I do with it, it doesn't stop." So this is one thing that it didn't work.

Brenda: Do you think it worked on some of the sicknesses?

Rose: Well, like for headaches, like the mint for headaches. Like, even for the kids, the small babies, if they get this high fever I just give them mint with a little bit of sugar. Like, you have to boil it, you make the water boil and then you throw the mint in, like the mint leaves. You throw a handful in about a quart of water and then they drink that every three, four hours with a little bit of sugar. It cuts the fever.

Brenda: And did you ever hear of a sweat lodge?

Rose: At them days, no. When I was younger, no, we never heard, or anything like that, it was never... I hear a lot of it now.

Brenda: But what do they use them for?

Rose: Well they use, you're supposed to be... well, you're not supposed to eat for three days or one day, whatever you think you can tolerate at that time. And you're in that sweat lodge for that length of time. And it's with hot stones and they throw water on it and you got to sweat your sickness out, whatever, and you got to do all the praying.

Brenda: So some used it for when they were sick?

Rose: Yeah. Brenda: And prayed and...

Rose: Some used it for, you know, for beliefs.

Brenda: It's for a sort of religious... it's used for religious beliefs then, eh?

Rose: Yeah.

Brenda: Did you know of anyone that ever was in one?

Rose: Well I went in one last year because we had quite a bit of problems with, you know, family. Like the younger kids,

because there was, you know, private things that was going on that I'd seen that it wasn't turning out the way it should be. So I, well, you fast for so many days, so I fasted for three days and three nights for this purpose alone. And I think it worked because it hasn't reoccured, whatever I, you know,...

Brenda: So you believe in it then?

Rose: Yeah, if you use it the right way. It's got to be used for something for the good, but not for the bad, because it can come back on you. It's said that if you use it for the bad, that you're three times the more sorrier.

Brenda: So it's what they'd call practised Indian religion then, eh?

Rose: Yes.

Brenda: When your family was growing up did they get along with non-native people?

Rose: Most of the time, yes. There's very seldom there would be a few that would, you know, call them Metis. Well of course them days there was no discrimination in our community. Even at the schools there was always the over percentage of Metis so they couldn't afford to discriminate them. So they were mostly overpowered all the time, so they couldn't discriminate. But like in the 50th generation, like when 50 cycle, I'll call it, and it's most of the white people are married to the Metis girls now. So they can't call them, you know the kids, Metis or something like that because...

Brenda: They're sort of all intermarried now.

Rose: Yeah, they're all intermarried so they'd be calling their own kids Metis. Brenda: Did you ever hear of instances or experience any where a Metis person was doing the same job and they received less pay?

Rose: Well, not really. I've heard about it when we were working with the Native Women's Organization and all our other things, but in my community here everybody was served the same, whether they were white, or Metis, or Indian, or...

Brenda: You were never denied a job because you were Metis?

Rose: No.

Brenda: Did you feel comfortable when you were around white people like judges, or police or anything like that?

Rose: No. I feel if anybody feels the way I am, well, they pretty well feel pretty all right, I guess. Because I feel I'm a person first of all and whether I am Metis, white, or English, I'm the same person that I want to be. You got to put it in your head what you want to be, and what you want to think



yourself you are, not just to belittle yourself. I think if you belittle yourself you're the one that's discriminating against yourself.

Brenda: So you never had any bad experiences then with...

Rose: Not really, no. I've heard of a lot of, you know, getting discriminated on, but for myself, no.

Brenda: Did you parents, your grandparents and that, attend church regularly when you were young?

Rose: Well that was a must with our grandparents. You had to be, Sunday, and whenever you bought new clothes, that first time they had to be worn on church. And it was worn at church just for so long and then you could wear it for everyday wear afterwards. But church was a must every Sunday, Easter Sunday, and Good Fridays, and all the church socials and then, whatever.

Brenda: Did the priest ever visit your home?

Rose: Every year.

Brenda: Do you remember anything that he talked about at that time?

Rose: Most of all he wanted to know how many we were in the family, how we were getting along, and if we needed something. Or he said, he used to tell Grandma -- well of course, she was well-known all over, I guess -- and she used to say, "Well, do you want a cup of tea?" And he'd take his tea and bannock and whatever and he'd bless the house, and bless the food. And he says, "I see you're not in a want of anything. But," he says, "if you ever want something you just come to me."

Brenda: So you figure, all in all you figure the church generally helped Metis people then, eh?

Rose: Always, in this community anyway. Whenever they needed the help they got it.

Brenda: Do you think the church had more influence then than it does today?

Rose: I think so, because I don't know if it had influence, but then the people had more beliefs in the church. I think it's because they taught their kids to... And we were taught not to talk back or to think for ourselves till we were old enough to do so for... on our own. Like Grandma used to say, "Well," she says, "While you're in my house you do what I say. But when you're on your own, you can do whatever you want to do. But," she says, "under my roof you do as I do."

Brenda: And did your commitment to the church ever get weaker?

Rose: No, not that I know of. I still do my duties and I still do my percentage of work for the church. Like right now I'm involved into the Shrine, the St. Laurent Shrine, which I give myself, all summer long, during the week, to clean up and, you know, we're different committees and stuff like that that we're involved in.

Brenda: And when you went to school, Rose, what type of things were taught at school?

Rose: We were taught history, English, French. The English it was a compulsory thing. We had to learn the English, the grammar, the lectures and all that stuff. And science and history was compulsory also. But then there's the French, which was compulsory at them times when I went to the convent, but now it's not.

Brenda: So there were nuns that taught there then?

Rose: Yeah, all through my school years were nuns.

Brenda: What type of a school, was it just one room or were there many rooms in it? Rose: Well when I first started school it was in a convent.

There were five rooms, five downstairs and there was four, six upstairs, so there was a full twelve class. Like some would be one and two together, three and four together, and...

Brenda: So they'd sort of double up on the grades.

Rose: Yeah.

Brenda: Were you allowed to talk Cree in school?

Rose: Only at certain times. Like, during the class sessions, like, if we had English it had to be English. But other times, like recess times or when it wasn't question period, we could talk to each other in our own language. It was not compulsory for us not to talk our own language.

Brenda: Were you ever taught any Metis or Indian history when you went to school?

Rose: Not that I know of. The only thing that we got was the regular history book of when Champlain was coming into Canada and when he discovered Canada and all that stuff. There was nothing about the Northwest Rebellion at them days. It was in later years, I think when I was in grade 11, that it came out, you know, that we start to...

Brenda: Did you enjoy school?

Rose: Very much. Well I was always a bookworm, what they call a bookworm, always had my nose in books. And I wasn't one to read fiction stuff, you know, like love stories, and true stories and whatever. I always tried to read something that was educational and what is interesting. Like, you know,

stories about people going someplace, and where they went and stuff like that. I was not one to geog... geographic... you know, something about geography, about lands and different types of buildings. Different types of people, that's what I was interested in.

Brenda: Was there white students that went to school there too?

Rose: I think we were half and half at that time, when I was in, mostly half and half.

Brenda: How were you treated by the white students, no difference?

Rose: No difference at all. Brenda: Did your parents encourage you to go to school, or your grandparents, I should say?

Rose: My grandparents.

Brenda: What did you enjoy most about school?

Rose: I think the most things that I enjoyed at school is that I was at the convent and even after I'd come home from the classwork. See, we had a certain, now, we had about 15, 20 minutes after school that we could do anything what we wanted to, then we'd have a kind of a snack, usually toast and something or whatever, or cookie and something. Then we were taught we had to do our homework. Then after that we had certain chores to do, and then we had supper. And then after supper, well, we'd go and do which... I was put to clean out the chapel, like. I don't know why, I was always caught up in the religious stuff, doing the chapel, cleaning it up and getting ready for the church services.

Brenda: Do you remember what party your grandparents voted for in those days, like?

Rose: It was mostly Liberal.

Brenda: Do you know why they voted Liberal?

Rose: No, not really. But they always stayed Liberal no matter what, until it was in later years. I was still going to school, then something happened. I think it was the depression years and Grandma wanted some help from the town -- Grandpa was sick at the time -- and they didn't want to give any relief or whatever they called it at that time, or any help to the Metis or anything. There's a bunch of women that went after the Mayor with pitchforks. And he was Liberal and that was the turning point.

Brenda: That was the finish of the Liberal voting, eh?

Rose: Yeah.

Brenda: Did sort of the whole town switch, or the whole community?

Rose: Well, I think most of the community because there was white people, there was French women, there was English women and everything in that bunch. And they said if they couldn't get what they want they'd hang him up, which I think they nearly did. And they took the town clerk, they locked him in a little jail thing there. And they just had to turn around and they said, "Okay, you got to take us one by one and you got to sign," and they gave him the book and he had to make relief orders. Then all at once, about two weeks after they got, a train come in with apples and there was dried apples, green apples, and there was fish, dried fish and smoked fish. Oh, and you had canned goods, you know, salmon and stuff that you could keep for a while, that it wouldn't spoil or anything. I think that was the turning point and that was it. Grandma never voted Liberal after, it was always the Conservative and later years she voted CCF after, in whatever she thought was best I guess, you know, to serve the people.

Brenda: Do you think that the church was involved in politics at all?

Rose: I guess in the earlier years they were very much involved. If you were Catholic you voted Liberal; if you were Protestant you voted something else.

Brenda: So you think the church had a lot of influence on the way people voted?

Rose: You know if I was, to know what I know today and then to go back to the first few years then, you know, to find out what things went on, maybe we would have opened our ears and eyes a little bit.

Brenda: Do you vote the same way as your grandparents did?

Rose: No I don't. I take a good look at what the whole board and then I decide what I'm going to vote.

Brenda: So you do get involved in politics then, eh?

Rose: Oh, I do. Well, if we don't vote we don't get what we want.

Brenda: Do you think that the Metis people, though, voted for the party that they figured would do the best for them?

Rose: I think most of them think that way. But then, of course, the majority, like the older people, they're still drawn in their old ways, like the old French people and all that, like the old Metis, like my sister-in-law. She'll never vote anything but Liberal, and that's the way she was taught, eh. And that would be turning your coat around. That's what they called it then, turning your coat around.

Brenda: What was your first paying job, Rose?

Rose: Being waitress. No, my first paying job was I went to work in the fish camp way up north for \$8 a month. And that's a whole month and that would be getting up at 4 o'clock in the morning milking cows.

Brenda: What did you do at a fish camp?

Rose: Well, you milked five cows first. You come and you wash the dishes, the dishes from the separator, okay, and then I had to throw some pancakes for the men -- there was 40 men in the fish camp, you had to feed them all -- and wash those...

Brenda: What did they do in the fish camp though, what was, was it fishing?

Rose: Yeah, fishing. They'd fish and they had to fillet the fish, eh, and fillet them, freeze them and...

Brenda: Where was this at?

Rose: In Dorey (?) Lake, Saskatchewan.

Brenda: Did you have mostly temporary work, or seasonal work?

Rose: Well I stayed from '42 to '45, I worked in Dorey (?) Lake -- that's three years.

Brenda: So you really haven't been unemployed that much of the time, eh?

Rose: No.

Brenda: Just while you were more or less raising your family?

Rose: Yeah. But I guess I worked most of the time. Like, the first years I worked as the waitress there, well even one I quit Monday and I had my baby Tuesday morning.

Brenda: So you worked right up until the time.

Rose: Yeah, and then I went back to work about three, four days after.

Brenda: Was there very much employment back in those days? Was it quite scarce or...

Rose: It was scarce in a way but there was enough to carry the whole town, I guess.

Brenda: So employment was fairly good around...

Rose: Yeah.

Brenda: Were you ever involved in the old Saskatchewan Metis

Society?

Rose: Well in 1953 when it started.

Brenda: But before that there was an older one. It was during the '30s and the '40s. You wouldn't be involved in it but maybe your parents or your grandparents.

Rose: My grandma was in one. She used to go to the... I think if... I have to look back in the papers that she has. I think there is one, a banquet deal and a seminar deal that was brought out. It was in '42 I think, and that was Amyotte then.

Brenda: Where was he from, do you remember?

Rose: No, I can't remember, but I'd have to look for it.

Brenda: Would it be Regina, Joe Amyotte maybe?

Rose: I don't know, but it was held at the Bessborough in Saskatoon. It was a kind of an annual meeting and banquet.

Brenda: Yeah, I believe I read something to that effect too. There was a big conference held. Yeah, I think that would be Joe Amyotte. Did you remember any of the other names that was in...

Rose: No, not really. But I'd have to take a look and maybe let you know sometime, because I've got it someplace -- I never threw it away.

Brenda: Your grandparents didn't talk much about what was involved in it at that time?

Rose: Well Grandma used to be very much involved with the women, eh, the Metis women and everything. And of course being a little girl with big ears you always hear a lot of things going on.

Brenda: Did you remember any of the names, like Joe LaRoque, or Joe Ross, Tom Major, Joe McKenzie, Solomon Pritchard?

Rose: Pritchards, that brings out, rings a bell to me, because Grandma used to talk a lot about the Pritchards and the Amyottes and the old Trotters, Charles, they called him. He was one of the...

Brenda: Charles?

Rose: Yeah. But they called him Charles in French.

Brenda: So in the communities today, you know, what do you think could be done for some of their problems? What problems do you think that they have, what are their biggest problems?

Rose: Like for instance here the, we have a pretty good local. We're active and everything, there's bingos and everything. Well I think the best thing is to do with our problems

and everything. There is a lot of drinking and everything. But I think the programs they have, we have, are the Al-Anons, we have our AA meetings, we have the youth programs for... and all that. But still I think the government should look into the housing department, which they build houses but then when their wages goes up the rent goes up. Why don't they put a rental right straight across at one level and stay, fix it like that, and then just change it a little bit every year -- not just every time they level up their wages.

Brenda: Do you think people in the future will be better off in the north, or in the cities, or country?

Rose: Well, I think for the Metis people as it is land base is okay. But if they're going to have land base I think they should... okay, take a good look at themselves, what they want, put it on a piece of paper and then work from there. What is there, like for one local at least. Okay, you take your local, you sit down, what we're going to do, what is our people want, and then go by that. I think if you go in the north, what you going to do in the north? There's no work there. In the cities it's full with white people. I think if you run your own programs and do what you want to do -- like myself, I'm involved in Farmer's Market right now. We're doing our garden- ing, we're doing our own plants and we're selling our own goods, like our baked goods, our craft stuff, and I think if we think along that line we can bring a few cents to ourselves and if we belong to each other.

Brenda: Good, very good suggestion, Rose, and thank you very much for the interview.

Rose: Thank you.

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